

NORTH OF HOLLYWOOD NORTH

Bowen Island and screen production networks

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Abstract

Bowen Island is located close to the British Columbian metropolis of Vancouver, in southwest Canada. Its proximity to Vancouver's audiovisual studios and screen production services has enabled several professional screen industry workers to reside on the island and commute for employment. At the same time, the island attracts film and television productions from the Vancouver-based 'Hollywood North' due to its convenient location and highly attractive land and sea environments. These productions offer some social and financial benefits to islanders, while creating portraits of island life that are disassociated from locals' experiences. Meanwhile, resident screen producers (and other cultural workers) create their own productions that utilise the island's features and show aspects of life on Bowen Island. This article draws on a network analysis to investigate the interrelated factors of island geography, transport and communications, screen industries and cultural production. It explores various audiovisual representations of the island and how they are informed by internal and external flows of people, services and products.

Keywords

Bowen Island, screen production, Hollywood North, network analysis

Introduction

Bowen Island is positioned northwest of Canada's Vancouver, in Howe Sound between the continental mainland and Vancouver Island. This is part of what has been called the Salish Sea¹ since the 1970s to denote the shared Canadian/USA water body comprising the Strait of Georgia and Puget Sound. Bowen Island has attracted a substantial number of professional, semi-professional and amateur cultural practitioners, many of whom are attracted to its quiet lifestyle away from metropolitan or suburban bustle (see Bramham, 2011). At the same time, since the 1980s, it has also developed as a film and television production centre due to its convenient proximity to Vancouver, a city with a population of 2 million. Along with another major Canadian city – Toronto in Ontario – Vancouver has been dubbed 'Hollywood North' because it operates as a lower cost alternative film and television production centre to Hollywood itself (Gasher, 2002). Notable TV series such as *The X-Files* and a stream of feature films have been produced in 'Hollywood North' (Spaner, 2003) and several have been filmed on Bowen Island, making use of its buildings, natural attractions and island features. At the same time,

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professional and semiprofessional screen workers resident on the island produce their own audiovisual work.

Arjun Appadurai (1990) offers a global cultural framework that is relevant to the flows of people, communication, products and services operating in and out of Bowen Island. Identifying five dimensions of global cultural flows in terms of mediascapes, ideoscapes, finanscapes, technoscapes and ethnoscapes, Appadurai's model enables different perspectives on these operations and how they interact. The model can be mobilised to demonstrate inequities in different parts of the world, and even within nation states, provinces and regions. In contemporary (developed world) cultures, mediascapes largely function virtually. However, when mapped onto a location such as Bowen Island, mediascapes converge as multimedia operations, as well as with other dimensions, that is, with technology, finance, transport, ideas and population/cultural diasporas. On islands, broad cultural dimensions can be tracked to specific people, relationships and interactions, and change over time with the movement of people onto and off the island. While cultural content is viewed as deterritorialised and transnational in contemporary critical interpretations, this is only partially evident in Bowen Island where cultural production - and specifically screen production - is connected to identifiable individuals, organizations and networks.

Since the 1970s, network analysis has been applied in organisational behaviour, mental health and the spread of disease, information and other studies. Social network analysis has emerged as a set of methods for the analysis of social structures (Scott, 2000), enabling investigation of the relational ties between interdependent 'actors' and their connections to resources and organisations (Wasserman and Faust, 1994). This analytical method assists the investigation of relationships and phenomena that function at various levels of global, national, regional and island cultural domains. The relationship of Bowen Island to screen productions is multi-layered. The island is represented in various ways by residents and non-residents and screen productions by island residents relate to the island in different ways. Furthermore, screen productions impact Bowen Island to a greater or lesser extent depending on the scale of productions and the involvement of people, locations and island resources at specific moments and over a period of time. These productions may affect aspects of island life such as the use of locations that subsequently disrupts daily routines, yet provides employment for locals, and financial assistance contributing to island facilities and economy.

There are multiple manifestations of media industries that operate on Bowen Island and are partly driven by mainstream images and uses of islandness. At the same time, these offer resources that support and develop Islander-defined projects, as well as allow islanders to self-define their identity and outward connections. As such, these self-representations support a form of culturally cohesive localisation that is not necessarily responsive to external representations of the island. The focus of this article is on a collection of individuals, the linkages between them that converge on the island, and their relation to broader screen production operations in Vancouver. As individuals contributing to the production of images, these networks inform representations of Bowen Island that are consumed in local, regional and even global contexts.

