ROBYN STACEY

CLOUD LAND

18 SEPTEMBER 2015 – 3 APRIL 2016

EXHIBITION REPORT

MUSEUM OF BRISBANE
An exhibition of this scale doesn’t happen without the assistance of many valued supporters. Museum of Brisbane was delighted to once again partner with Gadens to bring to life Robyn Stacey: Cloud Land. Special thanks should go to Paul Spiro and his team for their ongoing support.

The Museum’s longstanding relationship with Hilton Hotel Brisbane also saw a unique activation as part of Brisbane Open House, where a working camera obscura was installed in the Harry Seidler designed building. The Museum also acknowledges the support of Media Partners goa, 612 ABC Brisbane and Avant Card.

THANK YOU

Museum of Brisbane Board
Sallyanne Atkinson AO, Chairman
Andrew Harper
Jeff Humphreys
Alison Kubler
Chris Tyquin
David Askern (Company Secretary)

This project is supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland

Museum Partner

gadens

Accommodation Partner

Hilton BRISBANE

Media Partners

612 ABC Brisbane

Magistrate’s Chamber Children’s Court, Tyrone presiding (detail) 2015

Covers Room 1706, Quay West, Cloud Land (detail) 2015
**FAST FACTS**

168,836 people visited Museum of Brisbane throughout the exhibition

$398,745 in media coverage

41 tours, workshops and events

133 lucky visitors in offsite Camera Obscura experience at Hilton Hotel Brisbane

1 photographer

15 new works

119 high school students

**Robyn Stacey: Cloud Land Exhibition Report**
FROM THE DIRECTOR

Robyn Stacey: Cloud Land explores contemporary life in Brisbane, its people, places and stories through the lens of the camera obscura. Specially commissioned by the Museum, the exhibition featured 15 new artworks by Robyn Stacey – one of Australia’s preeminent contemporary photographers. We were also pleased to welcome Robyn back to Brisbane for this exhibition; raised here in Brisbane, Robyn has exhibited around Australia and the world.

Created over a 12 month period, the works invite us to take a very different look at Brisbane through Robyn’s exciting and innovative use of the camera obscura, a technique that is many thousands of years old. Robyn gives this technology a bold and surprising reinvention as her work transforms entire rooms. Interiors of high-rise hotels, offices and other spaces turn into the surface of a photograph, ‘wallpapering’ them with projections from the world outside, casting the view from the outside in.

The images in the exhibition are abundant with Brisbane stories, showing people and familiar landmarks from a stunning and exciting new perspective. Her works capture a moment in time, exploring both the history of the location and the personal stories of the subjects featured within these unique landscapes.

Robyn Stacey exhibition is stunning, important and moving. Thank you.

Bonnie, visited Nov 2015

Museum of Brisbane sincerely thanks the many contributors to this exhibition. Special thanks to artist Robyn Stacey whose wide-reaching practice reflects her significant contribution and dedication to Australian photography; to Martyn Jolly for his insightful essay; and to each of the subjects and the many individuals and organisations that so generously provided access to the locations. The outstanding support of the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland, Gadens and all involved has enabled us to showcase yet another intriguing view of Brisbane.

I look forward to welcoming you to the Museum again soon.

Peter Denham
Director

Entry to Robyn Stacey: Cloud Land
Credit: PhotoCo
Robyn Stacey: Cloud Land explores contemporary life in Brisbane through the lens of the camera obscura. This marks a new direction for Stacey, best known for her striking photographs of historical collections and still-lifes. However, the artist’s fascination in the intersection of art, nature and science through photography is maintained.

Stacey captures Brisbane’s changing built environment – the atmosphere, architecture and construction – and records specific moments in time. The transient nature of the camera obscura is inherent in its very operation, it can only produce clear results when the sun is present and conditions are right. Stacey spent many hours investigating and testing to find the perfect locations and the right time of day to catch the full effects of the sun. Stacey then photographed the captured imagery using a long exposure time with her own camera.

