



WRITING THE STORY OF THE FUTURE

a one-day seminar on the author in the digital age

The Australia Council for the Arts and AFTRS welcome you to a seminar exploring a universe in which the book is a game without buttons.

Wednesday 29 November 2006
9am to 4.30pm
University of Technology, Sydney
Room B1.11, Building 5
Building 5, Block B, 1-59 Quay Street, Haymarket



PROGRAM

- 9.00am – 9.30am **Registration, tea and coffee**
- 9.30am – 9.45am **Welcome and seminar opening**
Josie Emery, Director, Literature, Australia Council
Therese Fingleton, Project Manager, Story of the Future
Peter Giles, Head of Digital Media, Australian Film, Television and Radio School.
- 9.45am – 10.45am (1 hr) **Introduction:** Christy Dena and Jackie Turnure present a dramatic overview of the future of narrative and the role of the author in the changing landscape of the Digital Age.
- 10.45am – 11.00am Morning tea
- 11.00am – 11.30am (30 mins) **View work & discussion:** Simon Hopkinson looks at some alternative, low technology, approaches to creating narrative (with particular reference to his own works, *Playgame* and *Write-Here-Now*).
- 11.30am – 12.00pm **View work & discussion**
Marissa Cooke looks at the diversity and difference of the role of the 'writer' in digital media with particular reference to her work on the interactive drama series *Fat Cow Motel*.
- 12.00pm – 1.00pm (1 hr) **Interview:** Chris Avellone and Tim Smith.
This session will provide an insight into the pathway to become an RPG game writer, and techniques that are needed. Christy and Tim will ask Chris questions about how he became a game writer and then ultimately co-founded his own successful business. Chris will share insights into what the unique competencies are required for writing games and how there are immense possibilities for creating drama and revenue!
- 1.00pm – 2.00pm **Lunch**
- 2.00 – 3.30pm (1.5 hrs) **Panel discussion:** The panel explore some of the key questions on writers' minds today: *How are digital media transforming the narrative arts? Where do writers fit - now and in the future? Lo-tech or High-tech game worlds? How do we connect the artist with the technologist? What are the dreams for a new literature?*
- Chair:** Christy Dena
Chris Avellone Marissa Cooke
Simon Hopkinson Jackie Turnure
- 3.30 – 3.45pm **Afternoon Tea**
- 3.45pm – 4.15pm **Introduction to LAMP: Story of the Future Developmental Workshops and LAMP: Story of the Future Residential Labs in 2007** – Jackie Turnure
- 4.15pm – 4.30pm **Wrap-up & seminar close** Jill Jones, Program Manager, Literature
- 4.30pm – 5.30pm **Refreshments and networking opportunity**

PARTICIPANTS

Chris Avellone

Currently creative lead and co-owner of Obsidian Entertainment, Chris started his career by freelancing for a number of Pen and Paper Role-Playing game companies in high school before Interplay hired him as a game designer in 1996. He worked on most if not all of Black Isle's internally developed projects, including *Planescape: Torment* (Lead Designer), *Fallout 2*, the whole *Icewind Dale* series, and *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance*, and a number of canceled titles, including *Baldur's Gate 3* and *Fallout 3*. Chris was the Lead Designer on *Star Wars Knights of the Old Republic II: The Sith Lords*, and is currently working on *Neverwinter Nights 2* and other unannounced projects at Obsidian Entertainment.

Christy Dena

Christy is a cross-media consultant, researcher and writer. She has produced, written & performed in cross-media theatre and currently creates websites, cross-media games and short-stories. She has mentored for the Laboratory of Advanced Media Production and presented on cross-media writing and design strategies to the Australia Council for the Arts, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Center for Screen Business, ACT Filmmakers Network and AFTRS. She is a co-mentor for the Booranga Writing Centre's six-month Youth Online Writing Workshop (YOWW). Dena is on the Board of dLux Media Arts and writes about new media arts for *RealTime* magazine and on virtual world arts for *SlateNight* Magazine. She also lectures and tutors on new media arts theory and game-design to tertiary students in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth. Her PhD research, at the University of Sydney, interrogates how narrative has changed in the cross-media ecology. She blogs at Cross-MediaEntertainment.com and is co-editor of WriterResponseTheory.org.

Jackie Turnure

With writing and producing experience in both traditional and new media, Jackie brings a unique perspective to the role of narrative in cross media production. For the last 15 years she has been working across film, television, games and online production, with a particular focus on animation and children's content. Jackie received her BA (Visual Communications) from Sydney College of the Arts and her MFA (Film Production) from San Francisco State University. She spent nine years in the US teaching screenwriting at New York University, Hunter College and the Academy of Arts College, San Francisco. Jackie has written and directed ten short films and videos that have won awards and screened internationally, and written two feature film scripts. From 1998-2001 she produced and directed three 3D animated kids' games for PC, *Bananas in Pyjamas: It's Party Time*, *Oz - The Magical Adventure* and *Oz - The Interactive Storybook*. The games won numerous awards and were distributed in 18 countries. Jackie currently lectures part-time at AFTRS and works as a script writer, script editor and story consultant on feature films, animated television series and games. She recently story produced and wrote 3 episodes for *Deadly*, a half hour animated TV series nominated for the AFI for Best Children's Drama, and has written for upcoming TV series *I Got a Rocket* and *Gluey and Celerina* produced by SLR Productions. Jackie co-produced and voice directed *Stolen Life*, an animated feature produced in Machinima, that is premiering at the Machinima Film Festival in New York in November.

