

A L R E A D Y
E L S E -
W H E R E



Geoff Cobham: *Already Elsewhere*

‘Light, my light, the world-filling light’
Rabindranath Tagore

Geoff Cobham’s extensive practice has spanned the worlds of design, events, theatre, dance, public art and installation. Central to his work is an investigation of the dynamic interplay between light and body—those of both performer and audience—and the ensuing conditions that this interplay provides for unique personal experience and the possibility of individual transportation.

Light is charged with creation. With the elemental. Volcanoes spewing molten rocks. The rising slant of a new day. The aloof light of a star. The bioluminescence of a firefly. In *Already Elsewhere* Cobham harnesses this elemental form and offers it transfigured, providing an orchestrated coruscation which invites each audience member to experience light spatially, poetically and subjectively.

What are we when we are alone? A collection of ricocheting atoms? A body in space? A person in possession of a highly individualised history, a set of memories and feelings? A thinking creature of reason? Or do we cease to be a form with definite confines; do the lines between self and surroundings become less certain, more blurred? Cobham’s spatial poetic gently guides the audience towards a contemplation of the layers of our own individual makeup and offers us room to be alone, even in the company of others.

The sonic and optical architecture of *Already Elsewhere* combines with the individual body and individual psyche to create a new space that is diaphanous and constantly changing. As this space is made and remade around us and in concert with us, glimpses of new states of being become apparent. Time slows and quickens. Pockets of stillness reveal themselves. Atmosphere becomes momentarily weightless. We move towards a delicate silence.

So much about the properties and behaviour of light is still unknown. Cobham’s work expresses the mysterious, almost playful quality of light and delights in its unknowability. For if something is unknown, we can make it whatever we would like it to be, or perhaps whatever it is that we require it to be. A miniature glow in the distance becomes the spark of a cigarette lighter. Another joins it and they become the eyes of a creature in the darkness. A third, a fourth, a fifth become the lanterns swung by rice paddy workers making their way home at dusk. One hundred become the eerie windows of a vacant office block; two hundred an isolated village glimpsed at night from an aeroplane at cruising level; a thousand become the monolithic Milky Way.

In *Already Elsewhere* Cobham takes us to where we want to be. He does so gently, meditatively and with spirit. In doing this, he has opened the door to a third space between light and audience, where the experience is the experience. No more and no less than that is required.

Nicki Bloom, 2017





Image: **Geoff COBHAM**, *Already Elsewhere*
(lighting test image) 2017, 12volt 1.2watt
incandescent bulbs, dimmer, Bungee cord motor.
Music: Für Alina by Arvo Pärt.
Collaborator: Chris Petridis.

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22 September - 1 December 2017
Gallery 3

Published by the Anne & Gordon Samstag Museum of Art, University of South Australia.
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ISBN 978-0-9943350-5-0

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A Samstag Museum of Art and 2017 Adelaide Film Festival exhibition.

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Already Elsewhere was commissioned by Samstag Museum of Art in partnership with 2017 Adelaide Film Festival. Samstag Museum of Art wishes to thank Geoff Cobham and his collaborator Chris Petridis for this evocative installation, and playwright Nicki Bloom for her insightful essay. We are also grateful to Adelaide Film Festival for their generous support.



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