Robyn Archer interview
Doco Conference
Darwin Festival
Globalisation
Bendict Andrews
MAAP99
Asia Pacific Triennial
Dennis Del Favero
The Ghost Wife
The Mercenary
Nxt Symposium

Australia’s innovative arts bi-monthly
Cover photo: Re-make

From December Sydney's Museum of Contemporary Arts will host the exhibition "Moral Hallucination: Channeling Hitchcock" curated by Edward Colless and featuring works by contemporary Australian artists (including Louise Hearman, Andrew Hurle, Anne Wallace, Rosamund Lang and Ulrike Frank) which "channel the corrupting spirit of Hitchcock."

From March 30 to April 2, the museum will host a 4-day festival of gallery talks, papers and performances analysing and celebrating Hitchcock's enduring legacy to contemporary culture. On January 30 there's a recreation of Hitch's courtroom scene from "Vertigo." The Phoenix Times comprises rapid fire clips collapsed from Hitchcock's films. From the Hollywood archives come posters, gallery panels, artists' letters, stills and some photographs of Alfred Hitchcock in Sydney in the 1960s.

Organised by the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford the Hitchcock exhibition includes the complementary Moral Hallucination: Channeling Hitchcock curated by Edward Colless and featuring works by contemporary Australian artists (including Louise Hearman, Andrew Hurle, Anne Wallace, Rosamund Lang and Ulrike Frank) which "channel the corrupting spirit of Hitchcock."

Editorial

What a year, decade, century, millennium...

So far RealTime has managed to resist millennial Best Of's, but 1999 certainly encourages listing the great Worst Of's—Kosovo and East Timor, the GST in and the Republic out, and Labor and the Liberals realising the dream of a federal republic. Concerns as a roar of always a 'flow' of refugees sweeps the nation—remindent of those newsworthy moments of not too long ago, 'Maboh, How It Will Affect You.' There's also justifiable paranoia among artists as we find ourselves still in the box labelled 'elite' (had elite as opposed to, say, good, curring or business diction). The Australia Council Saatchi & Saatchi roadshow tried to explain why this is so and encouraged us to be more inclusive. While there was much of interest on the Arts have to respond: expects can from the video clips of focus groups, the gig was a little too close to patronising for comfort, possibly because so many artists had tried to be inclusive for so long, yet for others art is a pursuit, which, can, of course, be read as elitist and exclusive. Hopefully good will come from Saatchi & Saatchi-Australia Council 3-year strategy to promote the value of the arts to all Australians. But the way different art forms engage their audiences must surely be on the agenda. Is the blanket appeal to inclusiveness, not to mention the scale of arts companies and organisations and their access to markets, a more industry in Australia. It was an instructive example, but the arts aren't one industry, they are many (and industry the right world?).

Looked at from another angle, the big question is how inclusive is the culture it inhabits. The strongest response to the briefing by Paul Costantoura, consulting strategic planner with Saatchi & Saatchi, and Jennifer Bott, General Manager of the Australia Council, was about the apparent and visible since of the arts in education. How can the arts be regarded as anything but alien and elitist when they are seen as having a significant role in the everyday lives of Australian children? And what about the role of the media? Reporting the Arts, News Coverage of Arts and Culture in America is a research report just released by the National Arts Journalism Program (NAJP) at Columbia University. It reveals, as we would expect too from arts attendance figures in Australia, that the space allocated to the arts in newspapers and television simply does not reflect the numbers in the population for whom the arts is part of everyday life (see http://www.arts.columbia.edu for the full report). Speaking of the media, ABC TV's The Arts Show sounded vaguely promising before it went to air, and the idea of a whole hour on the arts almost unbearable (you can't possibly count the funereal Sunday afternoons on ABC TV). However, Andrea Strenkowski cleared the depth in interesting group discussion outside her literary interests. So, instead of finding people who could handle these formats, rare opportunities to see artists mentoring and talking and being something other than an elite, they were simply abandoned for an bland magazine approach, a kind of distorted Express the program we used to admire because there was nothing else, whereas The Arts Show became unwatchable). The upshot? Andrea Strenkowski cleared the depth in interesting group discussion outside her literary interests. 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A tale of two cities
Suzanne Spunner in Darwin while Dili burns

The experience of this year's Darwin Festival was inevitably and indivisibly linked with the events happening across the water in Timor. Darwin is a garrison town masquerading as a public service town with palms; it comes into its own during wars and evacuations. In September 1999, it was the best of times and the worst of times.

The ironies of timing were rich—the night before I left Melbourne I saw the premiere of Louis Nowra's Language of the Gods set in the town of Makassar in the Celebes, present day Sulawesi, in the dying moments of Indonesian independence. Amongst the audience was playwright Graham Perri and ex-Darwin actor Terry Kenrick who had created Death at Talibo, about the massacre of Australian journalists in Timor in 1975. Also present was John Romeril who wrote Top End, which conjoined the invasion of Timor and life in Darwin immediately after Cyclone Tracy, with timely reminders of the debt Australia owes Timor, and the corresponding support of Australian wharvies for Indonesian independence after the war. The night after I arrived, an architectural and historical icon of white settlement, The Hotel Darwin, was demolished. It had withstood the bombing of Darwin in 1942 and the fury of Cyclone Tracy. Each time it was rebuilt and its poetic blue tiled roof restored, only to fall prey to the capacity of economic rationalism one hot and steamy night.

The times were intense enough in the arts over the 10 days I spent in Darwin, events running out in Timor. As well as the festival there was the NT Writers Festival and The Aboriginal St Torres Strait Islander Art Award. But in Darwin there could be no forgetting Timor. Gertie Huddleston, a senior painter and a winner in the Art Award told me about watching the news on TV back at Ngukurr and crying for the people of Timor and how she had just spent the day painting with some of the refugees in the park beside the UN headquarters. The night before I heard the Gyuto monks from Tibet chanting a prayer for peace but hearing that drone from a distance, mistook it for the digeridoos. The monks made a fine sand mandala in the foyer of The Supreme Court, as mobile phones went off around them. The Arafura Ensemble gave a concert there and dedicated it to the people of Timor, and at the end Karyn Sassalessa read a poem about letting the peace keepers in. She looked strained; she was. Sassalessa was doing double duty. She'd come to read at the Writers Festival from working with the Kosovars down south and ended up counselling refugees at the Tent City on the edge of town.

Everything blurred, the place is so small. The Festival Club was set up on the wharf, and to party at the club you had to pass a military checkpoint because the place was so awash with foreign correspondents reporting from as close to the war zone as they could get.

At the daily meetings at the 'East Timorese Embassy' in Raintree Park, leaflets urged us to boycott Indonesian goods—Balinese clothing was mentioned specifically—meanwhile an exhibition at NTU, I've Been to Bali, celebrated the first major exchange visit of NT Fine Arts students whose course now involves an extended homestay in Ubud. And at the Mindil Beach Market we ate our satays, wore our batiks and smoked our kreteks, and watched the bloody red sunset, and heard that in Jakarta the Australian Embassy was being stoned and all over Indonesia Australians were passing themselves off as Americans.

