

*Where is the remote?*

*Episode one.*

Scot Cotterell, 2006

An exhibition summed up in its title is not new by any means but the pivotal nature of the word in this instance ensures that the title and concept of the exhibition sit in some ways at the core of all the works present in it.

Remote has become an interesting word, does it still conjure or describe a purely geographical or social distance as it once did? Remoteness may now be to do with another type of distance; political, religious, ethical, imagined, subcultural or a tricky amalgam of several types.

As language and telecommunications come to understand new terms and forms and deconstruct them in a search for informational clarity, they invariably create new sub-forms, hybrids and definitions that in turn repeat the cycle. Locative media being the current form to describe what is essentially man's search for truth in the contemporary world, through urban environments, cyber space, and theoretical space. A search conducted with the frenzied pace of tween channel surfers downloading, reconfiguring, remixing our daily realities with extensive augmentation such as handsfree sets, mp3 players and mobile phones. Connecting and re-structuring networks via podcasts, flashmobs, peer-to-peer networks and chat rooms.

Seeking out the informational waste shed by infrastructure through warchalking open wireless networks, home video receivers and gps systems. Creating new formal languages through electronic manipulation of sound and light.

The same exploratory spirit as present in early performative video work; where artists just worked, moved, acted, talked in front of the camera to posit themselves in video space, to watch it back and know what it felt like to exist on tape as an arrangement of magnetic particles that could be manipulated, segmented or erased is present in the work in *Remote*. Only now it's time, space, technology, information, psychology and geography all entwined in a writhing formal evolution pulling back in the new matter it spews forth. The same experiential modus operandi. What does it feel like to leave the gallery and traverse a path, To witness time passing in two locations at once, or to hover calmly high above a massive city?

In the context of this exhibition, *Remote* is used as a conjuring device, a signpost for a way of thinking about space and time. The works in *Remote* exist here and now for a designated period of time within this exhibition format, but they have existed before and elsewhere. Each work links back to its other lives, other exhibitions and the moments that were dedicated to its creation be it in Hobart, Rio or Amsterdam. The distributed nature of the exhibition with its itinerant format invites travel as part of the experience of the show. Remoteness is not just about distance, space or geography. It is about time, something can be distant in time or run along a different time-frame. All artworks that travel are essentially translocal but when works and artists become aware of their translocality and of the difficulty of positing an idea to one concrete place and time that things really begin to expand. It is through sometimes subtle, sometimes startling observations of the minutiae present in the current cultural equation that these artists explore a sense of place, from within looking out and all around.

What does it mean to watch a webcast of a view from Amsterdam or float as if by magic from the steel underbelly of a news chopper in Rio De Janeiro seeing familiar but not quite right camera feeds? Or to navigate via a map a series of artistic concepts throughout a building, an expanded plimsoll gallery and expanded experience?

Quite often with media-based works it is the interaction between forces present in the system that creates the art, it is the choice by the artist where to look, rather than what to portray. The works speak their own individual stories but the system in which they are portrayed generates its own content that at once is both entirely separate and inextricably linked to each work, and to the exhibition as a whole.

A tension exists between the controlled and random parameters within the system:

The Plimsoll Gallery, *Remote*, a map and you.

The helicopter, the wind, the view.

The webcam, the canal, trade routes.

An economic system, an artwork, an environmental crisis.

Internality may be the only true form of remoteness left for us, the interior space, that vast in-between state born of constant psychology and biology that is supposedly unique to the human animal; consciousness.

Inside you are truly remote.

*Scot Cotterell is a hybrid-media artist, writer and curator.*

*Working across the fields of installation, live audiovisual composition, moving imagery and still imagery, Scot has featured work in numerous large-scale National Festivals, Several National mainstream and independent arts publications and well as contemporary art exhibitions in solo, group and collaborative modes. Scot has worked as writer, curator and installation consultant for contemporary art and performance spaces, as artist with community-based cultural development organisations and as sound and video artist within Theatrical and New-Media contexts in Australia and Europe.*

*He lives and works in Hobart and has moved house 24 times in the last 9 years.*