

- REPORT -

The Mobile Innovation Network Australasia

*Max Schleser**

Abstract

This report profiles the Mobile Innovation Network Australasia (MINA), detailing screenings, workshops and related activities, and reflecting on new varieties of small-format filmmaking.



Figure 1: MINA.

The Mobile Innovation Network Australasia (MINA) creates interactions between people, content and the creative industries. Last year MINA expanded its reach to Australasia. In order to reflect this, MINA re-launched as Mobile Innovation Network Australasia.

MINA Symposia

During the last few years MINA has hosted the following international research symposia:

Nov 2011 – Massey University (Wellington, NZ) CoCA College of Creative Arts

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Nov 2013 – AUT University (Auckland, NZ) CoLab

Nov 2014 – AUT University (Auckland, NZ) CoLab

Nov 2015 – RMIT University (Melbourne, OZ) Australia

Nov 2016 – Swinburne University (Melbourne, OZ) Australia

The next event, #MINA2018, will take place at Ryerson University, Toronto, Canada (details tbc on www.mina.pro).

Max Schleser is a filmmaker and Senior Lecturer in the Department of Film and Animation at Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne.



Figure 2: MINA Symposium at Massey University in November 2012. Featuring Google + hangout conference calls from around the world.

The annual *International Mobile Innovation Screening* and the *Mobile Creativity and Mobile Innovation Symposium* have become widely recognised for the debates within and beyond the fields of media, art and design. MINA is continuing to grow as a network project between the College of Creative Arts (Massey University, NZ), Co-Lab (AUT University, NZ), RMIT University (Melbourne, NZ) and Swinburne University of Technology (Melbourne, NZ). During the last years MINA hosted a number of screenings in Wellington, Melbourne and internationally, lead workshops in mobile filmmaking and social media distribution and produced mobile-mentaries (mobile documentaries) and smartphone video projects. Next to the creative practice featured on www.mina.pro, MINA published special editions in *Ubiquity: The Journal of Pervasive Media* (Schleser 2014), *The Journal of Creative Technology* (Schleser 2014 and Antonczak 2015) and an edited collection, *Mobile Media Making in an Age of Smartphones* (Berry and Schleser 2014).

Over the last years MINA developed a close working relationship with academics and practitioners in Australia with particular focus on Melbourne at RMIT University, School of Media and Communication and Swinburne University, Department of Film and Animation. Teaming up with theorists and practitioners at RMIT University and Swinburne University, MINA has been organised collectively with Dr Max Schleser (Swinburne University) leading the initiative. MINA would like to use this opportunity to thank Te Rewa O Puanga – School of Music and Creative Media Production, College of

Creative Arts at Massey University, RMIT University, Dr. Patrick Kelly, Dr. Smiljana Glisovic, Dr. Marsha Berry and Dr. Seth Keen, AUT University, Co-Lab and Laurent Antonzack and Dean Keep at Swinburne University for their support.

