

# CRAIG WALSH DIGITAL ODYSSEY

A MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART TOURING PROJECT



## Teachers' notes – The purpose of this kit

This is a comprehensive resource produced for teachers and students by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney in conjunction with the project *Craig Walsh: Digital Odyssey*. The resource is designed for teaching and research purposes, and provides discussion and analysis of this national project, with links to the curriculum. The resource may also be used in relation to other subject areas, in particular Design and Technology, Human Society and its Environments (HSIE Science) and Science.

The resource includes background information on Craig Walsh's artistic practice, as well as discussion of new media arts in general.

Words in **bold** are defined in the Glossary at the end, and a list of references is also included for further study.

This *Digital Odyssey* Education Resource will be frequently updated with images and information about Walsh's journey, providing details of individual presentations of the project and new artworks.

### Get involved! Stay updated!

Track where Craig is today. Read the *Digital Odyssey* blog. See picture of the latest artworks. Find information on current events. Do it all at [digitalodyssey.com.au](http://digitalodyssey.com.au)

## Curriculum connections

### Visual Arts/Creative Arts

- Contemporary Australian Art
- The role of the contemporary museum
- Art history
- The frames
- The conceptual framework
- Artist's practice
- Body of work
- Tracing the career of artists
- Diversity of media and practice

### English

- Analysing visual texts
- Oral and research skills
- Creative writing
- Critical essays and reviews

### Photographic and Digital Media

- The moving image – video and installation

### Society and Environment

- Visual arts as a reflection of contemporary culture
- The influence of history on creative practice
- Visual arts as a reflection of cultural and personal identity

### Science, Design and Technology

- Advances in computer technology and its application to art
- Digital software programs
- Architecture model design and construction

### ESL/NESB/CAILD

- Developing a visual arts vocabulary
- Oral and written responses
- Cultural identity and other issues in the visual arts

## Craig Walsh – Biography

Craig Walsh is one of Australia's most prominent artists, recognised internationally for his artwork that experiments with cutting edge digital technologies, site-specific projects and the exploration of alternative contexts for contemporary art. He was born in Orange, NSW in 1966, and was recently based in Brisbane, Queensland.

His work has been shown in a number of national and international exhibitions, including the Jakarta Biennale XIII, Indonesia, OISJ Biennial San Jose, California; Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; Koganecho Bazaar, Japan and DRIFT 08, London.

He has been awarded several national and international residencies and commissions, of which many are located in Queensland. In 2007 he won the People's Choice award at the Nuit Blanche Festival in Toronto. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Fine Art and is currently Adjunct Professor at Griffith University.



Craig Walsh 2007

## Digital Odyssey – Project Description

The Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney presents *Digital Odyssey*, an epic artist tour and residency with internationally respected Australian artist Craig Walsh.

Walsh is renowned for his large-scale computer-manipulated imagery projected onto, and in response to, existing environments and public spaces, from buildings and trees to watercourses and shopping malls. By working closely with each community and responding creatively to local history, stories and interests, Walsh's artworks become sites of community connection and shared identity; he transforms everyday locations into environments of extraordinary wonder.

January 2010 marks the beginning of an odyssey around Australia for Walsh and his wife, the artist Hiromi Tango, and their baby. Walsh and his family are travelling in a converted mobile home that doubles as a digital studio. For several weeks at a time, Walsh is undertaking residencies in regional communities throughout the country. The artist creates and presents **digital artworks** in consultation with community groups, either adapting one of his existing major artworks, or developing new work in response to local environments.

*Digital Odyssey* enables rural and remote communities to engage actively with the production and presentation of cutting edge contemporary artwork alongside the artist. The project will allow Walsh to generate new digital artworks that reflect both the concerns and interests of particular communities and the location itself. Through consultation and collaboration with each community group, the project aims to foster a type of cultural exchange. By drawing inspiration from local history, current concerns or local stories, Walsh is able to generate works of art that reflect back to the community something of itself.

Secondly, Walsh plans to make work inspired by the journey. Given the epic nature of the project and the huge distances he plans to travel, the landscape and the people and experiences he encounters will provide a rich source of stimulus for his work, as well as the opportunity to develop new techniques and approaches.

A range of specially designed public programs are planned for each location. The MCA is partnering with local venues to present events that may include public talks, workshops and master-classes, in order to facilitate a greater understanding of the applications of recent digital technologies in art. These programs have been tailored to a range of audiences including adults and school students.