This article investigates some of the screen productions that have been made on Bowen Island, how the productions have been facilitated, and perceptions of benefit to the

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local community and economy. It will examine the opportunities and constraints for cultural producers resident on the island. The study draws on social network analysis to explore the relation of screen producers to productions and locations, and uses information gathered from fieldwork² including interviews with relevant personnel and observation, and analysis of media texts and literature sources. An overview of Bowen Island is followed by discussion of local and external productions, leading to a discussion of these screen productions as reflective of creative industries functioning in a specific island location.



Figure 1 - Map of Bowen Island in relation to British Columbia and Vancouver
(<http://members.virtualltourist.com/m/1b080/de626/>)

Bowen Island Overview

Bowen Island is approximately 6 kilometres wide by 12 kilometres long, with a land area of almost 50 square kilometres. The island's all-year-round population has gradually increased over the last decade, from 2,975 in 1999 to 3,605 in 2009, but this expands by about 50 percent during the summer season when vacation residences are occupied by mainlanders. It is located at the outer extension of Vancouver's metropolitan area, and connected by a regular ferry service from West Vancouver (Figure 1). This allows approximately 500 adults and around 200 students to commute to workplaces or

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educational institutions on a daily basis, and the mobility of the resident labour force is indicated in the fact that 44% travel elsewhere in the Greater Vancouver Regional District to their regular place of work. According to BC Statistics estimates, the median age of residents is 44.8 years old, and a considerable percentage (36%) are university educated.³ Furthermore, relevant to this article, 14% have an occupation listed in the 'arts, culture, sport' sectors.

Historically, Bowen Island has attracted non-resident populations. Prior to the naming of the island after a British naval hero in 1860, Squamish peoples used the island as a summering ground. European settlers began logging, fishing and farming on the island in the 19th Century and, towards the end of that century, Bowen Island was a location for holiday cottages. The Union Steamship Company of British Columbia (founded in 1889) transported visitors to Bowen Island for daytime activities (horse riding, lawn bowling and parties) and evening dances and moonlight cruises (see Bowen Island Historians, 2004). By 1958, a regular car ferry service was introduced, enabling the island to become a commuter location, although it still attracts visitors for hiking, mountain bike riding, kayaking, swimming and sailing (Howard, 1973). Tourism (managed through BC Tourism) has also assisted employment in service industries (as well as arts and cultural areas) on the island. In 1999 Bowen Island became an 'island municipality' as part of the Greater Vancouver Regional District in British Columbia and the Bowen Island Municipal Council is responsible for governing the municipality under the authority of the Community Charter, Local Government Act and the Island Trust Act.

In 1987 the Bowen Island Arts Council was formed and it runs an art gallery (located at a central tourist shopping area called Artisan Square), the 'Write on Bowen' Festival of Readers and Writers in July each year, the Bowen Island Music Association which stages concerts and performances, and a committee charged with the mission to build a Community Hall and Arts Centre on the island.

In terms of media services for island residents, there are print, radio, television and online services. A weekly newspaper, *The Bowen Island Undercurrent*, has been running since 1975, growing from modest mimeographed sheets stapled together, to a newsprint with colour publication in which the classified advertisements and letters to the editor add considerable information about island politics and activities to the news pages.⁴ A film society was established in 2003 to screen productions made by locals and "thought-provoking alternative films to the island community"⁵ on an occasional basis. The internet has also expanded other forms of communication amongst islanders and to the world. One example is Chris Corrigan's *Bowen Island Journal*, a blog that discusses island politics and activities, and also records (often poetically, euphorically and photographically) his experience of island life.⁶ The Artisan Radio service has narrowcast across the island and via internet streaming since August 2006. BowenTV is a community television service that has operated since 2007 as on-demand video produced by filmmaker George Zawadzki and available through YouTube. In 2010, web and graphics designer John Dowler established a media cloud to showcase cultural activities on the island. The Bowen Island Forum is a blog that enables discussion of various community issues. These media forms serve to keep island residents informed, in touch and to various extents participating in debates and dialogues, whether they are resident on the island or geographically dispersed.

Screen Production and Bowen Island

In relation to screen production, Bowen Island operates as a set of local screen activities, as a subsidiary industry, and as a location for the mainstream screen industry. Screen workers navigate the local and non-local production industries in different ways depending on their chosen relation to the mainstream industry. Independent producers and production personnel rely on self-initiated productions funded largely through government or commercial sources, while larger studios and productions contract personnel as required and based on prior credits within a network of industry contacts. Local screen activities result from a significant number of screen workers across a range of skills (including actors and writers) who live on the island and produce local stories with local resources. Such screen productions connect more or less with the actual geography of the island or specific locations, and to island issues, personalities, events and activities.