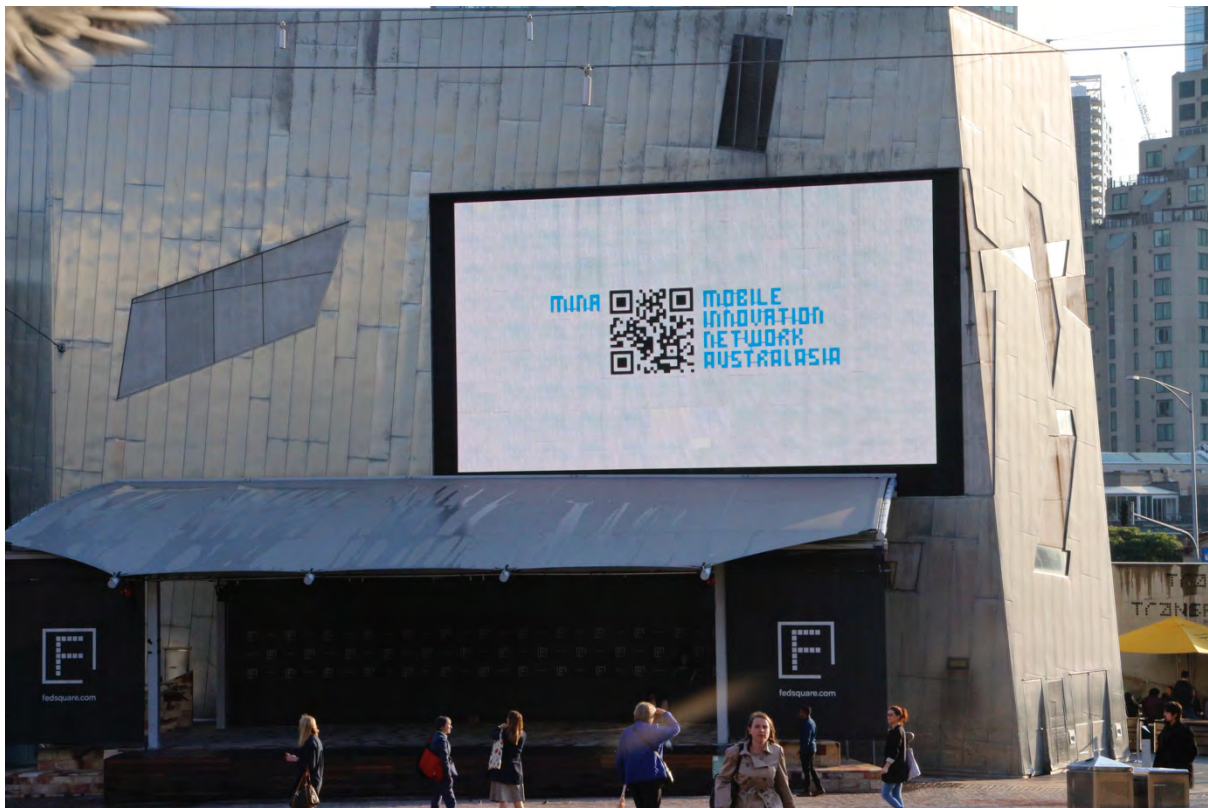


Figure 3. MINA screening at Federation Square, Melbourne, November 2015

The screening also grew in terms of film submissions. The screening programme is more international than ever before and we are excited to present the next edition at ACMI, Australian Centre for Moving Image in Melbourne. The screening program is coordinated and curated by Dr Max Schleser (Swinburne University) in collaboration with Dean Keep (Swinburne University), Adrian Jeffs (Filmmaker), Patrick Kelly (RMIT University) and Gerda Cammaer (Ryerson University, Canada).

The #MINA2015 screening is available via DVD and eBook and will provide an overview of the developments in an exciting and fast moving field. Mobile, smartphone and pocket camera filmmaking's impact on other disciplines within art, media and design and also beyond the creative practice realm is now recognisable.

Now in its seventh edition, the MINA International Mobile Innovation Screening is more diverse, colourful and provocative than ever before. Smartphone filmmaking has become a recognisable feature across the whole media landscape. The BBC started offering training courses for journalist in mobile journalism (mojo). Smartphone filmmaking and mobile media has become a regular feature in broadcast news, and *Tangerine*, a smartphone film production, was the most talked about film at the Sundance Film Festival.



Figure 4: The Call for Mobile, Pocket and Smartphone Films is online at <https://filmfreeway.com/festival/MINA>

There are more than a dozen mobile, smartphone and pocket film festivals around the world and major software companies producing non-linear editing software such as Adobe, Apple and AVID have launched mobile and/or tablet versions for editing on the go. Following the accessibility of video production cameras, now post-production is in the palm of our hands.

The beauty of mobile filmmaking is exposed through the creative exploration of filmmaking and its break from established rules and conventions. While mobile camera phones were never intended for filmmaking when they first appeared, filmmakers and creatives defined the aesthetics and working practices.

The MINA International Mobile Innovation Screening program features works from Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand, Germany, France, India, Iran, Japan and the Philippines. The mobile films capture a space that is often overlooked. The selected works reveal moments of life, capturing the mundane in a poetic way reminiscent of the essay film. Whether waiting at a bus stop or in line, or going through a car wash, the smartphone is always with us. Our thoughts in these situations, which allow us to reflect upon the current moment, can be captured using mobile visual media.

Modern architectural and Japanese landscape features are being used as inspiration for visual compositions. Abstraction is used as a powerful storytelling device. It allows audiences to experience emotions and feelings that are difficult to describe with words.