The highlight of the Darwin Festival was Trepang, an Indigenous opera directed and devised by Andridh Saint Claire, which celebrated the 300 years of trade and cultural exchange between the Macassan seafarers and the Yolgnu, the Aboriginal people of SE Arnhemland. Every year with the South East trade winds the Macassans came, in their prau, and returned with their boats full of dried smoked trepang, which had been collected in the warm shallow waters by Yolgnu men and women. Trepang, biche de mer, sea cucumber, was prized as an aphrodisiac by the Macassan Chinese masters.

On the opening night, various Aboriginal leaders welcomed the audience: Billy Risk from the Larrakia Association spoke of the Tamarind Trees the Macaans planted all along the Northern coast and welcomed the refugees from Timor; and Terry Yumbulal, artist and cultural manager for the Elcho Island people who performed the show, reminded us that this was a trading history between business partners. Marcia Langton talked of Trepang as being "family history", a long history of mutual respect and friendly relations between neighbours, then and now, a story of first contact and wondered, as we did, what things would have been like if this model had been our dominant image of cultural contact.

Mary Lynn Griffith hoped the concrete wharf was safe and not about to succumb to the same insidious, undetectable, "concrete cancer" that had invaded the Hotel Darwin and necessitated its overnight demolition. The Fourth Estate, a blues ensemble of a dozen local journos playing manual typewriters, bemoaned "the deadline blues" and around the town there was not a hotel bed or a roll of film to be had for love or money; the place was awash with foreign correspondents reporting from as close to the war zone as they could get.

What we saw under the tars that night was a series of cultural exchanges—songs and dances performed for one group by the other to introduce and reveal themselves, and at the same time we saw what the Yolgnu made from that contact. We saw a boat built, blessed with ceremony, a sail hosted and a great voyage undertaken, we saw the arrival on a distant beach and strangers approaching strangers. We saw gifts given and received, and dances about all the new things—tobacco, cloth, knives, playing cards, dugout canoes with sails, and alcohol. A marriage ceremony between a Macassan boy and a Yolgnu girl signifying and sealing the promise of friendly relations.

The entire opera was sung in Macassarese and Yolgnu Mahta, which includes a repertoire of some 450 shared words, but even to outsiders like myself the story was clear in the detailed performance; we just missed out on lots of jokes that had the large Aboriginal audience in stitches throughout. We were the strangers, the Balandja, a Yolgnu word for white people, given them by the Macassans from their word for Hollanders, the Dutch who had colonised their country.

There is a moment in Trepang, a very subtle moment, really an accident, a rupture in the illusion of first contact that occurred in the place where the wearing of sarongs is introduced. The Macassans present sarongs to the Yolgnu and show them how to wear them. Everything proceeds with the pleasure of novelty and pretend naivete but one old Yolgnu man, once he'd wrapped his new sarong around himself, immediately made that unmistakable gesture of adjusting the fit and setting it on his gut by deftly rolling the top over. That small gesture revealed all. He could not dissemble, he knew he was part of Asia as only recently the rest of Australia has begun to learn and, like him, we cannot unlearn that knowing.

What a difference a year makes! Last year I came back for the premiere of my play Silver Seafoars, celebrating the annual Darwin to Ambo yacht race and the maritime history of the Arafura Sea, including the little known but extraordinary meeting between Matthew Flinders and the Macassan fleet off the coast of Arnhemland in 1803. The race began 28 years ago as the Darwin to Dili Dash, but in 1975 everything changed and it rerouted to Ambo. This year the race was suspended and everything has changed again.

Darwin Festival, September 2 - 19
Why would she want to do that?

The Robyn Archer Interview

Adelaide Festival artistic director Robyn Archer talks Adelaide 2000, life, globalism, music theatre, the Gay Games and Tasmanian arts festivals with Keith Gallasch

I've always been a bit of a sucker for nice offers.

KG You started out with a double go at Adelaide and now you've got the Gay Games and the new Tasmanian festival coming up. This is clearly a more care into ongoing festival directorship.

RA I really had thought that I would just fall down for a year and read a lot...and just wait. I'm a great believer in leaving a vacuum and letting what flows in flow in the best way to get the creative best out of you. But I must say that I've always been a bit of a sucker for nice offers. And to go from the experience of Adelaide into two festivals that would be clearly very different but in many ways rather similar is that they're both reflections of communities...I did experience a few qualms about whether even I, the time management upromo, could handle it. I'm the kind of person, when once I undertake a project, I don't actually need a deadline to finish it—it's there I would rather clear it out of the brain and get it done and move on. I had a few doubts, given the pressures of Adelaide and the intensity of the last 4 and a half years, whether I might stop suddenly and just never recover and I wouldn't do anything. I know Barrie (Kosky) went through a really strange stretch after '96; he disappeared off the face of the earth for 6 months or so. I didn't feel like doing that. And in addition, I see these 2 festivals as a sort of transition back into my own work. I'm going to direct a piece next year and I think I'll be doing a big cabaret affair.

KG There's no doubt that your own work has taken second place in the last 3 or 4 years.

RA No question about that. I've been doing concerts but only of things I already know.

KG Do you miss it or is it good to have that time out?

RA I actually think there is something of that in it, not wanting to crash straight back into the quite different physical demands there are on performance. Also there's no doubting that once you're in a festival structure with an enormous back-up system, going back into the kind of ratbaggy of freelance suddenly just seemed to be more than I could take. But I think the next festivals will require more than most. Particularly in the case of the Gay Games in the sense that you've got to get a really good team together. It relies a lot on volunteers.

KG And you won't have the big budget.

RA It's not enormous but it means you've got to assemble a team. That means passing on some of the skills learned in Canberra and Adelaide. It'll be the same in Tasmania—assembling a team, training up people...

KG You won't be picking up on the Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras machinery?

RA We'll be working closely with them but they're a totally separate organisation. Although the Gay Games has been running, I think it's the fifth or sixth Games, and they run every four years, they've never successfully brought off the cultural component yet. There's the Sports Director and the CEO working for 12 months whereas the cultural stuff is really late coming. I'm trying to get together really good teams so that I can start to act in much more of an advisory role about the artistic content. For Tassie, it's fantastic. The feeling in the community is wonderful. They've been wanting this for about 10 years.

KG What scale do you imagine the Tasmanian festival—a similar model to Adelaide?

RA No. I've got a couple of limiters on it because of budget but also because of my own well known theory that festivals if they're to be worth their salt ought to diversify and not just be carbon copies. So the last thing I want to do in either the Gay Games or the Tasmanian Festival is to somehow unnaturally preserve what I've been doing in Adelaide. It's a complete turnaround which is good for the brain but good for the festivals as well. With Tasmania, for a start we're calling it '10 days on the Island.' Clearly it is a festival for Tasmania but we're trying to encapsulate a different kind of experience...

KG Presumably a tourism as well as cultural experience?