Walsh's first destination is the South Australian city of Murray Bridge, where he is spending ten weeks. Murray Bridge has been chosen by Country Arts South Australia as the 2010 Regional Centre of Culture. A year long program entitled Ripples Murray Bridge is planned for the Murraylands region, the title referring to the 'stimulus effect of an injection of arts activity into a major regional centre, and the ripple effect it creates'.<sup>1</sup> In addition, Walsh's residency in Murray Bridge coincides with the 2010 Adelaide Festival.

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1. See <http://www.countryarts.org.au/catalogs/arts-programs/south-australia/2010-regional-centre-of-culture-ripples-murray-bridge-240504.php>

## Hiromi Tango – Artistic practice

Hiromi Tango is an emerging artist whose performances and installations are based on collaboration between herself and others. Her works create a critical dialogue that explores artist-public engagement, investigating how, by intervening into a particular space, the artist can generate unexpected moments of intimacy and evasion. Through these interventions, Hiromi seeks to blur the boundaries between conventional ways of relating.

*Hiromi Hotel* is a touring project which creates Art Love Hotels with local communities and artists in Australia. The project has been an evolving situational installation since its inception at Raw Space Galleries in Brisbane in 2006. Since then, Hiromi has undertaken site specific performative installations in Auckland at Dell Gallery, during a residency at Abbotsford Covent in Melbourne and on Queen Street Mall in Brisbane, as part of the ARC Biennial. The artist has explored collaborative practice by occupying the window space at GRANTPIRRIE Gallery in Sydney in 2008 as well as Old Allan's Cake Shop at Erskineville. *Hiromi Hotel* led to the genesis of number of works, including *Mother, Queen Street Mall* (2007), *1000 stitches* (2009 – ongoing) and *Insanity Magnet* (2009 – ongoing). *Hiromi Hotel* was also part of the *Fresh Cut* exhibition at the Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane in 2009.

When speaking about one of her works, *Insanity Magnet*, the artist states that “I am interested in listening to stories, spending time with people and absorbing or interpreting this world as honestly and sincerely as possible, but the more I try, I feel a strong emptiness and anger over our existence.”<sup>2</sup> The artist intends to continue exploring the complexities of public interactions and artistic collaboration by collecting material relating to her exchanges on her tour throughout Australia. Artists will be invited to respond to themes of presence and absence, darkness and isolation by working independently rather than collaboratively.



Hiromi Tango *Insanity Magnet* 2009-ongoing Image courtesy and © Yuki Nakano

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2. See <http://hiromihotel.com>, accessed 21/1/2010

# The National Tour

## The Tour 2010: -----

Murray Bridge, SA:

1 February – 11 April 2010

Alice Springs, NT:

26 April – 16 May 2010

Winton, QLD:

31 May – 20 June 2010

Cairns, QLD:

28 June – 18 July 2010

Mackay, QLD:

16 August – 12 September 2010

Gladstone, QLD:

20 September – 10 October 2010

Gerringong, NSW:

1 – 30 November 2010

Ballarat, VIC:

6 December 2010 – early January 2011



## The Tour 2011: ..... .....

Tasmania

Northern Territory

Western Australia





## Craig Walsh – Artistic Practice

A new media artist, Craig Walsh produces artworks that are compelling and mysterious. He has developed a hybrid artistic practice that can best be understood as the exploration of unlikely vision in unorthodox settings. His works consist of temporary or permanent **projection installations** in both urban and rural settings. These utilise a combination of digital, video and sound art to produce works that are monumental in scale.

Walsh is interested in exploring new contexts for the staging of contemporary art, and often shows his work in urban settings and national parks as well as in the more traditional space of the gallery. His artistic practice is founded on an engagement with specific places and social groups. He inhabits public spaces in order to produce a spectacle.<sup>3</sup> This is art that is as much about creating an experience for the public as it is about creating a lasting object or image.

A fundamental concern for Walsh is the challenging of preconceived notions of 'art, space, function, experience and reality'.<sup>4</sup> In works that range from the playful to the unsettling, Walsh investigates the mutation of the environment through such ideas as the unclassifiable and the unexpected. His works concern the realisation of an idea, that utilise new media technology to create strange, immersive worlds.

