

# SPEAK TO ME

5TH INTERNATIONAL  
BIENNIAL OF MEDIA ART



LAUNCHING AT RMIT GALLERY SEPTEMBER 14 – NOVEMBER 17

## ARCHIE MOORE FOLLOWS THE SIGNS

Evelyn Tsitas



Still from *Kinelexic Tokyo*.  
Image courtesy the artist.

What if you filmed a well-known main road in your city and then used computer technology to take out everything except the written street and shop signs. Would the location still be recognisable? Can you know a place by text in the landscape alone, and not by the image?

That's an idea that interests Brisbane artist Archie Moore, whose work *Kinelexic Tokyo* explores the idea of removing the image in landscape and leaving the manmade signs.

Currently showing in Experimenta *Speak To Me* at RMIT Gallery, *Kinelexic Tokyo* documents the road trip Archie took in Japan in an effort to recreate a similar journey from the 1972 Russian cult science fiction film *Solaris* by Andrei Tarkovsky.

The video footage filmed from the taxi has been broken down into still frames and Archie used Photoshop to hand paint each frame out. The remaining signs, shopfront names, billboards and even car license plates become moving text on the screen.

“I’ve seen blog sites which use Google maps to show what that *Solaris* journey is like today, and compared it with the footage in the film. I travelled down a similar tunnel in the video. The trip was 20 minutes, and I think I was going to use 10 minutes of footage in the final video, but because it was so labour intensive, it became a very short work.”

Ironically, in *Solaris*, Tarkovsky explores the inadequacy and limitations of communication, and the same break down occurred while Archie was filming his homage.

“On the last day I was in Japan, I had this idea. But what I wanted got a bit lost in translation with the taxi driver and the interpreter. They didn’t really understand why I just wanted to drive and film out the window without a real destination,” Archie said.

The resulting work was a time consuming process for the artist to create, as it takes an entire day to paint out a single second of the video frame. The final video is enigmatic – a green screen with flickering Japanese signs that seem to build an urban landscape without buildings or other visual reference points.

Archie has a natural love of language and text, combined with an interest in how signs interpret the landscape. “When I’m in a space I’m always looking at words that I see. What other words are inside that word? Does it spell another word upside down, or could it say something else in Russian when it’s back to front? I’m thinking like that all the time,” Archie said.

“I enjoy exploring the idea of text and place, I want to film going across the city centre of various different cities, and see what is left behind if I take out all imagery except for the text based signs.”

Archie has an indigenous background and he suggests this may influence the unique way he sees the landscape. In a film he shot in Brisbane, he focused on signs that showed indigenous words for some place names and English names for other places and suburbs. “That gives you an idea of prior ownership or other people living here, or of what sort of groups live here, and that’s sort of colonial history as well,” Archie said.

“I’ve just had this idea for a while about just looking at the text when I’m in a car. I thought it could be interesting to remove everything else, just to see what you can ascertain from text. Would you be able to tell where you are? Is there something about the signage in Melbourne or Sydney or Brisbane that makes it unique?”

Evelyn Tsitas, RMIT Gallery, 2012.

RMIT Gallery is the main venue for the launch of *Experimenta Speak To Me*.