In 2005, George Zawadzki produced a film adaptation of Mordecai Richler's 1975 children's story of *Jason Two Two meets the Hooded Fang*⁷ with 50 local people as actors. Zawadzki invested only in literary rights for local viewing so his film can only be screened on island, but it is appreciated as a local production and Zawadzki argues it has 'cult status' with (at least some) islanders. In an attempt to generate more local screen productions, Zawadzki launched BowenTV as a hobby in October 2007. Although he planned for it to become a community TV/film production organisation and possibly an income-generating venture, a workable business model never eventuated, forcing him to withdraw his involvement in 2010. The original BowenTV items were made on domestic standard camcorder and basic editing software and they reflect a range of perspectives on island lives, including recordings of municipal meetings (by Andrew Stone), and local characters talking about their life and island controversies, such as local development and ecological resources. According to Zawadzki, BowenTV's videos have around 100,000 views in over 50 countries, with about 90% of that being local viewers, so, while it does have subscribers from other parts of Canada and the USA, as well as Europe and Asia, the service predominantly caters to Bowen Island and the immediate vicinity. In contrast to *Jason Two Two* being a non-local story versioned to Bowen Island performers and conditions, Zawadzki and subsequent contributors to BowenTV continue to produce items that are 'homegrown' in the sense of being produced by, about and for Bowen Island. While some issues may be relevant (and played out) to other locales (such as the balance of development with scarce island resources including water), the stories are identifiable to Bowen Island by featuring recognisable residents and locations.

Screen workers negotiate local and non-local production industries as contributors to mainstream screen industries, or as independent writers or producers. Technical crew such as director of photography and grips work long days and are required to be on location, while editors and sound personnel can more easily operate from home studios or dispersed facilities, delivering contributions online. Cam Hayduk and his partner Kathleen Kelly moved to Bowen Island in 2003, after many years of recreational visits to the island. Following some film production training at Confederation College, Hayduk was fortunate to be employed as a camera operator in the Vancouver film industry boom period of the 1980s when many young and aspiring crewmembers were able to find employment. In the 1990s, conditions had changed with reductions in tax incentives funding for the independent sector and a surge in the US film industry (see

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Christopherson, 2006). Major 'runaway' (from outside Canada) and local productions became scarce, prompting Hayduk to take a break to travel and seek employment in childcare while also running film school camps. After returning to the industry, and commuting to Bowen Island, in 2008 Hayduk lost enthusiasm for the productions he was contracted to work on and decided to launch Turtlebox Productions as a small independent company utilising minimal crew and outsourcing additional services as required. The company attracted work from organisations like the Arthritis Society and, through word-of-mouth, was able to generate enough productions to be viable.

Turtlebox Productions was established as a result of Hayduk's disillusionment working as a camera operator within the mainstream screen production industry. In addition to commissioned work by health and other non-profit agencies and his work with students, Hayduk's local productions include a pilot episode for a TV series titled 'Almost Green', for which Hayduk is seeking a television commission. The series is based on an eponymous book⁸ by former journalist and established writer, James Glave, about moving to Bowen Island, building an 'eco-shed' and transforming his lifestyle to become ecologically sustainable. Glave promoted the book online with a series of audiovisual spots, then featured in a 'Going Green' series of short videos about daily life in which he interacted with locals and environmental issues. The positive responses these videos generated encouraged Hayduk to produce the TV pilot.

Hayduk notes the opportunities his change of employment has provided him, including a more relaxed lifestyle with less frequent commuting and more reasonable working hours that are sufficiently flexible to accommodate childcare and other commitments. Weighed against the pros are the constraints of commuting time, varying reliability of transport and the occasional inability to attend inconveniently-scheduled networking events and activities. One solution to these constraints that some screen workers use is mid-week accommodation on the mainland.

Peg Campbell has been directing and producing award-winning documentaries and narrative films since 1975, and from 1986 to 2010 she taught screenwriting and production at Emily Carr University of Art and Design. Campbell has been active in film and video co-operatives, NGOs such as Cineworks Independent Filmmakers Society and Vancouver Women in Film and Video, and negotiates her engagement with these various activities by residing some nights of the week in Vancouver and returning to Bowen Island for the weekends. On the island, Campbell directs theatre, and her 2008 film, *Your Mother Should Know*, premiered at the 2008 Vancouver International Film Festival and was also screened by the Bowen Island Film Society.

Screen producer residents of Bowen Island function within a subsidiary industry to 'Hollywood North'. In this context, several screen workers either commute to Vancouver or operate remotely.⁹ One such commuter is Cathy Robertson, who has a Master of Fine Arts in filmmaking and is a cinematographer, director and producer with experience on over 250 dramatic TV series and documentaries broadcast across Canada and internationally. She has taught at Vancouver-based tertiary institutions including University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University and Emily Carr University of Art and Design, and has a continuing interest in community filmmaking and new technologies as enabling such an approach.

