

# hoyts cinema proposal

a proposal by crowd productions and david poulton architects

## 2004

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### 01.] design statement

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Crowd Productions, rather than being a self contained, discrete entity, operates as an attractor or engine within a network of researchers, design professionals, fabricators and suppliers. In this way Crowd functions more like a film production company. Crowd's principle commissions involve extensive research and the creation of new strategies and typologies. Due to this we have experience in commissioning and prototyping novel technologies, materials and techniques. We are well aware however that notions of pursuing innovation are meaningless without a rich grasp of context.

Before we can commence research or conceptual work for this project we have to ask:

How does Hoyts want to position itself in the field of entertainment provision, in relation to emerging technologies, new and established competitors?

Where does Hoyts want to go?

What contribution to culture and cinema does Hoyts want to make?



Additionally we ask:

How is your audience likely to change and who will they be?

What field of activities will they be engaged in or drawn to? [And therefore what will cinema and the movies mean to them?]

What for them will make place significant?



We believe that what cinema offers, what is unique about cinema, is not the scale and quality of projection and therefore the experience but the social or public dimension. It's an event. Like the opera it can be as much about other people and other activities, like the Passegiare, that happen to converge at the theatre. How do we create a more complete understanding of this process and how do we cater for it?

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## 02.] design concepts

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For us at this point the following notions are relevant in framing the cinematic experience:

### 01.] Light

The power of light frames the possibility of cinema and the contemporary city and it is a key device in modern installation art to evoke wonder. Pure light as it is being explored in contemporary art gives us new ways of using it and reinvesting it with its fundamental power and appeal. Moholy Nagy, the Hungarian artist saw cinema as kinetic light sculpture and in a quest for immersion sought to create spaces and art that captured this phenomenon. This light may be active or serene



### 02.] The intelligent wall

The intelligent wall is a new interface; framing, activating and energising city spaces and interior spaces. The intelligent wall is a fusing of new computer mediated communication technologies with architecture to create mixed realities. It is a child of cinematic vision and techniques and points to the future. Closed circuit cameras can create electronic details in ways that are abstract and tantalising. Combine this with the rich atmosphere of story telling at the cinema and you have a unique destination. We have begun to explore these fusions in our projects.



### 03.] The porous boundary

Film is by its very nature is voyeuristic. It challenges our notions of public and private. The power and seduction of voyeurism to intrigue people is very strong, inviting in people's imagination and emotional participation. The framing of public and semi private space within commercial precincts gives us the option of reinvigorating those spaces, creating a sense of voyeurism, adventure and discovery. By exploring the idea of porosity we can create soft boundaries and intrigue and entertain users and patrons, creating a unique environment. As the trailer is for the motion picture, so the cinema entry space and environs can evoke and suggest the possibilities of what may lie inside

#### 04.] The language of film

Film, with its devices of rapid time compression, cut-up and jump cut is a model and simulacrum of the city experience of rapid juxtaposition, discontinuity and density. The electric city and cinema were born at the same time and live an overlapping existence. The electric light illuminates the city to create new dimensions to urban living and design and cinema has become an indelible frame for seeing the city. The speed of contemporary travel fractures the landscape and compresses time. Visual transformation is an offshoot of vehicular speed overlaid onto the spatial displacement of modern instantaneous electronic communication like the Internet. This sense of displacement and speed and inform and energise public space to fuel anticipation and excitement.

One of the first modern mass mediums was the panorama, patented and popularised in 1787 by the Irish painter Robert Baker. It was one of the first forms of illusionary space and one of the first virtual spectacles. We have only begun to explore the possibilities of the digital panorama.



#### 05.] Extending the experience of film beyond consumption

We believe there is a need to extend and reframe the gamut of human activities as something far richer and more complex than consumption. By seeing the cinema-goer as more than a consumer, the cinema event can be extended to become a unique destination. The patron can gain further knowledge and education, do research and collect items. There is the possibility that the cinema may be the place where we begin to learn how to make our own films. Australia's fascination with sport begins with our collective participation at school. That makes later involvement, even as a spectator, much more informed and consuming. The cinema can be extended to include book shop, gallery and experimental studio along with providing information on the making of current features and lost scenes etc. This can be combined with a redrawing the traditional purchasing of snack food to make it more of an adventure.