RA I think if ever a place has had the excuse to do a tourism-culture profile, then it's that place. It won't be enormous. It will be international—interacting with other island cultures. And I keep saying to everyone, if we get desperate, there's always England and Manhattan! There are already fantastic natural connections with Japan, particularly between Hokkaido and Tasmania. And I'm looking at places like Ireland and Iceland.

KG All of which are doing really well culturally.

RA Really sensational stuff. So I'm even starting to think one year might be cold islands and one might be hot ones. So a trip to Cuba is definitely on the cards!

KG And Timor?

RA Yes, Timor and Cuba. Some incredibly interesting writing and song and music will probably come out of Timor over the next few years. I already know the community in Darwin reasonably well. And with the Gay Games the international confederation want to apply the same principles which they've applied to sport, which are “inclusion, participation and personal best.” What I'll be trying to do is get a cultural component that sits out at Homebush, right next to the sports events—participatory community stuff. Then whatever else we can afford to do in the city at the high end, well. Clearly there's no lack of performers and companies but in particular what I'm excited about is the Sports Outreach Program. Stuart Borrie the Sports Outreach guy is an athlete himself and he's got a very genuine outreach program which will be to Asia (particularly South-East Asia), rural and indigenous Australia and South Africa. And so he's already been to Johannesburg and sent a mission to Hong Kong to get into mainland China.

The politics of it are really interesting. Basically what it's saying is that the most liberal place in the world for the tolerance of gay and lesbian community is sitting in Sydney. And with Carr's new acknowledgment of same-sex relationships, it's kind of getting better and better. And yet, there are still...It's interesting how many people have walked up to me and said, "Congratulations on Tasmania" and not mentioned the Gay Games but it's a slight embarrassment. As if they're thinking why would she want to do that? If gayness is now passé and you don't have to do anything about it. Clearly even here that's not quite the case. And it's clearly underlined in rural and Aboriginal areas. And certainly in Asia and parts of Asia it's still life and death. So for me the opportunity to program gay and lesbian works from those places is fantastic.

As long as my feet don't touch the ground.

KG So you've potentially got a nice balance of artistic directorship of festivals and re-entering the creative life, what about your everyday life?

RA I keep saying to people as long as my feet don't touch the ground, I'm fine. If I don't think about it too much, I'm okay. If I stay in one place too long, it's very hard to get me out. Basically I don't really get to put my head down in the same bed more than about five or six nights in a row and it's been like that for the last 4 and a half years.

KG And you've got used to that?

RA I've been a gypsy artist for 20 years but it's been very intense for the last 4 years. It's been a very wild time. There is an indicator of how somehow it doesn't ever sit in the psyche properly: when I have to fill in forms I actually now get very distressed because of the question of phone number. I say what do you need it for? And my address. Booking tickets for the Eurythmics last week through Ticketek took 23 minutes because I didn't have a phone number. I'm now officially an itinerant voter. So I have to say there hasn't been much of a home life for ages and ages. Just the unpredictable nature of the schedule.

KG So the network of friends is obviously global as well. Are there enough people to keep in touch with?

RA There are. Although there are people in Adelaide I've been longing to spend an evening with and in 4 and a half years I haven't had a place in Adelaide as a base but when I get there it's straight into 15 hours a day. It's never let up once. It's mainly because of the amount of correspondence that comes to the office as well as the thousand speeches you have to give as well as the real job of planning it and doing all the work. But everyone wants you to open everything and, unlike being an artist, I've found myself making myself completely available because that's the way to get to the roots of the community. Every small exhibition for a school or something is that extra set of parents and their friends and their community who she'll say, she's not too big for her boots. She came down and did this for us.

A festival that doesn't stop.

KG Globalism means economic controls at the highest levels, despite the rhetoric of freedom and free trade, and with nasty consequences for the local, in terms of culture, employment...But in another way there's an increasing and complex interplay of local and global cultures. In the Adelaide Festival you've set up for 2000, what's the relationship between that local festival and issues of globalism?

RA For a start, I think the fact that we've got a website probably means that there'll be a parallel virtual festival for the first time. And the fact that we're going to get certain Writers Week sessions and forums and the stuff that RealTime will do straight onto the web. That means an enormous global reach. But physically, a good festival has always been one of the places you can interact, if it's set up in that way. If it's programmed only in such a way that people come and do their show and leave again, the possibilities aren't there. But the idea of collaboration between overseas and Australian companies is one way of making...
sure that it's a bigger program with a more global-local focus. And masterclasses make it a much more interesting proposition too. I think the idea of first performances actually increases that too because it requires more than just, you know, what do you need, booking the venue blah blah blah. It means you've got to follow through with a whole lot of things. Things like The Ecstatic Bible bringing 2 companies together (Adelaide's Brink Theatre and England's Wrestling School.) really good. And Peter Greenaway and Saskia Boddeke's Letters to Vermeer involves the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra plus 40 Adelaide extras. Geoff Cobham (the festival production manager) dropped into the teaching institutions and has got 20 kids from the VCA working on Mizumachi the music theatre work from Japan. And the fact that the regional program is there as well is making it even more localised.

The example of New Moves Australia (the choreographic laboratory) is one of the most significant ones in the sense that politically I just wanted to have something about what's happening with dance. My impression is that dancers are put under too much pressure and there isn't really a meeting place for contemporary dance at all in Australia.

KG It's small but significant in events like antistatic in Sydney and Dancers are Spacemakers in Perth.

RA And in Canberra but because the occasions are not big deal very few independent dancers or choreographers get an opportunity to access funds to go. Whereas in Adelaide, they may have a case. We just need some travel assistance to come over and see what happens. What I like best about it is that from that notion of wondering what we could do about it, then a cup of coffee with Nikki Millican (from Glasgow's New Moves) that eventually gets her out here, 7 choreographers get to do their thing with 6 others and a mentor in Adelaide. Then they all go to Glasgow which gets them over there to network and see other stuff. But also the process Nikki found 5 works in Australia she wanted to present as part of her festival. If you use those occasions to put fingers into the process as well as just the presentation of works, then you're getting some real benefit out of it. I would have thought that this one, much more than any previous Adelaide festival offers the potential for ongoing networks.

KG A festival that doesn't stop.

RA I think that's possible. Nikki might be thinking very firmly that Australia might come into New Moves and that may well be a basis for some ongoing event in Australia. And all that requires of you as a festival director is that you're open.

KG What about the flow on of works. Some of them like Richard Margeret's Slow Love which is an Australian-Belgian co-production, this version first produced in Belgium (directed by Australian Boris Kelly for theatre Malpertuis). There's the Barbara O music theatre work which because of its director (Ann-Christine Rommen, long time assistant director to Robert Wilson) and composer (Elena Kats-Chernin) may very well get-

RA It's already got 3 seasons in Germany. Elena Kats-Chernin's music is already known there but it's another opportunity for her. urFaust directed by Benedict Andrews opened recently in Germany to a terrific response. I welcome the fact that it's a collaboration with the Sydney Theatre Company. It happened sort of accidentally but even so...

KG The only way most state companies are ever likely to get overseas is to invest in innovation.

