

Amy-Jo Jory/ Travis John/ Lauren Dunn
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Digital Outlawed is a new media visual art exhibition that imagines a world without computers. The notable exclusion of digital media in the exhibition explores an artistic disquiet. Has digital media become a criterion of contemporary art?

The Australian government defines contemporary art as 'employing new techniques and new media' and new media as 'work that uses new technologies'. With an emphasis on the new what happens to the old? Are artworks that employ old technology simply 'un-contemporary'?

Many art mediums synonymous with new media (video, projection, sound, photography, installation, performance) existed before the digital age. Reason follows that it should be possible to create artworks in these mediums without it. This is the challenge set for the Digital Outlawed artists.

Curatorial Note

When I first conceived the curatorial premise for Digital Outlawed I painted a crossed out computer on a piece of cardboard, placed my pillow sack over my head, and took a photo. It seemed like a logical thing to do. If you could remove the sack from the photo you'd discover that I was grinning, giddy with excitement, from ear to ear. I was a readymade outlaw - and I had a cause.

Suddenly digital media art was jumping out at me, all shiny and novel, from all directions. From art institutions, commercial galleries, and artist-run initiatives, it was there to be gawked at. Even the Fringe Festival itself, which this exhibition is a part of, is eager to embrace it - look through the pages of the program, with its pixel aesthetic, and you'll find countless shows incorporating the use of digital media (including the two keynote visual art projects).

First order of business; enlist some artists to join my band of misfits. Some of them I already knew, some I had to find, and some of them I had to charm. I invited them to join me at the pub, the cathedral of outlaws, and gave them one simple challenge- EXCLUDE THE USE OF DIGITAL MEDIA FROM ART.

Next, I planned my first order of attack. I pointed my metaphorical pistol at The Australian Council for the Arts, with their almost masturbatory declaration that digital media is the new frontier of contemporary art. I was up at all hours of the night planning my attack when the initial romanticism of being a Digital Outlaw shifted, and like the morning sun outside my bedroom window, it dawned on me what a massive can of worms I had opened.

First of all, being a Digital Outlaw is a logistical nightmare. The presumption that digital has superseded analogue has turned the use of older technology into a nightmare. Some of the outlaws abandoned it all together, opting for even more traditional media. And then there were conceptual headaches to follow - can we say what we want to say without digital media? And what is the point of excluding digital media from art making? Isn't it, after all, just a logical progression for an artist in the Digital Age? For a long time I wasn't sure of anything... and then something beautiful happened.

A new discourse began to develop. We discussed ideas of how digital media affects our everyday life (past, present, and future) and how it can limit freedom while simultaneously providing a myriad of new potentialities. Creating digital media artwork is often a private experience, but with its exclusion, we began to adapt our practice, approaching other people to teach us new skills and to form new ideas. And finally the answers to my questions emerged. Is digital media a criterion of contemporary art? No. The artworks in this exhibition all exclude the use of digital media yet I consider them all to be 'contemporary'. If you look at these works you won't see new media as new materials, and they may not even present you with brand new ideas. But what you will find are artworks that talk about the contemporary world, artworks that are unique and exciting in their approach.

- *Curator of Digital Outlawed, Arie Rain Glorie, 13th of September 2013.*



Amy-Jo Jory

Viral Sex Tapes, Cassette Tape Sound Artwork, 6 Minutes, edition of 50, 2013

In our simulacra filled culture of advanced consumer capitalism, where the copy is indistinguishable from the original, is an original thought a contradiction in terms? WTF.

In the beginning I began where I always begin. Furtively, ashamedly, I Googled it. Who knows what I Googled, but I know I started there, regardless.

In the end Digital Outlawed forced me to make something tangible, something you can touch; 'real'. I put out an edition of fifty audiocassettes, a quickie – each side just 3 minutes long. *Viral Sex Tape* is free to take, steal, or just stumble upon (and quickly away from) in the gallery. Like in the glory days of the Internet, it's up to you.

I also made some weird sculptures that looked like they are chicken paste, and I wrote stories in the same way some people might draw.

Anyway, here is one of those sort-of stories. (right-hand side)

Fairytale for the future

It's ok. Go back to sleep.

Shhhhhhhh.

... You can relax.

I'll tell you a story; I don't expect you to really understand it. It doesn't matter.

