

Queensland SPARC Chapter. Report on meeting held 14th September 2012

Meeting held at: Griffith Film School (GFS), Southbank.

In attendance: Geoff Portman (QUT) Herman Van Eyken (GFS), Michael Sergie (Bond), Nick Oughton (GFS).

The Queensland SPARC group has been asked to devise a research project that will contribute to the overall SPARK research program.

Designing the project

In order to establish a frame for the Queensland project, and to provide consistency with other SPARC State projects, our approach referenced the underpinning precepts that informed the recent WA SPARC meeting held in Perth. These precepts reflect the intent of the overarching SPARC Project.

Some of the principals highlighted were:

- The importance of enhancing the integrity, efficacy, legitimacy and quality of screen production and practice based research methodology.
- A requirement to focus on post-graduate research
- The need to engage with communities and institutions in a regional context, for instances the Pacific region.
- To utilize online networks in order to engage speedily and economically with stakeholders within and without Australia.
- To develop grant seeking strategies (CRC, AusAID) in order to facilitate further research through collaborations with Australian and overseas institutions and develop post-graduate scholarship opportunities.

With these principals in mind the group decided that a focus on the Pacific region would be appropriate and that indeed, this would compliment the Indian Ocean purview of the WA SPARC group. The rationale behind this approach hinges on the following:

- Pre-existing training, educational and practice connections with the Pacific region, for instance, QUT and GFS have links with Fiji Islands while GFS has an association with the Asia Pacific Screen Awards and Timor. Bond's involvement includes hosting Pacific-based students in their Film Production programs.
- A perception that some Pacific nations may wish to garner assistance in developing their own screen education programs in order to more fully explore, discuss, promote, and disseminate their traditional and unfolding cultures, knowledge trails, and to develop commercial screen based assets.
- A belief that established film schools can play a role in assisting emerging films schools develop educational programs and initiate a research agenda.
- Countries considered during the discussion were, Fiji, Tonga, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, New Guinea and Timor.

The discussion was informed by ideas enunciated in the paper, *Story Telling For The Asia Pacific* by Dr. Margaret McVeigh. In this paper McVeigh asks the question, 'what is the best way to understand and prepare emerging filmmakers in the Asia-Pacific cultural and industrial context?' This question invites an examination of:

- The narratives and stories appropriate to the Pacific region.

- The influences that will impose themselves on these narratives including, culture, narrative and filmic conventions, government and industry policy emerging technologies, and community and national goals.
- The current context in terms of existing structures facilities and skill-base in the Pacific region.
- The formal educational structure and programs required assisting individual nations and communities prepare and sustain their own practitioners.

Through membership of the Australian Screen Production, Education and Research Association (ASPERA), QUT, Bond and GFS are connected to CILECT, the world body representing film schools, and its Asia Pacific regional chapter, CAPA. CAPA is planning to initiate a mentoring program between established and emerging film schools in the Asia Pacific region.

There are two additional circumstances, which will assist in propelling this project forward. First, a commitment given by Professor Richard Bagnol, DVC Research (GU) and Graham Wise, Manager Research and Development (GU) to provide assistance with our project. Both attended the Queensland SPARC Colloquium conducted at Griffith Film School in April 2012. The second circumstance involves the CILECT Asia-Pacific Association (CAPA) Conference that will be held in Brisbane in Late November 2012. The two themes leading this conference are:

Film School Futures in the Asia-Pacific region.

What are the challenges facing emerging and established film schools of the Asia -Pacific in relationship to: digital systems, workflow, data management and storage; the decline of celluloid acquisition; the development of new discipline areas and technologies and; teaching practice relating to these topics.

New cooperation and partnerships between Film Schools in the Asia-Pacific.

What opportunities exist for new and more extensive partnerships between Asia-Pacific film schools including: inter regional or cross-institutional co-productions; academic and student exchanges; joint offering of programs and; promoting screen education and cinema in the Asia-Pacific region.

Both themes provide a context for further discussion regarding the goals of this project.

In order to facilitate further investigation and discussion, the Qld, SPARC group proposes to bring representatives of Pacific Communities and higher education to the CAPA Conference. These include the Director of the Oceania Centre for Art, Culture and Pacific Studies at the University of the South Pacific Vilsoni Hereniko. Vilsoni is a filmmaker and wrote and directed the feature 'The Land Has Eyes', and has an intimate knowledge of the contexts informing this project.

The Qld SPARC team proposes, therefore, to allocate a portion of the \$4000.00 grant to bringing Vilsoni Hereniko to Brisbane for the CAPA Conference (if he is available) and to have discussions with him during this visit.

Nicholas Oughton
20 September 2012