



PLACE, GROUND, PRACTICE.

Bandung Centre for New media (Indonesia),

Lisa Reihana (Aotearoa New Zealand),

Rachael Rakena (Kai Tahu/Ngā Puhī/Aotearoa New Zealand),

Sarai Media Lab (Delhi, India),

Sriwhana Spong (Aotearoa New Zealand)

Co-curated by Amanda McDonald Crowley and Nova Paul

December 1- 22, 2005

Gallery One



Place, Ground and Practice

The exhibition *Place, Ground, Practice* has been developed to coincide with the symposium *Cultural Futures*

, and includes a range of work from artists participating in the event that reflects upon the

discussions and dialogue

Cultural Futures

interrogates. The exhibition, like the conference, responds to important transformations that have reconfigured opportunities for arts and media practice in the Asia and Pacific regions in recent times.

The phenomenal increase in access to information and communication technologies internationally over the last two decades, and more recently across the Asia Pacific, has in some localities led to new media practices becoming well established and recognised as part of the art world. In other places these practices have yet to carve out their own cultural space. The artists included in this exhibition create technologically assisted spaces for storytelling. Some stories are deeply personal, some are political, all are culturally specific to the places where the stories originated, yet each resonates with the technologically mediated times in which we find ourselves.

The emergence of a so called 'new media' environment has exponentially increased the engagement of artists from these regions with the rest of the world. At the same time, it could be said that if there is a 'new' element in new media practice, it is perhaps a return to an art embedded in culture, using contemporary tools and investigating their impact on society. Each of the artists and artists' groups in this exhibition make work that engages with and critiques the impact of technological development on contemporary cultural practice.

Artists around the world are engaged in a critical discussion on urban futures and technologically mediated moments, discussions that are infused by complex sociological and political debates. This exhibition includes the work of artists from New Zealand, Indonesia and India whose work is informed by these global conversations. That the artists also look inward and across the region for inspiration reflects a growing recognition that the Asia Pacific contains distinctive cultural concerns that are common to its members and that cultural value is not centered in Europe or North America.

This exhibition extends and fosters the understanding of New Zealand's unique position in the Asia Pacific region through and in relation to new media and art practices. The works encompass an exploration of the spiritual, ethical and technological challenges that face us in the 21st Century. The artists variously ask us to explore spaces suffused with possibilities for engaging with a technologically mediated present, but inevitably caught up in the varied and complex pasts of various places close to home.

Amanda McDonald Crowley, November 2005

Amanda McDonald Crowley is the Executive Director of Eyebeam Atelier in New York: <http://www.eyebeam.org/>

Previously based in Australia, she is a cultural worker, curator and writer who specialises in creating new media and contemporary art events and programmes that encourages cross-disciplinary practice, collaboration and exchange.

Urban Drift

Both maps and story telling turn a space into a place. In Aotearoa New Zealand pre-contact Maori relationships to place were made by an elaborate oral weaving – of stories, recitation and description – that sited and connected tangata whenua (the indigenous; literally the “the people of the land”) to the whenua (ground), and orientated and navigated them through it. Used on Western terms to colonial ends, Western maps and grids were a form of colonisation that not only dominated and classified, but aided the erosion of the “invisible” oral tradition and indigenous way of knowing and understanding a space.

The substantial relocation of the Maori population from rural bases to the city through the 1950’s and ‘60s was the most rapid urbanisation of any indigenous population in the world. The move was referred to as “urban drift”, a term that implies aimlessness, a lack of agency, and indeed the rapidity meant that in many cases the loss of physical contact with ancestral land and resources also meant a losing touch with practices and conceptual tools such as the ability to recite whakapapa (genealogy) integral to Maori identity.

Practice, though, can reclaim ground, and make place. Despite initial weakening of cultural practices through dislocation from ancestral land and the community that surrounded it, it has become apparent that Maori do negotiate the city in a Maori way. Many of the conceptual technologies that shape Maori identity are still “invisible”, relating to kaupapa (purpose) and tikanga (protocols), but their results are not. Maori Television is a highly visible example of an urban Maori production that takes up technologies once exotic to Maori culture and employs them according to Maori values and priorities. It creates a Maori place within the mediascape, one that could even be seen as a new kind of meeting place for Maori. Here we might also see

another kind of “drift” within the urban, the gradual accretion of a new indigenous space.

Nova Paul, November 2005

Nova Paul is a filmmaker of Nga Puhi descent who teaches in the Spatial Design and Visual Arts programmes at Auckland University of Technology.