This is story about greyness. It is about concrete, steel, of rotting guts in the evening. Of wool rasping on skin, and the damp whinge of sweat. The smell.

Once, people lived in small enclaves – they called them *cities*, or *towns* – made of wood, brick, steel, concrete, squares of glass stacked on top of each other. In a way, these places were a bit like The Camps, with roads that roared through the centre, cars and trains spitting and punching their way down the street.

Sometimes people clustered in small dwellings, arming themselves against their neighbours, fencing off scraps of land. Identical places they called houses.

They used crude boxes to talk to each other in far away places, they used them to share stories, they used them to love, for sex. They used them to hate.

Travis John

Symphony of Stuff, Car Door, Ceramics, Magnets, Ball Bearings, Computer Hardware, Dimensions Varied, 2013

Working within an amalgam of composition and sculpture, Travis constructs acoustic installations and environments that explore ways in which objects and space can be organised to create embodied musical experiences.



Lauren Dunn

IDLE II, Medium format images (Hasselblad), Medium format slide projector (Aldiss), Dimensions Varied, 2013

IDLE II is a redeveloped series of documentary images that serve as an investigation of popular outdoor urban spaces where the absence of any human beings looks to reveal what is usually unnoticed.

For Digital Outlawed, Lauren's photo-based minimal installation provokes consideration around the developments of modern technology while giving the viewer an opportunity to interact with analogue tools nearing extinction.



T.R. Carter

LONG SHOT, Sterling Silver, Copper, Gun Powder, Thread, Black and White Photographs, 2013

Armed with a 12 gauge single shotgun, 12 gauge 5 shot automatic shotgun, 5 shot 22 calibre rifle, precious metal and base metal, T. R. Carter went out bush to take a *LONG SHOT* for Digital Outlawed. The artist has used guns to directly subject plates of copper and sterling silver to candid acts of violence, in order to question differentiated understandings of the value placed on objects within the material world.

Using the debris from the blast, Carter presents an installation of artefacts and photographic documentation alongside an accident waiting to happen; a piece of jewellery that has been bent and burnt to form a shell packed with gun powder. She will wear this makeshift bomb around her neck for the duration of the exhibition.



Jake Preval

(Untitled) Another Day, Acrylic Paint, Dimensions Varied, 2013

Making work for Digital Outlawed has been an illuminating process. When I was first approached to be a part of the show I was excited, obviously, to exhibit a new work, but mainly because I had never really considered myself a 'new media' artist. New. Media. It sounded so futuristic, so far from my own work. But on closer inspection the digital, whether it be thematic, photographs/video or in the documentation and dissemination of my work, was obviously present, and yet somehow I had failed to recognise this defining thread within my own practice. New. Media. I could practically hear the Internet dial tone. After my initial self-congratulatory light bulb moment, I set about realising a number of projects, but quickly realised how difficult it was to eschew the digital, just how entrenched it was within my working methods.

In a paradoxical turn I have come to understand my own work (a predominantly sculptural practice) through the conduit of the screen. I install a work and then instantly review the images on my computer. The curatorial premise of Digital Outlawed made me isolate this spatial collapse and interrogate its presence within my work. I buried my digital camera in a sock drawer. I started to teach myself analogue photography - played with ideas of manual photoshopping, emoji nightmares and various sculptural works, but kept returning to my relationship with the screen. I don't have a TV, and if you get me drunk I'll espouse endlessly on its brain rotting capacity, yet I remain faithfully the computer's bitch, lured into its slick graphic pool, its undulating deception of space. I closed the lid.

