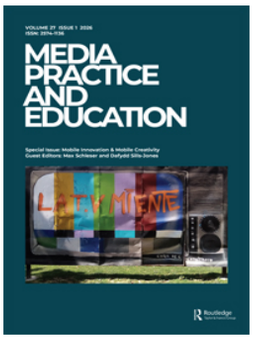

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Filmmaking as a research method: uncovering complexity within a creative system

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ABSTRACT

In researching the creative capacity of *The Shoot Out 24 Hour Filmmaking Festival* (*The Shoot Out*) an ethnographic methodology was employed with filmmaking as a research method. This valued the researcher's existing skills and experience as a filmmaker, their 'insider's perspective' (Robson 2011) as festival creator, their cultural capital and habitus (Bourdieu 1977). Documentary filmmaking techniques were used as a method of collecting, coding, analysing and presenting original interview data. In this way, filmmaking 'form[ed] an integral part of the research process' (Candy and Edmonds 2010, 127), aiding the researcher in uncovering the complexities of the creative process within the festival's creative system (Csikszentmihalyi 1988; Kerrigan 2013). Participant interviews are presented as a series of research films that address the research areas of investigation and sit within a website platform to be viewed in conjunction with the written text. By grouping video clips, it becomes a 'medium through which ethnographic knowledge is created' (Pink 2011, 2). Arguments can be shown to be complex and heightened through vocal intonation, emotion, confirmation from other interviews or video archive. This article will discuss how using filmmaking as a research method not only aided but also enhanced the research process.

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Creativity; constraint; ethnography; methodology; filmmaking; festival

Introduction

The Shoot Out 24 Hour Filmmaking Festival (*The Shoot Out*) began in a regional Australian city, Newcastle, NSW in 1999 with an economic agenda 'to promote Newcastle and Hunter Region as a viable and vibrant centre for filmmaking' (24h Hour Events Pty Ltd 1999) and a site for the development of a sustainable film industry. The Newcastle event ran for 10 years, attracting between 180 and 198 filmmaking teams or almost 2,000 filmmaking team members per year (Blake 2005; Tedmanson 2004). Regional centres were deliberately targeted; in Australia, *The Shoot Out* ran in Geelong, Victoria (2004–2008) and Toowoomba, Queensland (2004 & 2005), and internationally it ran in

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Hamilton, New Zealand (2004 & 2005) and Boulder, Colorado, USA (2004–2009). The festival was 'a catalyst for production, it motivated over 15,000 filmmakers to participate in making a film over the festival's lifetime' (Street 2023, 2). The size and scale of *The Shoot Out* have been included here to illustrate the success and enormity of the event. This research, exploring the creative capacity of *The Shoot Out,* is focused on the Newcastle event that ran between 1999 and 2008.

To uncover knowledge of how the design of a film festival motivates, influences and sustains creativity within the filmmaking process, an ethnographic methodology was used. An ethnographic study involves 'an immersion in the particular culture' (Robson 2011, 142) where the degree of immersion can range from observer to complete filmmaking participant (Bryman 2008; Gold 1958). As a festival director and creator of *The Shoot Out* and a filmmaker, this author was operating inside the research context and had a unique understanding of filmmaking culture and the culture of the festival. Documentary filmmaking techniques were used in the research design as a method of collecting, coding, analysing and presenting data within the author's written thesis. As such, the filmmaking applied as part of this method served as a way to record an interview as evidence rather than transcribing the recorded interview and using it as text only, as would be done for qualitative research. This paper will build on arguments for the validity and strength of filmmaking as a research method in the creation of new knowledge. Screen production techniques can uncover rich, complex qualitative data and retain visual material revealing behavioural nuances that can be lost in more traditional interviewing methods.

