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Title
Creative Destruction: Screen Production Research, Theory & Affect

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Abstract
The documentary film 600 Mills was explicitly funded and produced as an academic research project, designed to investigate, through cinematic means, the decline of the textile industry in the Melbourne suburb of Brunswick. Drawing on the work of Thrift, Deleuze & Guattari, Massumi and others, it is argued that the film production process uses ‘affect’ as a form of sensory knowing that can engage with relevant theory and be used to conceive of filmmaking as a valid form of academic research. This article discusses the approach taken by the three filmmaker-researchers in making a film which, instead of using the medium to convey information or communicate research findings gathered through other means, seeks to use the creative possibilities of film production to convey knowledge about a complex human, social and historical process.

Keywords
filmmaking research, screen production, affect, documentary, film
Biographies

Dr. Leo Berkeley is a senior lecturer within the School of Media and Communication at RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia. He also has considerable experience as an independent filmmaker, having written and directed the feature film, Holidays on the River Yarra, which was an official selection for the Cannes Film Festival in 1991. His current research and production interests are in the practice of screen production, low and micro-budget filmmaking, improvisation, essay films, community media, mobile media and machinima. See leoberkeley.com for more details.

Professor Martin Wood is an organisation theorist interested in documentary and experimental film production. His research has developed both theoretical and practice-based vocabularies to investigate the relationships between organisation, culture and economy. He has continuing interests in all of these areas and developing concerns with the question of how film can present research—employed as a mode of knowledge. He has published on film production as research and received critical acclaim for his short film Lines of Flight, which won significant prizes at film festivals around the world.

Dr. Smiljana Glisovic is an early career researcher in the field of documentary and poetic forms in audiovisual installation. Her other academic interests are in creative practice research, specifically in the field of screen production. Her
creative practice engages with text, moving image and performance. She works sessionally at RMIT University in the School of Media and Communication.

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Introduction

The film 600 Mills is a production by three academic filmmakers at RMIT University, Professor Martin Wood, Dr Smiljana Glisovic and Dr Leo Berkeley. It was funded explicitly as a research project to be undertaken through the production of a film. The content of the film explores the decline of the textile industry in Brunswick, an inner suburb of Melbourne that fifty years ago contained over 600 textile mills, now reduced to around ten through the impact of free trade policies and globalization. The project engages with the work of twentieth century economist Joseph Schumpeter and his influential concept of ‘creative destruction’. From the beginning, an objective of the research was to engage with how film could be used to conduct the research and not just report
on the findings, as a mode of research that produces a unique knowledge artefact rather than merely ‘illustrating’ the work of a written text.

There have been some significant contributions in recent years seeking to articulate the basis on which the creative practice of filmmaking can be considered as a form of academic research (Batty 2015; Bell 2006; Kerrigan, Berkeley, Maher, Sergi and Wotherspoon 2015; Wood and Brown 2010, 2012). Drawing on this work, our project sought to explore questions like how moving images and sounds could convey dimensions of a complex personal, social and political environment, ‘writing’ for the screen in ways not possible using text, but also how this use of film could demonstrate a level of theoretical rigour appropriate for academic research.

Over the course of the production, we filmed interviews with individuals involved in the textile industry, as well as with a range of academics and philosophers, discussing concepts that we wanted to interrogate in relation to the life of this industry. How to use this audiovisual material in the final film was a matter of extensive discussion at the postproduction stage. There was a strong desire to avoid approaching the film as a simple expository work. Instead, we strove to use the specific cinematic qualities of the medium to convey or create sensations for perceiving the research, as when a felt experience produces an emotional as well as cognitive response (Jamieson 2007: 25).
The risk in this situation was creating a work, which instead of producing a
dynamic relationship between intellectual knowledge and sensual experience, did
not do justice to either. The meaning or significance of images can be
ambiguous and the response of individual viewers subjective and varied (Candy
2011). If one applies rational/cognitive criteria in this situation the conclusion
might be that the material does not fulfil the requirements of academic
rigour. However, an alternative position is to argue the need for academic
research to investigate dimensions of lived human experience that are largely
inaccessible to established research methods (Thrift 2008) and for a broader
definition of knowledge to be applied. As highlighted by Candy (2011) in a
discussion of creative practice research and the use of visual media, 'In order to
evaluate the knowledge, we need a common language. Whether or not there is
a commonly understood language that is embodied in an artefact, is a
contentious issue’ (p. 44). Contributing to a greater understanding of this issue is
an objective of our project and one that we as researcher-filmmakers focus on in
this paper.

The film’s production, in relation to how the research was undertaken, has been
an evolving process. Using an iterative reflective practice method characteristic
of a ‘screen production enquiry’ methodology (Kerrigan et. al. 2015), periods of
creative development, filming and post-production have been interspersed with
regular discussions in relation to the creative, theoretical and intellectual
objectives of the research. Several of these discussions were audio-recorded
and we have used them as data for this paper. The three researchers all have different perspectives and roles on the project and their interactions have brought to the fore significant factors that inform how a creative film can ‘do research’ in an academic context.

