

Title Open Air

Research Statement

Author Chris Caines

Type J1

RM Code 2013007188

Date 2011

Open Air is a locative media app and gallery based installation that explores the resonance of place in the development of Australian impressionism.

Research background

This research is in the field of Locative Media.

Janet Cardiff demonstrated that mobile representations of sound can be used to create new understandings of place. Terri Rueb's work showed that by using mapping technologies, place-based sound can be embedded in a world-wide locative network, taking the work from the personal to the globally-connected. Nigel Helyer demonstrated that by using environmental and historical information in situ the participant experiences a richer relationship with the place.

The research question addressed by this work is, is it possible to use these techniques to enable participants to think about the development and history of the visual arts in Australia?

Research Contribution

Open Air demonstrates that the use of locative media to present environmental and historical information in situ can create for participants a rich embodied understanding of the role of place in the development of Australian impression, and thus the role of that movement in the national visual imagination.

Research Significance

The project was funded by a grant from Arts NSW. Open Air was curated for exhibition at Mosman Art Gallery.

MOSMAN ART GALLERY



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Banner image

Arthur Streeton, *Sirius Cove, Sydney Harbour* (detail)
1895

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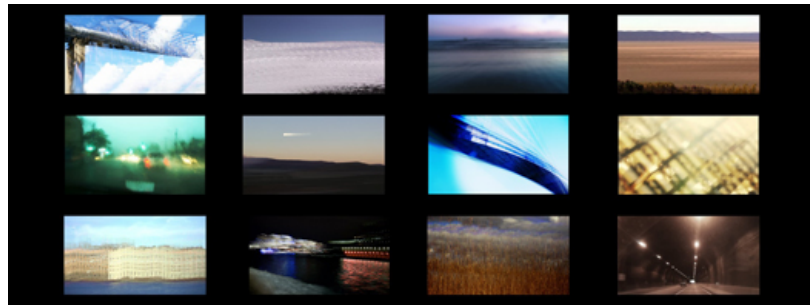


OPEN AIR

Saturday 29 October – Saturday 31 December 2011

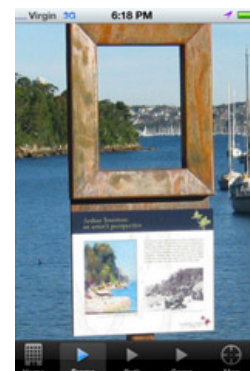
Open Air by Chris Caines is a project in two parts, a responsive video installation at Mosman Art Gallery and a companion locative audio essay iPhone app for the Curlew Camp Artist's Trail at Little Sirius Cove. The project is a meditation on the tradition of landscape as a subject for artists in Australia from 19th century painting to the media arts of the present day.

It uses the example of the Curlew Artists Camp where Arthur Streeton and Tom Roberts worked in the 1890s as a way of thinking about the notion of landscape as a creative form and how those famous foundational paintings produced at that site came to influence our idea of a national aesthetic in the visual arts. Representations of landscape are an Australian cultural tradition absolutely central to indigenous art but also core to settler and immigrant culture as ways of thinking about both mapping territory and a sense of place.



The video installation in the gallery responds to visitors entering the space by lighting up a table in the centre of the room where twelve small rectangles of video begin to play with images of landscapes shot by Caines across Sydney, Melbourne, the Blue Mountains and the Yarra Valley. These are interspersed with text animated fragments of letters between Streeton and Roberts and accompanied by a soundscape composed from field recordings taken in the same locations as the images.

The [companion iPhone app](#) takes the form of a three part locative audio essay to be experienced walking and sitting at locations along the Curlew Artists' Walk that begins at Little Sirius Cove in Mosman and leads to the Curlew Artists Camp, one of the foundational sites of Australian Impressionism during the 1890s. The walk starts at the left hand side of Little Sirius Cove where a frame references the painting that Arthur Streeton made from this spot. The walk then continues along the path past Taronga Zoo before ending at the site of the Camp itself. The audio contains in-situ reflections about



the art historical resonance of the work made by Arthur Streeton and Tom Roberts at Curlew Camp and how these images and the ideas they contain about the representation of place inform present day concepts of landscape and identity in Australian arts and culture.

Download the app free from the iTunes Store. Search for *Open Air* and you will find the [Open Air – Locative Audio Essay](#). The app also contains a GPS map interface to guide you to Little Sirius Cove by car or on foot.

Part of the [2011 Festival of Mosman](#).

Public Program



Meet the Artist: Chris Caines

Saturday 3 December

Mosman Art Gallery, 2:00pm – 3:00pm

Find out more about this multimodal artwork 'Open Air' from its creator, artist Chris Caines.

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