Scholarship Opportunity: Samford Environmental Research Facility (SERF)

The Creative Lab and QUT’s Samford Ecological Research Lab (SERF) (managed by the Institute for Future Environments (IFE)) are seeking an outstanding candidate who wishes to develop an Art/Science PhD between these two labs starting in early 2020.

THE HOSTING SCIENCE LAB
The Samford Ecological Research Facility (SERF http://www.serf.qut.edu.au) is located in the idyllic Samford Valley, a 25-minute drive northwest of QUT’s Gardens Point Campus in Brisbane, Queensland. This 51-hectare property provides QUT with a research, teaching and learning base for a range of ecological, engineering, built environment and educational programs primarily relating to urban development and its impact on ecosystems. Forests and sown pasture cover 70% of the property providing a refuge to native plants and animals that are under increasing pressure from urbanisation. SERF is managed as a living laboratory for research and educational experiences for its researchers, students and visitors. Scientists and students are engaged in documenting, analysing and understanding ecological processes, patterns and phenomena that vary over long temporal and broad spatial scales. SERF is interconnected to many national and international networks and research programs (e.g. the The Long term Ecological Research Network https://lternet.edu, Flux-net https://fluxnet.fluxdata.org) and most recently DroughtNet https://wp.natsci.colostate.edu/droughtnet/).

LIKELY PROJECTS
The Principal and Associate supervisory team will work with you to develop and hone your initial proposal for the 2020 QUT Annual Scholarship Round, which you will continue to develop during the three years. Your project will be arts/research driven, with a substantial portion of creative practice output, and will seek in a novel way to explore/engage aspects of ecological science and conservation underway at SERF and/or associated cultural forces. We envisage that your program of research would somehow integrate within a range of initiatives currently underway, ensuring your entry into a transdisciplinary collaborative and supportive working environment. Your supervisors, and other available mentors, have extensive experience across the experimental arts and ecological/conservation science and their many possible interactions. Current/planned art/science crossover projects at SERF include Uncanny Valleys Super-Site: http://embodiedmedia.com/homeartworks/uncanny-valleys-super-site and a proposed on-site Science/Culture Incubator that seeks to integrate 10 years of data collected at SERF to build both a scientific and culturally engaged impression of this remarkable site and its activities. Science projects underway include studies of soil health, carbon sequestration, sonic acoustic monitoring, forest health and drought tolerant landscapes).

Whilst artist researchers of all media will be considered, preference would be given for those with a strong interest in ecology or environmental practices - most likely with a technological component, in line with QUT Creative Lab’s mission statement. You would be free to divide your time each week between the Lab, situated in a secluded peaceful bush location just outside Brisbane (own transport required), the Institute for Future Environments at Gardens Point Campus and the Creative Lab at the Kelvin Grove campus which is directed by internationally renowned robotics artists Prof. Louis Philippe Demers. Creative Lab membership gives you access to an array of high tech spaces, facilities and equipment as you may require.

For further information on this exciting opportunity, in the first instance please contact Keith Armstrong (k.armstrong@qut.edu.au).

For up-to-date information on QUT Annual Scholarship Round please see https://www.qut.edu.au/research/annual-scholarship-round.
SUPERVISORS
Principal: **Dr. Keith Armstrong**, PhD, MSc. BA, | Senior Lecturer |, Visual Arts, School of Creative Practice | QUT | Brisbane
| Senior Research Fellow University Free State, Centre For Development Support, South Africa.
www.embodiedmedia.com
https://staff.qut.edu.au/staff/jennifer.firn

Keith Armstrong is an internationally recognised Australian artists-researcher profoundly motivated by issues of social and ecological justice with a 25 year track record. His engaged, participative practices provoke audiences to comprehend, envisage and imagine collective pathways towards sustainable futures. He has specialised for over twenty years in collaborative, experimental practices with emphasis upon innovative performance forms, site-specific electronic arts, networked interactive installations, alternative interfaces, art-science collaborations and socially and ecologically engaged practices. See www.embodiedmedia.com

Associate 1: **Prof Jennifer Firn**, PhD, MEd (SFHEA) | Associate Professor | Science & Engineering Faculty | QUT | Brisbane
| Adjunct Professorial Research Fellow,
University of Sunshine Coast, Tropical Forests & People Research Centre, Editor in Chief of the journal Ecology and Evolution
https://jenniferfirn.wordpress.com

Jen Firn is a restoration ecologist who specialises in studying ecological theory and then linking these theoretical constructs to the practical management of grasslands and tropical forests. The driving motivation for her academic career is to find smarter, cheaper and more sustainable ways of restoring degraded plant communities, whether that be grasslands or forests, focused on developing a better understanding of how the loss of native biodiversity impacts on ecosystems and subsequently finding better ways to bring it back.

Associate 2: **Dr Bek Christensen** | Manager, Research Infrastructure Support | Research Infrastructure Specialist (Ecology)
| Vice-President + President-elect, Ecological Society of Australia
https://au.linkedin.com/in/bekchristensen

Dr Bek Christensen manages and directs programs at SERF. She has a longstanding background in ecosystem research and policy, and has worked across university, state government and NGO contexts, building up diverse and strong networks across the ecosystem science and management communities in Australia. She was formerly with Australia’s land observatory TERN (Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network), part of Australia’s National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy.