

Layla Curtis

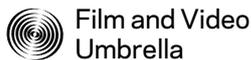
18 May–13 July 2013

British artist Layla Curtis presents a solo exhibition of work including a new commission entitled *Antipodes* (working title), 2013 and *Tong Tana*, 2012. Curtis' work has a focus on mapping and the ways we represent terrain and locate ourselves and our movements through space.

Antipodes (working title) is an ongoing online and photographic project that pairs webcam images from places at the opposite ends of the globe. Although Australia, despite our colloquial name for it, is not directly 'down under' from Britain, and the other side of the world from us, like much of the planet, is actually sea, the four per cent of the earth's surface in which land is antipodal to land offers rich terrain for interesting parallels and correspondences. As far away from each other as it is possible to be, their day-for-night, summer/winter contrasts palpable, often extreme, these distant 'twins' (Spain/New Zealand, Hawaii/Botswana, Paraguay/Taiwan, Porto Alegre, Brazil/Nagasaki, Japan) frequently possess surprising affinities. Having researched multiple webcam sources from myriad international locations, Curtis revels in drawing out these points of connection: the smouldering volcano of Mt Merapi in Indonesia echoed by the snow-capped summit of Pico Bolivar half a world away in Venezuela. Like mirror images, the key elements of the picture may be the other way round but their inherent similarities are undeniable. A series of photographic diptychs, distilled from the stream of webcam footage, press the point home: highlighting both the distance and the difference between us, but also how online communications and digital technology bring us closer together.

In *Tong Tana*, Curtis explores the elemental desire to understand environments. She spent four weeks in the rainforests of Borneo with the semi-nomadic Penan, one of the last surviving hunter-gatherer tribes in South-East Asia, and known masters of tracking and hunting. By placing a head mounted camera and binaural microphones on one of the hunters as he makes solitary journeys through traditional hunting grounds with his handmade poison-arrow blowpipe, Curtis captures his journey in a way that would otherwise be unachievable. The viewer adopts the position of the hunter within the gallery space, experiencing a heightened sensory adventure. *Tong Tana* includes maps drawn by the Penan hunter that plot his route through the rainforest.

Antipodes (working title) by Layla Curtis is commissioned by Film and Video Umbrella, in association with SpaceX, with the support of Arts Council England.



Tong Tana is supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England.

ENDS

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Notes to editors

Spacex is a leading contemporary art gallery located in the centre of Exeter. Our diverse programme encourages the public to engage with the latest developments in contemporary art through a changing exhibitions programme, which includes new commissions, projects and activities. A significant part of our programme, including artist-led projects, events and research, takes place outside of the gallery. We have an international reputation for presenting ideas from some of the most daring and exciting artists working today. www.spacex.org.uk

Film and Video Umbrella is the UK's leading agency for the commissioning and production of artists' film and video work. For over twenty years the organisation has presented a consistently ambitious and engaging programme of contemporary moving image commissions. Delivered in collaboration with galleries and venues across England, Film and Video Umbrella projects bring the most exciting new artists' moving image work to audiences across the country. www.fvu.co.uk

Layla Curtis received her BA Fine Art from Edinburgh College of Art (1998) and her MA Fine Art from Chelsea College of Art (2000). Her work, featuring in collections including the Tate Collection, and the Government Art Collection, is exhibited widely. Solo exhibitions include those at Milton Keynes Gallery (2000), New Art Gallery Walsall (2006) and Ormeau Baths Gallery, Belfast (2008). In 2005 Curtis was awarded an Arts Council England International Fellowship and undertook a three-month journey to Antarctica with the British Antarctic Survey. Her work has also been included in exhibitions at Tate Modern, London; Tate Liverpool; Pavilhão Lucas Nogueira Garcez-Oca, São Paulo, Brazil and Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal, Canada. Recently her work was included in the *Revolver* series of exhibitions at Matt's Gallery, London (2012). www.laylacurtis.com

**For further information please contact Spacex marketing manager Rowan Green
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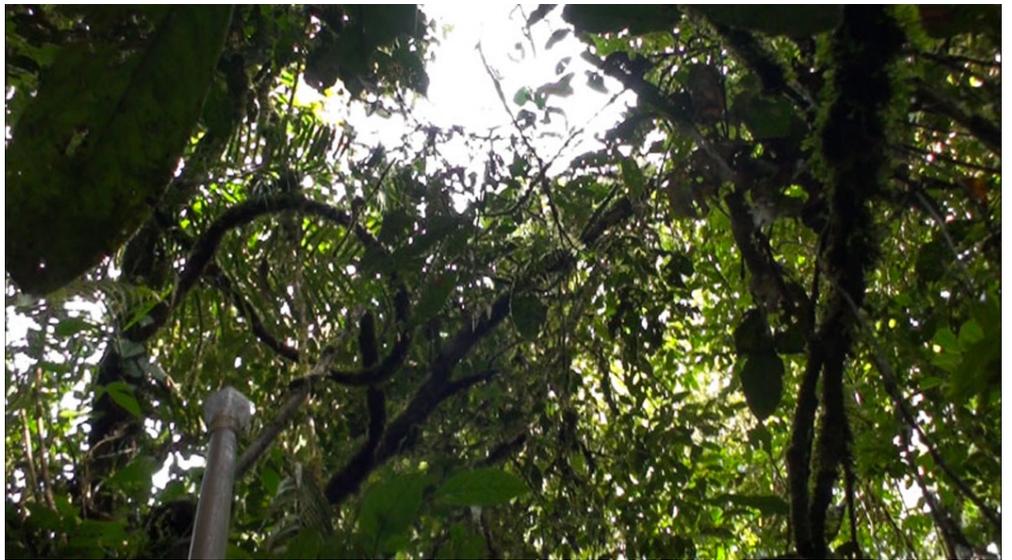
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Image Sheet

Layla Curtis, *Antipodes* (working title) is commissioned by Film and Video Umbrella in association with Spacex. Technical support by Cuttlefish. Supported by Arts Council England.



Layla Curtis, *Tong Tana* (video still), 2012.
Image courtesy the artist



Layla Curtis, *Tong Tana* (production still),
2012. Image courtesy the artist



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