Dark rides are an entertainment format that originated in the United States in the early 20th century. *Ghost Train*, *Haunted Mill* and *Spooky Castle* rides populated amusement parks across the world. Throughout the 1930s and 1960s the dark ride was an established part of the media landscape but has largely disappeared today. One of the unique properties of the dark ride experience is its role in recording and dramatizing sociocultural change.

In the 1910s Pittsburgh’s once thriving milling industry had disappeared and was represented by abandoned mills scattered across the horizon. In the ensuing decades the *Old Mill Ride* became a popular dark ride theme, rides were styled as abandoned buildings using a mill format to ferry passengers through the space. Examples of this simulacrum of forgotten industry still stand today at the historic Kennywood and Knoebels (without apostrophe) amusement parks. The ride experience outliving the industry itself, melding classic haunted attraction with an immersive museological experience.

Joel Zika will discuss the role that darkened electric rides have played in creating lasting records of lost industries and social fears throughout the 20th century. Joel will discuss his field work and the multitude of connections between shared cultural history and the thematic space of the amusement park. From the Mining rides of Pennsylvania to the
Haunted hospital amusements of Japan, this paper will explore media storytelling that has intersections with cinema, theatre and architecture.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):
  Joel is an expert on the history of immersive media and has spent his career researching the history of amusement rides and their influence on contemporary media production. Joel is the founder of The Dark Ride Project, a Virtual Reality initiative to document the last of America’s haunted amusements using the latest VR tools. Most recently Joel presented his research at the International VR conference in Toronto (VRTO) and at Austin’s South by SouthWest festival. Joel has artworks in public and private collections across Australia and has exhibited print, projection and VR works internationally. Recently his work was featured in the books ‘Darkness and Light in Australia Art’ and ‘Digital Light’ from fibreculture books.