RA Exactly right. The collaboration between the State Theatre Company of South Australia and Bell Shakespeare on Dance of Death—a collaboration with (Kyoto-based) Roger Pulvers—may well mean it gets a production in Japan.

KG Elision is an interesting case. Yue ling jie (Moon Spirit Feasting) is an opera. Largely they've done installation-based works, and they've made several successful forays into Europe.

RA This is an installation anyway. It's taken from a tradition of street opera in Malaysia. So it's ideally designed for a street performance. There continued on page 6

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**The Ecstatic Bible** by Howard Barker

A startling document of our times and their spiritual chaos from Howard Barker, one of the most powerful and controversial contemporary playwrights in the English language. March 2 – 8 Brink Productions and The Wrestling School Book at BASS 08 8400 2205 or www.adelaidefestival.telstra.com.au

Telstra Adelaide Festival 3 – 19 March 2000

AN EPIC PRODUCTION

WORLD PREMIERE EXCLUSIVE TO ADELAIDE
Why would she want to do that?

continued from page 5

are already people in Europe interested in that and that's because of the reputation of Elision and Liza Lim and Daryl Buckley. I’ve seen around the world a real positioning of local work into the mainstream. There are two good examples. One's from overseas and that is Giudio Creese by Societas Raffaello Sanzio. Working from the small town in Italy that they live in, they never use actors, they use people who are Eskimos. In the visual artists when you get people in terribly remote places and hungry art dealers buying up like crazy. But in something like Essential Truths Readily to Hand curated by Malcolm McKinnon and Reg Lynch which is part of the festival's regional program, the principle is very much that the events be owned by the community. Even though there’s the Riverland Greek Festival and a big Greek community in Eryne Peninsula, I'm quite sure they didn't know about the Habibis, the Greek ensemble from Melbourne—unless they saw Ana Kokinos’ film Halles. So we put together fantastic artists to serve their interests. But the Malcolm McKinnon project is saying that what the bush produces is also important. To bring that exhibition right slap bang into the Festival Centre foyer in Adelaide is also a festival statement.

How new is the new?

KG One of the things you were emphatic about when you first announced the festival was that it is not an issue and a lot of the new is a reworking of the old. How rhetorical were you being? A lot of the festival was made up of new works, it was a defusing device to allay fears or is it part of a philosophical position?

RA It's really that I'm very happy to do new work because it has a political point. I believe in Australia we still suffer very broadly from a cultural cringe. Personally I think it's one of the issues in the discussion of the republic. I don't think we'll cut the cringe until we become a Republic. And nobody actually has the vision to understand that. They don't understand that the underlying business of suddenly saying "we belong to ourselves" will automatically make us revalue our culture. Everything is desperately questing for Australian identity— all that "we are wonderful Australians"... if you knew it and you were, you would never have to say it. As it is we have to keep telling everybody how wonderful we are because we’re not quite sure that we are. So I am very happy to have a lot of new work and that was very much planned. I didn't know how much we'd get in but I was very happy to have it mainly because I think it will give audiences an opportunity to make up their minds for themselves.

Let's take a popular example. If you're in Britain and a new Andrew Lloyd Webber comes up it might be good or it might be bad. And across the scale, people get to think about whether they like it or not—critics, cognised, the public. Here we only get the imported 'hits.' We don't get the 'dro.' And so suddenly a success in New York is considered to be the most wonderful thing on earth. Then everybody thinks that anything that comes from the West End or New York is fabulous. But New Yorkers will go and see openings nights and they're not going to take off ten days to be. It's the great one out that wins. So there's this false idea about things from overseas and the idea that people are not used to being able to look at things that are not as good as you expected but looking with a generous eye and saying well, it's a different work but this is what we want about it...In Europe you go to these wonderful festivals where the only thing they do is produce new work and you find people standing around saying, well I didn't like that but this bit was wonderful and I wonder what they'll do next and...

KG A generosity and curiosity.

RA I think our isolation and the cost of bringing things here has meant that our critical faculties are a little damaged. So there's the possibility that some of the new stuff will work and some won't. I hope that Wonderful Things is going to work. It's the basis of interest in previous work and an inherent interest in Peter Greenaway. It's a good example because whether you like his films or not, you can't help but be interested. And for me, a character. A lot of what we've got will be sold on curiosity and the rest will be sold on the word of mouth when we get there.

KG The dance program is really strong—Les Ballets C de la B, 3 works by Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker, Mathilde Monnier... A few people I know are wondering whether to throw in their jobs to get there.

RA I'm detecting in the first few days of the program being announced, something like the old feeling before there was the competition from other festivals when coming to Adelaide was a biennial pilgrimage from other states. People who are saying, I haven't been to an Adelaide Festival in 6 years or I've never got to an Adelaide Festival. People are getting into the gang of 10 so they can get a group discount and so on. I keep recounting that wonderful year that The Mahabarata happened when some people from Sydney all got on a bus and travelled over a day and a half, went to the production that night, got on the bus and came home again, so they never had to pay for accommodation. So, anticipate all the way across the desert and analysis on the way home.

However, about the new works, and this only came about by asking artists what they wanted to do, literally 95% of these are taking their cue from some ancient work. And that's where the discussion of the new gets interesting. I had to say to myself what's new about anything? What could we ever really say is new in the arts?

KG Aren't you in danger of getting into spiralling relativism?

RA Well exactly. But in all this new work, there’s almost nothing in the festival that you wouldn’t be coming in from saying, let’s sit down and have an idea about a show.

KG But something like Ballet C de la B you would say the performative content is quite new.

RA Utterly. But the music? Bach. It’s what I've been saying about de Keersmaeker dancing to Steve Reich's Drumming. People had given minimalism up for dead but now when you re-listen you're hearing something completely different because there have been so many popular borrowings from it.

KG Reich has recently been re-mixed by New York DJs.

RA To see Drumming or her other work False (Reich's Piano phase, Come Out, Violin Phase, Clapping Music, Eds) which de Keersmaeker herself performs with Michèle Anne De Mey, it’s the movement that helps you interpret the music. It’s the best possible result.

Music oils the machine

KG In this festival there is a strong emphasis on music theatre even in pieces like the large scale street work Mizumachi from Japan.

RA The performance has music utterly integrated. There’s almost no moment that is not musical. There’s a tiny bit of dialogue but mostly these huge mobs of kids going on stage singing this sydolic gibberish which takes its origins from an arst of Osakan street theatre. Mizumachi is really spectacular, sort of indescribable. You mostly go there for the spectacle—sets the size of which you’ve never seen in your life. And it's very committed, almost like getting disco kids to do a big collaborative opera together. Great music and interesting stories. Mizumachi is a quite accurate historical documentation of what Osaka was like in the early days, so it's got that 'back to the future' sense. It's futurist but documenting a past age through music.

At the end of one of our program you've got Jonathan Miller’s The Ghost Wife in the chamber opera tradition, but then you’ve got Crying in Public Places in Skin having a go at stringing a narrative with John Romeril through songs. And a singer-songwriter like Andrea Riennets reviving up her first piece. And in Max Black, we have composer Heiner Goebel mixing the soundtrack on stage.