Martin Wood is a professor in the field of organisation studies. His short documentary film *Lines of Flight* (2014) received recognition and won significant prizes at film festivals around the world. Smiljana Glisovic is a newly postdoctoral researcher with a maturing art practice in the field of writing, performance and film, which supports her academic research. Leo Berkeley is an established Australian filmmaker-academic. He has written and directed a feature film selected for the Cannes Film Festival and gained a PhD involving the production of a drama film in 2012. All three were involved in organizing *Sightlines*, a 2014 film festival/conference focused on filmmaking in the academy.

In addition, the cinematography and sound recording for *600 Mills* were done by Polly Stanton, an audio-visual artist and researcher whose work investigates how cinematic forms document, reflect and shape human experiences of place and environment.

Figure 1: Disused clothing outlet, Lygon Street Brunswick (frame from the film *600 Mills*)

**The Film**
600 Mills is a film-as-research project that looks at the way innovation economics affects ordinary people. Part of the film is a response to the destructive side of business innovation, by which new products and processes replace outdated ones. Set in the heart of Melbourne’s textile and clothing sector, the film is a lament to manufacturing decline over the past 40 years and the struggles against mill closures because of economic recession and the restructuring of industry. However, the film takes a further step to focus on how these circumstances also create forces and spaces of counter-action that present alternatives to profit-maximising economic activity and may ultimately encourage a more sustainable innovation process. At the heart of the story are a number of small makers and crafters who flourish because of their skill and ingenuity in grasping opportunities and affecting a different relation to innovative economic activity. One of these is a father and son team who established the brand Otto and Spike that is built on a sustainable business model using leftover resources from large-scale textile industry closures to make fashion accessories in a nimble and adaptable way.

The production of the film was supported by funding from the Global Cities Research Institute at RMIT University. The role of filmmaking in the process and the relationship between filmmaking practice and academic research were identified in the initial research questions for the project:
1. How can we evoke alternatives in the current global capitalist system to the view that innovation is only sustained through creative destruction?

2. How do the theoretical, practical and aesthetic preoccupations of filmmaking help us study organizational innovation and, in turn, advance our understanding of filmmaking practice?

3. How can the wider epistemological array that film-based study provides gain a stronger foothold in academic research?

These questions highlighted the interests of the researchers in developing the use of creative film practice as a research activity, including through investigating the human dimensions of broader social and cultural processes. One focus was on how filmmaking could be used as a medium of transmission to turn material about organisational innovation into what could be described as a multisensory knowledge situation, to bring to expression the capitalist process of creation and destruction (for example, through the use of affective processes of empathy and suggestion). Rather than simply being a tool to 'record and store' disembodied findings, we wished to use film to approach the 'interspace' between people and cinematic events in order to create something new.

Our production process started with an outline/proposal, which was the basis on which funding was obtained. This money allowed us to hire a professional cinematographer, an important issue given the high production values and emphasis we wanted to place on aesthetic dimensions in the film. Our early pre-
production discussions focused on possible qualitative resonances between the various topics of interests, such as the ideas of Joseph Schumpeter and the textile industry in Brunswick. In these discussions we were trying to understand ways in which these diverse topics shared ‘cinematic’ qualities such as texture, colour and rhythm.

Filming took place between May and November 2015 and was an open-ended, exploratory process, continually adjusted in the light of material obtained and with time for discussion and reflection as we went along. In many cases, aesthetic decisions were not pinned down before filming: it was an improvisatory approach where the researchers and cinematographer made decisions on the spot, based on our creative objectives and what was available at the time and location. We explicitly wanted to avoid working from a predetermined narrative, to allow opportunity for unexpected ideas and encounters to emerge from the process.

As with most documentaries, the editing stage was important for shaping and structuring the film. On this production, the three filmmakers used the editing stage to have detailed conversations about how the film should be put together. Several additional shoots were held after the editing process began, to allow a refocusing of the film in the light of these conversations and a review of our objectives.

At the time of writing, the film is not fully complete, being currently in the final stages of post-production. While there may be some further fine-tuning to the
editing, we do not anticipate changes that would invalidate the comments in this paper. The version of the film as it currently stands can be viewed online at: vimeo.com/153051457.

**The style of the film**

There was agreement among the three researchers that this project needed to be exploratory, so that we used film production to discover the research and create an artefact that went beyond the communication of information. We wanted the film to be more than a conventional television documentary, where the key formal elements are primarily verbal and illustrative: interviews and voice-over for exposition and analysis, as well as overlay footage to visually highlight the points being discussed. However, beyond this agreement, many other aspects of the film’s style were the subject of debate. Among the three researchers, even the use of ‘talking heads’ interviews generated lively discussion. One view expressed was that this sort of interview is making no use of the film medium and could just as easily be transcribed as text. But this is to oversimplify the situation. ‘Pictorial’ argumentation (Mitchell, 1994) is possible and we can conceive of a medium shot (from the waist up) and a close up (from the neckline up) of a human subject as both a representation and a performance at the same time. For instance, whilst the focus of an interview is on a person talking, the performative aspect of this is significant beyond what can be understood from the explicit meaning of their words, such as tone of voice, facial
expression and overall appearance. Particularly if the interview is not just focused on imparting information but deals with the person reflecting on their feelings and memories, the affective component of the interview can be a significant part of the viewing experience.

One of the key interview subjects in 600 Mills gives a fine example of the non-verbal characteristics relevant to pictorial argumentation. He is an older man talking about his life in the textile industry, a story of struggle and survival with many twists and turns. Initially conveying a demeanor of age and weariness, there are surprising moments when the man is asked about the issue of creativity or retells how his business was saved by getting into the manufacturing of beanies, which adds an element of incongruous humour that would be hard to convey without experiencing the tone of voice and the sparkle in the eye that occurs as it unfolds on screen.

Given the academic context for the production and our use of filmmaking practice as part of our methodology, a question we had as filmmaker-researchers was the relationship between the film and other forms of argumentation that underpin the research. Extended video interviews were conducted with four prominent academics and philosophers around the work of Schumpeter and continental philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari as they related to the project. The key issue that emerged in relation to this material was the extent to which it should be used explicitly in the film and how it should be balanced against both
the textile industry interviews and a variety of overlay/audiovisual imagery. Here again, we did not want the film merely to record philosophical arguments being stated onscreen. What was important in developing an effective response was a careful consideration of the nature of screen production research and how it is positioned in relation to other forms of academic research and other forms of creative screen practice. This question is one of aesthetics and needs to take into account the specific research topic, the methodologies, and the audience and publication platforms involved. To examine this issue in more detail this paper will focus on the approach we took in relation to the key theoretical concept of ‘creative destruction’ and its use in the design and production of the film.

Figure 2: Textile worker (frame from the film 600 Mills)

The Theory

From the beginning, the rationale for the film was to create a relationship between Schumpeter’s concept of ‘creative destruction’ and the past, present and future of the Brunswick textile, clothing and footwear sector. Mainly elaborated in chapter seven of his book ‘Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy (Schumpeter 1950), this theory has achieved increased prominence in recent years as it seems particularly well-suited to dealing with the type of economic disruption evident through the impact of digital technology in the 21st century. In explaining
the dynamics of capitalism, Schumpeter shifted the focus away from price competition. He recognized that 'it is not that kind of competition which counts but the competition from the new commodity, the new technology, the new source of supply, the new type of organization' (p. 83). He observed that this type of competition 'strikes not at the margins of the profits and the outputs of the existing firms but at their foundations and their very lives' (p. 83). Schumpeter maintained that the process of creative destruction 'is the essential fact about capitalism' and that it 'incessantly revolutionizes the economic structure from within, incessantly destroying the old one, incessantly creating a new one' (p. 82). As highlighted by Potts in his interview about Schumpeter for the film 600 Mills (2016, 03:51), creative destruction is often a positive process for consumers, who benefit from the drive within capitalism to continually provide new and cheaper goods and services. However, the destructive side of the process can have a significant negative impact on workers and owners of capital.\footnote{2} It is the human side of this that the makers of 600 Mills wanted to explore as one of its main areas of focus.

The researchers were also interested in investigating whether there were circumstances where there could be ‘creative’ economic activity without ‘destruction’ necessarily being linked to it. Here, we drew on the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and their concept of ‘holey space’, which connects the ‘striation’ or organization of the world with possibilities for experimentation, together with Swann (2014) and his concept of ‘common innovation’, which
broadens the definition of wealth away from a material focus to include personal and community wellbeing. Within the film, this involved speaking to and filming a range of talented and creative people in the current textile, clothing and footwear sector, drawing out the connection between free action and structural organization involved in their efforts to escape traditional economic structures (and the destructive forces associated with them) as they attempt to create new ethical and sustainable business models.

Given the salience of the concept of creative destruction in the development and conduct of the research, a pressing question for us as filmmakers was how explicit it should be in the final film. It was used to inform what material was filmed, what interview questions were asked and how the documentary was being structured. In a text-based research project, it would certainly be explained (or at least referenced) and applied to the case study under investigation. Why would this not be the case for screen-based research?

One issue relates to the audience for an academic film work. The film image as a means of communication has the potential to carry at one and the same time both explicit and implicit information. This means the audience needs to be familiar with both formal and informal codes of information in the search for meaning. Second, for filmmaker-researchers, one appeal in undertaking screen-based research is the possibility of having an impact on a wider audience than is usual for written academic publications. However, this broader audience focus
has implications for the conceptual content in the work. Given that knowledge of economic theory is likely to be limited to a narrow range of disciplinary specialists, the concept of creative destruction would have to be explained, with the risk of either over-simplifying the concept with a limited explanation, or alienating the audience with a lengthy one. The issue of citation is also a relevant factor, particularly given the need to situate research within a specified field. A standard expectation in text-based research, citation in linear, time-based screen works is problematic. We are not aware of an approach, such as subtitles or inter-titles, which is not overly intrusive on the viewer experience, although a reference list in the end credits goes some way towards addressing this problem.

