

## REMOTE SENSES, INTIMATE ECOLOGIES: ANEMOCINEGRAPH (2007-2011)

Before we knew how to circle the earth, how to circumscribe the sphere of human habitation in days and hours, we had brought the globe into our living room to be touched by our hands and swirled before our eyes.<sup>1</sup>

The year after the Sputnik became the first man-made object to circulate with heavenly bodies, philosopher Hannah Arendt noted, paradoxically, that our expansion into the universe has led to a decisive 'shrinkage' of the earth. She suggests that when 'Nature' is understood from a point outside the earth (the place where Archimedes wished to stand) beyond the reach of our senses, it is as though we can dispose of it from the outside.

Later, the first whole-earth photograph sent from Apollo 17, photo AS17-22727 (1972) became an emblematic image of global unity for environmentalists and multi-national corporate organizations alike. Yet the diminishment of the earth and the separation between the human and the non-human are also encapsulated in the singular image of a harmonious planet. The human privilege of the remote perspective can be an estranging vision from the biota and atmospheric phenomena that is around and inside us.

The art project *Anemocinegraph* reframes remote weather satellite images and surface recordings of local 'micrometeorological' events. The anemocinegraph is a Nineteenth century wind measurement instrument that was never physically constructed and exists only as a drawing. In this fictional anemocinegraph, images are projected on half spheres, the size of a living room globe, to be touched lightly. The audio composition of *Anemocinegraph* is based on a data sonification of the wind fluxes of CO<sub>2</sub> gas from a real micrometeorological instrument, the sonic anemometer.

Micrometeorology is the science of small-scale turbulence and diffusion of wind flow close to the ground; the slippage of air between buildings, or an eddy that causes a vortex of leaves to fly. These small-scale weather events are fleeting performances of air inside the planet's boundary layer. Over several weeks I collected surface-based video recordings of these transitory moments around my home in Auckland.

Also passing over the hanging screens are weather images from the NOAA satellite 13, collected during the same time period, courtesy of the LandcareResearchNZ database. New Zealand's islands are always partially obscured by sequences of animated cloud. The changing weather patterns at the synoptic scale of satellites mirror the tiny micrometeorological movements. The endless flux of local weather across the surface of the earth is an alternate spatial schema; a series of counterpoints to the cloudless clarity of the whole-globe image.

1. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago University Press, 1958): 251.

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*Anemocinegraph* (2007-2011)  
10-20 opal perspex spheres, dimensions variable