The filmmaking festival

The Shoot Out was often referred to as 'unique' (De Lore 2006; Newcastle Herald 1999) as its success required it to 'evolve away from simply being a place for screening movies to something entirely other' (Gass 2009, n.p). It was a participatory filmmaking event with specific production requirements built into the festival's design. Filmmaking entrants were required to travel to the event's location to make their 7-minute film during a specified 24-hour period. The filmmaking rules of the festival were as follows:

- Strictly 24h to make a film;
- films must be under 7 min in duration;
- in-camera editing only;
- sound and/or music could be dubbed onto the vision;
- must include five items from a prescribed list.

The 24-hour time limit was the festival's 'point of difference … We wanted the whole festival process compressed into a weekend' (Foot, quoted in Street 2023, 93). The time limitation necessitated that filmmakers use video cameras for filming, taking advantage of the availability of consumer-level video technology, declared by Broderick (2000, 61) as 'the digital revolution in moviemaking' and heralding the democratisation of filmmaking. The festival's restrictions on the filmmaking process allowed greater participation at a time when access to the camera and editing equipment was a significant barrier to film production. This meant filmmakers with varying skill levels had an opportunity to create a

film and be competitive in a highly creative environment. Amateur home movie makers were able to compete on a similar platform to professional filmmakers, helping to develop a level playing field.

Literature review

There is a broad scope of film festivals internationally, with the term *film festival* representing 'a heterogeneous array of formats and agendas, and it is this aspect of the phenomenon that seemingly is overlooked within eschatological discourse' (Stevens 2011, 143). *The Shoot Out* falls into the category of *Competition-based filmmaking festival* (Street 2023, 261) as it uses production requirements as a device to encourage and inform emerging filmmakers' creative production. The degree to which filmmaking festivals impose production requirements is varied and can be likened to manifesto film movements such as Dogma '95. Although all these festivals have press articles, industry magazine articles and websites promoting their events, scholarly literature on competition-based filmmaking festivals is scarce, limited to articles on the 48 Hour Film Project in New Zealand, the time limited film festival PlayOFF in Odense, Denmark, and the Scottish Amateur Film Festival (McBain 1997; Mercier 2014; Mercier and Wilson 2013, 2017; Philipsen 2012).

Creativity occurs as the result of a complex system of interrelated elements. Research focused on the Creative Systems Model (Csikszentmihalyi 1988; Kerrigan 2013; Redvall 2016) recognises the interaction between: the field of experts required to authenticate a creative product; the rules, structures, codes and conventions that make up the creative domain, with past works as examples of best practice and; the individual with their own idiosyncratic background, who with knowledge of the domain and the expectations of the field, create work.

The individual within the creative context is responding to a confluence of factors that have been considered academically. The analysis and coding of interviews with the filmmakers within the creative context of the film festival was aligned to existing research which provided a framework for discussion, including structure and agency (Giddens 1976; Wolff 1981), rules and resources (Bailin 1988; Newcomb and Alley 1982), arguments of art versus craft (Bailin 1988; Wolff 1981), creative magnitude (Boden 2004; Csikszentmihalyi 1988; Kaufman and Beghetto 2009) and motivation (Amabile et al. 1994; Amabile and Pratt 2016; Fischer, Malycha, and Schafmann 2019; Ryan and Deci 2000). Research on motivation has largely been led by organisational psychologists. However, Mercier and Wilson (2013), building on McBain's (1997) research on festival participant motivations, offer six overarching motivations for filmmakers entering the 48 Hour Film Project. Stevens states that while competitions that offer awards and recognition provide motivation, 'this alone will not remain enough to entice filmmakers to submit product to these events' (2011, 146), supporting the importance of researching motivation in the context of film festivals within the academy.

Mercier and Wilson found that the festival was 'a constrained space in which participants nonetheless have autonomy over their process … and how they will manage the competition constraints' (2017, 19). Mercier refers to limited-time filmmaking festivals as a 'simultaneously constrained and unrestrained arena' (2014, 201) and uncovers the

perspectives of the filmmakers participating in this environment. She found that the filmmakers generally cited the time limit as the most onerous constraint to production, and yet academic literature 'is silent as regards to limited-time film production' (Mercier 2014, 193).