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Media and communications technologies have considerably impacted on the production and distribution of screen media and other expressive forms. Communication systems have changed at a remarkable pace, transforming the relation of Bowen Island to regional and international centres. Cathy Robertson recalls how in 1992 facsimile was the major form of 'instant' communication for islanders until the internet was introduced in 1994. Film and television producers were restricted to dial-up until broadband was available from about 2002. This has meant that more production work can be done via the internet using Skype, social media such as Facebook, email and unlimited storage services, thereby assisting on-island creative work. A documentary and TV series producer and production manager, Lynn Fuhr, and her husband Eric Davies who is a sound recordist, moved to the island in 1998. While Fuhr operates her business remotely, close to her children, Davies commutes to Vancouver and other parts of the world.¹⁰ Continuing their respective businesses has only been possible by ready access to Vancouver and, more importantly, to the internet. Hayduk observes that many of the Turtlebox Productions items are entirely produced and delivered to locations across Canada without personal face-to-face client meetings, and that such a *modus operandi* would not have been possible ten years previously. In terms of post-production sound services, too, there are several professional recording studios on the island, enabling music and sound mixes to be recorded and delivered remotely.

In addition, resident screen producers create or contribute to Hollywood North productions using Bowen Island as a location for screen stories. One of the highest profile screen producers who resides on Bowen Island part-time (when not located in Los Angeles) is Grace Gilroy. She has not only produced stories for the US industry using Canadian locations and facilities but has also been instrumental in bringing screen productions to Bowen Island.

Locating Screen Stories on Bowen Island

Bowen Island offers an attractive film or television location for the mainstream screen industries. Since the demise of the horizontally-integrated Hollywood studio system in the 1950s, mainstream film and (to some extent) television production has been structured around a vertically-oriented skills-based approach. This has enabled the growth of dispersed production centres and locations outside Hollywood, New York and the USA overall. Such productions exploit specific locations for aesthetic content as well as reduced costs for production and post-production stemming from tax credits, currency exchange rates or cheaper labour. 'Runaway' screen productions attract employment, business growth and marketing attention to these locations, and government offices and film agencies have directed resources to capturing productions for cities or regions in order to exploit a portion of these lucrative income-generating activities. Bowen Island is one such region that is promoted by the British Columbia Film Commission as offering "many lakes, beaches and unspoiled crown forest".¹¹

Much of Canada's film and television industry produces output geared towards mainstream North American audiences, and 20% of film production is generated through the Francophone film productions (centered in Montreal) that are distributed mainly to European and wider Francophone audiences. The major Anglophone production centres in Canada are Toronto and Vancouver and, in fact, prior to the film

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industry slump in 2008, Vancouver was the second largest film and television production centre in North America, after Los Angeles. Vancouver and Toronto developed as 'Hollywood North' due to tax credits on Canadian labour costs offered by the Canadian Government to attract productions away from the major US production centres (Gasher, 2002). Vancouver is considered reasonably close to Hollywood (a three-hour flight from Los Angeles and in the same time zone) and this means that personnel can be located there easily. Also, landscapes around Vancouver can be made to appear like Oregon or even northern California, and laneways and other urban locations can be transformed into appropriate cityscapes. Filmmaking infrastructure and experienced crews have grown in Vancouver, with three major special effects stages (Lions Gate, Vancouver Film, and Bridge Studios). Where Hollywood producers were initially attracted to favourable exchange rates and lucrative tax incentives offered by local and provincial governments, now the availability of experienced crews, equipment, studios and a cooperative city government are major enticements to Vancouver. While Vancouver has been used as a filmmaking location for nearly a century now, it has been prominent in this role since 1999.¹² In 2007, over 200 film and television productions were completed in British Columbia, generating over a billion dollars in production spending on films like *X-Men 3: The Last Stand* (directed by Brett Ratner, 2006), *Night at the Museum* (directed by Shawn Levy, 2006) and television series such as *Battlestar Galactica* (2004-9). More recently, television productions have exceeded film productions in terms of foreign production spending, with almost Canadian \$400 million spent by foreign television series in 2010 (BC Film Commission, 2010). Additionally, the decision to locate Pixar Canada (an offshoot of the successful US digital animation studio) in Vancouver highlights the way in which the city has developed as a creative hub.

