ENCOUNTERS

BY CRAIG WALSH

*Recent sightings of prehistoric reptiles swimming in the Brisbane River near the Goodwill Bridge
have stirred excitement among curious locals.
Passers-by claimed the creatures were up to 12 metres long
with massive heads, short necks, powerful jaws and large teeth.*

DESCRIPTION

ENCOUNTERS is a site-specific, large-scale moving image installation which integrates a family of 3D animated plesiosaurs into existing waterways and public sites. The installation has two components: a large-scale projection directly onto the water surface and a large surveillance monitor positioned in a public site near the water projection. The creatures are visible after dark, as they swim, dive and surface along a large body of water. During the day as well as night, the plesiosaurs can be viewed through the surveillance monitors which appear to be providing live footage of the organisms underwater. These monitors present underwater footage with a real-time time code overlay, this enhances the believability of the underwater footage and replicates live feed aesthetics.

The animations are convincing illusions as the plesiosaurs appear to exist below the surface and randomly emerge and submerge in a looping sequence. The visuals are designed to loop seamlessly for 20 minutes, without any start or finish. The sighting by the audience is very much like other interactions humans might have with water species (such as seeing whales or dolphins in a river or from a boat)

ENCOUNTERS formed out of an artistic collaboration between artist Craig Walsh and the expert scientists, chief curators and senior palaeontologists at the Queensland Museum in Brisbane, Australia. The partnership facilitated knowledge sharing of high-definition 3D models of extinct river dwelling species relevant to the project. *ENCOUNTERS* enables these extinct species to convincingly reappear in a place they haven't been seen since the Triassic Period and into the late Cretaceous Period (215 million to 66 million years ago).

The activity of the creatures is visible to the audience via an elevated platform, this could be a river walkway pedestrian path over a bridge, pontoon etc. The audience look down from a height to view the artwork on the waterway as well as viewing the underwater surveillance monitors positioned near the projection component. Engagements are packaged for a 4-week installation – longer (or shorter) engagements are possible.

By day, the Plesiosaurs can be seen through the underwater surveillance cameras
or lucky viewers can catch them playing in the water as they come closer to the surface at night".

Plesiosaur 3D model
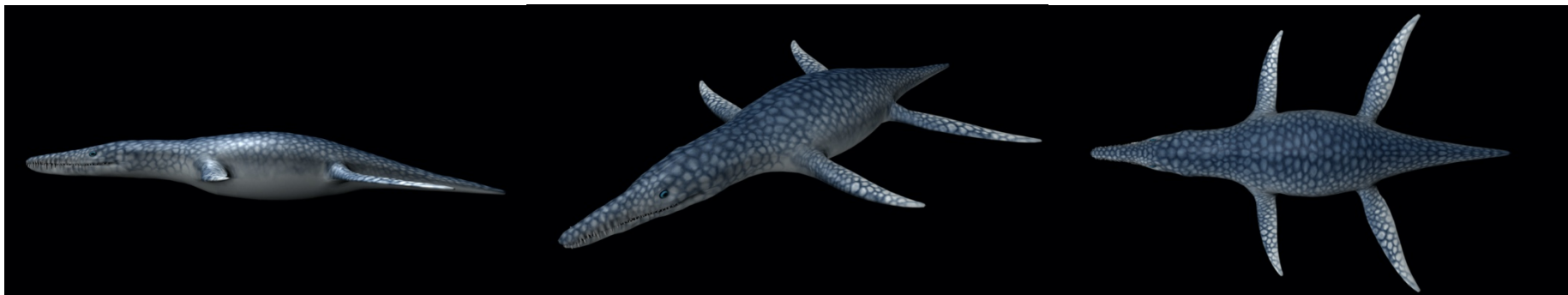
RATIONALE

ENCOUNTERS continues Craig Walsh's series of interventionist projects which explore public waterways, and the vast histories and stories associate with them. The use of moving image technologies and high-end 3D modelling/animation enable the artwork to integrate into rivers and waterways as if real, enabling the histories and stories of a place to emerge. A physical manifestation is generated through scientific evidence, mythologies and stories evolving from a place. Specifically, *ENCOUNTERS* enables species now extinct to once again appear and in doing so juxtapose vast histories of occupancy in a specific geographic location.