In a case study of the manifesto film project *The Five Obstructions* (von Trier and Leth 2003) Philipsen explores the strict scaffolding applied to the filmmaking process and its effects on creativity. She found 'constraints can facilitate creativity in the filmmaking process' and encourages 'filmmakers interested in thinking 'outside the box' to recognise that they can benefit from being placed 'inside the box'' (Philipsen 2009, 1) or operating inside the rules and structures of filmmaking and the film industry. These constraints do not necessarily harm creative potential – indeed, they are built into the construct of creativity itself' (Kaufman and Sternberg 2010, 481).

Filmmaking researchers recognise creativity as occurring within the constrained process of film production (Newcomb and Alley 1982; Philipsen 2009). This is supported by creativity research that identifies structures, both social and historical, as integral to creativity (Bourdieu 1993; Csikszentmihalyi 1988; Giddens 1976; Kerrigan 2013; Redvall 2016; Wolff 1981). Creativity research within a film festival structure has revealed the influence of motivation (McBain 1997; Mercier and Wilson 2013; 2017), scaffolding challenge (Philipsen 2009, 2012) and time constraint (Mercier 2014) on creativity. This research explores creativity within the specific context of *The Shoot Out*, adding to scholarly discourse by uncovering the complex interdependence between filmmaking agent, field and domain in the process of creating a film.

Researching creative capacity

The Shoot Out provided a rich research context and opportunity to analyse a distinctive creative system in action over a ten-year period. The festival's unique and specific 'set of rules, procedures and instructions for actions' (Abuhamdeh and Csikszentmihalyi 2004, 33) established a defined creative domain aligned to the filmmaking process.

Systemic-based theoretical approaches frame creativity as the result of a confluence of factors within a historical and social context. By aligning *The Shoot Out's* creative system to Csikszentmihalyi's systems model of creativity (1988), revised by Kerrigan (2013), we can tease out the nuanced, dynamic and complex interactions between the domain, field, and creative agent that result in creative practice. In Figure 1, this is graphically represented with creative practice sitting at the intersection of domain, field and agent.

Aligning the festival with Kerrigan's Revised Systems Model of Creativity (Figure 1), *The Shoot Out* festival directors are shown as part of the field and gatekeepers to the domain. They stimulated novelty by enticing individual filmmakers (agents) to enter the competition and engage with the domain's rules and conditions. The individual entrant filmmakers, as creative agents, drew on their own idiosyncratic filmmaking backgrounds and internalised knowledge of *The Shoot Out* domain to create a film. *The Shoot Out* festival judges, appointed by the festival directors, formed part of the field. They are the domain gatekeepers selecting the most promising examples of novelty to form the Top Ten films of *The Shoot Out* each year. The Top Ten films were publicly screened at the end of each festival and later released on VHS and/or DVD, transmitting novelty and