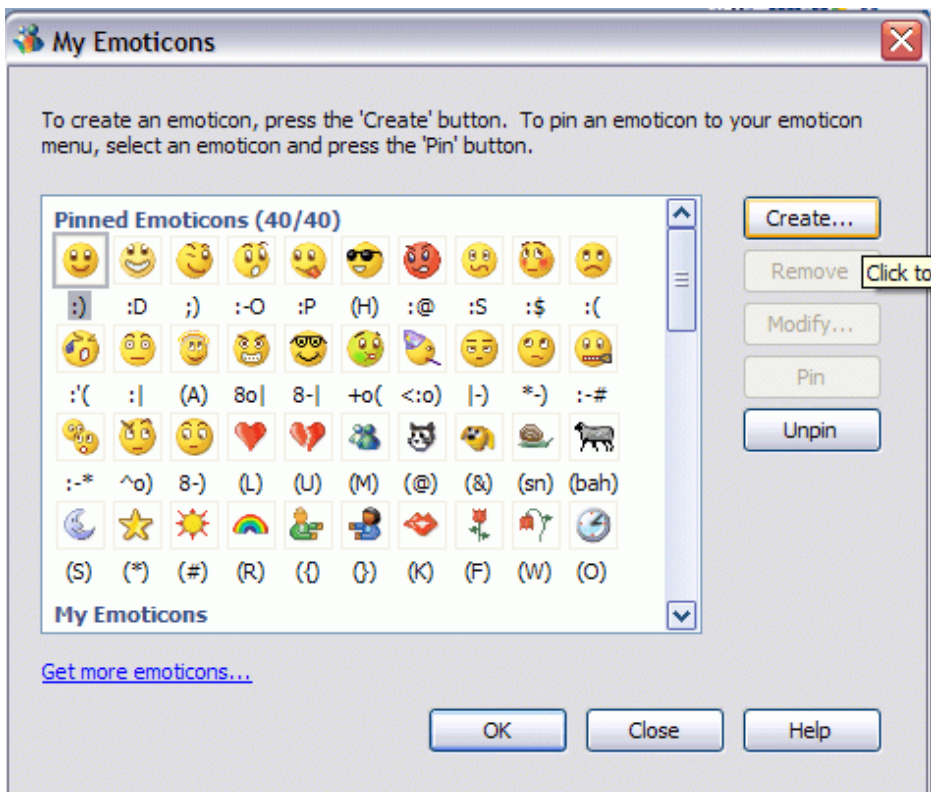
Untitled (Another Day) is a response to this collusion of digital and lived space. It takes a remembered title screen (a digital artefact?) from an X-tube video and attempts to remake it, emancipating it from digital oblivion and isolating it, allowing us to enjoy it for the strange poetry it is. And, like its discovery, the work only exists momentarily - white paint or the X button will erase it from being in the end. It's a monument to a fleeting digital encounter, an attempt to articulate a digital plane free of the screen and a way of inverting my own methods of understanding my work.



Darcey Bella Arnold

MSN Messenger (circa 1999-2005) :) ;) :@ :(+o((A), Ceramic, Acrylic, Glaze, Dimensions Varied, 2013

MSN Messenger (circa 1999-2005) :) ;) :@ :(+o((A) is a installation piece created in response to the curatorial guidelines of Digital Outlawed. Text emoticons, which are automatically replaced with small corresponding images, are given new context as a remembrance to MSN chat. These emoticons are sculpted and preserved in ceramics and glaze as a tangible memorial. Displayed in a museum standard as antiquities of the digital. Emoticons have played a significant role in communication through social media as a mask or flag for the users to dictate the tone of a message. These emoticons have offered the portrayal of a range of feeling through cyber communication since 1999, and have become essential in the new digital language.



Arie Rain Glorie

Liminal Body, Video Artwork, 345 Minutes, 2013

Liminal Body explores how video technology has altered the way we experience time.

On one VHS tape are five different static images, each one approximately 60 minutes long, of the artist performing an action. Pausing the recorded footage at a particular moment constraints the artist's body at the threshold of another movement. The image shakes. There is a visual footprint of where the artist has been and what might happen next.

I often use video as a way to record performance in my art practice. A part of this process is reviewing how my body moves by changing the duration and speed of the video. This can change the entire outcome of the performance and how it might be viewed. And it's all done via digital process.

I saw no reason not to follow the same process for *Digital Outlawed*. How different could the use of analogue technology be? Well. I came across logistical problems. What are simple commands at the push of a button on a computer are a long drawn out process on VHS. But through this process I came to really appreciate how this medium has changed the way we view the world. I began to appreciate how a moving image can be captured on tape; how I can fast forward, rewind, pause, and replay what I have recorded. I eventually settled on the pause button as my favourite utility. When you pause a digital video it obeys, it does not shake and it has no glitches. It is unmistakable and precise. On VHS I love the way the image will shake and might distort, how temporary it seems, how it's always on the verge: at the threshold, of moving again. As digital video supersedes analogue this quality is lost. We will not experience time like this again.