KG He ran a great open discussion-demonstration last festival.

RA There are 41 masterclasses, including the conferences. A lot of them allow a 5 ticket for observation.

KG What is it about music theatre? A lot of artists are moving into it.

RA I don’t think there's any doubt that the timing is at a moment when grand opera is in question yet again. I get the feeling that vast numbers of artists, composers in particular, and librettists as well, who may have at some time subconscious thought I will end up in grand opera, have all said biggger, we just better get on with what we do cause we're never gonna get a gig there. They've just barked off and said well we, we're gonna take all those things—in the end that wonderful Latin word opera—and do “the works”. It's clearly what stimulates a Barrie Kosky or a Peter Sellars about directing in that mode. You get every resource under the sun and because of the status of the genre you usually just get production money than you get anywhere else. But for those artists who don’t make it into that very small niche, I think there's still a lot of other who get immense pleasure out of taking on so many different forms. That's now being added to with filmic, screen work, digital stuff as well—increasingly choreography is employed. It’s just spreading its net...I suspect that artists are discovering that music oils the machine. It adds this totally other dimension which is otherwise hard to the ear or hard to the imagination.

KG It has a synthesising power.

RA It’s like a beautiful veil that you throw over the rest of the production. And I imagine that more and more Australian artists have been exposed to this. It's interesting that in the program we get to do the Der Lindbergh/lug of Kurt Weill and that great master is acknowledged, but in Australia the movement into music theatre may well hark right back to the work that Wal Cherry (the first professor of drama at Flinders University, Adelaide) was doing through his politics and his dramaturgy to introduce onto the stage the work of Brecht and Weill. In the 70s Music South Australia started in a front room. And Lyndon Terracini was singing a lot, Gerald English was singing. Maybe now 35 years later, that initial interest in small scale-chamber opera is really starting to pay off in a breed of people who feel quite naturally at home in the medium.
2000 Adelaide Festival: Where to start?

It’s a big one, so decision-making is going to be tough. Because there are so many new works there’s also less reviewer back-up for your choices. It’ll be an exploratory adventure. One to be embraced. A way of life for 2 weeks, day and night.

Music theatre alone, in its many manifestations from opera to installation, could keep you ecstatically occupied during the 2000 Adelaide Festival. Peter Greenaway and one of the Netherlands’ great contemporary composers, Louis Andriessen have created an opera premiered only recently in Europe and presented here by the Netherlands’ great contemporary composers, ecstatically occupied during the 2000 Adelaide Festival from opera to installation, could keep you there! It’s a form that is not always

important as the music. And that just might be the defining difference between opera, orperetta, musicals and music theatre. That word “theatre” is very important and it means the composer must be at pains to make sure that he or she is serving the text.

KG What about the politics?

RA Brecht and Weill were able to take advantage of a cabaret tradition that had begun in Paris in the 1880s, had flourished in Vienna and had gone on to its zenith in the 20s and 30s in Berlin. They were absorbing some sort of popular scene that allowed for political songs and activism and I incidentally ran into their work after my early adolescent period of being a folk singer because I grew up learning from them my Dad. He sings songs from Oklahoma and West Side Story, they were the first things we had in the house. So I was really destined through the club scene and vaudeville to become a musicians singer. I was plunged straight into a form where the words would always be as

Vitalstatistix’ acclaimed production of the play Writing to Vermeer. Roger Pulvers directs Strindberg’s Rosmersholm, 8/10, a remarkable work in 1875’s Prix Jura, directed by David Noon, and the connection with the Bell Shakespeare Company. Arena Theatre Company from Melbourne look towards of the Bell Shakespeare Company. An intense work shop starting out with an intensive workshop starting out in the US, celebrates black street dancing. La ribot, a solo performance artist whose “body is a canvas for art”, creates small provocative works.

Music theatre is realised on a larger scale and in the open air-in the tradition of Indonesia’s Wayang Kulit—In the Theft of Sita. It’s a contemporary shadow play created by director Nigel Jamieson, composer Paul Grabowsky and Balinese master puppeteer Wayan Wilu. With Mambo’s Reg Mombassa, Skylark’s Peter Wilson. Vivid Adelaide’s Biennial of contemporary dance and music is a site specific work, in Port Obviously it’s a form that is not always

KG What about your own role in this history?

RA Clearly it’s a form that is not always

"theatre" is very important and it

make sure that he or she is serving the text.

means the composer must be at pains to

object at the end is ro achieve something

their political or social commentary. Whereas

it seems you’re able to communicate whatever you wish to communicate.

Adelaide Festival, March 3 - 9, 2000;
http://adelaidefestival.telstra.com.au

 viele isolation, but in a sense that’s where

individuals will contribute to the festival in may ways, through visual arts (in the Brenda L Croft-curated Biennial of Contemporary Australian Art), music (Jimmy Little and a number of bands), theatre (the Noel Tovey-directed Spirit,Time and Place, plays by Merrill Bray and Ray Kelly) and in Ochre and Dust, a performance-installation created in collaboration by director Aku Kadogo, artist Fiona Foley, photographer Helen Lohr and 2 Anangu-Pitjantjatjara story-tellers.

And there’s Artists Week, and Writers week, and a hypertext event, verve—the other writing (Contemporary Art Centre of SA), and the welcome return to Australia of digital media artist Bill Seaman, also with a work about writing, Red Dice. This festival is going to be hard work but with great rewards. RealTime will be there responding on the run in online, and with video interviews with artists, writers and audiences.
Art and the city
Julia Postle and Naomi Black swing into FoCA, Canberra's Festival of Contemporary Arts

Gender dancing

FoCA has certainly grown since it last materialised in 1997. A biennial affair, this time under the direction of the interred Roland Mander, FoCA is now a full-blown arts festival with a substantial involvement. The 1999 festival has been infused with Roland's enthusiasm for Canberra's creative scene which he gave pride of place in a program which saw art to the fore. I managed to see a few FoCA events, but choose here to focus on 3 of them.

Gender is a subject that has become a tad clichéd as a focus of performance. Two of the dance works I witnessed at FoCA managed to communicate the inherent complexity of gender roles and labels in pretty novel ways and through very different choreographic processes, revealing personal truths rather than seeking to tackle a philosophy of gender.

In Butterweeds, Taisa Roppola explores her own, and to some extent, all women's experience of personal knowledges and the often curious realm of women's relationships with each other. She does so through movement that evokes both childhood naivety and adult emotion and sensitivity. Butterweeds exposes the inconspicuous and the tender, the cruel and the kind—all facets of human nature, but without the pathos, the sound seeming to hover there for a long time like Zoe Arnold's weight-bearing. There are moments that linger when things aren't going their way. But there is a lightness—one can see the 500 people walking out of this film how the movement is in constant flux, almost elastic in quality. Or the performers sitting together, gently jostling each other for space on the seat, the movement developing into a major effort to keep one woman off.

For an exploration of the male, I turned to Roughcuts, the result of a week-long workshop workshop involving young men and boys from the ACT in movement-making and gender. Ruth Osborne from the Choreographic Centre and Philip Pigg from the Centre for Drama and Theatre Studies, ACT coordinated the experience for some 50 young guys, bursting with energy and enthusiasm for what I presume was for many their introduction to dance.

There was the standard cheeky sense of humour that you see at most dance eisteddodds, but there was also honesty. From simple movement-based manipulations of sporting gestures and actions to more complex contact improvisation sequences, Roughcuts managed to involve young men aged 7 to 26 and give them an introduction to dance. For further information and registrations please contact the Centre for Drama and Theatre Studies, Monash University on (03) 9905 9135 or at gardner@ozemail.com.au or check for details at www.arts.monash.edu.au/drama/theatre/index/conferences

From travelling circus to internet dance performances, from artisan's bazaars to superstar ensembles, live performing artists meet their audiences. Examining the context in which these exchanges take place, this conference will explore globalisation with an emphasis on the economic and cultural implications for the creation, production and distribution of the live performing arts.

globalisation the live performing arts conference
Hosted by Circus Oz and the Centre for Drama and Theatre Studies, Monash University

13-15 February 2000
Parkville Campus, Monash University
Melbourne Australia
preview

Images from the Perth and Olympic Arts Festivals 2000


Sylvie Guillem, Olympic Arts Festival, Sept 8 - 12, 2000.

16 December - 24 April 2000

HITCHCOCK
Art Cinema and... Suspense

25 international and Australian artists venture deep into the mind of Alfred Hitchcock. Film, video, photography, painting, and previously unseen photographs of Hitchcock in Sydney celebrate the life and work of the master of suspense in this, his 100th anniversary.

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART
Circular Quay Sydney
Open 10am - 5pm (closed Tuesdays)
Circling the global

Anita Gardiner on globalisation and the performing arts

Paul Monaghan and Paul Jackson introduce the first of 3 essays they have commissioned for publication in RealTime for ipf (Independent Performance Forums)

In a 1991 essay ("The Public Intellectual", Manning Clark, 1991) that preceded the essays in Bad Language (Cambridge University Press, 1992), Greg Dening notes that "ultimately living is a conversation. That is why we make theatre of it. That is why living conversation of theatre would at first glance appear to be as intuitive. However, if we attempt such a conversation across discursive boundaries, we find ourselves all too readily in a terra incognita. Independent Performance Forums were an attempt to explore just such a terrain. The premises were as follows: to create a space in which the work of performance practitioners was taken seriously; to facilitate a discussion that was neither primarily 'theoretical' nor as pragmatic as the standard media review/interview (ie to explore just such a terrain). The premises were that discussions were recorded and archived. Short, often provocative, statements. Performance group and Theatreworks, the Theatre is Bad, are neither primarily 'theoretical' nor as pragmatic as the standard media review/interview (ie to explore just such a terrain). The premises were that discussions were recorded and archived. Short, often provocative, statements. Performance group and Theatreworks, the Theatre is Bad, are neither primarily 'theoretical' nor as pragmatic as the standard media review/interview (ie to explore just such a terrain).

Globalisation is a communicational concept, just as economic, political and cultural concepts are. For example, as Mike Featherstone points out in Undoing Culture, when we buy and eat a McDonald's burger in India, we are consuming culturally as an image and an icon of a particular way of life. Similarly, if we buy a ticket to see Black Swan and Company B Belvoir's co-produced Cloudstreet, we are not only experiencing a local work about a local community but are also supporting arts companies who are part of an industry presenting cultural products that contribute to national identity formation.

Globalisation is widely acknowledged as fundamental to the economic conditions Australia experiences today. John Wiseman, author of Global National and conference guest, argues that while globalisation should not be seen as inevitable, "Australian economic relationships have indeed been profoundly altered by a dramatic increase in the speed and scope of flows of capital, goods, services and information made possible by the availability of new transport and communications technologies." Significantly, these rapidly increasing transactions are taking place in a context where international trade and investments are constantly being negotiated by nation states, with the a World Trade Organization (WTO) as the principal forum for negotiations, dubbed the "Millennium Round", in Seattle on November 30. Cultural matters are included in these negotiations. Performing arts and artists should be informed of the cultural rights at stake in this process, and this will be a topic for conference debate.

According to historian Geoffrey Blainey, periods of economic globalisation are not new. He argues that it was last seen from approximately 1840 to 1910, and has always been the wide-spread use and introduction of new technologies that have driven the change. As one aspect of contemporary globalisation, technology in the arts is another example of how culture and economics are intertwined. In RealTime, the global connections and consciousness of many artists are being realised and celebrated (see Robyn Archer interview pages 4 - 7).

"Global warming (environment), the global economy (multinational capital) have all become common phrases. There are many factors to globalisation, acting against or helping investment and the expansion of capitalism; inter-culturalism, migration and postmodernity; mass telecommunications and technological developments; liberal democratisation and the role of government policy and the nation state; and social and intellectual property rights. There are also differing views about the benefits or otherwise of each brings. Given the many different potential meanings and applications of the term globalisation, it is important to be clear and particular about its use.

The cultural critic Fredric Jameson argues in Culture and Globalization that: "globalization is a communicational concept, which alternately masks and transmits cultural or economic meanings." Within the context of the rising tide of concern about the economic costs of globalising performing arts, this definition is a useful starting point, as it acknowledges the dialectical relationship between communication and economics. Cultural practices inform economic arrangements, just as economic practices inform cultural expressions. For example, as Mike Featherstone points out in Undoing Culture, when we buy and eat a McDonald's burger it is not only consumed physically as material substance, but is consumed culturally as an image and an icon of a particular way of life. Similarly, if we buy a ticket to see Black Swan and Company B Belvoir's co-produced Cloudstreet, we are not only experiencing a local work about a local community but are also supporting arts companies who are part of an industry presenting cultural products that contribute to national identity formation.

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Culturally, globalisation of the live performing arts is also linked to broader debates about postmodernity. Socio-cultural trends have changed, as can be seen in the editorial notes in From Acting to Performance, "if there is a crisis in the theory and practice of political art under postmodernism—and there is—a new breed of artist is produced in international festivals, and that is the trend towards the live performing arts are subject to, and part of, the phenomena of globalisation. While the report understands itself on the question of economic globalisation, and the globalisation of diversity, the issue of globalisation and the live performing arts also raises fundamental questions about the future of cultural practices in Australia. For instance international festivals in Australia are clearly already part of this global market. Professor Paul Monaghan of the Drama and Theatre Studies at the University of Melbourne, is currently conducting research on international festivals and their impacts on local performing arts, and will be presenting some of these findings at the conference.