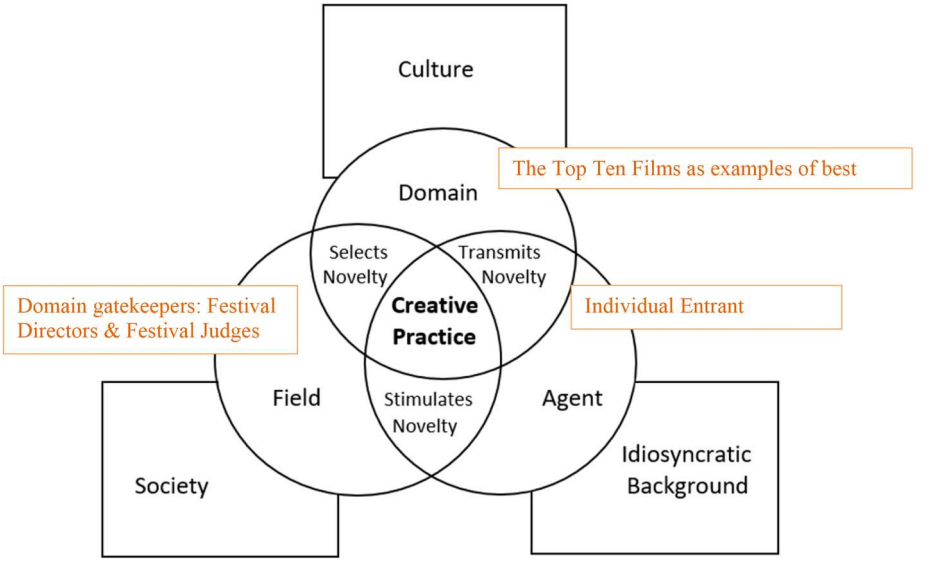

Figure 1. The Shoot Out aligned with components of Kerrigan's Revised Systems Model of Creativity (2013, 114).

the expectations of the field to future entrants of *The Shoot Out* as examples of domain best practice. This activity represented a cycle in *The Shoot Out* creative system, with each year of the festival being a new iteration.

To explore the creative capacity of the festival, a qualitative ethnographic methodology was used to address the three research questions, aligned with the three components of the creative system.

FIELD:	How did *The Shoot Out* directors design the festival to motivate creative filmmaking? (RQ1)
AGENT:	How did the structures of *The Shoot Out* enable filmmakers to be creative? (RQ2)
DOMAIN:	What was the iterative effect of the Top Ten films on *The Shoot Out* domain and the next generation of filmmakers? (RQ3)

A mixed-method approach was implemented with the core data collection strategies being: Semi-structured interviews with festival directors and the head of judging as the gatekeepers to the domain, forming part of the field (RQ1); Semi-structured interviews with the entrant filmmakers as the individual creatives within the system (RQ2) and; textual analysis of the Top Ten Films from each of the 10 years of the event as examples of best practice within the domain (RQ3).

Applying an ethnographic methodology

Ethnography is a qualitative methodology where researchers understand 'social interaction is complex and that [through the research process] they will uncover some of the complexity' (Glesne and Peshkin 1992, 7). With 'its roots in anthropology, [ethnography involves] an immersion in the particular culture of the society being studied so that life in that community could be described in detail' (Robson 2011, 142).

With the researcher's unique insider knowledge of both filmmaking processes and the running of the film festival there was the opportunity to investigate with depth the interaction between festival and filmmaker in the creation of a film. Their role within the film festival included setting the festival's rules and conditions, facilitating the event, creating processes for judging and screening, festival promotion, organising sponsorship, funding, industry alliances, workshops and masterclass programs.

The researcher's immersion in the culture of the festival and the larger domain of filmmaking practice informed the research and facilitated greater depth to this ethnographic study. The researcher's habitus (Bourdieu 1977), or embodied tacit knowledge of filmmaking, and their cultural capital as a festival director and creator of *The Shoot Out*, gave them a strong insider perspective. Ethnographic researchers 'strive to see things from the perspective of the [research] participants' (Crotty 1998, 7) and this allowed the researcher to interpret the evidence collected from the films and the interviews within the same social context and constructed experience.

An ethnographic methodology allowed the creative process experienced by *The Shoot Out* filmmaking entrants to be recognised as complex and taking place within a specific context. To fully grasp and understand this, 'the researcher becomes the main research instrument as he or she observes, asks questions, and interacts with research participants' (Glesne and Peshkin 1992, 6). The researcher was in the unique position of having years of experience within the event and access to people and artifacts of the creative system.

The same skills and experience the researcher brought to the benefit of the research context also influenced their approach to methodological considerations. As a filmmaker, their existing skills as a documentary interviewer, director, camera operator, producer and editor meant they could lean into these familiar tasks and, where possible, utilise this advantage. Initial research design deliberations saw the researcher unable to imagine an interview without a camera, as shooting and conducting documentary-style interviews was a common activity throughout their professional career. The researcher had developed an innate skill in documentary interviewing acquired over years of professional experience. It was a natural progression to then consider that a video editing process could be used to code and analyse this footage, taking advantage of the researchers advanced video editing skill. Finally, once the footage was coded and arranged on an editing timeline, the benefit of then using these sequences to support and illustrate rich evidence to an academic discussion was apparent.

