Moving Images - Static Spaces. Architectures, Media, Film, Communication, Digital Art and Design

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Short Form Video and the Possibilities for a New Architectural Criticism

• Format(s):
Pre-recorded Film / In-person presentation / Written paper

• Author(s) Name:
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• University or Company Affiliation:
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• Abstract (300 words):
[This paper will focus on the continuing presence and importance of short form video production and its relatively unformulated position within wider discussions around architectural filmmaking. I will draw upon recent developments within experimental and documentary filmmaking, journalism and architectural thinking. Through reference to my own filmmaking practice that has focussed on short form videos shot on smartphones (Cowlard Béton Brut 2015, Lung 2016) and by making reference to other artists, filmmakers and media producers who are working in a similar way, I will present a potential arena for a new form of architectural engagement and criticism.

The format of short form video encompasses everything from the animated gif through to more conventionally defined short films. However, I am most interested in exploring the impact of videos that have a duration between approximately 6 seconds and four minutes. These films are of particular interest for their potential to be viewed both in a single screening or as a continuous loop.

The device of the loop will be referenced in its relationship to experimental cinema but also in relation to Walter Benjamin’s proposition that buildings are appropriated through
an incidental habitation. The paper will also build on the idea of the database documentary, first posited by theorist Lev Manovich and latterly urbanist and new media artist Jessie Shapins (Manovich 2002, Shapins 2012). Given that most video, whether produced by experienced filmmakers, critics or an educated and interested public, has the potential to be shared on social media sites the ability to geo-temporally tag the videos, aggregate content and provide direct avenues for discussion combined with insider knowledge presents many possibilities for redefining architectural engagement and importantly opens up the potential for a renewed architectural criticism that is rooted within everyday experience and habitation.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

David Cowlard is a filmmaker, photographer and sound artist. His interdisciplinary practice is founded on a documentary approach to architectural representation and includes work across a number of media including short films, documentary, urban field recording, radio production and curation. He has a particular interest in exploring how moving image, locative media and recorded sound can inform a wider critical engagement with architecture and the built environment.

David teaches in the Photo Media Dept, at Whitecliffe College of Arts & Design, Auckland, New Zealand and is a Professional Teaching Fellow at the University of Auckland’s School of Architecture & Planning. He recently convened Moving Spaces, a two-day international symposium on the expanded field of architecture and the moving image with Santiago based photographer and filmmaker Cristobal Palma as keynote speaker. (www.architecturalfilm.space)

David publishes on various digital platforms as @photourbanist