Vancouver's screen industry success has had a flow-on effect for Bowen Island given that production personnel are available reasonably close by, and this means that the island can be the location for a film or television storyline, or specific sequences of a production can be shot there. Bowen Island's relative convenience can be compared with another Gulf island, Galiano Island, which is a 55 minute ferry ride from Vancouver south and is the location for the Gulf Islands Film and Television School (or GIFTS¹³) that runs media production training in various genres (documentary and drama) for specific age and interest groups. The School's curriculum emphasises independent, hands-on and reactive media production taught in intensive live-in courses. Other Gulf islands with notable creative arts activities and remarkable locations include Salt Spring and Capriola Islands, although neither has attracted screen productions to the same extent as Bowen Island due to their distance from a screen production hub such as Vancouver and relatively inconvenient transport options.

The local Bowen Island Municipality benefits from economic and other contributions, and the Municipality developed a film policy in 2007 (formally adopted January 14, 2008). A formalised process for applying for filming permission and daily charges contributed almost CAN\$7000 to the municipality coffers in 2007 and in the following year that had almost doubled. While 2009 saw a reduction in on-island productions, this reflected the North American industry hiatus more generally. In terms of the overall 2008 municipal budget, Canadian \$13,000 is a sizeable amount, although many localities (even such well known ones as Manhattan) promote themselves to screen production companies not to derive direct income but to benefit the broader local economy. The

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film industry contributes over one billion Canadian dollars to the overall economy of British Columbia and employs almost 50,000 people.

A notable and valuable feature of Bowen Island's commercial filming policy is that screen production companies, in addition to paying \$100 per day per location, are encouraged to donate to local community groups and/or leave "a needed legacy behind for the community to enjoy"¹⁴, specifically to fund a contribution to the community (relative in scale to the production budget and period spent on location on Bowen Island). Some of these islander-defined returns have been: a staircase and access road at a landing park (valued at approximately Canadian \$17,000); 3 park benches; donations to the Volunteer Fire Department, the teen centre and Bowen Island Community Church; and a ferry shelter (that islanders had requested to be provided by the ferry company but had not been forthcoming up to that point).¹⁵ The former filming liaison officer for the municipality, Chris Buchanan, also notes that the community benefits significantly from productions shot on Bowen Island through utilisation of local businesses including water taxi, garbage collection, food services, equipment operators, driveway buyouts, and property rentals.¹⁶ An additional benefit that islanders derive from such productions using Bowen Island as a location is their ability to draw on these facts for tourism, as evidenced in the Tourism BC site information under a 'Bowen Island Goes Hollywood' heading.¹⁷ With these benefits accruing to the island and the exercise of protective policy, there is little evidence of active opposition to the screen productions located on-island, although residents sometimes comment on temporary inconveniences.¹⁸

Recent feature films shot on the island include *The Fog* (directed by Rupert Wainwright, 2005)¹⁹ and parts of *The Wicker Man* (directed by Neil LaBute and starring Nicholas Cage, 2006)²⁰. Some earlier films that used Bowen Island as a location include *The Clan of the Cave Bear* (Michael Chapman, 1986), *The Russia House* (Fred Schepisi, 1990) and *Double Jeopardy* (Bruce Beresford, 1999). Recently a horror/thriller television series devised by Ari Schlossberg for CBS's 2008-2009 season,²¹ *Harper's Island*, was filmed on Bowen Island and produced by part-time island resident, Grace Gilroy. The thirteen episode series is based on a storyline in which one or more characters located on the island are murdered in each episode. The series used several locations on the island for both specific sequences and background scenes, including the Royal Canadian Legion building that had been in a state of disrepair but was renovated for the series, and decorative signifiers of the Legion were temporarily replaced with US-oriented visual markers.²² Along the lines of the contemporary screen industry's tendency to use dispersed transmedia narratives, internet tie-ins and niche marketing, the show had web support in the form of a Fancast Forum (in which fans debated who would be 'killed off' next), a social web series and behind-the-scenes items. BowenTV featured a clip titled 'Harper's on Bowen' about the production impact on the island, with wry comments by locals (for example, about appearing as 'background' in various scenes).²³

Screen Production as Creative Industry

Bowen Island's connections with screen production can be analysed by mobilising cultural discourses relating to regional creative industries policies. In a 2001 Canadian national study of communities with a population of less than 50,000 people, Bowen

Island was fourth in Canada's ten most artistic municipalities, with 115 (6.6%) of total labour force then listed as just over 1700. In an update of this study based on the 2006 Census, Bowen Island had shifted to fifth place (Hill, 2010).²⁴ This aspect of the island is relevant in terms of the most critical new sector of the global economy, the 'creative economy' as articulated by Richard Florida in his 2002 book, *The Rise of the Creative Class, and How it's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community, and Everyday Life*. Creativity, according to Florida, is "the decisive source of competitive advantage" (ibid: 5) of the global economy and the 'creative class' is distinguished by core values including individuality, meritocracy, mobility, openness and the self-formation of identities. Florida discusses also how certain regions and cities are embedded with particular creative knowledge 'clusters' in which creative individuals and organisations sustain and reinforce production. In the global economy, these localised creative cultures become an integral part of the region's identity and economic viability. In this model, even small islands can be 'annexes' to this phenomenon, as reflected in Bowen Island.