Well-known Brisbane sites, including hotels, apartments, offices and industrial spaces are transformed into captivating internal spaces that feature the city and many of its landmarks. By transforming each site, Stacey is able to invite in the rapidly developing external city into the subjects’ private worlds. The subjects themselves highlight the changing face of Brisbane, the many people who connect with Brisbane, be it for generations or for a passing moment in time.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

ROBYN STACEY

Robyn Stacey is one of Australia’s most acclaimed photographers. Her large and striking images have been exhibited widely in Australia and internationally since the mid-1980s. Her work has referenced film noir and the Dutch still-life traditions, exploring cultural memory and aesthetic, social and historical concerns.

Stacey’s works are held in the collections of the National Gallery of Australia, National Portrait Gallery, Museum of Brisbane, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Art Gallery of Western Australia, National Gallery of Victoria, Art Gallery of South Australia, Queensland Art Gallery, and Artbank, as well as numerous university, corporate and private collections.

Stacey has a Bachelor of Arts from The University of Queensland, a Master of Fine Arts from the University of New South Wales and is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Communication Arts at the University of Western Sydney.
ROBYN STACEY’S CAMERA OBSCURA

Camera obscura is Latin for ‘dark room’, the name given to the phenomenon whereby an image of the surrounding world is projected onto a screen or wall in a darkened room. Like pinhole photography, the camera obscura allows light in through a tiny hole in order to project a scene from outside onto an inside surface.

The long exposures register the passing of time in the blurred motion of clouds or movement of people, traffic and trees. Change of state is displayed as sky, backgrounds and subjects merge; bleeding into each other on torsos and faces – all of this time and activity captured in a single frame, a moment out of time, the still image.

Transience and transformation are at the heart of the camera obscura as each room only exists for a few hours, depending on the position of the sun in relation to the room. The surreal and psychological spaces created by the camera obscura are based on Newton’s Law, which states that light travels in a straight line until it meets another surface when it undergoes a deviation in its original path and then continues on in a straight line. Nature and science create the upside-down, reversed and distorted visual effects that comprise Cloud Land.

THE CAMERA OBSCURA

The camera obscura is a simple and ancient device that forms the basis of modern photography. The term is Latin for ‘dark chamber’.

The principles of optics, including that light travels in a straight line, were discovered as early as 400BC. However, it was not until the 10th century that the ‘dark chamber’ was discussed by Arabian scholar Alhazen. He went on to make the first camera obscura. In the 13th century Leonardo da Vinci began using the camera obscura to study perspective.

In the 19th century a way of preserving the image on metal plates was invented, giving rise to the first photography. Large, sometimes portable camera obscuras were now used for entertainment purposes, where visitors could walk inside and see the view projected onto a centre plate. Brisbane had one of these large camera obscuras in Whites Hill, Holland Park, that was in use from the early 1900s to 1928.

Today these experiences are not as common, but there are more camera obscuras than ever before – existing in miniature in every camera phone.

HOW DOES A CAMERA OBSCURA WORK?

The light that we see consists of a countless number of light rays travelling in straight lines. When a small hole, or aperture, is created in the side of a dark enclosure, only a limited number of light rays can enter. These rays fall on the opposite side within the enclosure, creating an image of what is outside. Because light travels in a straight line, the light rays entering the dark enclosure fall directly opposite their original starting point. This means that the image inside appears upside-down and in reverse.

The size of the aperture is important for the camera obscura to work effectively. If the aperture is too small not enough light is able to enter and the image appears dark. If it is too large the image will not be in focus. Many camera obscuras use a lens to focus the light, so the aperture can be larger and allow more light to enter.

The human eye works the same way. The lens behind our pupil focusses the light onto our retina. Our brain flips the image so we see everything the right way up.
A significant outcome from the Cloud Land exhibition was that the Museum was able to acquire six new artworks for the Museum of Brisbane Collection, which will ensure Robyn Stacey’s work will continue to be shared with future generations.

