

Media Studios

semester 1 2017

Another World: Developing Stories For Screen

Stayci Taylor



Image: Still from *You and Me and Everyone We Know*, 2005, Miranda July

How are story worlds created, and how can these be employed to develop rich and satisfying screen narratives?

Every story has its own world, and its own feel and its own mood. So you try to put together all those things - these little details - to create a sense of place.

David Lynch, *Catching the Big Fish: Meditation, Consciousness, and Creativity*, 2006

description

Screenwriting is a practice engaged with a number of elements, including character, theme and narrative. The resulting stories, beyond living in the combined imaginations of the writer and reader, seek to be made manifest on screen. Traditional screenwriting models emphasise the importance of plot, but not necessarily the creation of those worlds into which viewers so readily enter when consuming works made for film, broadcast or online distribution.

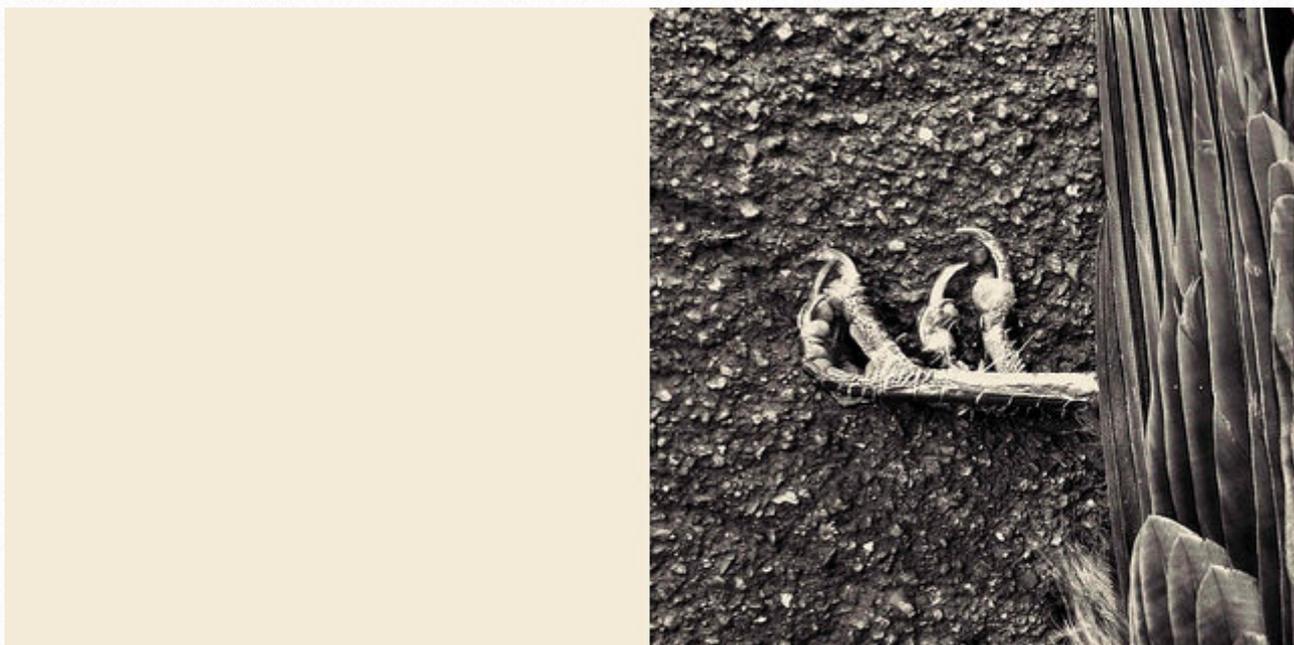
This studio takes its prompt from filmmaker and scholar Kathryn Millard who invites us to “Write for place. Decide on a setting for your script and write for it” (Screenwriting in a Digital Era 2014, p. 184). Taking, then, this location-as-inspiration approach, you will develop a story for the screen using a range of traditional and experimental techniques for generating and constructing narratives. The participants of this studio will each create their own screen story while also engaged in others’ via collaborative methods of script development. Inspired by industrial realities, whereby commissions and funding are increasingly reliant on multimedia submissions, you will produce a ‘proof-of-narrative’ combining the written (e.g. screenplay, treatment or TV bible) and audio-visual (e.g. video pitch, mood reel, teaser) in an artefact that best presents your original screen story and its rich, new world.

aims

- to develop a story for the screen
- to experiment with established and emerging methods of script development
- to explore editorial techniques for both collaborative and individual screenwriting practice

Ecologies of Noticing: Documentary and What Things Are

Adrian Miles



Robert Croma. #15. N.p., 2014. Flickr. Web.