Florida's and other scholars' work has informed an approach to cultural policy and planning in Canada and the USA by its application to creative cities and regions as incubators, as distinct from national cultural planning as evidenced in Australia, some Asian and developing countries, or the European emphasis on broad cultural strategies. Flew and Cunningham (2010) identify creative industries discourses as emerging primarily in relation to government policy in the 1990s with the initiatives of Tony Blair's Labour government in the United Kingdom. The 'creative cities' model has been criticised for its focus on location and the boundaries dividing creative arts activities from (profit-generating) entertainment/copyright industries. In contrast, 'cultural industries' models attempt to provide broader frameworks to accommodate the whole of the 'culture cycle' of inception, production, dissemination and consumption that critically informs screen production, whether at the level of independent or mainstream industries. Based on the 2009 UNESCO model (2009: 19-12), the culture cycle includes five stages that interact in a complex network:

1. Creation: the originating and authoring of ideas and content.
2. Production: the reproducible cultural forms (eg TV programs, films), as well as the specialist tools, infrastructure and processes used in their realisation (eg filming, post-production).
3. Dissemination: the provision of cultural products for consumers and exhibitors (eg film distribution including online modes).
4. Exhibition/Reception/Transmission: the place of consumption and provision of live and/or unmediated cultural experiences to audiences by granting or selling access to consume/participate in time-based cultural activities (eg festival organisation and production; commercial, specialist and art-house cinemas).
5. Consumption/Participation: the activities of audiences and participants in consuming cultural products and taking part in cultural activities and experiences (eg attending film festivals, consuming screen products in domestic settings, using online resources, buying screen merchandise).

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An additional operation that maps onto this integrated model is marketing and merchandising that may be seen to function as an additional stage, or as a component of Stages 2, 3 and 4, as it is increasingly part of production, dissemination and exhibition.

Several factors appear to impact island identity in relation to screen production and relate as overlaid levels for Bowen Island in the current period. Bowen Island's screen productions—whether located or produced on or off-island—contribute to a self-defining network in which audiovisual activities, social planning and economic activities coalesce. Bowen Island can be viewed as peripheral to Hollywood North although, if the perspective of island residents predominates, then the centre of production becomes the island, its locations and community benefits. The productions filmed on the island can also be viewed differently. Screen productions will use the island in various ways, filming specific landscape or seascape locations, constructing a whole village as film set (in the 1966 film *The Trap*, directed by Sidney Hayers), or locating scenes in recognisable buildings such as The Snug café (in the 1997 TV film *All the Winters That Have Been*, directed by Lamont Johnson and starring Richard Chamberlain). To outside viewers, island locations are merely atmospheric support for the on-screen action and are de-identified or renamed for the story. Yet local people recognise buildings and geographical features of the island without having any association with the film narrative or genre itself. The island is chosen in part because of its particular appearance—the light, beaches, forested areas, specific built structures, etc—and *also* because it is an island. Screen indicators of an island locale are conveyed through, for example, aerial shots, travel sequences (eg ferry, boat or light aircraft to arrive/depart), long shots of island vistas, as well as dialogue and obvious narrative markers such as place names.²⁵ Several films have drawn on Bowen Island's 'islandness' and it has been called Raven Island and Harper's Island and specific locations (such as Snug Cove) have been renamed Antonio Bay, Shelton's Bay, and so on.

It is pertinent that many of the screen productions have used Bowen Island in relation to horror or mystery films, and this may be consistent with other island-based representations (and the subject of another research study). However it supports a paternalistic view of the island in suggesting that the island is perceived as outside the domain of control by metropolitan centres: in other words, its seeming remoteness and island boundaries mean that 'horrific' acts can occur supposedly outside the jurisdiction of so-called 'civilised' life. Island residents may not necessarily agree on everything—for instance, development policies can be divisive, with the Chamber of Commerce ranged against residents concerned for scarce local resources²⁶ – nevertheless, island life is both a community activity and a haven from the disadvantages of city or mainland life. In this way, the BowenTV contributions and other online contributions such as blogs and journal entries enable a more participatory media experience²⁷ and, while often reflecting community disagreements, a more island-centred set of representations.