The Cloud Land exhibition was outstanding.
Ann, visited Jan 2016

Room 930 Royal on the Park, Maroochy Barambah Song woman and Law-woman Turrbal people 2015
Type C Print

Room 710 Tower Mill Motel, Carlos 2015
Type C Print

Room 1706 Quay West, Cloud Land 2015
Type C Print

Magistrate's Chamber Children’s Court, Tyrone presiding 2015
Type C Print

Maintenance Office Rail yard, Port of Brisbane 2015
Type C Print

Guards Room Boggo Road Gaol, Rena 2015
Type C Print

Room 930 Royal on the Park, Maroochy Barambah Song woman and Law-woman Turrbal people 2015
EXHIBITION CONTRIBUTORS

Robyn Stacey: Cloud Land was created with the support of many individuals, companies and organisations. Museum of Brisbane sincerely thanks everybody for their generosity and effort. Special thanks to Robyn Stacey for her extensive work and commitment to this exhibition.

Robyn Stacey is represented by Jan Manton Gallery, Brisbane and Stills Gallery, Sydney.

Organisations
All Hallows’ School
Archerfield Airport Corporation
Boggo Road Gaol
Bosscher Lawyers
Brisbane Marriott Hotel
Brisbane Open House
Childrens Court Brisbane
Cooper Grace Ward Lawyers
Cox Rayner Architects
Hilton Brisbane
Jan Manton Art
Mercure Brisbane Hotel
Metro Hotel Tower Mill
Port of Brisbane
Quay West Brisbane
Royal on the Park
Sofitel Brisbane Central
Stills Gallery
Supreme Court Library
Queensland
Trannys Pty Ltd
Willara House Girls Hostel
(City Tabernacle Baptist Church)

Individuals
Michael Anderson
Maroochy Barambah
Rena Bishop
Yimesret Gebrewold
Cameron Hall
Lesley Hall
Philip Hall
Courtney Hoey
John Hoey
Daryl Hewson
Martyn Jolly
Ade Kukoyi
Jan Manton
Jade Meakin
Carlos Miralles Safont
Craig O’Brien
Michael Rayner
Tyrone Ruddell
Allan Stacey
Katherine Stacey
Chris Starr
Jennifer Taylor
Ronald Van Weezel
Public programs for Robyn Stacey: Cloud Land included a wide variety of activities for adults and children exploring the technology of a camera obscura, the breadth of Robyn’s work and the unique stories behind the subjects. Partnerships formed with Brisbane Open House and the Brisbane Asia Pacific Film Festival helped us reach new audiences, as we were able to access their databases and promotional opportunities.

To complement the in-exhibition camera obscura, we partnered with Brisbane Open House and Hilton Hotel Brisbane to create a unique camera obscura in one of the Hilton’s luxury suites. Led by a Museum of Brisbane tour guide, this one-off experience explained the simple science behind the camera obscura phenomena as well as providing an insight into Robyn Stacey’s artworks. Participants also had their photo taken in the camera obscura and could enjoy a custom dessert created by Hilton’s Executive chef, Hueman Lam.

In another event partnering with Brisbane Open House, Shaune Lakin, Senior Curator of photography at the National Gallery of Australia, and Robyn Stacey discussed Robyn’s body of work, her life in Brisbane during the Joh Bjelke-Petersen era, and the creative process behind Cloud Land.

Workshops were held for photography enthusiasts to learn from Brisbane photographer Carl Warner in an off-site experience exploring the Roma Street Parklands.

Children’s activities explored Robyn’s techniques through free school holiday and weekend workshops creating sunprints and pin-hole viewers. These workshops were specifically programmed to appeal to children aged 5-12 years and unpacked complex components of the exhibition. Through simple, hands-on activities children were able to engage with the practicalities of camera obscura photography, as well as the thematic ideas behind the exhibition.
A free activity booklet called ‘Little Lens’ was produced and proved extremely popular with children in the Museum. The 16 page booklet guided children and parents through the exhibition, providing discussion points to enhance their visit together and explored the history of the camera obscura, the process behind the photos and why the scenery is upside-down and back-to-front!