Historically, it has been argued that ethnographic video should be an objective, archival record of actuality (Barbash, Frenkel, and Taylor 1997; Heider 1976) following scientific research principles rather than filmic conventions. In the 1990s, even though it was accepted that ethnographic video may 'eventually be edited into a film' (Crawford and Turton 1992, 74), for reasons of authenticity and truth, it was believed a research film should remain unedited. It has since been argued that the foundations upon which an ethnographic research project is designed do not support this limited definition of a research film (Kerrigan and Callaghan 2018; Pink 2011).

An ethnographic methodology has its foundations in a constructivist ontology and interpretivist epistemology, where it is believed there is not one objective 'truth' out there, but our knowledge is socially constructed, mediated by individual experience (Hammersley 1992; Weerakkody 2009). An unedited video already represents a series of decisions that could mediate or frame the truth in a certain way. Where a camera is

placed, what is chosen to be included in the frame, and when the record button is pressed on or off can shape the unedited video and affect an audience's perspective. Socially constructed knowledge is subjective, and to assume unedited footage more accurately depicts 'truth' is to

> not only ignore the inevitable subjectivity research involves but by defining research footage so narrowly rule out its potential for ethnographic representation … and so restrict the potential of video representations for reflexive engagement with the research context. (Pink 2011, 4)

Media content used in research cannot be defined by traditional filmic forms, as its purpose is not primarily to entertain but rather to support research (Kerrigan and Callaghan 2018). The documentary format and genre have been said to most closely align with a research film. Documentaries do use interviews to put forward a discussion and frame an argument. Nicols, in his book *Introduction to Documentary*, refers to a participatory mode of documentary making which 'emphasizes the interaction between filmmaker and subject' (2017, 37). An ethnographic researcher is embedded in the research context, allowing the interviewee to more freely discuss their experiences as the interviewer understands the complexity of their experience.

Using filmmaking techniques as a method allowed the researcher-filmmaker to analyse and code the interview responses. The filmed interview responses form thick descriptions (Geertz 1973) and provide an explanation of events and social structures. The editing allows for a range of responses to similar questions to be placed alongside each other in a sequence with archival footage (where appropriate) to illustrate and support broader arguments. In this way, interviewees can be clearly shown to support or not support notions presented by other interviewees, making arguments more robust.

Filmmaking as method (data collection)

The research employed a mixed-method approach using traditional ethnographic research methods such as interviews, observation, document analysis, and textual analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 16 *Shoot Out* entrants. The researcher was able to draw on their filmmaking practice, using documentary filmmaking techniques to record the interview, allowing it to become data, which is an accepted ethnographic method of qualitative data collection (Pink 2011, 4).

It is common for research interviews to be audio recorded to enhance a researcher's ability to recall, note take and revisit what was said in an interview. Spencer recognises that 'images and video open up complex, reflexive and multi-faceted ways of exploring social realities' (2011, 35), complementing text-based enquiry with additional layers of complexity. Video recording not only captures the audio of an interview but also the accompanying moving visual image. As this author observes, 'This added visual data can enhance the research by providing not only the text derived from the interviewee in the form of the spoken word but elements of vocal delivery, tone, inference and visual body language' (Street 2023, 85). This supports the qualitative research ideals of valuing complexity and 'thick description' (Geertz 1973).

Conducting the semi-structured interviews using filmmaking techniques was an opportunity to utilise the researcher's existing documentary interviewing experience,

filmmaking skills and habitus (Bourdieu 1977). Sixteen filmmaking entrants were interviewed, each with their own unique 'idiosyncratic background' (Csikszentmihalyi 1988). They had all entered *The Shoot Out* over multiple years and were recognised as making creative contributions with at least two films selected to be part of a Top Ten screening.

The researcher used a documentary approach where interviews were filmed on location using a single Canon C100 video camera on a tripod, utilising natural lighting and conventional frame composition techniques. Audio was captured by radio lapel microphones and zoom recorders where appropriate.