He has a particular interest in portraiture, and explores this in both the more traditional representation of a person, as well as capturing the identity and feel of a community.<sup>5</sup> In what he sees as a logical progression of public art, his artworks evolve over time with the incorporation of new narratives and themes that he uncovers through discussion and consultation with community groups.<sup>6</sup> As an artist engaged in such public collaboration, his role has expanded to include project management, negotiation, teaching and mentoring, as well as being a facilitator and medium for the stories of others.

Walsh is interested in challenging traditional modes of reception and interpretation of art. In delivering art as experience, as site-specific spectacles and moments in time, his practice raises the question of what constitutes the actual artwork. Is it the moment in time or the documentation and reinterpretation of the original installation, or both?<sup>7</sup>

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3. Linda Carroli, 'Introduction', *Insite: Craig Walsh*, artist's monograph, IMA Publishing, Brisbane, 2000, p.6

4. Artist's Statement for Multimedia Art Asia Pacific (MAAP) in Beijing, 20 October – 3 November 2002

5. Craig Walsh, *Heads Up*, 2008, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney. Commissioned by C3West, 2008

6. Stephanie Radok, 'Craig Walsh: Transfigured nights, surprising days', *Artlink*, Vol 28, No 3, 2008

7. Craig Walsh, *Insite: Craig Walsh*, op cit., p 15



# Craig Walsh - Major Works

## Themes and Ideas:

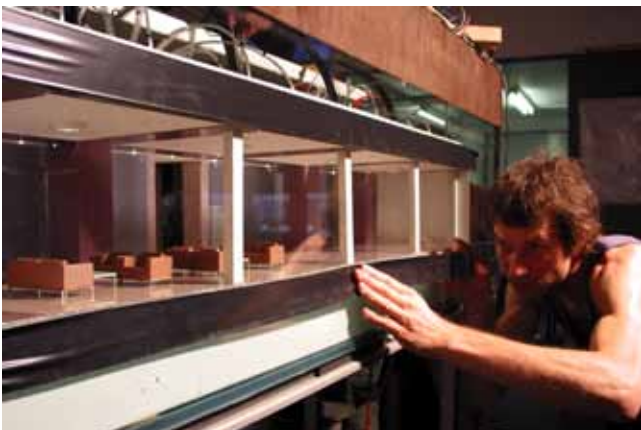
Computer Technology/Digital art  
Projection and screen  
Community Involvement  
Mutated life forms  
21st century forms of portraiture

Live video feed  
The environment  
Interactive art  
Real or unreal

Craig Walsh will adapt and re-execute four major works for *digital odyssey*: they are *Humanature*, *Cross-reference*, *Incursion* and *Classification Pending*. These four works are discussed here in relation to the themes they address and the technologies they employ.

Recent developments and innovations in computer technology are driving the production of digital and new media artwork today. In his artistic practice, Walsh utilises experimental hardware and software that involves digital animation, pattern recognition and biometrics.<sup>8</sup> The artist often works in collaboration with computer programmer Steven Thomasson in the development of his three-dimensional animations.

Walsh's large-scale public projection works have been shown in both urban and outdoor settings, and the screens onto which he projects his work are often unorthodox, and may include buildings, trees, rivers and rocks.



Top left and right: Craig Walsh *Urban Tide* 2003. Production shots. Images courtesy and © the artist  
Bottom left and right: Craig Walsh *Urban Tide* 2003. 13 synchronised digital projections. customised rear projection screens. Sydney Festival. Image courtesy and © the artist. Photo: Paul Green

8. Mark Calderwood, *Fast Thinking*, p. 57



Craig Walsh *Humanature* 2008 single-channel digital projection Deep Creek Conservation Park, South Australia Image courtesy and © the artist Photo: Lana Merrington

The work *Humanature* has been shown in various locations including music arts festivals such as the Woodford Folk Festival in Queensland (1994-2001), Womadelaide in South Australia (2003 and 2006) and the Fuji Rock Festival at the Naeba Ski Resort in Japan (2006). It comprises a projection of a monumental human face onto a large tree or rock face, creating an extraordinary artistic intervention into a natural environment. The image may be a slide projection, or video that is pre-recorded or streamed live. Walsh may digitally manipulate the image, which may move or talk or even be interviewed through a live feed. The effect produced is of a monumental portrait or presence. The sight of an enormous face appearing in the landscape not only challenges the traditional concept of portraiture but also stages an **enigma**. Audiences have reported reading the image as a huge hologram or an enormous topiary.<sup>9</sup>

Screening his work in these contexts has the effect of interrupting the conventional reception of art, and it means that audiences can encounter art in immediate and/or familiar environments, away from the often-intimidating atmosphere of the gallery context. Walsh's manner of de-familiarising the familiar is an instance of art's long tradition of making us see things anew.

