

RESEARCH STATEMENT: Alex Kershaw

TITLE: A Lake Without Water

YEAR: 2006

Research Background

Field – Video/sound installation articulating experiences of the Australian landscape and the use of relational methodologies in the process of art making.

Context - *A Lake Without Water* was made on Weereewa (Lake George), a dry lake in the Southern NSW Tablelands.

Research Question – How can video be used to imbricate social networks on Weereewa that rupture its mainly pastoral usage? How can video instillation viscerally stimulate an audience?

Research Contribution

Innovation and new knowledge - *A Lake Without Water* created new ways of being with people who live and work around the lake. Weereewa becomes a theatre with farmers, an auctioneer and surveyors cast as its actors. The video pieces utilise the lake as a stage for instigating acts of play, documenting performances that act as circuit breakers within the daily routines of work in and around the lake. Surveyors, auctioneers and farmers are usually responsible for the reduction of landscape in exchangeable symbolic forms such as maps, law and currency. In *A Lake without Water*, however, they are recast in slapstick style performances, ludic monologues, and uncanny documents.

Innovative video presentation re-articulated the landscape and its people within the gallery space. Viewers navigated their body through the space to experience the work as opposed to cinematic, televisual or immersive approaches. Video was positioned at varying heights as both projection and on LCD screens, from 7-inch screens to 5-meter projections – both on the walls and onto shoulder height custom-built tables.

Research Significance

Funded by the Australia Council for the Arts through the New Work Grant initiative. Exhibited at Artspace in 2006. Reviewed by curator/writer Bec Dean in *Realtime Arts*. Reviewed by Dr. Dougal Phillips for *Art & Australia*. Curator and critic Dr. David Teh was commissioned by Artspace to produce a lengthy critical text. Exhibited at Beaconsfield in London UK as part of a survey of my work called *3 films made between 2005 and 2009*. The work was featured in *Not Just a Pretty Picture: Art as Ecological Communication, Researching Environmental Concerns*, by Dr. Catriona Moore.