

(SAS2019-10997) - ANIMATING IMAGINED COMMUNITIES: MELBOURNE'S CHRISTMAS WINDOWS

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Abstract

Since 1956 the Myer Animated Christmas Windows have provided an annual attraction for the people of Melbourne, Australia and beyond. Displayed by the Myer Melbourne department store in the Bourke St Mall, thousands of people visit these window displays each year, as different fairytales, children's books, or Christmas stories are animated through intricately designed animatronic figures and scenarios. The Myer Animated Christmas windows can be understood as a site that is at once experiential, social/institutional, and discursive (Kwon 3). This paper proposes to examine the ways in which the windows contribute to the building of imagined communities, functioning as a site of nostalgia and place-making. In order to do this, the paper will appraise the ways the discourse around the windows link the displays to concepts of tradition, childhood and remembering, and the ways the windows themselves contribute to constructs of culture and national identity. Inextricable from the commercial use of the location, situated within Melbourne's central business district, the windows can be understood as an animated and animating site. By exploring the ways in which the windows use vision and sound (voice over narration and music) this paper will also consider the ways the windows are not only animated but *animating*, as people are guided and invited to move through the space.

Kwon, Miwon. *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* The MIT Press, 2002.

Palavras-chave : place, animatronics, imagined communities, nostalgia