*Humanature* is reconfigured each time in accordance with the location and Walsh's current concerns. At the showing of the work at the Fuji Rock Festival in 2006, for example, Walsh collaborated with the Japanese artist Okubo Noriaki, and the projected image merged his own face with that of the Japanese artist.<sup>10</sup>

By incorporating local knowledge into each work, Walsh is able to pursue the aim of bringing to life a site's cultural and political history.<sup>11</sup> By providing an artistic form or template and then collaborating with particular communities to shape the final version of the work, this practice allows the audience to determine the significance of the work, to provide the content or the ideas underpinning the image. Liz Hughes, the former Artistic Director of **Experimenta**, points to the way the enigmatic and unexpected nature of Walsh's work 'transforms, enriches and energises people's space'.<sup>12</sup>

9. Craig Walsh, op cit., p 17

10. See <http://yoe.australia.or.jp/english/events/431/> accessed 26/11/2009

11. Craig Walsh, ibid., p 18

12. Liz Hughes quoted in Mark Calderwood, *Fast Thinking*, [www.FastThinking.com.au](http://www.FastThinking.com.au), p. 57

## Cross-reference



Craig Walsh *Cross-reference* 2005 single-channel digital projection, custom rear projection screen, existing doorway. Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art, Art Gallery of South Australia. Image courtesy and © the artist. Photo: Mick Bradley

In Walsh's work, *Cross-reference*, the audience doesn't so much contribute to the ideas behind the piece as become the subject of the work itself. This work was shown in the Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art at the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide in 2004 and YOKOHAMA: International Triennale of Contemporary Art in Japan in 2005.

In the preparation for the 2004 version of this work, Walsh created a tiny architectural model of a gallery, which was shown as a temporary sculpture at the Big Day Out festival on the Gold Coast in 2004. The audience at this festival were invited to peer into the scale model of the gallery, and inside the sculpture a small video camera recorded the facial expressions of the person looking in.

These video images became the basis of the work *Cross-reference*, with the images of one audience being projected onto large screens behind doors for another audience to view: the visitors to the Art Gallery of South Australia. On the one hand, it could be said that the work reverses the relationship between viewer and artwork.<sup>13</sup> The audience and the action of looking has become the subject matter of the work.<sup>14</sup> Certainly by having the viewer look at images of people themselves viewing an artwork, the work could be said to create a certain reflexivity. The viewer of one work becomes the performer of another, hence the choice of title.

Walsh also sees *Cross-reference* as a portrait of an audience at a particular venue at a particular point in time. It captures a cultural niche, specific to place and time. The work also plays with issues of scale. And by raising the question of who is looking at whom, the work is suggestive of surveillance, that is, of a secretive and unauthorised gaze. Interestingly, surveillance has become a rich thematic seam mined by a number of new media artists.<sup>15</sup>

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13. Shiralee Saul, 'The Art of Playing Up', *Experimenta: Under the Radar*, Experimenta Media Arts Inc, 2006

14. The notion of 'seeing yourself seeing' is a central concern of the Danish artist Olafur Eliasson, whose solo exhibition is on display at the MCA from December 2009 until February 2010.

15. Michael Rush, *New Media in Art*, Thames and Hudson, London, 2nd ed., 2005, p. 129

## Incursion



Craig Walsh *Incursion* 37:20:15.71" N – 121:53:09.51" W 2008. 12 channel synchronized digital projection customised rear projection screen SJ01 Biennial, San Jose, California Image courtesy and © the artist Photo: Craig Walsh

The rapid developments in image-creation software has granted new media artists enormous freedom in image making. No longer bound by the notion that the photographic or filmic image refers in some way to recorded reality, artists can create artworks that display strange new worlds that may even evolve over time.

One current theme in Australian contemporary art is the creation of new or alien life forms, suggestive perhaps of **Darwinian evolution** run amok or of advances in **biomedicine** and **genetic engineering**. Other Australian artists who focus on mutant creatures or plants in their work include Patricia Piccinini, Caroline Rothwell and Louise Hearman.<sup>16</sup>

Walsh's work involves a tension between unexpected images and the real world environments in which he chooses to project his work. In some projections, images of overpowering flora or fauna intrude into unlikely urban environments, marking the incursion of the wild into the civilized space, and vice versa. They constitute the encroachment of a life form that manifestly does not belong to the space.