However, the issues discussed above assume that screen-based research takes the same rational/cognitive/discursive approach to conducting and disseminating research as text-based forms. It can be argued this should not necessarily be the case. As a form of communication, film has different affordances to written text and an effective use of the medium should take advantage of these. Two distinctive strengths of the medium already alluded to are its ability to convey lived human experience and what has been referred to as ‘affect’.

Film is a versatile medium that can be used many ways but its photographic qualities underpin its ability to capture and convey human experience on screen (Andrews 2010). This ability is, of course, constructed through framing, lighting,
editing and many other tools of the form but the temporal and spatial richness of what can be communicated offers great potential to researchers, a potential recognized in fields well beyond the creative arts. (Pink 2007; Wood 2010) That film is 'read' differently to written text is hardly a novel statement, with decades of screen and media studies research analyzing this process and the required literacies being taught widely in schools and universities (Bordwell & Thompson 2013). What is less explored is the application of the expressive qualities of the film medium to the concept of knowledge, as it is used in academic research. In particular, we wanted to consider how film engages with the viewer in ways that cannot be clearly defined in written or verbal terms.

Affect

The focus on affect as a field of study has been growing over the past twenty years (Massumi 2015; Anderson 2014; Seigworth & Gregg 2010; Brennan 2004), with Thrift (2008) arguing for it to be given far greater attention in social science research. Stressing the extent to which the world is only partially understood, Thrift advocates for new approaches to better understand what escapes existing academic discourses, an approach that ‘values the pre-cognitive as something more than an addendum to the cognitive’ (2008 p.6).
Cautioning that affect should not be conflated with a simple notion of emotion, but addresses a broader field of sensory experience, Thrift argues that it is a form of thinking in action:

Affect is a different kind of intelligence about the world, but it is intelligence nonetheless, and previous attempts to either relegate affect to the irrational or raise it up to the level of the sublime are both equally mistaken. (Thrift 2008 p. 175)

For those used to the reason and rationality of traditional forms of academic discourse, even those that attempt to persuade us with emotion, scholars of affect studies acknowledge the 'muddiness' (Gregg and Seigworth 2010 p. 4) and 'messiness' (Thrift 2008 p. 169) of this research field. However, its significance in better understanding the full spectrum of human experience is hard to argue with. For Thrift, a human geographer:

Cities can be seen as roiling maelstroms of affect. Particular affects like anger, fear, happiness and joy are continually on the boil, rising here, subsiding there, and these affects continually manifest themselves in events which can take place either at a grand scale or simply as a part of continuing everyday life. (2008 p. 171)
To what extent is affect relevant to screen production research? Or, put another way, if affect is 'a kind of intelligence', does screen production research have the capacity to affect us, as another mode of knowing that can shock or jolt us into conscious thought (Larsson, 2016)? Presence argues that ‘cinematic spectacle is affective by nature’ (2012 p. 1) and that 'researching affect is an important project that constitutes a fundamental part of understanding our relationship with audio-visual images' (2012 p. 8). This relationship lies at the core of the affective encounter that forces us to think, without which there is no communication (Jamieson, 2007; Larsson, 2016). While affect has been studied from a range of perspectives (Thrift p. 175-182), this paper is dealing with the concept with reference to the work of Spinoza, as developed by Deleuze and Guattari. From this perspective, affect deals with sensation. It ‘gives us an affective shock’ (Deleuze, 1989: 156) that is pre-personal, pre-cognitive and distinct from individual ‘lived affections’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1996 p. 169):

affect behaves like pain, in that it can be described as ‘the body's way of preparing itself for action [...] by adding a quantitative dimension of intensity to the quality of an experience’.\[14\] (Presence p. 2)

Shouse explains that ‘Without affect feelings do not “feel” because they have no intensity’ (2005 para. 11). Understood in this way, affect can be considered as what moves us when we watch a film, what ‘gets under our skin’, a bodily experience of sensory intensity we have prior to and outside of conscious
awareness or control. The role of affect can perhaps be seen more clearly in the way that people experience music:

In a lot of cases, the pleasure that individuals derive from music has less to do with the communication of meaning, and far more to do with the way that a particular piece of music ‘moves’ them. While it would be wrong to say that meanings do not matter, it would be just as foolish to ignore the role of biology as we try to grasp the cultural effects of music. Of course, music is not the only form of expression that has the potential to transmit affect. Every form of communication where facial expressions, respiration, tone of voice, and posture are perceptible can transmit affect, and that list includes nearly every form of mediated communication. (Shouse 2005 para. 13)

In shooting and editing a film, filmmakers either explicitly or implicitly concern themselves with the 'musical' side of filmmaking, the role of rhythm, tempo and tone in the way that images and sounds function separately and in complex patterns of relation that are created to affect a viewer. In their discussion of art and affect in the book ‘What Is Philosophy’ (1996), Deleuze and Guattari stress the central role of sensation in the way a work of art is composed: 'Whether through words, colors, sounds, or stone, art is the language of sensations' (1996 p. 175). This point is elaborated by Rutherford with reference to film: 'Cinema is
not only about telling a story; it’s about creating an affect, an event, a moment which lodges itself under the skin of the spectator.' (2003 p. 16)