Several artistic endeavours deliver economic benefits to Bowen Island, however the screen production industry operates differently to other cultural activities. Art, music and writing festivals, and other events, are designed to entice artists and tourists to the island, and dovetail with an existing creative (and health conscious) community. The screen industry offers something different insofar as it brings personnel, equipment and outside stories to Bowen Island as a commercial enterprise that is not primarily

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motivated around cultural development, preservation, heritage, or creative life for the island itself.²⁸ This can be likened to the way in which Bowen Island hosted the Winter Olympics torch in February 2010. As part of the Spirit of BC campaign, the torch was located on the island for a day prior to the Opening Ceremony. The event engaged the local community while also providing a catalyst for winter tourist visits to the island. Like the screen industry, this activity sees the island implicated with the mainland while, at the same time, offering a unique experience that can be consumed by tourists and visitors from afar through media services.

Conclusion

Bowen Island offers a richly complex matrix in relation to screen production. Such a matrix positions geography, transport and communications, screen industries and island residents in direct relation to each other. It operates as a locale and inspiration for island production, subsidiary location for a mainstream production hub, and a creative industry node amongst other regional examples. At the same time, Bowen Island has very specific features that are at once implicated in this matrix and particular to the island. Furthermore, individual screen workers are related to each other through their productions and professional associations, shared interests, and so on. At an overarching level, they are connected through their residence on the island and their interactions as citizens sharing local issues, events and services not necessarily related to screen productions or media industries.

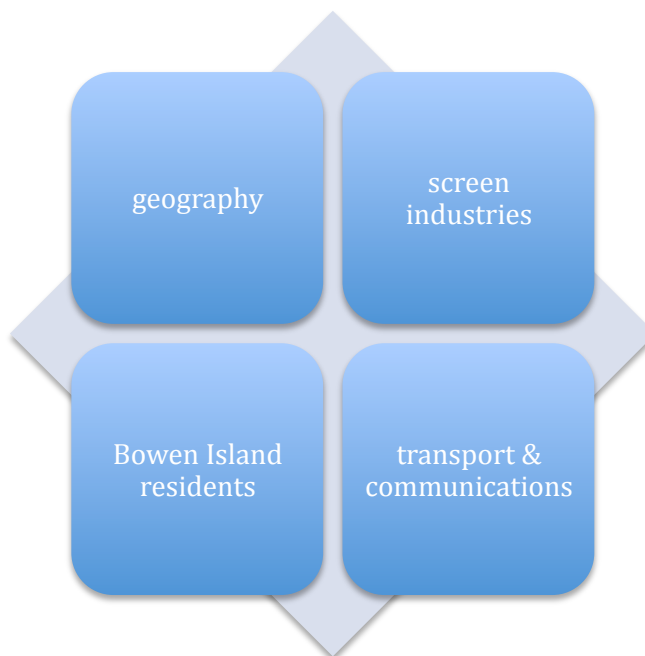


Figure 3 - Matrix indicating inter-relation of media and island factors impacting on screen productions on and off-island (Coyle, 2012).

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The geographic features, history, local economy and socio-cultural character of the island and its residents impact the screen productions outlined above. If the screen production matrix is seen in relation to a larger network, then the island is the core of the network that accommodates Bowen Island with other surrounding islands,²⁹ the metropolitan centre so close to it, to BC and Canada, and internationally via media communications and representations distributed abroad. Bowen Islanders can be seen as actively defining and engaging with their own models of the world, all stemming from the geographically-defined island location. This enables them to use screen production to craft a positive self-representation, assist the local economy, and link to the region and the world in a variety of ways. As such, Bowen Island offers a node within a network, one that suggests a framework for examining screen production in other variously defined locations, whether island or regionally located community. The screen productions on and relating to Bowen Island provide a model that is at once specific while also reflecting the complex nature of media personnel, products and services in contemporary society.

Thanks to Lynn Fuhr, Cam Hayduk, Cathy Robertson, George Zawadzki, Chris Buchanan and the BI Municipality, BI Arts Council, BI Library, BI Tourist Office, BI Historical Society for local insights and access to archives, SFU scholars and island residents Professors Alison Beale and Adam Holbrook, and to Michael Evans and Philip Hayward for comments on early drafts of this paper presented as initial findings at the Fifth ISIC conference in 2008 in Sado.

End Notes:

¹ Kwiáht Center for the Historical Ecology of the Salish Sea website: www.kwiaht.org/salishsea.htm

² Initial fieldwork was conducted 30 May to 14 June 2007. Subsequent fieldwork periods were November 2010 and September/October 2011. Initial findings were presented at the 2008 International Small Island Cultures conference in Sado, Japan. Research for this project was supported through, and special study leave granted by, the School of Arts and Social Sciences, Southern Cross University, Australia.

³ Several academics employed in tertiary institutions in Vancouver live on the island.

⁴ See www.blackpress.ca/division/profile.php?divID=2&paperID=105 for short profiles of newspapers published by Black Press.

⁵ See bowenfilm.com/about/

⁶ Located at bowenislandjournal.blogspot with archived material at the old site at www.chriscorrigan.com/miscellany/bijournal/2003_04_01_archive.html

⁷ *Jason Two Two and the Hooded Fang* was originally devised as a children's fantasy novel by controversial Canadian author and screenwriter, Mordecai Richler, and published in 1975. Two films and an animated television series based on the book were released: in 1978 directed by Theodore J Flicker, and in 1999 directed by George Bloomfield, followed by the TV series originally aired in 2003.

⁸ Glave's front cover (Canadian publication) declares the book to be about 'How I built an eco-shed, ditched my SUV, alienated the in-laws and changed my life forever' and contains environment research information matched with the story conveyed with self-

deprecatory humour. *Almost Green* was published by Greystone Books, a division of Canada's Douglas and McIntyre Publishers that focuses on eco-critical work, and on 1 Sept 2008 was published in the US by Skyhorse Publishing with the subtitle 'How I Saved 1/6th of a Billionth of the Planet'. Glave is a former senior editor with *Outside* magazine and has also worked as news editor for *Wired*. As a freelance writer, Glave has contributed to numerous publications, including the *New York Times Magazine*, *Details*, *Vancouver*, *Western Living*, and the *Tyee*. He also blogs at www.glave.com.

⁹ Another Bowen Island resident screen director and writer is Stefan Wrenshall, whose 2011 feature film *Indie Jonesing* is due for release in 2012.

¹⁰ Davies has recorded sound for many documentaries and TV series in 29 countries.

¹¹ See 'Bowen Island as a 'region' on the BC Film Commission site: www.bcfilmcommission.com/locations/regions/metro_vancouver/bowen_island.php - accessed Sept 19, 2011. While the island is marketed as a location for screen productions, there does not seem to be any evidence of tourism related to visiting sites and landscapes represented in the productions.

¹² See *Hollywood North* magazine, operating out of Toronto since 2002, that claims to provide a 'comprehensive insight into Canada's Film and Television Industry', online at <http://www.hnmag.ca/>

¹³ GIFTS can be found at: <http://www.giftsfilms.com/>

¹⁴ Bowen Island Municipality Policy and Guidelines for Commercial Filming on Bowen Island, Policy #08-01: 4, online at Bowen Island Municipality website: www.bimbc.ca/policies - accessed June 2009.

¹⁵ See *BIM Link* (Bowen Island Newsletter) item 'Municipality, filming company and the community conspire to build shelter' that describes how "a Bowen approach" was mobilised to solve the problem of the need for the ferry shelter, namely, that Harper's Island Productions and a "Bowen resident" agreed to help with expenses (v2 n3, September 2008, online at: www.bimbc.ca/bimlink_september - accessed June 2009).

¹⁶ Information provided via personal email correspondence (June 2-3 2009).

¹⁷ See au.britishcolumbia.travel/en-CA/PlacestoVisit/BowenIsland.htm - accessed June 2011.

¹⁸ See, for example, comments about navigating the fog used for *The Fog* production, online at: www.flickr.com/photos/dynamohum/3488391262/ - accessed November 2011

¹⁹ A remake of John Carpenter's eponymous horror film (1980).

²⁰ A remake of Robert Hardy's eponymous feature (1973).

²¹ Aired on Global TV in 2009.

²² Thanks to island resident and scholar, Adam Holbrook, for this information.

²³ www.youtube.com/watch?v=WTDeTG780wI&feature=channel_page - accessed September 2011

²⁴ The nine arts occupations included in the analysis are: actors; artisans and craftspersons; conductors, composers and arrangers; dancers; musicians and singers; other performers (such as circus performers and puppeteers); painters, sculptors and other visual artists; producers, directors, choreographers and related occupations; and writers. Media artists are not well captured in the occupational classifications.

²⁵ See a broader discussion of 'islandness' in Hay, 2006. The topic is worth further discussion, but not within the scope of this study. See also Hayward's discussion of islandness, 'otherness' and elements of horror film (2007).

²⁶ See various articles in *Bowen Island Undercurrent*, online at: www.bowenislandundercurrent.com

²⁷ However, this cannot be equated with the kind of overt participatory media experience that occurred in the Fogo film project described by Crocker (2008), possibly due in part to the proximity of Bowen Island to mainland BC.

²⁸ A possible exception to this may be that, in 2008, Bowen Island hosted the Creative Peace film production camp, an annual event initiated by GIFTS that brings Israeli, Palestinian and Canadian youth together to produce films relevant to their cultural understandings. See www.creativepeacenetowork.ca.

²⁹ The creative industries operating on other Gulf Islands are worth examination but not within the scope of this study.

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