*Incursion* 37:20:15.71" N – 121:53:09.51" W (2008) is a projection installation that was featured at the O1SJ Biennale in San Jose, California in 2008. Images of an alien creature, reminiscent of a massive weedy succulent, appeared to fill the San Jose City Hall Rotunda. The work was rear projected at night onto the glass walls of the venue, granting the illusion of reality. In a comment on the work, *Parasitism* (2006), Walsh has talked of his desire to 'explore the tensions between the urban and natural environments through a juxtaposition of habitats and the subversion of architectural function'.<sup>17</sup> This comment applies equally to this work, where the building is transformed into a kind of hothouse for a weird and rampant species of plant.

Drawing on the language of dream and cinema, Walsh's works evoke the illusion that such strange events and/or creatures exist. We can read this as a play on the audience's ability to suspend their disbelief or as suggesting a future nightmare scenario of global warming. The works are open-ended in their interpretation, offering a range of possibilities.

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16. For Patricia Piccinini see <http://www.roslynxley9.com.au> for Caroline Rothwell see <http://www.carolinerothwell.net> and for Louise Hearman see <http://www.roslynxley9.com.au>

17. See Queensland Government Parks program [http://epa.qld.gov.au/parks\\_and\\_forests/great\\_walks/art\\_and\\_environment\\_program/](http://epa.qld.gov.au/parks_and_forests/great_walks/art_and_environment_program/)



## Classification Pending



Craig Walsh *Classification Pending* 2007 - ongoing 4 channel digital video projection  
Ipswich Parklands, Queensland Image courtesy and © the artist Photo: Marc Girmwade

Originally commissioned by the City of Ipswich in Queensland, *Classification Pending* is a work that has been exhibited in several different locations including the Koganecho Bazaar, Yokohama and in London as part of DRIFT 08 (both 2008).<sup>18</sup> *Classification Pending* was launched on the Bremer River in the Ipswich Parklands as a permanent work in February 2007. In Yokohama, the work was projected onto a local canal, whereas in London the screen was the River Thames.

The work utilises four-channel synchronised data projection to project a digital animation of a mythical aquatic life form onto the river. The three-dimensional creature is inspired by real world life forms: the extinct swimming reptile *Woolungasaurus*, the mullet, the common eel, the Fork-tailed catfish and the Brisbane short-necked turtle.<sup>19</sup> Projected on the river for several hours each day, the artwork mutates and changes. During three monthly cycles, the creature grows, is joined by a mate and together they produce an offspring. The City of Ipswich reports that the work has become popular with locals and tourists alike, providing an instance of the growth in cultural tourism. Local stories about the work's mythical creatures continue to evolve.

*Classification Pending* asks us to think about the links or boundaries between myth, evolution and genetic engineering. It raises questions concerning the location of boundaries between such oppositions as real and unreal, art and non-art, and art and environment. During a period in which ecological issues are at the forefront of public debate, *Classification Pending* encourages the audience to reflect on how environmental degradation is contributing to the loss of species, whilst at the same time new species of flora and fauna continue to be discovered.

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18. For Koganecho Bazaar, see <http://yoe.australia.or.jp/english/events/431/>, accessed 26/11/2009 and for Drift 08 see <http://www.illuminateproductions.co.uk/drift08/default.aspx> accessed 4/12/2009.

19. 'Classification Pending', *Filter Magazine*, <http://filter.anat.org.au/classication-pending/>, accessed 27/11/2009

## Artefact H10515



Craig Walsh *Artefact H10515* 2009 Powerhouse Museum, Sydney image courtesy and © the artist Photo : Craig Walsh

### Artefact H10515

The projection installation *Artefact H10515* is another example of a strange and unsettling creature, and is a digital animation that Walsh has created with the assistance of Steven Thomasson (production and post-production programming) and Lawrence English (sound production). Commissioned by the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, the work presents a giant living and breathing creature that fills a large glass display case. The creature continuously moves and prowls, and its huge tentacles and suckers are able to respond to the touch of a hand on the glass.

In the video interview *Making of Artefact H10515*, Craig Walsh and his collaborators discuss the 'creature in the cube' and describe how it is made to exist within space. They reveal that the work is produced by five computers, of which four create digitally rendered views of the object. The fifth computer keeps the other four in synch, informing the other computers about what the object is doing and how it is moving in time. The programming of the movement is done by means of mathematical equations. Such programming generates both evolution and motion, as in for example, the movement of the tentacles.