How do we make work that addresses the density of a thing?

Instead of removing elements to achieve the elegance of simplicity, [ecologies of noticing] adds (or simply leaves) elements to accomplish the realism of multitude. It is a practice of exploding the innards of things — be they words, intersections, shopping malls, or creatures. This "explosion" can be as figurative or literal as you like, but it must above all reveal the hidden density of a [thing].

Ian Bogost. *Alien Phenomenology, or What It's Like to Be a Thing*. Minneapolis: University Of Minnesota Press, 2012. Kindle. loc. 1297.

description

We have all been taught to understand things from a linguistic or semiotic perspective. Meaning is language based and socially constructed. Language is, at heart, the only road to meaning, therefore meaning and the world is constructed. This is known as a constructivist view because the world is understood to be constructed – socially, culturally, historically, politically, and so on. Constructivism, by definition, makes the human the centre and measure of all that matters.

This is a problem. Just as we once believed the earth was the centre of the universe, (white) man provided the measure for reason and judgement, and that evolution and biology justified us as the most important species, we have historically moved from assumptions that appeared natural and normal. This is now happening with language, meaning, and the human. There is new research in media studies and the humanities that sees constructivism as narrow and dangerously anthropocentric. This research sees media and the world as involving much more than the human and, as significantly, that these other non-human things have complicated, tangled relations with us and each other that matter. Constructivism cannot notice the density of things because it reduces the world to our scale and our terms, relying on generalisations as if everything is not individual, distinct, and different.

In collaborating with a class in Offenburg, and sharing small scale interactive audio-visual documentaries, we will investigate the hyperlocal as a network of relations of things that do stuff. These audio-visual documentaries can be video, audio, or still image (or combinations thereof).

aims

- be introduced to recent new research in media and documentary
- create innovative work that broadens our understanding of ourselves and the world
- to listen to voices other than our own

The Korsakow interactive documentary software (OS X or PC) will be required (USD69, approx. AUD90)

It's Alive

Leo Berkeley



Image: Gary Lund *Modern Living* CC Licence: Attribution-NonCommercial 2.0 Generic (CC BY-NC 2.0)

What does live media offer as an experience that sets it apart from other media content and, from a production point of view, what are the creative possibilities and challenges involved with live media production?

The moment, inevitably, is what we remember and retain, what we possess of the screen and incorporate into ourselves and our worlds.

Murray Pomerance, *The Horse that Drank The Sky*, 2008

description

Live production has been a central part of the media from its beginnings. All radio and television began this way. In the 21st century, live programs are making a comeback, seen as a point of difference for a medium like television as competition from emerging media increases. From sport, news, events and disaster coverage to a range of variety, reality and talk programs, a significant proportion of all media content can be defined as live, yet it can be argued that the specific features of this form are both neglected and misunderstood.

'Live' itself is a contested term, with the values of immediacy and authenticity it evokes contributing to its overuse and abuse. Through reading, viewing, discussion and practical experimentation, the studio will develop a working definition of live media that will then be applied to the more professionally-focused project work produced. Live media production often involves careful planning, considered risk-taking and particular forms of teamwork that will all be part of the studio. Both successful and unsuccessful live media examples will be analysed.

Liveness will mainly be explored in this studio through television but a range of other media will be considered, including radio, music and online media such as Facebook, YouTube and Periscope. Theoretical perspectives on liveness will be examined and the knowledge gained from this will inform your practical work. There will be a range of projects produced through the studio that explore different aspects of live media production, with the multi-camera television studio being a principal focus.

aims

- to investigate the appeal of 'liveness' as a media experience
- to experiment with both established and new ways of making live media
- to design and execute a successful live media production

The RMIT TV Studio will be used for the production of the projects on some Thursdays between 5.30-10.30pm. Students are required to attend at least three of these sessions, with specific dates and times to be negotiated.