Simon Hopkinson

Simon spent many years in as both a writer and director for many of Australia's leading theatre companies. He is a former Artistic Director of the New England Theatre Company, the Darwin Theatre Company and the Australian Theatre for Young People. He had a long association with the Melbourne Theatre Company as at different times Youth Director, Resident Dramatist and Associate Director. His plays include *Stopwork!*, *Buffaloes Can't Fly*, *Sail* and (with Helen O'Connor) *Lipstick Dreams*, *Happy Families* and *Wedding Games*. For three years in the late 1970's he moved away from traditional theatre into performance projects (many in collaboration with the artist Gary Willis). In more recent years he has ventured into the murky waters of film and television. In addition to writing for many other series he co-created the television series *Bananas in Pyjamas* and *New McDonald's Farm*. He was the last writer left standing on the animated

feature film *The Magic Pudding*, for his resilience on this project he received an AFI Best Screenplay nomination. He has written the scripts for three highly successful interactive CD-ROMS and co-created and script edited the online game, *Chiko Accidental Alien*. He is the President of the Australian Writers' Guild.

Marissa Cooke

Marissa has worked extensively in television, new media and advertising over the past 10 years as a writer, content producer, and creative strategist for a diverse range of media projects. As New Media Producer and Senior Writer for Australia's first interactive television series [Fat Cow Motel](#) (ABC, Austar), Marissa was responsible for creating an immersive, cross-platform game and producing interactive content across web, iTV, email, mobile and dial-up channels that delivered unprecedented results for the ABC becoming the most visited TV website ever for ABC Online. Marissa also developed an innovative pre-broadcast viral media campaign delivered via print, radio, email, SMS and web. Marissa won the inaugural Australian Writers' Guild Interactive Media Award in 2005 for her work on *Fat Cow Motel*. Marissa's most recent work includes Content Development and Writing for the new Yahoo! 7 immersive game/drama series, [PS Trixi](#) – a world-first 12 episode new media 'event' delivered across web, Instant Messenger, email, mobile and video platforms. Marissa was also a scriptwriter on the AFI award-winning first series of the Foxtel drama series *Love My Way*, as well as the Australian-German co-production *Blue Water High*. Marissa is currently developing her own cross-platform projects as well as consulting for a range of commercial clients including award winning interactive agency [Tribal DDB](#) as a digital content developer and copywriter across clients including [Volkswagen](#), NIKE and [McDonalds](#).

Timothy Smith

Timothy has been working as an actor on stage and in television under the name Timothy Wilde for the past 10 years. Throughout those years, he realized that to make a living as a performer he would need to create his own work and started writing theatre restaurant stage plays, writing and directing short films as well as promotional videos, teaching acting and in 2005 travelled Australia, performing two man shows for Theatre in Education. Enjoying the writing process more than performing he started exploring it fervently, enrolling in The Drama of Screenwriting, two script workshops and writing for television at AFTRS. He was fortunate enough to be accepted in 2006 for their full-time writing course. Timothy's interests are, for want of a better word, geeky. Playing and writing table top role playing games such as *Dungeons and Dragons*, *Vampire the Masquerade* and *All Flesh Must Be Eaten*, playing video games, both first person shoot 'em ups and RPG's (very addicted to *Neverwinter Nights*), blogging and more. He has recently completed an attachment with the writing team of *Neighbours* and is currently writing an ARG for a feature film.

Josie Emery

Josie is Director of Literature at the Australia Council for the Arts. She was previously co-head of screenwriting at the Australian Film Television and Radio School and has chaired Writers' Week at the Adelaide Festival and the South Australian Writers' Centre. Josie has worked with film directors such as Philip Noyce and Scott Hicks, and has an AWGIE Award for Best Television Adaptation. Her novel, *The Sky People*, was short-listed for the Adelaide Festival Awards for Literature in 1986.

Jill Jones

Jill is Program Manager, Literature, at the Australia Council for the Arts. She has managed such programs as the Literature Board's *Write in Your Face* initiative for innovative writing by young and emerging writers and Digital Ink, a digital writers' residency, in partnership with Council's New Media Arts Board in 2003. She is a published poet, winning the Kenneth Slessor Poetry Prize in 2003 for her fourth book *Screens Jets Heaven: New and Selected Poems*, and has worked on a number of multimedia projects with photographers and other visual artists.