All filmmaking equipment was operated by the researcher, who then took on the role of interviewer in a semi-structured interview using mostly open-ended questions aligned to agent, field and domain as components of the creative system (Csikszentmihalyi 1988; Kerrigan 2013). Using a casual documentary style of questioning allowed for more depth and built a strong rapport and empathy for the interviewee. The interviews followed a semi-structured approach where an interviewer would have an initial topic that was 'guided by the interviewee's responses' (2011, 285). The interview questions were framed against the three components of the creative system, with the first set of questions about the interviewee's (Agent) filmmaking training and expertise that motivated them to enter *The Shoot Out*. They were asked to describe the skill levels of the team of people (Field) they were working with, and there were a series of questions about how their team coped with the festival constraints (Domain), laid out as the rules and conditions of *The Shoot Out*.

Filmmaking as method (coding and analysis)

The filmed interview data was coded and analysed using filmmaking methods within the editing software Adobe Premiere Pro. The raw footage was organised into editing bins labelled by the research codes, which then allowed for themed sequences (timelines) to be assembled. There were 32 films created addressing 12 research categories aligned with the creativity literature:

- extrinsic motivation (Amabile et al. 1994; Amabile and Pratt 2016)
- structuration (Bourdieu 1993; Giddens 1984; Wolff 1981)
- intrinsic motivation (Fischer, Malycha, and Schafmann 2019; Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi 2002; Ryan and Deci 2000)
- domain participation (Csikszentmihalyi 1988; Redvall 2016)
- idiosyncratic background (Bourdieu 1993; Kaufman and Beghetto 2009)
- challenge versus skill (Abuhamdeh and Csikszentmihalyi 2004; Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi 2002)
- disruption (Bailin 1988; Tahirsylaj 2012)
- time restraint (Hennessey and Amabile 2010; Philipsen 2009)
- domain acquisition (Kerrigan 2013; Redvall 2016)
- field acceptance (Redvall 2016; Sawyer 2006)
- rules and rule breaking (Bailin 1988; Csikszentmihalyi 2014; Newcomb and Alley 1982)
- challenge – going beyond (Csikszentmihalyi 2014; Tahirsylaj 2012).

Colour coding was used in the software by applying coloured markers and colouring of video clips to further code and group content within each categorised sequence. This

process echo's a documentary filmmaking editing process where editors start by grouping footage in bins and further refine the interviewee responses within an edited timeline.

Applying the filmmaking research method was seamless, and it allowed the researcher, who was an experienced video editor, to efficiently analyse each response as well as verify multiple interviewees' responses for accuracy. The superior quality of the analyses obtained from carrying out the filmmaking method was assessed against an application of a more traditional recorded interview method. There were three additional filmed interviews conducted with the festival organisers where traditional transcription and paper coding methods were applied. In comparing the two applications, the researcher found the traditional transcription method to be a cumbersome process, and it also eliminated the nuances contained within each filmed response in terms of tone and intonation. So, the preferred method for this research context was to use the filmmaking technique as it maintained the interview quality and integrity.

Examples of the effectiveness of the filmmaking method can be seen in *Video 6.3.1 Intrinsic Motivation* (https://youtu.be/8QHhNMdFa68). The entrants passionately described their experience as intrinsically motivated or an 'autotelic activity … rewarding in and of itself' (Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi 2002, 89). The transcription of the edited text has been provided below as a guide, should the embedded video link not play:

BERENGUT:	It was mostly just because it was a fun weekend, it was a really good way to spend a weekend.
WAWRZYNIAK:	Mark my words it was like, we all look forwarded to it for the whole year. It was literally the most fun thing we did all year.
BUCKLAND:	It was just a really fun thing to do and luckily for us we had some success in the first year and we went 'Wow this is amazing'. We turn up and have fun and people like it.
HAMILTON:	It was lots of fun and it built a lot of camaraderie really quickly with your team.
BUCKLAND:	Just the Joy of the shared experience of it.
TARREN:	Just a whole group of people who are totally into it …
FALLON:	The Camaraderie and the fun

