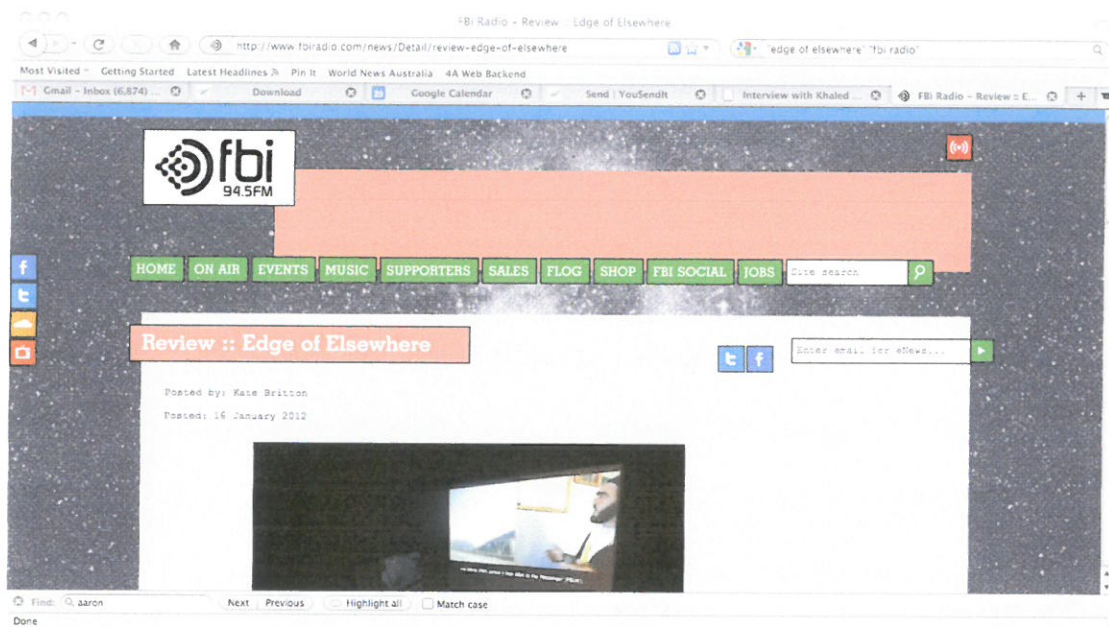


FBI Radio
Blog review
16 January 2012

<http://www.fbiradio.com/news/Detail/review-edge-of-elsewhere>



Text:

Kate Britton:

First walking into the gallery, you may be forgiven for thinking you'd stumbled into a Nike commercial. Ten screens greet you, each featuring a long-distance jogger – one screen in Luang Prabang, one in Geneva, one in Shanghai, one in Tokyo, etc. Landscapes blur by with the monotonous thud of the runner's feet, traversing the unique yet oddly familiar locales.

The artist, Japanese born Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, despite his demonstrable stamina as a runner, is far from a Nike ad however. Nguyen-Hatsushiba's Breathing is Free: 12,756.3 is an ongoing running project that sees that artist jogging to draw attention to the plight of those around the world forced to run for their lives. It's a gruelling practice, as Nguyen-Hatsushiba aims to run the 12,756.3km of the earth's diameter, a task he anticipates will take up to 10 years.

Breathing is Free is a nice entry point to the Chinatown showing of the Edge of Elsewhere project, now in the last of its three year run. The project is being shown across two spaces as part of this year's Sydney Festival – 4A and the Campbelltown Arts Centre – showcasing contemporary artists from across Australia, Asia and the Pacific in specially commissioned works that aim to challenge how we think about contemporary community-engaged practice.

Many of the works included in the shows display the same concerns as Nguyen-Hatsushiba's work – a commitment to addressing difficult social issues, a visible physical practice, an exploration of traditional culture in a changing world. From personal histories told through artefacts, to modern takes on traditional calligraphy, to a visual exploration of the Naqshbandi Order, a Sufi community in Western Sydney, Edge of Elsewhere doesn't shy away from looking at what happens when the old meets the new, or the East (and Pacific) meet the West, and its these encounters (in their various forms) that are the heart and soul of the show.

The works are in turns funny, poignant, disorienting and challenging, reflecting the time and passion that has gone into the Edge of Elsewhere project over the last three