**COURTNEY — Following**

(0 images)

**Following the Stars: Mapping the Film Circuits of Inter-War Outdoor Cinemas in Western Australia**

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In his 2011 exploration of using GIS and the film history, Klenotic discusses his realization of the potential that GIS technologies offer for his work in film history:

GIS has enabled me to think more carefully about cinema history as a history of spatial relations, and it has helped me to rethink the modalities in which historical evidence can be examined, assembled, interpreted, stored and presented to the public; modalities that are impossible to describe and explain in writing alone. (Klenotic, 2011, 58)

Our project, *Following the Stars: Mapping the Film Circuits of Inter-War Outdoor Cinemas in Western Australia*, seeks not only to map the geographical proliferation of outdoor cinemas but also to re-create the exhibition history of films in Western Australia between the two world wars, creating a visual representation of film exhibition. Based in large part on Ina Bertrand’s now-aged Cinemawebdatabase, we have compiled a list of roughly 125 outdoor cinemas in operation between the end of the First World War and the beginning of the Second. Ranging widely in design and intent, these spaces offered outdoor film exhibition opportunities for many far-flung rural communities as well as for the urban populations on the Perth environs. In light of recent interest in mapping the movies by such projects as the Australian Cinemas Map1 and the Cinemas and Audiences Research Project (CAARP),2 this project addresses a particular type of cinema space during the pretelevision era in which outdoor cinemas were particularly popular.

Some of these spaces were purposely built ‘picture gardens’ such as the still-operating Sun Pictures3 designed specifically for film exhibition outside. Others, however, were developed through opportunistic convenience, adding a fence and deckchairs on a lawn behind a hotel, or projecting outside from an indoor cinema during summer nights when the weather cooperated. Many of these venues operated as part of a larger circuit (Goldfield Pictures, Hoyts, Nulsen’s West Touring Talkies, the Salvation Army Biorama Company, and more).

*Following the Stars* is developing maps of the circuits that we are re-creating using Omeka and the Neatline plugin via research conducted through Cinemawebandthe invaluable newspaper resources in Trove, in addition to months of months of fieldwork locating and researching cinemas or former sites. The project also features a timeline of film exhibited and develops a narrative of the history of this type of film exhibition in western Australia.

Data used in developing the project include venue names, locations, and years of operation; circuit operators and routes; film titles and dates shown; sources; images of cinemas both currently and historically when available; and lengthy bibliographies upon which the project is based.

**Notes**

1. See http://auscinemas.flinders.edu.au/.

2. See http://caarp.flinders.edu.au/.

3. See http://www.broomemovies.com.au/sun-pictures.html.

**References**

**Cinemaweb.** (n.d.). www.ammpt.asn.au/CinemaWEB/SITE/ (not functional as of time of publication).

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