Filling the air with ghosts.

Some details about our next two classes on Cockatoo Island. As has been outlined the basic idea is that we are creating media walks for a portion of the Island or a particular location there. Either audio only pieces, audio with pictures, video or small mobile websites. These are to be experienced via iPod or any MP3 player/video player and/or internet enabled handset/phone depending on the nature of the project. Pieces can be produced in small groups of between 2 and 5. You will need a media player of some sort (many phones will suffice) for the 2nd week to transfer the files to, please let us know if you are unable to access one of these.

Approaches

These walks can take any number of approaches in using the site as a platform for hosting these walking or location based media pieces. You can build imagined narratives, respond to site histories, take any aesthetic or conceptual approach you can imagine to the Island, anything that will assist in building an interesting imaginatively suggestive experience for your audience. Any google search will throw up a wealth of info about the site if you are interested in that approach, probably the best starting point for general historical info is the main island website -
http://www.cockatooisland.gov.au/about/index.html

Probably the best example of work in this genre is the sound and video walks of Janet Cardiff and George Miller. This piece Ghost Machine uses a video camera as a playback device http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tgef5gel4sk some of the walks they make use photos as suggestive navigation aids http://www.cardiffmiller.com/artworks/walks/longhair.html . The elaborate fictions that Cardiff & Miller produce are often recorded in-situ using binaural microphone techniques that are easy to approximate simply by using two microphones on, say, a bike helmet. The locative works made by Blast Theory in the UK https://vimeo.com/2275985 mine similar storytelling techniques but in a different way.

First Week -

In this week we will be writing, planning and producing the pieces. Book from the equipment store any gear you may need, Marantz or Zoom recorders, cameras, etc for either recording/producing on the island or documenting your walk sites for production back on campus or elsewhere. Some of you may use location recordings while others may create all the media you use in the studio or a mix of both. Cameras (video or still) may be useful for audio only pieces as well in having visual reminders of the walk when you are editing the final piece and thinking about how to guide your listeners/walkers.

We would advise writing some sort of script however minimal of the structure of your walk, what happens where, etc, whether it has any voice narration/dialogue or not. These pieces need to be finished and posted on the class site tagged with **Cockatoo** by midnight the night before class for morning classes and 11am the morning before your class for afternoon classes. The posts must include a version of the map picture attached to this mail with your walk route drawn on in red, clearly indicating the **starting point.**

Second Week

On the day before your class in the second week download (or bookmark) mediawalks from the post of your fellow students by choosing the Cockatoo tag from the class site, download (save) at least 5 pieces (and either print or make a note of the starting point for the individual walks) to your playback device. When we return to the island that week we will experience those pieces in the locations they were designed for.

Considerations

Be mindful of how you direct your listeners to keep them on track, ask them to navigate by things they can see and it is useful to incorporate paused sections of the walk (by asking them to pause the file) to move them to another part of the walk at a visual landmark they can see or follow from where they are currently located to progress the walk through multiple locations. We consider designing the "usability" of the piece in terms of how you give listeners clues for navigating the walk the most challenging part of the production, so be mindful of giving good directions. Whichever approach your group takes what you are aiming for is to immerse the listener/viewer/reader in an imaginative space you conjure for particular locations.

Getting There.

Attached is a jpg version of an A3 map for drawing on in photoshop and mapping out the route of your walk and then posting alongside your media file on the website. We will be heading out in regular class time both weeks, optimal times departing Circular Quay are 10.10am for the morning classes & 2.10pm for the afternoon classes respectively. Once on the island returning ferries leave at between 1 hr & 20min intervals depending on the time of day. Attached is the timetable, you can of course come from other parts of the harbour (there are some services from Darling Harbour for instance). You can stay as long as you want or need to, last ferry back is at 10pm.

We'll meet at the café right next to the ferry point on the island.