

CV

Chris Howlett

Born 1974, Kokopo in Papua New Guinea, currently lives in Brisbane, Australia.

Education

- 2016-19 *Doctor of Philosophy*, Queensland University of Technology (QUT), QLD, Australia.
2000 *Master of Fine Arts*, California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, Los Angeles, U.S.A.
1996 *Bachelor of Visual Arts*, First Class Honours, QUT, QLD, Australia.

Professional Experience

- 2014-15 *Tutor*, Creative Industries, Queensland University of Technology, QLD, Australia.
2014-16 *Committee Member*, Boxcopy, Brisbane, QLD, Australia.
2008-11 *Lecturer*, Interdisciplinary Sculpture, Queensland College of Art, Brisbane, QLD, Australia.
2006 *Curator*, Debut III, Blindside Artist Run Space, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.
Committee Member, Blindside Artist Run Space Inc., Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

Awards, Grants and Scholarships

- 2014 [*Jeremy Hynes Award*](#), Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.
2013 *Sunshine Coast Art Prize – 3D*, Noosa Regional Gallery, Queensland, Australia.
Ian Potter Cultural Trust, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.
2004 *Arts Queensland Monthly Grant*, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.
1998 *Anne & Gordon Samstag International Visual Art Scholarship*, SA School of Art.

Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2013 [*New Dawn*](#), Boxcopy, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.
[*ARGARMENIA*](#), Tumo – center for creative technologies, Yerevan, Armenia.
2009 [*Flashbacks*](#), Metro Arts, Gallery 2, Edward Street, The City, Brisbane, QLD, Australia.
[*Flashbacks*](#), Balmoral Room, City Hall, The City, Brisbane, QLD, Australia.
2006 *InOut*, Blindside Artist Run Space Inc., Nicholas Building, The City, Melbourne, Australia.
2005 [*Weapons on the Wall*](#), Institute of Modern Art, Fortitude Valley, Brisbane, QLD, Australia.
2003 *Weapons on the Wall*, The Farm Space, The City, Brisbane, QLD, Australia.
2000 [*Hire Me Out*](#), Gallery 1, California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, Los Angeles, U.S.A.
1999 *Untitled Exhibition*, California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, Los Angeles, U.S.A.

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2016 [*GAME VIDEO/ART. A SURVEY, XXI Triennial International Exhibition*](#) – curated by Matteo Bittanti and Vincenzo Trione, IULM, Milan, Italy.
Digital Departures, Caloundra Regional Art Gallery, QLD, Australia.
2015 *Electrofringe*, IRL Digital Festival, Brisbane Power House, QLD, Australia.
2013 [*Yerevan Biennale 01*](#), Armenian Center for Contemporary Experimental Art, Armenia.
[*Gamerz-Festival #09*](#), Aix en Provence – curated by Isabelle Arvers, France.
FILE - Electronic Language International Festival, FIESP Cultural Center, Brazil.
2012 [*DJ Culture: Contemporary Australian Video Art*](#), GOMA, Cinémathèque, Brisbane.
exURBAN SCREENS, Frankston, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.
2011 [*Kick Off*](#), Gold Coast Metricon Stadium, QLD, Australia.
2010 [*Premier of Queensland's National New Media Art Award*](#), GOMA, QLD, Australia.
[*Videoholica - International Video Art Festival: Keep the Illusion Alive*](#), Varna, Bulgaria.
[*Vocal Thoughts*](#), Contemporary Art Centre of SA Inc., Adelaide, South Australia.
Hobart Art Prize, Hobart Art Gallery, Hobart, Tasmania.
Machinima, The Block, QUT; Pinnacles Art gallery, Townsville, QLD, Australia
2009 *Sweet Lip*, Accidently Annie Street Space Artist Run Initiative, Brisbane, QLD, Australia.
Visual Dust, Parer Place screens, Creative Industries, QUT, QLD, Australia.
Everything (et al), Metro Arts, Gallery 2, Edward Street, The City, QLD, Australia.
2008 *Sunshine Coast Art Prize*, Caloundra Regional Art Gallery, QLD, Australia.

- 2007 [*Christopher Howlett Enterprise: this is not art but design*](#), Post Studio Arts, VIC, Australia.
- 2005 [*Arc Biennial: Art & Design*](#), City Hall: Sherwood Room, Brisbane, QLD, Australia.
- 2004 *Contraband, Stowaway Lounge: Artist-Made Karaoke Videos*, 12th Inter-Society of Electronic Arts, Helsinki, Finland and Stockholm & Tallinn, LA Freewaves 9th Festival of Film, C-level, China Town, Los Angeles, U.S.A.
- 2000 *Ply*, Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, Los Angeles, U.S.A.
- 1996 *Cue*, KickArts, Cairns Contemporary Art Space, Cairns, QLD, Australia.