#### 06.] The mirror

Cinema acts as a cultural map and a mirror. It reflects the presence of the surrounding communities and their current and past attitudes, memories and ideas. Australia has a very rich, diverse and heterogeneous population. This can be reflected in the experience of going to the cinema and the surrounding environment of shops and services. The cinema can reflect the nature of film as a microcosm of the society around it. Like the hero of Jean Cocteau's ground-breaking film, Orphee, Blood of the poet, made in 1950, with film we walk through a mirror of our world to a world of dreams and fantasies.

### 07.] The age of access and networks

We need to see the siting of an activity as the result of a very dense and heterogeneous set of factors and networks, in order to understand its nature. This is done to model that activity in the most dynamic way possible to best understand the real impact and interrelated nature of these factors and networks. Traditionally this has been done by focus testing and surveys. New techniques have emerged that recognise the interrelated and complex nature of every detail, even those that seem unimportant at first glance. Techniques such as Actor Network Theory allow us to approach the design in a more delicate and forensic way to discover richer and more sophisticated relationships.



### 08.] The Light Society

The rapidly evolving technology of cinema and its transmission systems sits it squarely within the emerging digital economy, also known as the Light Economy. This is a significant dimension of the experience of cinema and it will become more important as issues relating to the global environment become ever more significant for the population at large. We would wish to explore and promote this association as it becomes relevant. Our network of researchers and collaborators include leading figures and thinkers in this area.

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Ella is running late. Ella is always running late. At 25 she feels that she is already running out of time. She has parked her car down stairs and detoured on her way to the cinema via her favourite record shop. She is meeting two friends to see this latest period drama starring Johnny Depp. She has arranged to meet her friends in the foyer for a drink, but she knows they will all be late and that gives them an excuse to have a much longer catch up after the movie. She loves the bustle and layered, textured feel of this 'foyer'. Its not really a 'foyer' in the traditional sense, like one of those dead, lost spaces where people hang around fidgeting. This space is full of life, yet not in your face. As you arrive there a some small intimate bars looking out onto the Melbourne Central concourse. At times with your friends you can almost take over one of these bars. They are great for people watching too. The area feels both modern and old, with a dense rich feel, with a great mixture of rough natural surfaces and slick curved space age surfaces. Like a market you can be distracted by what's in front of you but your gaze can easily travel through the immediate surroundings to what is beyond.

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The area around the ticket office is cool. Its not full of tacky signs but easy to spot because it glows as though it were made of ice and had been lit up from inside. You walk through it like a special gate on your way to an adventure. She has already bought her ticket on the Internet and she only has to run the barcode on her print out past a scanner in the wall. A friend of hers said coming here was like a visit to Broadway, full of life and the chance to escape. After a tough week Ella has looking forward to this experience of escape.

Past this portal there are a number of chilled-out bars and lounges. The lighting is much more subdued. The space is divided up with walls and screens of different materials that are all partly see through. Even though the floor plan feels quite organic its easy to know where you are as the long wall leading you to the cinemas softly glows and seems to hover along one end of the space. Ella sees her friends standing next to the snack counter. This is an amazing red blade wall that projects at full height into the room. Its like a giant vending machine and the snacks are sitting in clear dispensing tubes projecting from the red blade.

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You can buy your snacks in the conventional manner at the end but contemplating the array of brightly coloured food and buying it with change or using your mobile phone is much more fun. The environment feels clean but not sterile and completely minimal.

The whole environment is a mixture of hi-tech and the very natural. Big films on the big screen provide people a unique excuse to escape or just catch up. In an age of ever increasing concern over wasting materials and protecting the environment the virtual delight of cinema will seem an increasingly friendly as well as fun.