Performing artists need to be clear about what the economic and cultural benefits of globalisation are. For this to happen, the question of what globalisation is, and how it directly affects the performing arts needs further discussion. At the independent performance forum, February 13 - 15 at Monash University will be one such place where many of these issues can be discussed broadly by the independent performance forum. Perhaps it is through such forums that we can begin to address Wiseman's question, "how do we find new ways of acting on mythic stages with an ever expanding world, yet remain connected to our own place and our own time?"
Digital p/reservations

Kirsten Krauth reports from the Australian International Documentary Conference in Adelaide

A child's painting hangs in the window of the local corner store. A riot of purples and reds, the teacher's text caption reads: "My mum is special because she always tells me stories." This was the tone, too, of the recent doco conference in Adelaide (last held 2 years ago in Brisbane). For US guest directors Albert Mayles and Jennifer Fox, and locals like Trevor Graham, story and narrative still remain central. Many in the audience started getting twitchy as soon as digital media was mentioned. The conference, in its various competing forums, focused on 3 major themes—glamour, ethics, and the impact of digital technologies. Keynote speakers, in particular Peter Sellar (future director, Adelaide Festival) and Dr Margaret Somerville (Professor of Law and Medicine, active in worldwide development of bioethics), were provocative, formidable and downright inspirational. It was an exciting idea to choose a number of keynote speakers outside the documentary framework. However, it was the discussion of possibilities for documentary on both the internet and CD/DVD-ROM (both stand alone and extensions of film work) which opened up interesting ideas and opportunities for exchange between creators and audience. With wheelers-and-dealers firmly planted, mobile to ear, in the chandeliered foyer of the Adelaide Hilton, the screenings at Her Majesty's offered a reprieve (often nearly empty) from the holder pads, and a chance to meet the filmmakers.

Any session with SEX in the title was guaranteed a full house. The opening night screening, Sex: The Annabel Chong Story (Gough Lewis, USA/Camadui), despite early excitation, turned out to be a complex and confronting film. By night, Annabel, popular porn star, most famous for her world record of sleeping with 2,511 men in 10 hours. By day, race, student of gender, politics and anthropology at a Californian University. Like Female Perverts and Under the Skin, this doco explores female sexuality, performance, power and the body. Grace, a middle class, Singaporean "good girl" background, struggles with a mind/body divide, her sexual identity block with feminism and its openings. She asks some good questions: why can she be a "stud" and keep her men, why not go out with as many women as she can?, why do it anyway, why not get paid for it? At university she wears a T-shirt with "slutz" emblazoned on her chest and she goes full throttle to reclaim this label, seeking power in the ownership of usually derogatory language, turning it on to her head. The doco's impact comes from revealing Grace's fascinating contradictions by intellectually her participation in porn and situating 'pleasure' in a feminist framework, she's actually in denial. Her background is one of dependence, fragility and tragedy. The audience moves from believing laughter to mute repulsion as we meet the porn playboys who rip her off; this is no Boogie Nights happy family.

Whether Annabel Chong gets to Australian screens is another story and an issue discussed at length in the panel "Getting It Up (If Your Doco's About Sex)". Doug Stewart, SBS classification manager, revealed some alarming details on free-to-air TV. heavy handed regulation means we can't see good docos rated R which screen in Europe; with the morally conservative government setting the tone, the move is to place uniform codes on TV, using the commercial standards (different from SBS and ABC) as a guide, where even programs rated MA in the cinemas are rarely shown uncensored. (The commercial codes often re-classify programs normally rated M as MA. Nipple sucking, for example, is not permissible!). Jacqui Lawrence, deputy commissioning editor of independent film and video, Channel 4 (UK), highlighted the importance of being creative within guidelines, and the arbitrariness (and just plain silliness) of many standards (such as the Mull of Kintyre principle: less than 45 degrees erect OK, including chidlos, which can be problematic). David Haughton, president, International Documentary Association, spoke of the schizophrenic state of sexual issues in the US where people talk all the time but reveal nothing. He cited the example of gay relationships and sexuality in sitcoms. You can be gay as long as there's not another person in the frame who you're having a meaningful relationship/sleeping with. Ellen was taken off after she came out; Ally McBeal can kiss another woman on the lips because it's one of her many infuriating fantasies.

A highlight of the screenings was Jennifer Fox's epic series An American Love Story. Originally produced for PBS, the series has provoked great interest and debate in the US due to its depiction of an inter-racial family: Karen (white), Bill (African-American) and their 2 daughters Chaney and Cicily. Fox slept on the family's floor for 2 years, shooting 1000 hours of footage. But it is the paring down into 10-hour-long episodes revolving around a theme, the downbeat, laid back style, and accompanying soundtrack by Bill, a blues musician, which pulls the filmmaking above most 'real life' episodes. Everyday family situations—first date, college graduation, Christmas with the rels—become imbued with a wider significance. Throughout, race relations in the US are revealed to be more problematic than ever—the experience of Cicily at College University (white, healthy and sparkling clean it is) is highlighting the difficulties of identifying with both black and white communities, but fitting snugly into neither. In a heartbreaking revelation, she admits to never being asked out on a date at college, the white boys dating only white girls and the black boys, well, dating only white girls.

The American Love Story website (www.pbs.org/americanlovestories/toseries/) has become a form of documentary in itself. Originally a promotional vehicle for the series, it has moved into the role of preserving culture, recording stories about couples whose relationships cross religious, ethnic, age and geographical boundaries. Submitted by viewers during the series, live dialogues debate the issues screened, many sympathising with Cicily's "white-black girl" struggles. The importance of language and who owns it crops up repeatedly: the white sorority girls ask Cicily if its OK to say "homie?", Afro-American women online argue that when they speak English "property" it is seen as "acting white."
Digital p/reservations

continued from page 13

Simon Pockley, creator of online documentary The Flight of Ducks (www.cinemedia.net/-FODI), gave an interesting insight into the online documentary process in the session titled “Design, Technology and Documentary Form.” Created 5 years ago, The Flight of Ducks was produced with zero budget and unlimited time, and has had a constantly changing audience of up to 6,000 people a week. Created originally as an endeavour to preserve his father’s writings and documents from travels in Central Australia, the site is now a mixture of creative fiction, history, reference work, film, journal, poetry, and audience email response. The site has become a subject to censorship and deleted from the server (“culturally sensitive material”), captured for other sites, and harvested around the world.

Defying the most common critique of CD-ROMs (that they date too quickly), the design of Mabo ensures a long life with plans to have a website, hosted by the University of South Australia’s Indigenous Online Unit, which will house a database that readers can contribute to. This online input will make the Mabo project one of the most historically significant, continually evolving, archives in the country. Trevor Graham (also a contributing writer) mentioned that without this project, all the valuable material and resources he collected during the filming would have been thrown away. Documentary filmmakers have opportunities to use the web for more than marketing their films. Virtual storage. Extending the life of their work.

Overall, screenings curator Paul Byrnes (film writer for the Sydney Morning Herald) and former director of the Sydney Film Festival chose documentaries that were surprisingly traditional in style with a US/European focus. There were few which blurred boundaries or subverted genre (a disappointment after the critical perspective sessions/papers on mock documentaries, real life and personal narrative, documentary drama, and architecture and space). Missing were films from Asia (Taiwan, Hong Kong, Indonesia). Most Australian (and more innovative) docs were relegated to the back of the theatre tucked away in the hotel, depriving the filmmakers of a potentially large and international audience.