Sarai Media lab (Delhi. India)

Raqs Media Collective + Mrityunjay Chatterjee + Iram Ghufan

<http://www.sarai.net>

<http://www.raqsmediacollective.net>

The Network of No_des, 2004

The Network of No_Des is a media art and inter disciplinary public research project that seeks to recover the history of 'Networks', "Nodes" and 'Newness' in global terms. It considers the term "new" (especially when used with media) as one that has a long history and it will situate the horizon of the "network" that it refers to, in meridians far removed from the limited trans-Atlantic/trans-pacific latitudes of the general discourse of media history and theory. To the artists working at Sarai, working within the paradigm of an the intense info space of a dense South Asian city like Delhi, new media, or the information sphere in general, is an entity concretely framed by a question of the politics of access, the fact of labour and a persistent anxiety, which make the digital domain a truly nervous system.

Rachael Rakena (Kai Tahu / Nga Puhi / NZ)

Mihi Aroha, 2002

Rachael Rakena has lectured for the past eight years in Digital and Moving Image and Art Theory. She is currently lecturing in the Maori Visual Arts program at Massey University. Rachael's practice includes still imagery, performance, video and installation, considering ideas of iwi identity, digital space, space between, and water space, contributing to indigenous strategies towards tino rangatiratanga.

Sriwahana Spong (Aotearoa New Zealand)

Nighfall, 2005

Sriwahana Spong's main preoccupation to date has been video, used as a means of documenting performances, and creating monochrome text works where lists; ranging from places where explorers died, to the names of ships lost in the Bermuda triangle, swirl across the screen like an electric surrealist poem. With her new work *Nightfall* Spong uses filming techniques influenced by the horror genre to create a piece part nature study, part dream. Garden sculptures influenced by Balinese Hindu offerings emerge from the darkness of midnight ramble. These formations are illuminated by torchlight for a moment before dissolving back into the murky blackness.

Nightfall

is a work befitting to the explorations of an artist who grew up alienated from the Balinese culture that forms half her genetic makeup.

Lisa Reihana (Aotearoa New Zealand)

<http://www.lisareihana.com>

Colour of Sin: HeadCase Version, 2005

Lisa Reihana is a Maori artist who has played a leading role in the development of film and multimedia art in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Her work demonstrates a keen interest to communicate complex ideas about indigenous identity and bi-cultural living, and a desire to address and engage with contemporary experience through diverse media. Her installations are collages drawn from eclectic sources. Her examination of cultural histories uses photography, sculpture and time-based arts.

Bandung Centre for New Media
Gustaff H. Iskandar

<http://commonroom.info/bcfnma/videogoethe.html>

1. *Video Compilation Vol. 01*

The first video compilation made by the Bandung Center for New Media Arts in 2004, jointly curated by Arif Ash Shiddiq (a psychology student from the University of Padjadjaran, Bandung) and Roy Voragen (a philosopher and political scientist from the Netherlands) during the German – Indonesian video screening program held at Common Room in June 2004. The compilation presents nine video works by artists who live and work in Bandung, Java, and Ubud, Bali.

2. *VideoBabes Video Compilation*

Founded in 2004, VideoBabes was the first collective initiated by female artists in Bandung. They are an artist run organisation that focuses on increasing the development of video-based art in Indonesia. Their aim is to work together with local and international institutions and organisations to initiate video related programmes and events. They are involved, in all levels in production, distribution, exhibitions, screenings, lectures, and workshops.

3. *Cerahati Video Compilation*

Cerahati is a creative community in Bandung consisting of people interested in creating audio-visual work. Since 2000, Cerahati has produced music videos for local independent bands and major label bands. They also go by the name Biosampler, a multimedia performance group who are often perform in local clubs, at arts festivals, in public space and private houses, mixing live digital/analog music with digital projections and lower tech image sources like slides and overhead projectors. They have put together a video compilation focusing on local music videos from Bandung made by independent bands/labels 2001 – 2005 especially for this exhibition.

4. *SIGNAL_RE-CO[R]DED*

Curated by Agung Hujatnikajenong, the young curator of the OK Video Festival in Jakarta in 2003 and 2005, this compilation of recent Indonesian video art screened at the Video Sculpture Exhibition in Bandung (7– 30 June, 2005) and compiles eleven video works from artists who live and work in Jakarta, Bandung and Yogyakarta.

5. *Video Check Point*

A compilation curated by Yogie Ginanjar, a student from the Fine Arts Department in the Bandung Institute of Technology, of work made by young artists in Bandung, most of them still students.

The exhibition **Place, Ground, Practice** is co-curated by Amanda McDonald Crowley and Nova Paul, in conjunction with **Cultural Futures: Place, Ground and Practice in Asia Pacific New Media Arts**, an international symposium exploring cultural issues in the emerging new media environment, taking place in Tamaki Makaurau Auckland, New Zealand, 1 – 5 December, 2005

Cultural Futures has been coordinated by Danny Butt, Jon Bywater and Nova Paul

<http://culturalfutures.place.net.nz>

<http://www.culturalfutures.place.net.nz/placegroundpractice.pdf>

Also of interest Tessa Laird's article in the Listener: [The future belongs to crowds](#)

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