Public Art & Commissions

- 2011 *Kick Off*, Gold Coast Suns Metricon Stadium, QLD, Australia.
- 2010 [*OUT Billboard project*](#), Kelvin Grove, Creative Industries Precinct, Brisbane, Australia.

Interviews

- 2016 [*Interview: Chris Howlett*](#), GAME VIDEO/ART. A SURVEY, XXI Triennial International Exhibition, gamevideoart.org, Milan, Italy.
- 2013 *The World of Alternate Reality Gaming in Armenia*, CIVILNET, Yerevan, Armenia.
- 2012 [*Artistic Machinima and Britney Spear's Pink Mansion by Mathias Jansson*](#), Art21 Blog, Art in the Twenty-First Century, PBS, U.S.A.
- 2010 *Australian Art Market Report Interview by Serena Bentley*, Issue 36, April, Paddington, NSW, AUS.

Selected Publications

- 2017 [*MACHINIMA. 32 Conversations on the Art of Video Games*](#), 158 pages, ISBN: 9781366258540, edited by Matteo Bittanti.
- 2016 [*Catalogue: GAME VIDEO/ART. A SURVEY, XXI Triennial International Exhibition*](#), 112 pages, ISBN-10: 8836634540, Publisher: Silvana (October 27, 2016), edited by Matteo Bittanti.
- 2014 *In Profile: Chris Howlett*, ARGARMENIA by Christy Dena, RealTime Arts Magazine.
- 2013 [*Interview with Mathias Jansson, Machinima!*](#) Theories. Practices. Dialogues by Bittanti, Matteo & Lowood, Henry (Eds.), Milan: Edizioni Unicopli, page 237-251, ISBN 9788840016542.
- [*Eyeline Review, Chris Howlett: New Dawn by Tim Walsh*](#), Eyeline Contemporary Art Magazine, Issue 80, pg.102-103, Queensland Australia
- 2012 [*Confronting Consensus: The Art and Politics of Christopher Howlett*](#) written by Mark Webb and Mark Pennings, Eyeline Contemporary Visual Arts, Issue 76, p.38-47, QLD, Australia.
- 2010 [*In the not too distant future*](#) by José Da Silva, Premier of Queensland's National New Media Art Award Catalogue Essay, p16-19, QLD, Australia.
- 'The past informs the future'* by Danni Zuvela, RealTime Magazine: Issue 99, Oct-Nov, QLD, AUS.
- 2009 [*Flashbacks by Mark Webb*](#), Flashbacks Catalogue Essay, August, Brisbane, Australia.
- Bold Intersection in Time by Suzanna Clarke*, In the Frame, Courier Mail, Aug, Australia.
- [*Flashbacks*](#) by Mark Pennings, Eyeline: Contemporary Visual Arts, no70, p.83, Australia.
- 2006 *A Semiotic Analysis: Sound & Text Exercises*, Blindside Cat. Essay, VIC, AUS.
- 2005 *Let's Get Political by Rex Butler*, in BAM, The Courier Mail, Jan 1st, Brisbane, Australia.
- 2004 [*Weapons on the Wall: Seduction is Important by Chris Handran*](#), IMA cat., QLD, Australia.
- 2003 *Reviews by Chris Handran*, Eyeline: Contemporary Visual Arts, no.52, p.47, Australia.

BIO

Chris Howlett (born 1974, Kokopo, Papua New Guinea) is an Australian artist based in Brisbane, Queensland.

I hold a Masters in Fine Arts from the California Institute of the Arts ([CalArts](#)) made possible through a *Anne & Gordon Samstag International Scholarship* and First Class Honours from a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Queensland University of Technology ([QUT](#)). From 2001–04 and 2014-15 I tutored Studio Art at Creative Industries, QUT and from 2008-11 at the Queensland College of Art ([QCA](#)), Griffith University in Interdisciplinary Sculpture. My education as well as my teaching experiences have greatly influenced my post-studio approach to art making and provide a critical framework to interrogate interdisciplinary practice.

My art practice pursues a wide range of conceptually and politically focused projects, and I work across a range of mediums, including interactive games and sound, painting, video, installation and performance. The nature of this post-studio approach is connected to ideas on situational art, collaboration, authorship, and in particular, West Coast American conceptual art. Los Angeles holds a special importance to my art practice because of the strong artistic friendships I developed there during my three years of study and who all remain a vital part of who I am today.