Lentara Co-design

Seth Keen



Image: Lentara Community Wardrobe Project, Ti Hoang (2016)

How can
Communication
Design and Media
practices be used to
respond to
contemporary social
issues?

The driving force for collaboration is motivation. In order for a co-creation to succeed, everyone involved needs to feel that they gain something from the collaboration or feel that they are doing a meaningful thing and working towards a valuable end result. Across disciplines this motivation becomes the enabler of innovation and transformational communications.

Essi Salonen, *Designing Collaboration: British Design Council*, 2012.

description

This cross-disciplinary studio brings together Communication Design and Media students to work with the industry partner Lentara, a community service not-for-profit organisation. Lentara facilitate multiple community services like Asylum Seeker Housing, Emergency Relief, Men's Shed programs and Integrated Family Services.

This industry partnership with students has been created because Lentara are interested in 'social entrepreneurship' and the creation of innovative ideas. In this studio there are opportunities for project outcomes to be published and distributed publically, and Lentara fully support the development of personal portfolios. Following the completion of the studio, Lentara will offer a paid, part-time internship to assist with the implementation of projects.

In this hands-on studio practical skills will be supported with the methodologies required to work with a variation of communication, and service design problems. Audiovisual media practices will be used to research and inform the design process, along with present ideas. Students working in mixed groups may take varying hybrid approaches that draw from graphic design, advertising, branding, film, television, radio and social media.

aims

- develop the design and production knowledge required to solve communication and service design problems.
- learn how to adapt to changing technologies and practices through the use of design and media production methodologies.
- develop interdisciplinary Communication Design and Media practices that can be used to solve real life problems.

More Than Fabric: Fashion Films in the Digital Age

Christina Heristanidis



Image: Comme des Garçons AW16 by Nick Knight's image of Jazzelle Zanaughtti. Styled by Katie Shillingford.

How is fashion represented in the contemporary media landscape?

Fashion is the intersection of art and commerce, between form and function.

Lindsay Adler, fashion photographer

description

Like fashion itself, fashion films are the intersection of art and commerce, form and function. This studio will explore the diverse nature of fashion films, from runway shows, to art pieces, to in-depth documentaries.

As a result of advances in digital technology and the growth of social media, the fashion film industry has exploded. In this studio we will explore how fashion films operate as art and as an industry (branding, advertising). We will also look at fashion as it appears in other types of film in a variety of ways including costuming.

Examining how fashion and the fashion industry is represented in a range of genres and across media platforms, we will investigate how to negotiate the commercial and industry imperatives that drive contemporary fashion to craft a meaningful piece of artistic fashion media.

aims

- to examine the various ways in which fashion is represented in film, advertising and brand identity.
- to create a high quality fashion video.
- to work in collaboration with fashion creatives.

Old's Cool: New Media Innovation from Old Media Principles

Daniel Binns

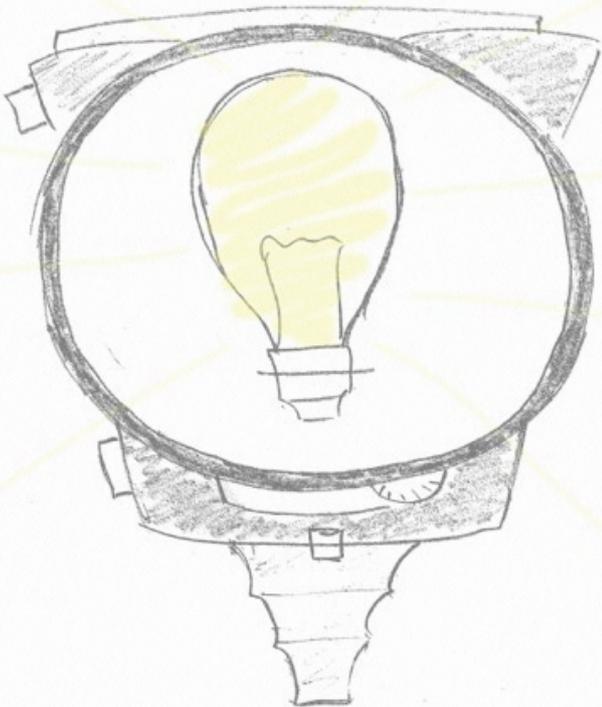


Image: by DB

How can the principles of old media help us become better new media producers?

