

## ***We Are the Road* (PhD)**

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### ABSTRACT:

Contemporary archival art practices utilise their artefacts in a variety of ways. *We Are the Road* aims to develop an approach to the artefact and strategies of artists moving image production that run contrary to the typical habits of these practices. My approach foregrounds certain artefact's own internal and pre-existing complexities, separate from the complexities of an archive. This is distinct from archival art practices that focus on specific histories and their misrepresentation or absence; and practices that critique the archival construct itself.

I undertake the research through the production of moving image and sound artworks that seek to adopt and critically reformulate the processes of commercial film production and the artefacts it produces (such as the location report and the screenplay). This manoeuvre responds to the notion of instrumentality criticised in philosophical thinking about technology and is further informed by a variety of sources and disciplines including literary criticism, film theory and pop-cultural discourses.

The artefacts located by this project are the material remains of non-technical aspects (communities, ideas, events) that have accumulated around the development of moving image and screen-based technological products since the late 20th century, primarily television, the Internet and the digital moving image. Their continued existence as digital files and second-hand products is not the result of an organised recognition of their worth, rather, they have accumulated in the wake of technological advancement as so much junk floating around at the margins of the archive. The intention of the project is not to rehabilitate overlooked materials but to explore the idea that these unheroic fragments and their stubborn specificities actualise moments of lived experience entangled with technology.

*We Are the Road* pays close attention to the transformation of the document from record to material in the precise moment of new art production, which is understood to be an active situation in which complementary and competing ideas, impulses, and opportunities are at work simultaneously. My research seeks to formulate and negotiate new articulations for such a complex and multi-dimensional experience of the present. As such *We Are the Road* is aligned with Raymond Williams' assertion in *Marxism and Literature* (1977, p128) that 'we have indeed to find other terms for the undeniable experience of the present: not only the temporal present, the realization of this and this instant, but the specificity of present being, the inalienably physical.' Importantly, this articulation encompasses how the work I have generated connects to key works and ideas within the field of contemporary artists' moving image, making the moment of production a collapse of origin and destination, reader and maker, audience and producer.