Finally, a focus on story telling in Robyn’s work was revealed in the panel ‘Photography or film: who tells a better story’. Profiled in the Brisbane Asia Pacific Film Festival program, the discussion was led by Program Manager Leanne Kelly, and included special guests Robyn Stacey; Maxine Williamson, Director of Asia Pacific Film Awards and Brisbane Asia Pacific Film Festival; Michael Aird, anthropologist, curator and photographer; and Shawkat Amin Korki, writer, director and winner of the 2014 APSA UNESCO award for promotion and preservation of cultural diversity through film.

Right: Children’s sunprints workshop
Below: In Conversation with Robyn Stacey and Shaune Lakin
## PUBLIC PROGRAMS SUMMARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Event</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Special Guests</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
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<tr>
<td>Artist tour with Martyn Jolly</td>
<td>Exhibition Tour</td>
<td>19/09/15</td>
<td>Gallery 1</td>
<td>11:00–12:00</td>
<td>Robyn Stacey and Martyn Jolly</td>
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<td>In Conversation with Robyn Stacey and Shaune Lakin</td>
<td>Panel Discussion</td>
<td>20/09/15</td>
<td>Dome Lounge</td>
<td>14:00–15:00</td>
<td>Robyn Stacey and Shaune Lakin</td>
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<td>Sunprints Workshop</td>
<td>Children’s Workshop</td>
<td>28/09/15–02/10/15</td>
<td>Theatrette</td>
<td>10:00–13:00</td>
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<td>Upside-down and back-to-front: DIY Pinhole viewers</td>
<td>Children’s Workshop</td>
<td>10/10/15–11/10/15</td>
<td>Theatrette</td>
<td>9:00–17:00</td>
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<td>Camera Obscura Experience</td>
<td>Offsite Tour</td>
<td>10/10/15–11/10/15</td>
<td>Hilton Hotel Brisbane</td>
<td>09:00–12:00</td>
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<td>Capturing Place with photographer Carl Warner</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>24/10/15</td>
<td>Roma Street Parklands</td>
<td>10:00–12:00</td>
<td>Carl Warner</td>
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<td>Tour with the Director</td>
<td>Exhibition Tour</td>
<td>15/11/15</td>
<td>Gallery 1</td>
<td>11:00–12:00</td>
<td>Peter Denham</td>
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<td>Robyn and her subjects</td>
<td>Exhibition Tour</td>
<td>21/11/15</td>
<td>Gallery 1</td>
<td>14:00–15:00</td>
<td>Robyn Stacey and Maroochy Barambah</td>
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<td>Photography vs film: Who tells a better story?</td>
<td>Panel Discussion</td>
<td>22/11/15</td>
<td>Dome Lounge</td>
<td>14:00–15:00</td>
<td>Leanne Kelly, Michael Aird, Robyn Stacey, Maxine Williamson and Shawkat Amin Korki</td>
<td>89</td>
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<td>Tour with the Director</td>
<td>Exhibition Tour</td>
<td>21/01/16</td>
<td>Gallery 1</td>
<td>12:00–13:00</td>
<td>Peter Denham</td>
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<td>Museum Daily Highlights Tour</td>
<td>Exhibition Tour</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Museum of Brisbane</td>
<td>13:00–13:45</td>
<td>Customer Service Officer</td>
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<td>Little Lens: activity booklet for children</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Gallery 1</td>
<td>All day</td>
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Robyn Stacey: Cloud Land was the perfect exhibition to inspire creative writing for Corinda State High School’s yearly writing camp. Students from years 7-9 were asked to create short stories, or produce a personal anecdote in the form of a digital narrative in response to one of Robyn Stacey’s photographs. The writers’ camp was a huge success, with students engaging with the exhibition on a deeper level and producing some fantastic writing in response to the photographs. Some of the students later entered that work into the Museum’s online short story competition, with a Corinda State High school student being voted by the general public as the winner.