THE *ENCOUNTERS* installation aims to position the audience within a type of time travel, as a public site is now shared with species from long ago. The objective is to generate new forms of interaction between fabricated life and actual environments providing unexpected encounters for the audience and a deeper contemplation and understanding of time and space

As a highly illusionistic work, *ENCOUNTERS* instigates an experience for the viewer not dissimilar to what might happen when we encounter other organisms in a shared environment. This project acts as the subject and catalyst to evoke a local **'sighting'** and explores the possibility to engage the local community in generating new mythologies and stories of the river. This installation presents new possibilities of how temporal public artworks can integrate into specific environments and provide new forms of engagement. Importantly, The appearance of the Plesiosaurs also raises issues relating to how we interact with nature and our ability to simulate these types of 'experiences' through technology.

One of three Plesiosaurs that appear randomly as viewed from the Goodwill Bridge which crosses the Brisbane river

large scale surveillance monitor revealing four camera feeds of underwater imagery which appears to be real- time. We see the Plesiosaurs resting and moving randomly around old car bodies resting on the bottom of the river.

5-minute video:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/pvroz17kbie7i2b/residents_v2.mp4?dl=0

BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECT

Craig Walsh has been developing artworks in response to waterways since 2007 and has presented water projections across Australia and in locations in Europe and Asia.
ENCOUNTERS is a product of much research/development and experimentation and represents a touring site-specific artwork flexible in its application whilst remaining relevant to the sites it occupies.

Following are links to examples of the history of development:

https://www.craigwalsh.net/portfolio-items/classification-pending/
https://www.craigwalsh.net/portfolio-items/grossi/
https://www.craigwalsh.net/portfolio-items/incubator/
https://www.craigwalsh.net/portfolio-items/the-residents/

COLLABORATIVE/ DEVELOPMENT POSSIBILITIES

Whilst the project exists as a finished artwork, it also offers opportunities for future collaborations with science and local communities and to build on the complexity of the ecosystem presented.
Depending on the site and specific partners, new content can be developed to occupy the space with the existing content.
This could manifest in the form of other extinct species or a response to local mythologies, stories etc.

TESTIMONIAL

In March 2021 Queensland Museum Network engaged Craig Walsh to produce a work for a three week public art installation as part of Curiosity Brisbane. The Residents was a projection of prehistoric creatures that may have inhabited the Brisbane River millions of years ago and was accompanied by a video piece showing the creatures living beneath the surface. Craig worked collaboratively with Queensland Museum palaeontologists to refine and modify a work that he had exhibited previously in a different context.

He met the brief of creating a work showcasing the intersection of art and science. Craig met deadlines, successfully managed the budget and accepted input without compromising the integrity of the work. His positive attitude, creative vision and ability to adapt the piece for its new context created a magical result. The Residents came to life! The work was extremely popular with many viewers left questioning – was that real? The Residents was a significant technical challenge beautifully resolved. The graceful creatures were so realistic, the experience of spending time with them was immersive and a little different with each visit. I look forward to working with Craig in the future.

Cathy James
Head, World Science Festival Brisbane and QMN Events

Artist Bio
CRAIG WALSH
Artist, Creative Producer

Craig Walsh was born in Orange in 1966, and currently lives in Tweed heads, Australia. He is primarily interested in hybrid and site-specific projects and the exploration of alternative contexts for contemporary art. He often utilises projection in response to existing environments, landscapes and sculptural elements. Throughout his career Craig has developed and implemented numerous public artworks both permanent and temporary, often through community engagement processes. Through recent projects, Craig is developing works that change and evolve over time to provide opportunities for continual community engagement and interaction. Craig's work has been shown in a number of national and international exhibitions, including the Setouchi International Art Festival, Japan; the Gwangju Biennale, Jakarta Biennale XIII, Indonesia; Yokohama International Triennale of Contemporary Art, Japan; 01SJ Biennale San Jose, California; Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; Koganecho Bazaar, Japan; and DRIFT 08, London. Walsh's Digital Odyssey project formed a collaboration between Craig Walsh and the Museum of Contemporary Art (Australia), along with State and regional organisations and community groups. Craig Walsh: Digital Odyssey commenced in 2010 as a national, multi-venue tour and artist residency in rural and remote locations throughout Australia. The works created in each town have been guided and influenced by the landscapes and histories of the local area, and the project has been a catalyst for change within the communities involved. His exhibition, Craig Walsh: Embedded, was showcased at the MCA Australia and developed out of a commission from Rio Tinto, which enabled Walsh to work with Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation (the traditional custodians of the Pilbara's Burrup Peninsula).

