Long Time, No See?

On making time, reorienting and a future with a future

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**Long Time, No See?** is a participatory art project addressing the challenge of futuring, which as design theorist Tony Fry argues, demands that we face an imperative for change – a need to tell a new story. In part, the old story is characterised by ‘the storm we call progress’ which has wrought havoc across the planet, stressing and destroying socio-ecological systems and resulting in uneven and unjust patterns of development.
The project seeks to respond to Fry’s contention that "we can try to make our life into a work of art and we can create another more viable one of which there is still no imaginary." The project's approach, which is termed Imaginary, is to engage people in participatory processes that result in contributing to this networked artwork.

Long Time, No See? (LTNS) was conceived by an interdisciplinary creative team, led by Artistic Director Dr. Keith Armstrong, and was funded by the Australia Council’s Brookfield Smith Arts Initiative as one of only four projects across the nation. After a year of development with iterations presented at local and international events including a booth at SXSW 2013, LTNS is screening at the Cube, QUT for the next two years as part of a library of networked artworks. As a contemplation of several processes, it involves an interactive website, an app, community dialogues and workshops. Each is intended to engage participants or users in critical and creative practices that engender ecological understandings and future thinking. Since its inception, the project was designed with a view to developing computer-based generative data, using large, layered and diverse datasets.

At its core, participants are guided online, either using an app (also available as a book) that sets out nine stopping points at which participants contribute text, image and/or sound. Each completed walk is then remapped, through mobile GPS, to create a visual representation of the territory that has been walked. Once pointed online, keywords (or tags) link the walks to each other revealing a networked cartography of experience, place and thought. This is set against a backdrop of image and audio that is generated by massive environmental and demographic datasets. The poetics of the work are derived from cartographic and metaphysical metaphors that endeavour to reveal contours, wayfaring and patterns.

The project intentionally grounds people in eliciting excitation and sharing "micro-archives" of care and commitment. The philosopher Tim Morton argues that "the ecological crisis makes us aware of how interdependent everything is. This has resulted in a creeping sensibility that there is literally no world anymore. We’re losing the very ground under our feet."\footnote{1} LTNS is inspired by this sensibility, as well as the idea of re-imagining life and place.

In June 2012, participants were guided to a significant Buddha statue site next to the Noosa Heads. Here, participants provided photographs of trees representing the Rainbow Serpent. In Paramatta, the narrative of the dialogue was focused on "society's nature in compelling," in other feedback, participants have responded positively to project:

- Walking, thinking, recording – a raised level of consciousness when a series of concepts are addressed in a personal and a shared way – great to see that other folk engage with the project – makes me want to continue the activities on a regular basis.
- It’s an interesting and optimistic process that uses dialogue, food, laughter, walking to develop an online map of connective values.\footnote{1} It was a great group of participants – such a delight to have a space enabled where we take time out and discuss both ideas and futures.

Such disorientation calls for reorientation.

The project aims to provoke a complex sensory experience – highly interactive and extremely thought provoking. We found ourselves eagerly discussing how our individual thoughts feed into the larger picture derived on the map and identifying where we thought the communities of others were.

LONG TIME, NO SEE? IN ACTION

Presently, the LTNS project team is working with groups to run dialogues, workshops and present the work. This will occur at The Cube at QUT's Gardens Point campus, where the work is screening, or elsewhere. This includes exploring how such projects can be used as part of environmental awareness, and inquiries are welcome. In creating different kinds of "storying" spaces which fold and unfold through personal experiences, LTNS can help create a space of inquiry in which lived and living spaces yield an alternative and living geography of connection. LTNS is an art in an approach that is ultimately created by its participants and the call for a future with a future’ is a call for careful and committed action.

MORE INFORMATION
Blog: www.community/long-time-no-see
Online (please use Google Chrome): bit.ly/longtimenosee
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/groups/longtimenosee