In my new media projects I'm concerned with how virtual and real environments shift cultural and political understandings of our physical and psychological selves. These spaces may include, online social networking sites, memes and chat-rooms, video games, or MMORPG's (Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games) such as *Sims3*, *World of War Craft* or *Second Life* and the relationship they share to real institutional spaces such as the family, the home, the military, political ideology, or the immediate landscape we all share which have a noticeable, direct impact on our everyday lives.

My diverse practice also expands preconceived notions of narrative and cross-cultural documentary by using Machinima which uses animated filmmaking techniques within a live or constructed video game environment to create cinematic experiences. My recent machinima works include [Argarmenia](#) (2014) and a 4-channel sculptural installation [New Dawn](#) (2013). Previous works include the production of a number of Machinima films in 2009 such as in [Metropolis: Part I-III](#), [Bushstalkers](#), [Homesteads](#), [Michael Jackson 4 Ways](#), [Homestead: Part I & II](#) and [Human vs. Human](#) which examine the slippery relationships between art, politics and entertainment.

Some of my other interdisciplinary projects also include long-term performative and collaborative projects such as *Hire Me Out* (2000) and *Christopher Howlett Enterprise: this is not Art but Design* (2006) which critically, conflates art aesthetics with service based economies involved with the art/design/business nexus, large scale installation, painting and sculptural projects called, *Weapons on the Wall* (2004) that directly confronted consumer culture with the sublime excesses produced by the military-industrial complex and the problematics of art still functioning as a form of counter-culture production inside the gallery space.

Some of my significant milestones have been the *Anne & Gordon Samstag International Scholarship* that enabled me to live and study in Los Angeles over three years and allowed me to set up close relationships within the local arts community. Since then I have made return trips back to Los Angeles to maintain close networks and to develop new exhibition opportunities for my work in the future. In 2016, the selection of my machinima work entitled, *Metropolis* (2009) by curators Matteo Bittanti and Vincenzo Trione was exhibited for the official opening of the *XXI Triennale International Exhibition. 21 Century. Design After Design, GAME VIDEO/ART. A SURVEY Exhibition*, in Milan. My machinima works have also been exhibited internationally in festivals including the *Inter-Society of Electronic Arts* in Helsinki, Finland and Stockholm; the *Videoholica International Video Art Festival* in Bulgaria; the *Freewaves Festival of Film, Video and New Media* in Los Angeles and exhibited work at the Art Centre College of Design and CalArts in California.

My solo works such as *Weapons on the Wall* has been exhibited locally in Brisbane at the Institute of Modern Art, the QUT Art Museum and as part of the *Arc Biennial for Art & Design; Flashbacks* which was a recent new media installation has been exhibited at Metro Arts; and interstate my sound installation called *INOUT* at the Blindside Artist Run Space in Melbourne.

My significant group shows include the [XXI Triennale International Exhibition. 21 Century. Design After Design, GAME VIDEO/ART. A SURVEY Exhibition](#), *Premier's New Media Art Prize*, *Vocal thoughts* at

Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia curated by Peter McKay (now Curator of Contemporary Australian Art at the Gallery of Modern Art), the *Hobart Art Prize*, *Cue* at the Cairns Contemporary Art Space and *KICK OFF* which is a nationally, curated screen-based program at the new Metricon Stadium home ground of the Gold Coast Suns; and local commercial art galleries including Whitebox, Alderton, and Plöetz in Brisbane.

I am currently undergoing a Doctorate of Philosophy at QUT, in Brisbane, Queensland which is to be completed in 2019.

QUOTES

“For me, I think it always comes back to the agency attributed to attaching alternate histories and personal narratives over the top of the prescribed structure of the game narrative and physics. I’m also drawn to online communities that form around specific games and the modding tools that arise out of the forums and discussion boards, and how interstitial spaces open up where players develop software programs to mod(ify) aspects of the game physics or game play. This in turn is distributed freely to other players who publicly suggest further modifications to the original code which gradually gets updated and evolves into something new and unexpected. This is a very interesting form of collaboration where user generated software and expertise start to direct and take control of the desires of the gamers in order to force unforeseen environmental outcomes for the actual game.”

- Chris Howlett, [‘Interview: Chris Howlett’](#), GAME VIDEO/ART. A SURVEY, XXI Triennial International Exhibition, gamevideoart.org, Milan, Italy, July 2016.

“During the last decade we can see a closer connection between war, video games, art and political activism. The term “joystick war” is used to describe a new kind of warfare. Soldiers far away from war zones sit in safe office environments in front of monitors and continually steer drone flights with a joystick with which they can spy on or destroy the enemy. These virtual wars have previously been questioned by several artists such as Joseph Delappe, Harun Farocki and Wafaa Bilal. In many cases, these artists have combined footage from real wars with virtual wars (as video games) to question the borders between real and virtual warfare. Chris Howlett follows this tradition in his new exhibition “New Dawn” when he remixes videos from computer games with online content from news channels and other sources. Howlett examines a changing world where virtual and real life are increasingly entangled and blurred. What will happen to our understanding and experience of violence, death, love and friendship when the borders between real and virtual are no longer discernable?”

