

RESEARCH STATEMENT

Original Creative Work

Citation: Cooke, Grayson, 2005, *Sweet As*, Original Creative Work, Photographic exhibition, held at CQU University Bundaberg Campus January-March 2005, and Fairymead House Sugar Museum June-August 2005.

Research Background

- Australia is one of the world's largest exporters of raw sugar, and Queensland produces over 90% of Australia's sugar exports. The Bundaberg region is one of Queensland's most important sugar-producing areas, and sugar is central to the economy of the region. However, the aesthetics of the sugar industry, its visual richness and strangeness, are often eclipsed by its quotidian status within horticulture.

Research Contribution

- The exhibition focuses on the visual appeal of the environments and people involved in sugar production. It documents sugar production processes, and daily life in the sugar mills. The photos provide a view of the sugar industry through "other" eyes, using expressionistic photographic techniques, rendering the sugar mill environments as misty, surreal spaces of steam, light, colour and motion. This is the sugar industry as it hasn't been seen before, "made strange" and re-presented as something outside the realm of the everyday.

Research Significance

- This project was part of a large project by the Bundaberg Media Research Group. Its significance is attested to by a) its funding and partnership structure; it was facilitated by a partnership between CQU, Bundaberg Sugar, and the National Library of Australia, and it was funded by the CQU Regional Council for the Arts, the CQU Industry Collaborative Fund, and the National Library; b) its exhibition at CQU Bundaberg Campus and the Fairymead House Sugar Museum; c) the purchase of the exhibition by CQU Bundaberg campus; d) press coverage in local media and CQU online Uninews.

Author: Grayson Cooke

Date: 15 July 2009