One of the distinctive features of Walsh's work is the way he makes his artworks responsive to the environment. The creature is designed to feed on objects from the museum's own collection, via a program called the Thingalyser. This software downloads images from the collection into the artwork, deciding how to position them into the object space. The creature shivers, grasps the object and then seemingly ingests it. Likewise, the public can upload images of their own personal objects into the work by means of this software, which can be accessed on the Powerhouse Museum website.<sup>20</sup>

The title of the work refers to the historical cataloguing practice of the museum, whereby items were categorised by means of reference number preceded by a letter. This enabled the item to be classified as 'plant', 'animal' or 'mineral' specimen etc. The letter H was given to the category of unclassifiable objects, hence the title of the work.

20. See <http://artefact.powerhousemuseum.com/>

The result is an artwork that explores the idea of the museum as a space for the preservation and display of objects. This work cannibalises the collection, consuming the very stuff museums are designed to preserve. Whether the work is commenting on the potential of digital technology, the nature of contemporary art, or the state of museum practice, is open to debate.

During the interview Lawrence English talks of finding a sound for the creature that was sufficiently organic and alien. He utilized an old accordion bladder to replicate the sound of breathing, looking for a means to lend the creature mass and presence.<sup>21</sup>

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21. For another artist exploring similar themes, see the work of Karl Sims, in particular *Galapagos* (1997)



# Primary Learning Activities

Curriculum Links – Science and Technology, Creative Arts, English, HSIE

## The Environment

- Why does Craig Walsh create images of strange plants and animals? Go outside and sketch a plant or flower and transform it by creating strange features. What special powers might this new plant have? Name your new hybrid plant and write up information about it (species, features etc.) as if it were listed in a scientific journal. Why not photograph your plant and use photoshop to manipulate it into something new?
- Use crayons and paper to create a rubbing of a tree, bush or collection of leaves. After you have completed your rubbing, draw a portrait or a friend or classmate on top, using the rubbing to create interesting textures. Compare your work to *Humanature* by Craig Walsh.

## Technology

- How does Walsh use computers and other technology to create his work?
- Craig Walsh has used computers and other software programs to create *Artefact H10515* which contains a computer generated creature that gobbles up objects at the Powerhouse Museum. Imagine you could create a machine that had some special powers. Perhaps your machine could swallow up objects and shrink them, spitting them out as tiny replicas of the original. Invent your own machine, draw your design and label its features. Display them in your classroom and look at the other machines invented by your classmates.
- Visit <http://www.thingalyzer.com/> and find out more about your favourite things!

## Human Society and its Environment

- Have a look at Craig Walsh's itinerary on p. 5. Choose one of his destinations and research it. From your findings, think about an art project you might do if you were to visit this place.
- Why do you think an artist might travel around Australia to make work? Think about a recent trip you made (for example: trip to the beach, a family holiday, a visit to the park) and draw something that you saw. Create a story about this object – it might be in the form of a comic strip, storybook, or you could even act it out.



Craig Walsh *Humanature* single-channel digital projection Courtesy and © the artist Photo: Craig Walsh

# Secondary Learning Activities

## Curriculum Links – Visual Arts, Photographic and Digital Media, English

### Structural frame

1. What steps are involved in the planning and production of Craig Walsh's work? Discuss how his practice can be seen as multi-disciplinary. Ensure that your discussion includes the pre- and post-production phases of his creative process.
2. How does Walsh exhibit his work?

### Conceptual framework

3. In what ways does the audience contribute content to Walsh's work, and/or complete the work? Discuss in relation to specific examples.
4. What does his practice have to say about how we view art and where we encounter art? Include a discussion of issues such as exhibition location and surveillance.
5. In what ways are Walsh's works interactive? Discuss with reference to examples of his work.
6. Does digital art shift the parameters of art from appreciation of an object to having an experience?

### Cultural frame

1. Discuss the titles Walsh has given the works presented in this resource. What themes do they evoke?
2. How may Walsh's work relate to notions of Darwinian evolution, biomedicine and/or to environmental issues? Discuss with reference to several examples of his work.
3. How and why is Walsh's artwork responsive to the environment?
4. Can you think of parallels between Walsh's art, cinema and the subconscious? Discuss using specific examples.
5. In what ways is Walsh's artistic practice concerned with questions of **taxonomy** and classification? What does this have to do with science and with naturalism?

### Thinking and writing about it

- Choose an object with special significance from your own collection or a collection of someone you know. Take a digital photograph of it and upload it onto the Powerhouse Museum's Thingalyser ([www.thingalyser.com/artefact/](http://www.thingalyser.com/artefact/)). What is the response of the creature and what meaning do you attribute to this? What themes does this work address?

### Making it

- Research the work of artists who explore hybrid forms in their work. Choose a plant or animal and invent a new creature inspired by ideas of genetic modification. What special adaptations would your organism have? Draw or create your organism using sculptural materials and create a postmodern zoo/garden with the creations of your class.
- Use the concept of the Letter H in museum classification as the basis of a body of work. What objects might you find here? Create your own inventory of 'unclassifiable' objects and illustrate your ideas.

## Glossary

**Biomedicine** - the field of research that explores cellular, tissue and genetic engineering.

**Digital art** – Artworks produced with computer programs capable of creating, receiving and manipulating images and graphics.

**Darwinian evolution** – Charles Darwin (1809 – 1882) was an English naturalist who published the controversial and groundbreaking work *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, after over twenty years of study and thought. Last year marked the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the publication of this famous work of scientific theory. Disputing the notion of original creation, he argued that flora and fauna evolved gradually over time by means of natural selection and the transmutation of species.

**Enigma** – a person or thing that is mysterious or puzzling

**Experimenta** – An Australian organisation based in Melbourne and dedicated to commissioning, promoting and exhibiting the most advanced media and technology based-art.

**Genetic engineering** – The field of medical research involved in the manipulation of an organism's genes, including recombinant DNA technology, genetic modification/manipulation and gene splicing.

**Installation** – An art form that has its origins in the happenings, assemblages and performance art of the 1960s. Installations are constructions and ensembles of objects and effects that engage with and dominate their surroundings. They are usually displayed for a temporary period either in a gallery or a non-art context. The immersive nature of many installations encourages the viewer to physically enter into the work, to interact through all the senses and to explore different meanings.

**Immersive environment** – This term is often used in relation to virtual reality. More generally it refers to a sensory interaction between the viewer and object.

**New media art** – Art forms created through recent technologies including video, computer, digital and electronically interactive art.

**Projection installation** – An art installation that consists of the large-scale projection of images, involving slide, video or computer generated images, often staged outdoors. See installation above.

**Taxonomy** – Is the practice and science of classification

**Virtual reality** – A computer generated, three-dimensional environment that simulates real images and experiences. This can be explored on screen or via special apparatus (earphones, goggles, etc.) that feed sensory input to the user from a computer. The term is now widely used to cover any virtual world representation on a computer.

## References

*Dictionary of Art Terms*, Thames and Hudson, London 2003

Paul, Christine, *Digital Art*, Thames and Hudson, London 2003

Rush, Michael, *New Media in Art*, Thames and Hudson, London, 2nd ed., 2005

Walsh, Craig, *Artist's Monograph, Insite: Craig Walsh*, IMA Publishing, Brisbane, 2000

### Exhibition catalogues

Artist's Statement for Multimedia Art Asia Pacific (MAAP) in Beijing, 20 October – 3 November, 2002

*Experimenta: Under the Radar*, Experimenta Media Arts Inc., 2006

Saul Shiralee, 'The Art of Playing Up', *Experimenta: Under the Radar*, Experimenta Media Arts Inc., 2006

### Articles

Radok, Stephanie 'Craig Walsh: Transfigured nights, surprising days', *Artlink*, Vol 28, No 3, 2008

## Further Research

### Websites

**Carclew Youth Arts** [www.carclew.com.au](http://www.carclew.com.au)

**City of Murray Bridge** [www.murraybridge.sa.gov.au](http://www.murraybridge.sa.gov.au)

**Craig Walsh** [www.craigwalsh.net](http://www.craigwalsh.net)

**Experimenta** [www.experimenta.org](http://www.experimenta.org)

**Hiroshi Tango** [www.hiromihotel.com](http://www.hiromihotel.com)

**Institute of Modern Art (IMA) Brisbane** [www.ima.org.au](http://www.ima.org.au)

**Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney** [www.mca.com.au](http://www.mca.com.au)

**Powerhouse Museum, Sydney** [www.powerhousemuseum.com](http://www.powerhousemuseum.com)

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