We argue that for filmmakers concerned with writing for the screen, investigating how affect is used in the aesthetic composition of the work is a neglected area where greater knowledge would meaningfully contribute to the development of the field of screen production research. As Deleuze and Guattari maintain: 'artists are presenters of affects, the inventors and creators of affects.' (1996 p. 175)

While Thrift does not deal directly with film production, he makes clear that the arts offers possibilities for the exploration of affect and is unconvinced by methodological concerns:

I believe that the performing arts can have as much rigour as any other experimental setup, once it is understood that the laboratory, and all the models that have resulted from it, provide much too narrow a metaphor to be able to capture the richness of the worlds. (2008 p. 12)

Given that affect is pre-conscious, what features does it share with cognitive understanding and linguistic discourse? Brown and Tucker (2010) see this is a significant challenge in social science research, arguing for the use of 'intermediary concepts' to address it: ‘The ineffability, the inexpressibility of affect
becomes its key motif” (p. 238). However, like Thrift (2008), Deleuze and Guattari argue that affect is a form of thinking. In comparing philosophy, science and art, they see thought as belonging to all three: "Thinking is thought through concepts, or functions, or sensations and no one of these thoughts is better than another, or more fully, completely, or synthetically “thought”" (1996 p. 197). Massumi also sees a need for greater awareness of thought 'couched in bodily feeling' (2015 p. 9):

Thinking through affect is not just reflecting on it. It is thought taking the plunge, consenting to ride the waves of affect on a crest of words, drenched to the conceptual bone in the fineness of its spray. Affect is only understood as enacted. (2015 p. vii)

For a project like 600 Mills, this suggests possibilities for a discussion of the use of affect in the making of the film, where Deleuze and Guattari see the role of style as central in the composition of 'blocs of sensation' (1996, p. 175) used in artistic works:

In each case style is needed—the writer’s syntax, the musician’s modes and rhythms, the painter’s lines and colors—to raise lived perceptions to the percept and lived affections to the affect. (1996 p. 169)
This approach has been taken up in relation to film by Rutherford (2003) and Presence (2012), who argue for a focus on mise en scène as a way to examine the use of affect in cinema.

For it is not just what is put into the frame, but what is put into the moment of experience: how the spectator is drawn into the scene. This must be understood as the evocation of a sympathetic excitation or resonance in the spectator as embodied—how the embodied affect of the spectator is aroused, activated, enhanced, brought into play. (Rutherford 2003 p. 19)

Looking specifically at the production of the film 600 Mills, can affect theory applied to an analysis of the mise en scène help an understanding of how research can be conducted through the making of a film? Even at the level of 'talking heads' interviews, such as those featuring the father and son textile manufacturers, there are affective dimensions of the interviews that would not be communicated through written text but which enhance our knowledge of the situation being investigated, such as 'the intricacies of talk, body language, even an ambient sense of the situation to hand' (Thrift 2008 p. 7) that are communicated. In the following sections, we would like to examine a series of examples from the film 600 Mills in relation to this argument, which include both human and non-human audiovisual material.

Figure 3: Interview frame from the film 600 Mills
Creative Destruction on Screen

As the description of an economic theory, ‘creative destruction’ is a particularly evocative term, its two words both carrying an emotive resonance, as well as being in a provocative tension when placed side by side. However, as stated by Potts in the film, ‘creative destruction is not a morally loaded term, it’s a description of a process’ (600 Mills, 2016, 03:11). Can film contribute to an understanding of this process that differs from the linguistic, written or verbal, by creating sensations for perceiving the world in ways that engage with the concepts concerned? For example, when we interviewed people caught up in the destruction of the textile industry in Brunswick, what is going on apart from the meaning of their words? In this sense, we argue, viewing the film is a visceral activity. The viewer ‘becomes aware’ of the human story involved through feeling and sensation, as a felt experience, rather than simply being ‘made aware’ of the process via an intellectual process (Jamieson, 2007: 14).

The father interview

A key interview in the film is with an older textile manufacturer, the father in the father/son team behind the brand Otto and Spike. This interview highlights a number of features that work to create a potentially affective moment. The first is the ability of the spoken word to immerse the viewer in the immediacy of social...
intercourse in the here and now. As distinct from written text, which the reader surveys but does not inhabit, the spoken word has a performative and improvisational dimension that conveys much about the affective force of the encounter: the character of the person speaking, their education, ethnicity, social and cultural influences, as well as countless overt and unobtrusive affective qualities like their sincerity, conviction and friendliness that produce automatic responses below consciousness. With the spoken word, much can be conveyed beyond the meaning of their words through pauses, hesitations, stumbles, emphases, repetitions and the myriad variations in tone of voice. The complexities and subtleties of a human personality are on display. And this is all filtered through the technical and creative tools used in the filmmaking process, such as framing, lighting, staging and editing, which the filmmaker uses to trigger a perceptual involvement rarely found in the printed word.