Some mobile moving-image works are driven by aesthetic explorations using time-lapse, kaleidoscopes or dioramas as inspiration. Messages are personal, intimate and immediate. Some of these works are reflections on life and others on art and culture. Their meanings are powerful as we can connect to the thoughts of the filmmakers. Some

works tackle social problems through a strong statement while others allow us to understand situations of people and their lives.

Access to smartphone technology means that more video works are now surfacing from non-Western countries. Last year's MINA submissions, more than in the last four years together, were more international than ever before. Most submissions were received from the USA, followed by Iran and India. We are excited about these opportunities to welcome new filmmakers from all over the world to the MINA community.

The next generation of filmmakers will utilise the mobile device according to their own ideals and agendas. Mobile filmmaking is engaged in a constant innovation process that is influenced by multiple vectors. It is emerging as a field with its own aesthetic qualities.



Figure 5: MINA screening at the Fringe Festival, Wellington, January 2012

MINA Screenings 2011-2017

2011 - 2017 Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision - New Zealand's moving image and sound archive

2011 Fringe Festival Wellington

2015 Federation Square Melbourne

2016 Swinburne University of Technology and Lido Cinema, Melbourne

2017 ACMI - Australian Centre for the Moving Image

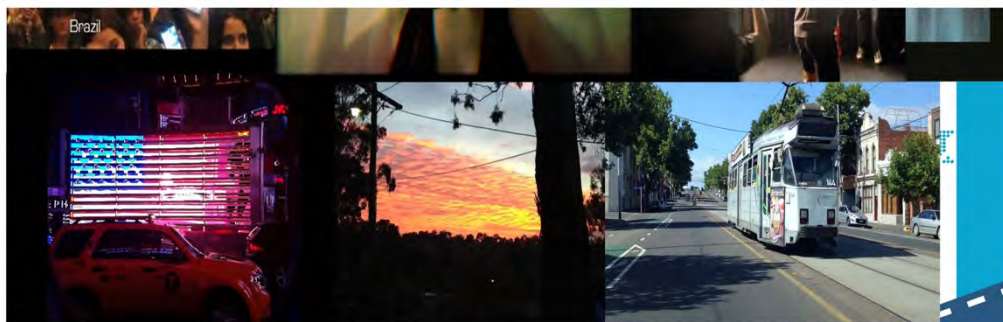
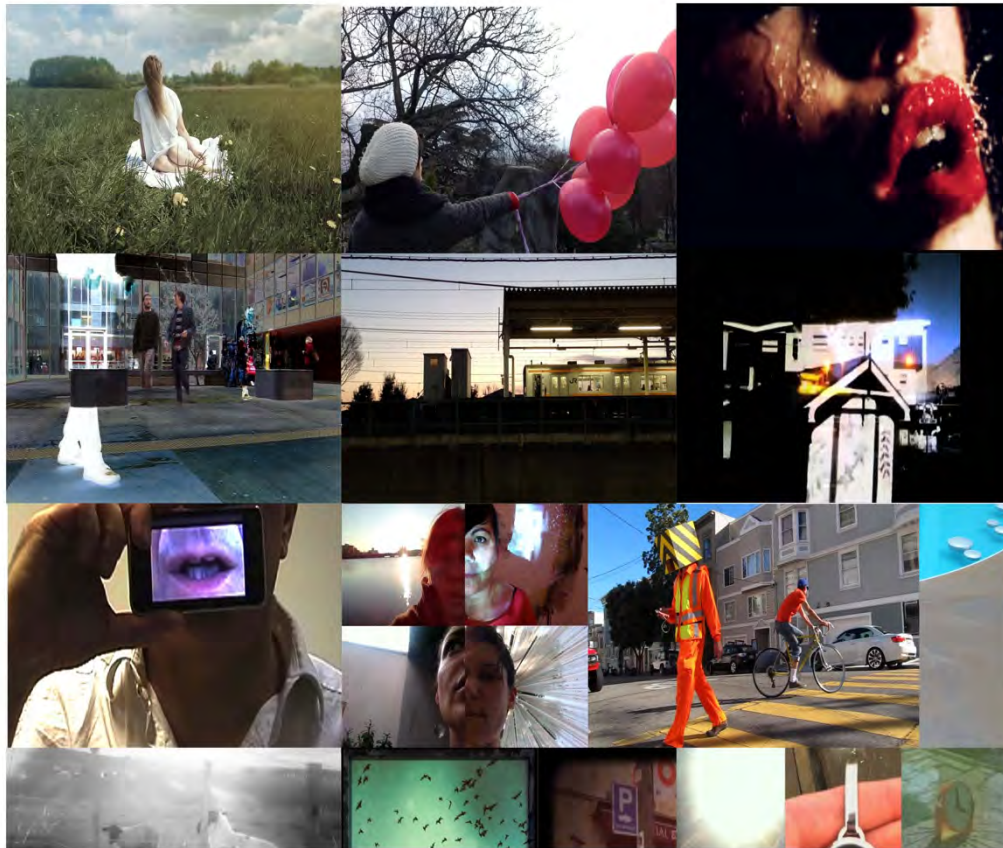