Recent projects:

- DUNGARIMBA WANDARAHN (Lismore place of learning) - A large scale projection project about language.
- https://lismorequad.org.au/cp_themes/default/event.asp?guid=13048AA2-07A9-48E1-ADA2-87A31DDB8FA1
- WOVEN SPACES- Collaborations with Hiromi tango . series of sculptural, projection and performance pieces engaging with communities and addressing well-being and mental health. a partnership with Building Hope, Breckenridge Creative Arts, Colorado, USA
  Jan 23-May 10, 2020
- https://hiromitango.com/Woven-Spaces
- MOVE, (the Museum Of Vast Exchange) - a temporal museum based on a commercial building typology providing a hermetic environment to connect arts, sites & communities.
- https://www.thecorridorproject.org/move
- MONUMENTS, a temporal public installation touring Internationally 2019- ongoing

PRODUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Site Requirements

- Whilst the projection onto the water surface is very durable, best results are obtained with water that has medium to heavy sediment. So, dirty rivers are ideal but coastal waterways with crystal clear water are less ideal
- Minimal bright lighting on the surface of the waterway, needs to be reasonably dark but not completely dark.
- Scale of the work is determined by the height of the viewing /vantage area and where the projector is mounted. The distance from projector to the surface of the water dictates what size we achieve. I have successfully presented these works at smaller scale and large scale.
- Project is adaptable to the site.
- Project can exist as a single projection or multiple projections.
- Multiple projections utilize the same content across all projectors but played back at different intervals. The more projectors utilized, the larger the area the creatures occupy. Multiple projectors also allow for multiple vantage points to view the installation.
- The installation requires a vantage point to view the artwork from above. This can be from a bridge, or a pathway/bikeway beside a river or walkway. it could also be from a jetty or pontoon.
- The installation requires a safe place that audience can gather to look over the edge of the platform and view the water surface. A railing is good so shorter children can see through the railing slots.
- The projector tower is installed on the same platform as where the audience are viewing the artwork.
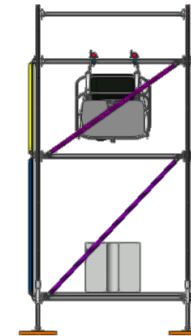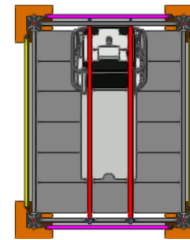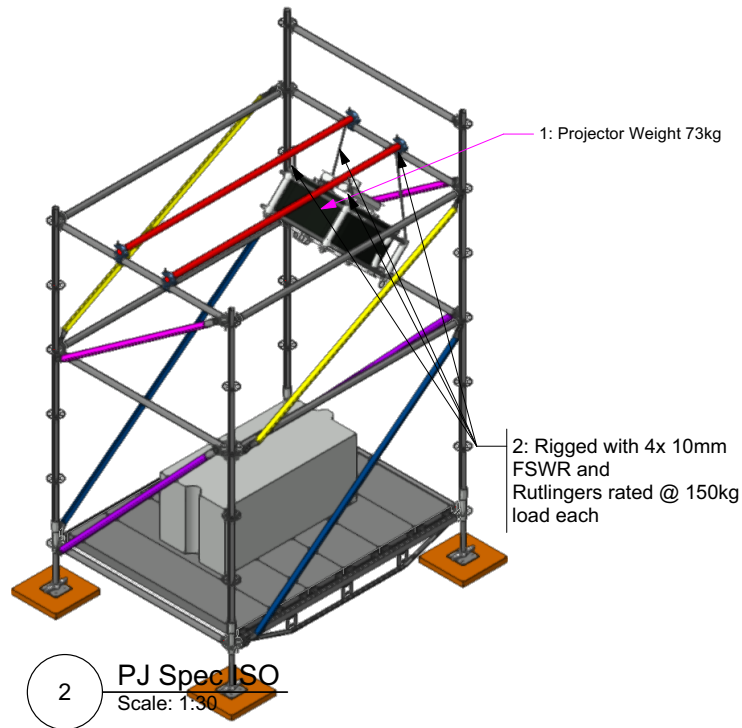
Installation Concept for Mounting Projector