In relation to this interview, notable moments were the reaction of the father when he was asked to talk about his ‘creativity’, when he surprisingly opened up and showed a side of his personality that was not evident elsewhere in the interview, a passion for risk-taking and a compulsion to follow his creative ideas at all costs that contrasted with the impression of an experienced and steady businessman displayed at other times. His face became more animated and his voice more passionate. Without a doubt, the final response in the interview induced one of the most emotive moments in the film. When asked to look back on his life, he seemed to be thinking deeply, recalling painful events and
choosing his words carefully as he described himself as a ‘survivor’ and a ‘fighter’, followed by a lengthy pause before finishing with ‘and I’m still doing it’. 

(600 Mills, 2016, 07:54) He seemed personally affected and it was hard not to be affected in response. The sequence makes ‘the “life” of the world materially manifest’ (Moxey, 2008: 131): his emotion is evident in his eyes, his tone of voice and a change in his manner from earlier, as well as serving as a monument of memory that is normally ‘exorcised in the name of readability and rationality’ (Moxey, 2008: 131) in more matter-of-fact answers.

Figure 4: Interview frame from the film 600 Mills

Other textile industry interviews

The other two interviews involving participants in the Brunswick textile industry were the son (and business partner) of the first interview subject, and the head of the local textile industry union. The son provided a second account of many of the same issues as his father and, from a research perspective, the contrast between the two versions was instructive. It was not a matter of greater or lesser accuracy but of two testimonies that reflected differing generations, personalities and individual responses to the ‘destruction’ they were experiencing and possibilities for surviving it. In the context of this paper, this could be seen as a
type of field opening up between the two testimonies, a field that enables resonances and affective experiences to be expressed.

Michele O’Neil, National Secretary of the Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union of Australia (TCFUA), the peak body in the country, was able to clearly articulate a broader perspective to the changes in the industry over the past fifty years, as well as a workers’ perspective that contrasted with the two manufacturers. The affective potential of this perspective was very evident. The impact on thousands of human beings of job losses stemming from tariff changes in the 1980’s was clearly and passionately articulated:

There was significant fear and concern and anger amongst workers and their unions about what that meant, what it meant for the future of the industry but also what it meant importantly for their jobs and their communities.

(600 Mills, 2016, 03:26)

Academic interviews

Jason Potts, a professor of economics, was also interviewed for the film on Schumpeter and the concept of creative destruction. He explained and contextualized the concept within the history of economics and discussed its
contemporary relevance. This interview is relevant to a discussion of affect in comparison to the other three. The relative clarity of abstract theory and the critical distance in which it was discussed contrasted with the messiness, complexity and variability of human responses to the theory in practice. However, this interview in turn had its own affective dimension that would not be present if the same words had been conveyed through written text, particularly when located amongst other interviews and imagery.

The extent to which the three interviews with academics/philosophers - Erin Manning, Brian Massumi and Jon Roffe - were used varied significantly through the editing process. In each case, their thoughts and insights were felt to be important but a decision was eventually made to use their explicit discussion of theoretical ideas sparingly, stimulating thought in combination with the creative use of images and sounds, rather than dominating the structure of the film.

Figure 5: Textile worker (frame from the film 600 Mills)

The contribution of the filmmakers

The various interviews with the participants in the film 600 Mills are all mediated on many levels through our work as filmmakers, from what questions are asked, to how the people are filmed but particularly through the editing of the audiovisual material. Selecting and structuring the interview grabs allow the filmmaker-
researchers to tell a story or construct an argument about the topic of the film. Which individual shot segments are used, how they begin and end, and where they are positioned in relation to other shots and sounds can be highly manipulated to take raw filmic data and fashion something quite different from it. In the context of academic research, this process is informed by a process of ethics approval and oversight but the scope for creative and affective input is still significant. For example, the positioning of material from the four interviews dealing with the concept of creative destruction allowed contrasting perspectives to set up a process of critique and contextualization around the concept, a type of data triangulation working on many levels not available through written text. On a simple level, just selecting the most affectively 'loaded' segments is a common filmmaking strategy, as well as using material that enhances drama and conflict evident in the interviews. An approach that sets a high ethical standard in this stage of the process is arguably an important element of what distinguishes a film made as academic research.

A topic of discussion among the three filmmaker-researchers on 600 Mills was the extent to which the ‘argument’ constructed by the editing should be open or closed. It was quite possible to either select material that was all consistent with one perspective on the concept of creative destruction, or alternatively, construct the film around an interplay of contrasting and contradictory views. This debate is similar to the issue of whether expository voice-over narration should be used, employed to direct the viewer’s interpretation of the material (Nichols 1991 p. 34).
It was felt that a more open approach would encourage a more active audience engagement with the issues being explored by the film, forcing the viewer to construct their own interpretation of what was being presented, and this in turn would enhance the affective impact of the work.