Figure 6: MINA screening 2014, in collaboration with a number of international mobile film-festival partners.



Figures 6 and 7: MINA mobile filmmaking workshops, CoLab (AUT University 2014) and Mobile Film Festival (San Diego 2014).

MINA workshops

MINA runs mobile filmmaking workshops for industry professionals, community groups and organisations. Nowadays smartphones and pocket cameras are ubiquitous. The aim of the workshops is to experiment with smartphones as creative tools and to discover the capabilities of this innovative form of visual storytelling. The mobile phone documentary filmmaking and social media production workshop explores storytelling through linking digital media to local cultures.

Workshops can be run in a day, over a weekend or a number of days. MINA will develop an outline suited to your skills and interest. Workshop facilitators will give you an overview of the many styles and techniques used to create films using a mobile phone. They will explore the ideas, scripting, shooting and editing processes to enable you to produce your own film, whether it's an educational video, experimental film or the next viral hit.

During the last few years MINA published several special issues in the *Journal of Creative Technology* and *Ubiquity: The Journal of Pervasive Media*.

Ubiquity is an international, double-blind peer-reviewed journal for creative and transdisciplinary practitioners interested in technologies, practices and behaviours that have the potential to radically transform human perspectives on the world (<http://www.ubiquityjournal.net/>). 'Ubiquity', the ability to be everywhere at the same time – a potential historically attributed to the occult – is now a common feature of the average mobile phone. The title refers explicitly to the advent of ubiquitous computing that has been hastened through the consumption of networked digital devices. The journal anticipates the consequences for design and research in a culture where everyone and everything is connected, and will offer a context for visual artists, designers, scientists and writers to consider how ubiquity is transforming our relationship with the world.

The MINA Special Edition for the *Journal of Creative Technologies* provides an overview of current developments and dynamics within multi-disciplinary contexts. Issues discussed include mobile media production; mobile pedagogy; mobile aesthetics; mobile hybrid arts; mobile interactivity; mobile space; mobile society; and mobile transmedia. The papers in this Special Edition explore Creative Technologies including AR, Quantum Filmmaking, open-source technologies, i-book publication, mobile video applications and smartphone apps. Innovations afforded by mobile technology are manifest and demonstrated through mobile applications for site-specific installation in a post-gallery context, interdisciplinary participatory art practice, archivists and citizen documentarians, Māori screen industry, and videoloop filmmaking. Discussions integrate theoretical and conceptual frameworks of embodiment, interactivity, mobility, computer science, new media, conceptual art, narrative, participatory archiving strategies, autoethnography, visual culture, and practice-led research. Brought together in this issue, they demonstrate the contributions that mobile media make to the Academy.

Dr. Marsha Berry and Dr. Max Schleser have also co-edited *Mobile Media Making in an Age of Smartphones* (Palgrave Macmillan). With the rise of smartphones and the proliferation of applications ('apps'), the ways everyday media users and creative professionals represent, experience, and share the everyday is changing. With the overlay of location-based services, these experiences and representations are providing new social, creative, and emotional cartographies. This collection discusses the prospects of the proliferation of mobile and digital filmmaking opportunities, from videographic citizen journalism to networked, transmedia collaborative filmmaking and photography, and the embedding of filmmaking and photography in social media practice. The contributors reflect on emergent creative practices as well as digital ethnographies of new visualities and socialities associated with smartphone cameras in everyday life.

Mobile Innovation Network Australasia: <http://www.mina.pro/>

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Contact:

Dr. Max Schleser

MINA Co-Founder & Screening Director

Max@mina.pro | MSchleser@swin.edu.au

Senior Lecturer, Film and Television

Department of Film and Animation

School of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities

Faculty of Health, Arts and Design

Swinburne University of Technology

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