Potential projection area on the water surface using multiple projectors

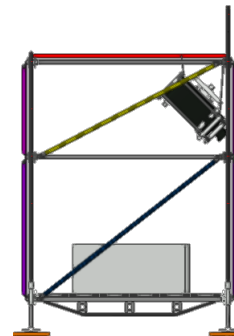**TECHNOLOGY /EQUIPMENT/ INSTALLATION**

- 10– 30k projector(s) with appropriate lens for the distance to the water surface.
- cabling
- Media server to supply single channel content to the projector and single channel to the monitor. (Supplied by artist)
- Software to overlay graphic real time codes and control playback times of the installation (supplied by artist)
- 1 x large scale outdoor/anti-glare display monitor (approx. 55 inch) mounted in housing in the scaffold structure. Can also have shade structure to assist with viewing during the day
- Projector and monitor to be mounted in a scaffold structure Waterproofed and secured. (See following Images of scaffolding with plywood cladding utilized in previous installation)
- Media server also mounted internal to scaffold tower.
- Power to the internal of projection tower

Previous projection tower and monitor display

1: Projector Weight 73kg

2: Rigged with 4x 10mm FSWR and
Rutlingers rated @ 150kg load each

2 PJ Spec ISO
Scale: 1:30

1 PJ Spec - Side
Scale: 1:50

4 PJ Spec Rear
Scale: 1:50

EvScience Week 2021 - Video Projection	Venue - BNE	Drawn By - Dale Rehbein
Event Date -	Client -	Lighting Designer -
Sheet Name - Video in Scaffold Tower	Date Published -	Set Designer -
Sheet Number - Sht-1 of 1	Version - V1	Audio Designer -
Sheet Scale - NTS	Version notes - Additional Video Rigging information for Engineer Sign Off	

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Previous scaffolding and projector mounting solution

PROJECT TIMELINE:

Initial consultation via phone/skype to discuss site opportunity and client requirements. (No later than 4 months in advance of installation opening date).

Secondary consultation to look at detailed images and maps of the site to discuss feasibility.

Testing of content on-site by presenter to confirm application is possible and successful in the desired location. Test content provided by Craig Walsh.

Contracting the artwork - what does this mean?

Site residency (7 days on site)

DAY 1:

Arrival /site inspection / meeting with host/ meeting with Audio Visual supplier

DAY 2 :

Oversee installation of equipment

DAY 3 :

Oversee installation of equipment / installation of media server and content/ view artwork after dark

Day 4 :

Rendering of any changes/modifications/ view changes after dark and finalize artwork

Day 5 :

Preview of the artwork

Day 6 :

Opening of exhibition

Day 7 :

Departure

PRESENTER RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Identification of potential sites for the installation
- Provision of photos for discussion prior to arrival
- Testing of content on site(artist available via facetime)
- Securing permissions/permits required for installation setup in the designated public space
- Provision of high-speed internet access to enable upload and download of large media files while on site.
- Wi Fi access at the installation site
- Provision of suitable accommodation for one person x 6 nights
- Provision of suitable ground transportation x 7 days
- Return flights via Virgin Australia, ex Brisbane/Gold Coast x 1 person (plus two pieces additional checked baggage).
- Appointment of suitably qualified staff to run the installation
- Cost of audio-visual equipment hire for the duration of the project
- Installation including any access/rigging requirements such as scaffold, outdoor   projector housing, brackets, etc.
- Access to power requirements (depending on site, access to power or generator as required)
- Provision of site security if required
  - strike/removal of installation
- freight media server back to Elsie management after conclusion of the installation

ARTIST TO SUPPLY:

- Media server to supply single channel content to the projector and single channel to the monitor.
- Software to overlay graphic real time codes and control playback times of the installation