Art never responds to the wish to make it democratic; it is not for everybody; it is only for those who are willing to undergo the effort needed to understand it.

Flannery O'Connor, *Mystery & Manners: Occasional Prose*, 1970

description

We live in the future: a world where you can make a feature film using a smartphone. The sheer ease of access to tools and technology is a boon for creative people all over the world. Stories are emerging that years ago we simply would never have heard; people now have a voice that can reach across the globe.

We're also observing renaissances in analogue and craft media, from music and photography to scrapbooking, bookbinding and printing presses. There's also the emergent practice of the social media sabbatical, and attempts at what's called deep work. These are resulting in alternative media practices where slowness and deliberation become key principles.

Old's Cool observes both new media's explosion of easy-to-use and easy-to-access technology alongside the analogue resistance. From this observation, we ask the questions: Can we learn something from old media, about how to use new media? What are the principles underlying, for example, live radio drama or pinhole photography, and can these help us become better podcast producers, digital cinematographers or social media consultants?

In this studio, we will research old media, new media, and the shifts between the two. We will identify key principles that we will take forward into our own explorations of media practice. From here, it is hoped that everyone in the studio will hone their technical specialties and identify trajectories for future development and exploration. A subscription to Adobe Creative Suite is highly recommended; some costs will be incurred during the studio, such as film processing and postage.

aims

- to research old media techniques and practices in order to identify key principles
- to identify new media practices that incorporate old media principles, as well as concepts of deliberation and craftsmanship
- to produce media artefacts in old and new media forms

Room With A View: Multi-platform Radio

Bruce Berryman

The screenshot displays a multi-platform radio interface. At the top, a blue waveform represents the audio signal. Below it, a timeline shows the current time at 00:01:10.455 and the total duration at 01:00:00.823. A 'Deselect marker' button is visible on the timeline. On the left, a list of members is shown under 'By Member', including 'All', 'Me', and several users with IDs like s3329997 and Zoe Annabel. The central 'Notes' panel for the 'Introduction' segment (69.524 - 212.707) contains the text: 'Cassie and Bianca did a great job of the introduction as they identify the station, show and how long it will run for. This is simple 'housekeeping' that gives the listener some context and is also just a really good professional habit to get into when your presenting a show live on air. Consistently recapping may seem repedative, but as radio broadcasters, we need to keep in mind that listeners can tune in at any point in time and keeping them informed about who they are listening to is a priority.' Below the notes are 'Edit Marker' and 'Delete Marker' buttons. On the right, a 'Filter By Marker Type' menu lists categories such as 'Presentation', 'Production / Panelling', 'Music', 'Interview', 'Transitions', 'Pre Recorded Segments', and 'Live Segments'. A 'Markers' list includes 'The good introduction theme', 'Faulty Towers', 'Faulty towers', 'Panelling', 'Fawly Towers Intro', 'Introduction Theme', 'presenter intros', 'Fawly Towers tidbit', and 'Presenter intros'. A 'Safari' browser notification is visible in the bottom left corner.

Image: RAWs Annotation, RMIT, 2013

How does radio change across multiple platforms in a period of media divergence?

I have discovered that the time we live in is an incredible one, as we can easily share ideas, content and information from our own computers, and collaborate, often without physically being in the same space.... I feel that multi-platform production and distribution really increases accessibility, both for content producers and for listeners, and therefore opens up the potential for new and wonderful things to occur.

RWAV Participant

description

The shift to digital modes of production and distribution and the emergence of hybrid sound based forms has presented challenges that many believed radio would not survive. To do so, it has been forced to integrate a variety of changes from the relationship between audiences and producers, to the way radio practitioners collaborate to co-create content for multiple platforms.

Collaborative radio production or co-creation is not in itself a new concept. For ABC radio producer John Jacobs 'the creation of media that involves a group has always had the potential to be a co-creative process'. Jacobs compares film and TV productions with their 'higher budgets, larger editorial quality expectations and associated constraints and hierarchies of creative control' with the 'small teams, low budgets and fast turnaround of radio, leaving more room for flat structures and co-creative ways of working'. For Jacobs, collaborative or co-creative radio production is simply 'good practice'.