- Mathias Jansson, [‘Interview with Mathias Jansson’](#), *Machinima! Theories. Practices. Dialogues* by Bittanti, Matteo & Lowood, Henry (Eds.), Milan: Edizioni Unicopli, page 237-251, ISBN 9788840016542.

“These games, even more so than the massive virtual killing fields of *World of Warcraft*, *Halo* and *Doom*, are premised on ‘remodelling the world and are the expression of a solipsistic mind, of an I/eye that considers itself the sole source of reality, they are about playing God’. It is this ‘interactive scopophilic exercise’, a virtual extension of Jeremy Bentham’s panopticon that allows the player ‘to gaze upon but not be gazed at’, and to ‘manipulate without being manipulated’³. that makes the Sims the ideal site for Howlett to investigate how technology and democracy might come together to simulate real relations of power and control. Through combining 3D game play with interactive game mods, video projections, sound works and site-specific installations, Howlett explores how these technologies reflect where we might be now, as subjects, ‘in the position of programmed device...in the position of programmer’. His practice over the last decade or so has been exploring what Foucault calls the enunciative function in society.”

- Mark Webb, [‘Flashbacks’ Catalogue Essay](#), August 2009, Brisbane, Australia.

“This is where Howlett can be seen to engage with the realpolitik of the everyday because his practice tends to draw and redraw art and political boundaries. His practice has for some time investigated the spaces between art and design, actual and virtual sites and political and aesthetic rhetoric. And these spaces have come together with greater coherency in his most recent explorations with machinima that bring several different and 'improper' worlds into the consensus of gaming world representations. In these exhibitions the viewer is presented with different formal devices for reading screen-based media, and for representing (and misrepresenting) reality. These spaces of representation become psychological zones that explore the public and personal realities of the stories we encounter in the work. And by reprogramming these virtual worlds Howlett interrupts their 'consensus' as it were so as to make visible how the complicated aggregations and displacements of language, power and narrative operate across real social, cultural, political and economic lives.”

- Mark Webb and Mark Pennings ‘[Confronting Consensus: The Art and Politics of Christopher Howlett](#)’, *Eyeline Contemporary Visual Arts*, Issue 76, p.38-47, QLD, Australia.

“Through sheer sensory “overload”, Howlett’s installation demonstrated the proximity of information available through media sources. With no distinct agenda or biases other than the re-presentation of cultural material broadly relating to central themes such as war, fashion, violence, comedy, politics and masculinity. “*Weapons on the Wall*” amplified the sometimes-forgotten assumption that underlies democratic forms of government. That is, the assumption, stemming initially from Rene Descartes and later the Enlightenment Project, that an individual, when presented with the relevant and accurate information, is able to make an informed and rational value judgment. This form of reasoning sustains the integrity of democracy, as opposed to other political systems like Fascism and Communism, by presenting individuals with old adages like “it’s nobody’s fault but my own” and “I should’ve known better”. Howlett’s installation, then, by reserving its own value judgment serves as some kind of catalogue through which opinions and subsequently, debate may emerge.”

- Grant Stevens, ‘*Weapons on the Wall*’, *Catalogue Essay*, August 2003, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.

“Chris Howlett's recent work reflects on these cultural anxieties and the symbolic language of a secular apocalypse. It is an end of the world concept that borrows from the Judeo-Christian belief, that disaster precedes salvation which is now secularised through advances in science and technology and an awareness of humanity's ability to self-destruct. For Howlett, expressions of fear and emergency are located in various forms of media and entertainment, particularly computer games that simulate the popular belief that crisis is looming. Through reorientating the codes and conventions of these games, Howlett produces machinima projects – animated films made within real-time virtual 3D environments – to underscore the agency these technologies have in redefining our subjectivities. As a process of image-making, machinima derives from the participatory culture of computer games, with users recording, re-editing and sharing videos of their expert game play. For artists like Howlett, the remediation of games also functions as a strategy for using the social nature of game play performance to critique itself; and by extension, its preconceived notions of narrative in specific game genres and the capacity of these narratives to reflect on contemporary social values. As Howlett explains, his machinima projects illustrate how 'virtual environments shift cultural and political understandings of our physical and physiological selves'.¹”

- José Da Silva, ‘[In the not too distant future](#)’, *Premier of Queensland’s National New Media Art Award Catalogue Essay*, p16-19, QLD, Australia.