(Street 2023, Video 6.3.1 intrinsic motivation excerpt 00:00:36:00–00:01:16:00)

By grouping a number of responses together in this context, the strength of the apparent intrinsic motivation felt by the entrants becomes clear. A single quote from these interviews would not carry the weight of the confirmation expressed by numerous entrants, providing strong triangulation of data. The video not only highlights what was said, but their passion, enthusiasm, tone and emphasis within their responses, adding to the data collected. Gibson states that 'audio-visual 'language' can be deployed for investigation and knowledge transfer, just as the written language can' (Gibson 2017, viii). In this case, the audio-visual nature of the interviews increases the scope of accessible data, demonstrates clearly the relational aspects and confirms the validity through a consensus of opinion expressed.

In other videos, such as *Video 6.2.1 structuration* (https://youtu.be/9D-0RuMzGXo), entrants outline the detailed minutiae of their creative process that occurred more than 10 years prior to the interviews taking place. In one interview, Berrengut recalls creating the title for his film made 16 years prior. He expresses that because of the

rules of the festival, such as no editing, they were forced to come up with more creative solutions:

> BERRENGUT: We brought a smoke machine, and we went into the bathroom of the apartment we were staying in and filled the bathroom with smoke. And then he kind of stood in there with a flashlight and we had, I think it was Lee Van Dam's sketch book, and we scalpelled [*sic*] out the title of the film, *The Sneeze*. Held that up in front of the smoke and then shone the flashlight from the back of it. So, you got this amazing effect of the light, through smoke, to get the title of the film and it looked so good! And after we shot it we thought, that looked amazing! And we would never of thought of doing that if there had just been a feature on our camera where you could put titles on a screen! (Berengut in Street 2023, Video 6.2.1 structuration 00:05:24:00)

The video interview highlights Berengut's vocal tone and excitement, which is barely illustrated on the page through exclamation marks. The detail in Berengut's recall further confirms their total engagement in their creative process and *The Shoot Out* creative system, giving more depth and insight to the research analysis.

Similarly, in V*ideo 6.12.2 Challenge Going beyond examples* (https://youtu.be/fahitrAqxYk), filmmakers Fallon and Martin explain in great detail how they made a film for *The Shoot Out* on film, recording the action in Canberra, in one take on a single roll of 16 mm and racing the processed film back to Newcastle. Van Genderen and Roy explain how they made a stop motion animation in 24 h by pressing the record/pause button non-stop for 20 h:

> VAN GENDEREN: the only way we could record what seemed like a frame was a frame record mode on the miniDV camera which actually shot 5 frames, like a burst mode … it could go on record/pause mode for something like 30 s … so every time you hit the record frame rate it would go 5 frames and then you would have 30–40 secs max to do something with your set before you had to press that button again. Otherwise, it would lift the record heads off the tape and you were stuffed! You had to start again! (in Street 2023, Video 6.12.1 Challenge – Going Beyond 00:10:11:00)

Although memories can fade over time, the detailed accounts in both cases were confirmed through comparison with their team members' interviews, and archival footage was used to support the interviewees' recollections. To illustrate the discussion, archive footage from the films referred to were included. Showing the filmmakers' films conveyed a better understanding of their high level of skill, giving weight to the expertise shared in their interviews.

In this context of an ethnographic study, video is used 'not simply to record data. But as a medium through which ethnographic knowledge is created' (Pink 2011, 2). By grouping video clips together in an editing timeline, arguments can be heightened, shown as complex, illustrated with archive, confirmed by other participants and bring greater meaning. The processes of documentary editing align with ethnographic research, supporting Kerrigan's finding that 'research approaches used in ethnography … share similarities with the choices used in documentary filmmaking' (2018, 21).

The researcher's editing experience informed the research and was 'an integral part of the research process' (Candy and Edmonds 2010, 127). Unlike a practice-based research

methodology (Smith and Dean 2009), where the creative work is the artefact and site of new knowledge, in this case, the researcher's professional filmmaking practice was used as a method to collect, code and analyse the interview data. Filmmaking techniques were successfully employed as a method to facilitate and streamline the execution of the semi-structured interviews, and video editing techniques were used to critically analyse the interviewee responses. The application of this method ensured that the highest quality evidence was collected and analysed in the most efficient way, leading to robust research findings.