Through a range of studio activities, you will use technologies that enable co-located and distributed production, to gain industry relevant skills in research, interviewing and narrative. Working with others on these projects will provide opportunities to develop understandings of the individual within the group and enablers in collaborative production.

aims

- to collaborate effectively in the production of radio content across multiple platforms
- to experience live to radio production
- to create ancillary online content to extend the narrative

(Jacob's comments on co-creative radio making may be found on Jonathan Hutchinson's blog <http://jonathonhutchinson.com/2012/01/20/behind-the-scenes-at-abc-radio-national-cocreativefeaturemaking/#comment-248>)

True to Form: Filmmaking that is True to Form and Content

Paul Ritchard



Image: Filming on a *A view from the Bank*, 2015

How might your filmmaking practice, be truthful to: form, the way you work and; content, whom or what you work with?

When I asked about his camera style, he immediately stated that he hated that word, because it implies the affected. “I never use it. I prefer the word idiom, which is better because it suggests a way of working.

William Raban about ‘Thames Film’ in *Documentary in Practice: Filmmakers and Production Choices*

description

Methods of film production are predetermined by the choice to make either documentary or drama. The form is set, and often the content too.

These methods have their own practicalities, logic and industrial efficiencies. A film project invariably requires a commitment to a particular form and its methods of production. This can limit the film’s expressive potential.

True to Form rethinks the conception, development and production of short film projects. Work in this studio will not start with the premise that you are making drama or documentary. It will start with the notion that the form and content of your work will be determined by your creative vision and a respect for the subject matter as an active agent shaping the final form.

You will establish your way of working by exploring traditional filmmaking protocols and techniques, and through a series of practical exercises and ongoing reflection, you will develop the technical competency and confidence to produce a series of film works. Our key objective is to discover a more flexible and potentially creative approach to the production of fiction and nonfiction.

Specific skills developed in this course include: producing, project management and directing skills; professional production skills in audio recording and post production; lighting - analysis, planning and setting; camera operation - exposure, focus pulling, camera movement, framing; and post production - editing, grading and title sequences.

aims

- to be able to critically analyse, through the making of film and reflection on that traditional and industrial production methods
- to explore the possibilities associated with applying techniques and practices not typically used in the creation of the form being pursued.
- to develop competency in production techniques and to think more expansively in relation to ongoing projects.

Uses of Photography

Brian Morris



FORGET YOUR PAST | BULGARIA 2012

SEWERFRESH.COM

Image: Buzludzha Monument, Bulgaria [Source: sewerfresh.com]

How do practical and conceptual 'uses of photography' matter to contemporary media practitioners?

A knowledge of photography is just as important as that of the alphabet. The illiterate of the future will be ignorant of the use of the camera and pen alike.

László Moholy-Nagy, 'From Pigment to Light'. Telebar Vol.1-2, 1923

description

What is a photograph now? What are some of the diverse uses to which photographs are put by both professional and non-professional image-makers in our visually-saturated cultures? How might reflexive literacies around the still image be useful for your media practice regardless of whether you aspire to be a film and television maker, social media producer, cultural critic or radio practitioner?

This studio explores these questions by making, looking at, reading, talking and thinking about photography. 'Photography' here is used as a descriptor for diverse technologies and practices based around communicating with light. Photography also changes things in the world - be they viewer perceptions, attitudes, social relations or everyday activities.

Moholy-Nagy's observation about the importance of photographic literacy still holds water 80 years after it was made - but it needs re-examining in the radically different context of digital and distributed online media.

Today, influential pre-digital ideas about how we 'read' and culturally incorporate photography in our lives jostle alongside newer theories that have emerged in the internet era. Contemporary thinking about photography has had to take account of fundamental changes in technologies, practices and contexts - this has destabilized the very idea of 'the photograph' and photography as a practice. That uncertainty figures as a lament for some and a creative opportunity for others.

So what combination of intellectual, professional and/or popular literacies are at work in contemporary uses of photography and how might they be applied to your media practice?

aims

- to improve and develop your production and post-production photography skills
- to expand your literacy around photography as a practice and form that has been reshaped in the digital era
- to investigate the usefulness of photography in enhancing your own media practice

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