Figure 6: Rooftop Garden (frame from the film 600 Mills)

The use of other imagery

A similar debate occurred around the use of non-interview audiovisual material, to be used either on its own or as overlay for interview segments. This material included shots of Brunswick streets, a textile factory in operation and relevant historic archival footage. As the production evolved, we also felt a range of less directly relevant, more ‘poetic’ images might be useful to include in the film, so shots that were felt to less directly evoke either creativity, destruction or change (which emerged as an overarching theme) were recorded. These images included tight shots of fabric, empty corridors, desolate building interiors, bushfires, aerial city views and shots of greenery in an urban environment. There was a spectrum of possibilities in how these shots could be used, with extensive discussion and numerous options explored through the editing process.
Our objective was to use the visual material, not as illustrations of explicitly stated ideas or concepts, but to create new connections and provoke new thoughts for the viewer. While we understood that a use of imagery that was not clearly relevant to the spoken word content running simultaneously would likely generate a wide and unpredictable variety of viewer responses, an open-ended process was our goal:

To affect and to be affected is to be open to the world, to be active in it and to be patient for its return activity. This openness is also taken as primary. It is the cutting edge of change. It is through it that things-in-the-making cut their transformational teeth. (Massumi 2015 p. ix)

However, using imagery affectively in this way was not straightforward. It became clear that if we wanted a viewer to accept this approach, we could not introduce it half-way through the film, shifting from a style that was conventionally expository to one where the use of imagery was more evocative and required the viewer to make their own connections as the film unfolded. Setting up the style of the film in the beginning to gesture towards this kind of affective treatment of images was important in terms of orienting the audience toward this kind of experience of the work. This had as much to do with tempo as with the content of the particular shots. A sequence of night-time shots of the city taken from high in the tallest building in Melbourne was used and the duration of the shots was a judgment made through 'feel', responding to the movement within the statically-
framed shots, a cutting rhythm set up from the first edit, and the need to establish that this film would create a different sort of stylistic space, where the images had time to register affectively beyond their functional purpose within a predetermined linear narrative.

Through an iterative, trial-and-error editing process, we judged that some shots and some editing rhythms had greater affective intensity than others. An example of this process was a sequence involving an interview with the owner of a small local fashion label, attempting to run his business in an ethical and sustainable way. This scene occurred in the second half of the film, which was designed to contrast new 'creative' possibilities for fashion and textile practice emerging from the 'destruction' of the twentieth century mass production manufacturing industry covered in the first half. As we started editing the footage, we realised that creating aesthetic ‘blocs of sensation’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1996 p. 175) that suited our purposes required shots that were neither too literal nor too unrelated to the focus of the scene. An early attempt to edit the scene used shots of fabric and garment construction to accompany the interview audio discussing the subject’s experiences in the fashion and textile industry. However, we felt this use of imagery was too obvious and conventional, a predictable approach that would lead to a predictable (and possibly disengaged) response from the viewer. A next version used handheld tracking shots along empty corridors in an old building, a speculative attempt to trial an alternative approach. While film images can elicit diverse and unpredictable responses, the
consensus was that these shots just did not evoke anything useful. Their connection to the themes of the film and the content of the interview were too obscure.

Following discussion and additional shooting, the third iteration of the edit used a range of shots taken in a rooftop garden located in the middle of the city, featuring green plants and vines with city buildings in the background. It was felt these shots, combined with the spoken word audio, could successfully achieve our aims, able to provoke an affective/sensory response that opened spaces for thought around the themes of our film. We would argue they were able to achieve this through the aesthetic deployment of design and creative techniques available to filmmakers. The shots were carefully selected and framed to highlight the green of the plants moving in the breeze in the foreground with the solid, monolithic greyness of the city buildings in the background. This is an approach known in poetry as ‘chiming’, which creates resonances and connections across the work in order to suggest relationships, and also to create a sense of a constellation amongst the concepts. In this case the garden evokes discussions on ecosystems that occurred in interviews within the film (600 Mills, 2016, Dwyer, 10:01 and Potts, 08:38).

The strategy for using shots that do not directly illustrate spoken word content, which was set up at the start of the film, brought to the fore elements like rhythm, counterpoint and symmetry in the use of the visuals. These elements are always
present in film editing but became more explicit in our thinking as filmmakers, given the stylistic approaching we were taking. Contrasts in colour and the use of focus contributed to a process of aesthetic composition, which according to Deleuze and Guattari, ‘is the work of sensation’ (1996 p. 191). This compositional work extended to judgments about the affective impact of shots when experienced within the broader scope of the film. The use of this ‘urban foliage’ imagery came in the film following the use of mechanical/industrial and ‘urban wasteland’ imagery in the first half of the film, then shots of bushfire flames in the transition to the second half of the film. It was hoped the urban foliage sequence would be experienced in the context of these earlier shots, contributing to a palette of audiovisual and affective means through which concepts in the film such as ‘creative destruction’ could be both ‘felt’ and ‘thought’.

Conclusion

In his introduction to A Thousand Plateaus, Brian Massumi has said ‘Filmmakers and painters are philosophical thinkers to the extent that they explore the potential of their respective mediums and break away from the beaten paths’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987 p. xiii). It was in this context that we approached the production of 600 Mills, seeing it as an opportunity to explore
‘how creative practice and theoretical research interpenetrate’ (Manning and Massumi 2014 loc 1579).

In 600 Mills, we were trying to use film to research the decline of the textile manufacturing industry in Brunswick in the later stages of the twentieth century and what it has more recently transformed into, using the specific creative potentials of the medium to explore the human dimensions of what occurred and the usefulness of some theoretical concepts in understanding the process. This understanding was not the acquisition of knowledge in the rational/cognitive sense but involved a broader concept of sensory and embodied knowledge that is increasingly the focus of researchers engaged with affect studies. Massumi (2015 p. 4) and Thrift (2007 p. 177) see the experience of affect as related to a feeling of a change in capacity. The sense of affect being involved with transformational thinking-in-action is one of the reasons it seems a productive area to explore in the development of screen production as research, a 'transversal' concept whereby traditional boundaries are challenged, between art and science, thought and emotion, and filmmaking and text-based research.

We wanted to make the film with reference to theoretical concepts such as ‘creative destruction’ but do more than just include this as spoken word material applied to the film’s narrative content. Our audiovisual treatment of the concept of 'creative destruction' was not explicit but used within the film’s production process for its structuring and aesthetic potential. Both the concept and our
focus on a cinematic approach informed our choices for visual imagery to include in the film, not to illustrate interview material but to create ‘sensations of concepts’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1996 p. 177) that a viewer can engage with in an affective way, deploying the expressive possibilities of the film medium to generate ‘intensities of feeling’ (Massumi 2015 p. vii) around the themes of the film.

Screen production, as a creative arts practice and a developing field of academic research, can be seen as a way in which the affective dimensions of human experience are investigated and communicated. This is a field of study about which a great deal more is to be learnt and the tools of audiovisual expression significantly expand the scope of what is possible. However, for this to occur, there needs to be academic recognition that the sort of approach outlined in this paper is a valid alternative to traditional forms of research practice and discourse.

It should be noted that there is nothing specific to screen production in this approach. While this paper has dealt with the particular affordances of the film medium, fields such as creative writing and the performing arts also deal with affect in different but related ways. In fact, in some respects the distinction between creative writing and academic writing highlights the key issue this paper is focused on more vividly than between filmmaking and academic writing. It is fundamentally about the difference between a creative, imaginative use of a communication medium and a rational, discursive one, where the focus is less on
conceptual clarity and more on affect and the generation of new associations and relationships. For example, Thrift (2008) has highlighted the ways in which dance communicates important forms of sensory and pre-cognitive knowledge:

it engages the whole of the senses in bending time and space into new kinaesthetic shapes, taps into the long and variegated history of the unleashing of performance, leads us to understand movement as a potential, challenges the privileging of meaning (especially by understanding the body as being expressive without being a signifier; see Langer 2005; Dunagan 2005; Gumbrecht 2004), gives weight to intuition as thinking-in-movement, foregrounds the ‘underlanguage’ of gesture and kinetic semantics in general (Sheets-Johnstone 2005), teaches us anew about evolution (for example by demonstrating the crucial role of bipedality), and is able to point to key cognitive processes like imitation and suggestion which are now understood to be pivotal to any understanding of understanding (Hurley and Chater 2005) and, indeed, desire. (pp. 13-14)

To conclude, the work to define and elaborate the means by which films operate on the senses is occurring in cognitive psychology and cinema studies (Smith & Christie 2012) but increasing awareness of this issue by screen production researchers may assist in the development of the field, by providing the ‘common language’ for the evaluation of visual media research referred to by Candy (2011)
at the start of this paper. The extent to which this process requires a written discussion is open for debate. It is probably necessary in the immediate future, although conceivably, as a shared awareness of audiovisual literacies develops among the discipline and society more broadly, an understanding of affective knowledge in film could be accepted without ‘translation’ into written language.

**References**


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**Notes**

1 In 2010, *Lines of Flight* won the Jury Prize at the Torelló Mountain Film Festival (Spain) and Best Film on Mountain Culture at the Vancouver International Mountain Film Festival (Canada). Also in 2010, the film was a nominee for Best International Short Film at the Reel Earth Environmental Film Festival (New Zealand) and finalist for Best Film on Mountain Culture at the Banff Mountain Film Festival (Canada). In 2014, *Lines of Flight* won the Best Newcomer Documentary Short at the International Academic Forum (IAFOR) International Documentary Awards (Japan).

2 Popular smart phone app *Uber*, whose cheap ride-sharing service is a dramatic challenge to the taxi industry, provides a good contemporary example of something new destroying something old.

3 In the original French, *mise en scène* (pronounced meez-ahn-sen) means “putting into the scene,” and it was first applied to the practice of directing plays. Film scholars, extending the term to film direction, use the term to signify the director’s control over what appears in the film frame. As you would expect, *mise-en-scene* includes those aspects of film that overlap with the art of the theater: setting, lighting, costume and makeup, and staging and performance. (Bordwell and Thompson, p. 113)

4 ‘Chiming means that tiny sounds chime with each other inside the line. It’s a sort of interior rhyming. Most good poems have repeating sounds. But one can make chiming into a sort of principle. If the chiming sound returns three times, it becomes a tune. Then the whole stanza turns to music.’ (Quinn 2000)

5 ‘The concept of affect is ‘transversal’, in Deleuze and Guattari’s understanding of that term. This means that it cuts across the usual categories. Prime among these are the categories of the subjective and the objective.’ (Massumi 2015 pp. ix-x)