Presentation of edited sequences

Evidence provided through *The Shoot Out* entrants' interviews was presented as a series of research films that address the research themes and areas of questioning. In style, they reflect a participatory documentary format featuring interviews with *The Shoot Out* entrants and, where appropriate, archive event footage and excerpts of past *The Shoot Out* Top Ten films.

The 32 research films were not created as a stand-alone documentary that could be examined as a 'creative work/exegesis'. Instead, the research films were presented in an online/ multi-media chapter titled *Filmmaker Entrant Interview Analysis* (Street 2023, 142, https://express.adobe.com/page/kUgauqoG08Mfr/). The research films sit within a website created for the thesis, which delivers an argument that expands and demonstrates how effective it is to use filmmaking as a research method. Each research film was contextualised further to ensure that the arguments and evidence are clearly situated to guide the viewer to engage with the research argument and thesis.

For example, *Chapter 6* identifies research evidence that illustrates the theories of structuration (Bourdieu 1993; Giddens 1984; Wolff 1981), and it states:

> The entrants, when reflecting on their experience, demonstrated profound knowledge and understanding of how their creativity was enabled by the challenge and constraint of the festival (Street 2023, 142, https://express.adobe.com/page/kUgauqoG08Mfr/).

Another example from *Video 6.2.1 Structuration* follows this statement, featuring filmmakers talking about how they responded to the challenge of the festival. Within the six and a half minute video they identify the structure of the rules as a 'spark for creativity' (Berengut in Street 2023, 01:20:00), 'they push you creatively' (Armstrong in Street 2023, 02:15:00), 'you've got to look at them all as positive restrictions' (Lewis in Street 2023, 03:04:00). Following this video sequence the written text continues the reasoning with:

> Apter states that people at times 'seek out stimulation and challenge' (1984, 266) and this was evident in the way the entrants almost revelled in the challenges presented and how they may be able to creatively overcome them (Street 2023, 144).

Like all research arguments, the written text was used to contextualise the data analysis presented in each research film. As they were embedded within a website, the research films were audio-visual representations of data. Just as 'a picture is worth a thousand words', these films feature nuanced qualitative data in support of the research, which would be cumbersome if described in text with equal detail. The research films, along with their accompanying text, were academically robust, driving the scholarly argument. Research films draw on traditional research methods and incorporate filmmaking

techniques, providing added complexity and 'thick description' (Geertz 1973) in line with an ethnographic methodology.

Conclusion

The end result of using filmmaking as a research method ensured that more articulate evidence was presented, leading to the conclusive finding that creative filmmaking practices were an outcome of *The Shoot Out's* complex, dynamic creative system (Street 2023, 264). The research films helped to clarify how *The Shoot Out* participants were creatively motivated to engage in the competition, and how each of them personally enacted their own filmmaking process, uncovering knowledge of how creative systems can be constructed to ensure motivated participation and creativity. The thesis findings confirmed that within the creative system of *The Shoot Out* 'creativity required a complex, dynamic interplay and overlapping of domain, field and filmmaking agents that was scalable and iterative, evolving over time' (Street 2023, 226). Furthermore, as Ross Gibson argues, 'the work we do as filmmakers in the academy is pre-eminently the work of knowledge production rather than the work of film production. The films are the means; the knowledge is the end' (2017, vi).

The filmmaking research methods applied to acquire this knowledge drew on an ethnographic methodology that valued the researcher's 'insider perspective' (Robson 2011), existing cultural capital and habitus (Bourdieu 1977). Drawing on these skills and experience, filmmaking was employed through a research method that aided the collection, coding, analysis and presentation of original interview data. It was found that by utilising the researcher's embodied tacit knowledge of filmmaking and skill, the process of research was not only streamlined but also enhanced.

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