

Universal Gallery: What if we put nature first?

THE UNIVERSAL GALLERY can be found on the ground floor of MOD.

ARTISTS

Credits

Free Lives - TERRA NIL GAME

QUT - TOUCHSCREEN PROGRAMMING TERRA NIL GAME

Content Warning:

All exhibits in this gallery have an interactive component and if you would like support or assistance, please approach a MODerator.

ACCESS SEATING

As you enter the Universal gallery a long row of leather bench seats is positioned on the right-hand side of the gallery.

DIGITAL SIGNAGE BOX (DSB)

A large, portrait-oriented screen with a moving magenta image of various natural landscapes, a gum tree branch swaying, Uluru: text reads in green: *What if we put nature first?*

Text (in white) reads: *The spaces we live in are designed to put our needs first, but what if we are not the priority?*

Would we see a flow of benefits from a new system placing nature first?

Approximately 10m to the east, you are at the entrance to the Universal gallery, white text on the black concrete floor reads: *What if we put nature first?*

To the left on a black wall, white text reads: “We belong here, this is our place, we don’t have to erase humanity to save the world. We should be saving the world for nature and for humanity because we are, at the end of it all, part of nature.”

Clare G Coleman, Terra Nil or Terra Nullus.

ABOUT NATURE

Prioritising the health of the environment, of Country, is not something that often we see in urban design. Cities are designed for people and for cars. Let’s consider how things might be different. Enter a space where nature is restored rather than exploited.

Explore interactive seasonal stories told by Story Teller and Artist Karl ‘Winda’ Telfer from the Mullawirra Meyunna, who will take you on a journey in preparation for each Kurna season in [Kuri Kurru](#).

Play [Terra Nil](#), a strategy game where you enable ecosystem reconstruction. Piece by piece, you will turn a barren wasteland into an ecological paradise. Scrub the soil of toxins, create rivers, and foster biomes of wetlands, wildflower meadows and forests. What happens when you restore nature and put its needs first?

PLAY TERRA NIL

Our cities often come to life through conscious decisions made during development. These decisions focus on how things are organised, how they look and how they function in the places we live.

When planning these urban areas, our primary concern is usually the needs of people. This leads to spaces that are designed for the comfort of humans and the convenience of cars. But what if we changed that perspective and prioritised nature? Research shows that having elements of nature in cities can benefit us in many ways. It can improve our [mental health, help us to adapt to and mitigate climate change, and support biodiversity](#).

Having a diverse range of plants and animals in urban settings is often seen as a challenge. A current strategy is to create pockets of biodiversity at sites far from the urban fabric of a city. But research calls for a new approach to urban design.

Currently, shared open spaces make up for the lack of greenery around residential areas. UniSA environmental researchers are [proposing new policies](#) that would make it necessary to plant trees when designing new housing areas. This would align with advice from [the](#)

[Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) aiming to decrease urban heat, reduce the reliance on electricity, and cut blackout risks.

In this exhibit we wanted to see what happens when you restore nature and put its needs first. In our Universal Gallery you can play Terra Nil, a strategy game where you enable ecosystem reconstruction. Piece by piece, you will turn a barren wasteland into an ecological paradise. Scrub the soil of toxins, create rivers, and foster biomes of wetlands, wildflower meadows and forests.

UNIVERSAL GALLERY OVERVIEW

In the centre of a 8m x 9m room hanging from the ceiling is a large sphere representing/ globe – 1.8m in diameter (representing the world). The sphere is projection mapped. Black floor railing surrounds it.

Positioned below the earth globe/ sphere is a kiosk inviting the user to seek further information: in this case, different data sets. When you press a particular data set: the information is projection mapped onto the 3D globe.

There are 3 data set categories to choose from: Nature, Humans and Animals.

Touch screen 1: Nature: Blue Marble, Blue Marble Seasonal, Blue Marble: Sea Level, Ice and Vegetation Changes – 19,000BC – 10,000AD, Land to Sea ratio, Rivers, Rivers Daily Discharge – 2010, Flood Events – 2000 – 2009, Fires – Real-time, Earthquakes – 2001 – 2015

Fires – real time text reads across all data set screens

Fires, both natural and man-made, are plotted in this daily imagery as a function of how many fires occurred within each 500 metre pixel area over the selected time period. Satellites are sensitive to infrared (heat) energy and are able to detect the thermal signature of fires. This data is not only useful for detecting wildfires in otherwise remote areas, but also for understanding how large fires spread over time. Some of the global patterns that appear in the fire maps overtime are the result of natural cycles of rainfall, dryness, and lightning. For example, naturally occurring fires are common in the boreal forests of Canada and grasslands in Australia in the summer. These are seen in opposite times of the year due to seasonal differences between the Northern and Southern hemisphere.

Touch screen 2: Humans: Human statistics, Blue Marble and Night time lights, Air traffic, Accessibility to Cities, Agriculture: Cropland intensity, Forest Extent, Gain, and Loss – 2000 – 2014, Population Density- 2016, Protests and Violence – 1979 – 2014, Protests and Violence – Real-time, Marine Debris: Garbage Patch Experiment

Touch screen 3: Animals: Fisheries Species Richness, Bird Migration Patterns – Western hemisphere, Marine Life tracks: Pacific Ocean and Spa Turtle Track: Atlantic Ocean

PROJECTED ARTWORK

The surrounding walls of the Universal Gallery feature ceiling to floor screens: upper and lower wall panels.

The upper wall panels are horizontal, cinematic style and the lower wall panels underneath are vertical (approximately 60cm l x 180cm h): 9 rectangular panels, the central wall, 11 and the right-hand side wall holds only 3 panels.

Two different, animation film sequences play on the upper horizontal and lower vertical wall panels.

On the upper half of the room is a 5min Disney-inspired, animated film trailer with soundtrack featuring a desolate, dry landscape, a dam bursts and montage sequence of idyllic landscapes and habitats appear: animals frolic in various, lush thriving landscape environments: a wolf howls, geese fly, bears roam free amongst wild flower laden hillsides, a deer feeds on grass as butterflies flutter by and rabbits bound joyfully. At the end of the short film sequence, in large white font text reads: Terra Nil available now, popping against clear blue sky with white cloud tufts.

On the lower vertical screens, all panels display the same still 3D computer generated image: A Northern American, rural terrain, dotted with pine trees: a central mountain with a cascade of waterfall, in the flat land below is a running blue stream. Sitting atop the mountain are wind turbines and irrigators.

A plume of clouds inhabits a clear blue sky – welcome to utopia.

White words read: TERRA NIL (the letter A has a cut out of a pine tree in its centre).

Underneath the text, are white words which read: Tap to play.

Each panel invites the viewer via drag and drop touch screen provocations (buildings and animals) to design and restore the desolate environment to a thriving, natural, sustainable biome - utopia.

Please seek assistance from a MODERATOR if you would like to interact with any of the interactive stations featured in this gallery.

INTERACTIVE COMPONENT

SURVEY STATION

Magenta text reads: How might future city development put nature first?

A – make current infrastructure more efficient

B – Protect pockets of biodiversity

C – Implement net zero policies

D – Requiring sustainable construction

E – Consult First Nation Elders

Please place your Broken token into the survey slot pointing towards your answer and submit your response.

This concludes the audio description track for “Nature” in the Universal Gallery, by Access2Arts for MOD. Exit via the same hallway we arrived by, turn left and you meet a ramp which will take you to the Street Gallery.