Local short story author Kathleen Noud also ran a workshop with Brisbane State High School’s gifted and talented class in conjunction with the exhibition. A total of 121 students visited the exhibition from secondary and tertiary institutions, with 22 students entering the online short story competition.

<table>
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<th>Student attendance</th>
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<td>Total students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secondary students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tertiary students</td>
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<td>ESL students</td>
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Top: Corinda State High School students working on the start of their short stories in front of their chosen photograph

Above: Simon Groth explaining digital narrative to year 9 students from Corinda State High School

Left: Curator Phil Manning giving Corinda State High School students an exhibition tour
A creative, engaging and multi-channel marketing campaign created high levels of interest for the exhibition and achieved high visibility for its partners.

**MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS**

**goa**

Thanks to substantial support from goa, Robyn Stacey: Cloud Land advertising captured thousands of Brisbane motorists and pedestrians when it featured on goa’s network of prominent digital billboards. Advertisements were displayed at 70 billboard sites across Brisbane.

**612 ABC BRISBANE**

Buzz for the exhibition lasted well beyond opening night thanks to a media partnership with 612 ABC Brisbane.

Promotional community service announcements were played for the duration of the exhibition along with several interviews and promotions posted on their website and social media sites.

Below: goa digital billboard in Kedron

**MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS**

Robyn Stacey: Cloud Land received considerable media coverage across television, print, radio and online outlets.

Media highlights include:

- Full page feature in Weekend Australian magazine’s *Heart of the Nation*
- Full page feature in *The Australian*
- Feature in *Canvas*, *The Courier-Mail*
- State-wide Seven News Queensland story
- *Brisbane Times* feature (syndicated nationally to *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*)
- *ABC News Online* article
- *Radio National Books and Arts* interview with Robyn Stacey
- 612 ABC *Breakfast* interview with Robyn Stacey
- Article in *BBC Australia*
- Article in Brisbane Airport’s *BNE* magazine
- Listings in *Camera* and *ProPhoto* magazines

A total of 72 media pieces were generated across the duration of the campaign valued at a combined advertising space rate of $398,745 and reaching an estimated 3,099,876 people.

I really enjoyed the Cloud Land exhibit, it was stunning like nothing I’ve ever seen before.

Attendee, visited Jan 2016
OUTDOOR AND SIGNAGE
In addition to the 70 goa digital billboards displayed across Brisbane, outdoor advertising was strategically erected in high traffic and bustling spots around the city and provided constant exposure to thousands of city dwellers, visitors and professionals.

Promotions ran at:
• King George Square with approx. 912,500 foot traffic per month
• Adelaide St digital signage located on one of Brisbane’s busiest bus transfer streets

DISTRIBUTION
To support outdoor and mass media channels, the Museum distributed 15,000 postcards across inner city targeted cafes, bars, educational centres, cultural venues, libraries, City Hall, tourist information centres, shops and within the Museum.

ADVERTISING
To complement an extensive promotional campaign, advertising was placed in premier Australian arts industry publications, Art Collector, Eyeline Magazine and Art Almanac, as well as mass media outlets The Courier-Mail and The Sunday Mail.

DIGITAL
A blitz of engaging digital content was published in the lead up, at launch and for the full duration the exhibition. Thousands of impressions were delivered across a variety of platforms including email, the Museum blog, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

A targeted eDM for Robyn Stacey: Cloud Land was distributed to a database of over 12,000 readers and regular Facebook posts, tweets and articles in the Museum’s monthly enewsletter kept the exhibition from losing momentum.

During the life of the exhibition, Instagram followers doubled and Facebook followers increased by 22%. A promotional video was produced with almost 12,000 views on YouTube and 2,000 views on Facebook.

MERCHANDISE
A catalogue for the exhibition was produced and proved very popular in the shop.