Time to make some predictions before millenium fever dies. The next AIDC will focus more on documentaries which take risks in style and content. There will be a greater emphasis on Asian films, and more speakers from non-English speaking backgrounds. All panels will be accessible live via the internet.

The OnScreen supplement of RealTime is funded by the Australia Council, the federal government’s arts advisory body, the Australian Film Commission and the NSW Film & Television Office.

Column

WriteStuff

Hunter Corday finds the screenwriter in a lonely place

The rarely asked question in the Australian film industry is not where are the new actors, directors or producers going to be found, but even what sort of writer will we be making at the new glossy studios, but where are the scripts coming from and who will be writing them?

How does a writer become a screenwriter? Can screenwriting be taught and inspired by experts at seminars and weekend workshops? Or is screenwriting, like poetry, an organic talent which, nourished by a supportive or conducive cultural climate, naturally rises?

Until the boom in the American creative writing college industry, all forms of writing were viewed as ‘natural’, and importantly, it was understood they came from the same source. Thus, F Scott Fitzgerald was taken in by Hollywood studios who assumed he would be able to write film scripts because he wrote successful prose. This was not the case, though others, such as Ben Hecht, made the transition from theatre to film more easily.

In today’s industry the situation is remarkably different, with writers crossing over from fiction to screen and back again, often adapting their own novels whilst others move seamlessly from writing to directing.

Why is this? One perhaps contentious answer is because the art and craft of screenwriting is a more natural and accessible practice than ever before—the script itself might now be the dominant literary form in our culture. We think more in shots and scenes than in paragraphs and pages, and literary professionalism is led by what we could now call a script culture.

In overseas film industries the writer is a more valued player in the production process, and the script is treated as very valuable property. Figures reported in American magazines such as Script/FTP and Written by list script sales regularly in mid to high $5 figure sums, with some well over $500,000.

These same magazines, and associated websites, also list a variety of courses and software programs designed to train the aspiring screenwriter. In this sense the hottest property is not the script but the key to screenwriting, the secret of the process that will, when unlocked, bring wealth and industry power. One program, boasting endorsements from Tom Hanks and Oliver Stone, uses the tag line “If it were any easier the script would write itself.”

In practical terms the heart of the screenwriting question is how to get the money to the writer, and then seeing the money on the screen. And in this process it is not clear if the Australian screenwriter is the originator or a collaborator.

When the AFC recently announced a major increase in funding project development, which seemingly include new money for scripts, the hope was that much of the recent criticism of some feature films—that the scripts were not developed and edited to the highest stage—would be remedied.

In an ideal world this funding would generate creative teams—writers, producers, directors—who would join forces to develop film or TV projects that have a strong chance of success. The team approach, which favours early and mutual commitment, is most likely to get the money onto the screen in the Australian context. Unfortunately it appears that the new funding structures are producer driven, with ‘development’ rather than ‘script development’ being the priority. This guarantees that more projects will be started but not that the scripts will be funded through the number of drafts required, or with the level of team involvement that will fully integrate the story into the development process.

In this new landscape, there are no new training courses for screenwriters, no provisions or structures which place the writer at the centre and acknowledge their role as originators (perhaps a better word than author in the current climate).

The Australian screenwriter is in a lonely place. No wonder so many want to be directors, and others deliberately initiate projects and produce their own work. That phenomenon has as much to do with a sense of control as it does with monetary return. Today, ownership and the sharing of development resources are the central issues for all screenwriters.

With over a third of the Australian Writers’ Guild membership listed as working in feature film, and the industry now likely to concentrate on the more around higher budget studio-based projects, the position of writers needs to be enhanced rather than merely protected. The desired result should be that Australian films are promoted the way Notting Hill was recently, as “from the same writer as Four Weddings & a Funeral.”

This is the first in a series of columns on writing for the screen by Hunter Corday. Hunter Corday is a film writer and teacher of Screen Studies at University of Western Sydney, Macarthur.
One day all headstones will be electronic

Edward Scheer in the dark corridors of Voiceovers

Black and white video images of an old woman in an uncertain landscape. She wears the standard peasant dress with the scarf worn as a shroud. Close-ups of her eyes mingle with land and water, tears, younger women. Are these images from memory, herself as a younger woman? Is it a testimony to un-lived lives?

I don't know if the old woman played by Joyce Rankin in Louise Drinkwater's moving electronic remembrance is the real subject of this piece but in a way it's not the point. It is a piece which generates effects of memory and maybe even a bit of nostalgia and, not surprisingly, made me think of my own grandmother, long gone.

This is a recording of a votive machine repainting "the web of time" as Chris Marker says in Sans Soleil. It is also a deserving winner of the 5th Guinness Contemporary Art Prize for tertiary art students. The Sydney College of the Arts should be congratulated for producing student work of this quality and maturity.

Iconographies: Antidotes to compassion fatigue

The video installations of the 5th Guinness Contemporary Art Project show how powerful good video art can be when it is presented properly. The curatorial focus and integrity of vision here are everywhere in evidence in Voiceovers which presents the work of 4 prominent figures in contemporary video art and suggests that this kind of art has the potential to effect the rescue of our tired media and our exhausted senses and rehumanise aesthetics as an experience of the body.

Nalini Malani's Remembering Toba Tek Singh uses a triptych of video projections showing images of the atomic bomb blasts at Hiroshima and Nagasaki—the last consummatory scenes in the final act of mass slaughter which closed WWII—framed by videos of 2 women holding ends of the same sari. In front is a grid of steel trunks containing bolts of cloth and small video monitors showing amongst other things images of the clear blue sky and the blast giving way to a voiceover mentions bombs called 'Fat man' and 'Little boy' and the obscene 'humanisation' of nuclear war. Malani also notes that 'Shakti' (living energy or life force) was the name given to the Indian atomic bomb tests in the 1970s. Her task is, as the voiceover says, that in "using language as an anaesthetic, feeling dies."

This installation is designed to counter this loss of feeling, to resist the anaesthesia which alienation induces and to act against the destruction which the dominance of military aesthetics (cf. Virilio) rends banal in our culture. The Benjamin resonance is unmistakeable. In Walter Benjamin's classic essay of 1936, "The Work of Art in the Age of its Mechanical Reproducibility", he attempts to act against the destruction which the production of cultural meaning. As the smart missiles with cameras attached rained down on Belgrade, who has not participated in this thrill of the destruction of bodies?

But Malani's polemic is also gendered and after spending any time with her installation the feeling is that the very existence of these weapons is a persuasive argument for feminism, a point underscored in Shirin Neshat's Turbulent, a critique of the compulsory silence of women in public space in Muslim societies. A simple opposition is generated with the 2 large screens en face. One contains the image of a man singing to an all male audience and then looking across the space at the image of a woman wrapped in a chador, who sings in turn. But her song is incomprehensible, a vocalisation of the body or a kind of semiotic chora. She performs a presymbolic message, running beneath and counter to the male dominated system of generating cultural meaning. For the detail of this piece I recommend the catalogue text by curator, Victoria Lynn, which places the question of the sensory experience of perception to the field of Aesthetics so that the construction of the modern human as an anaesthetic persona may begin to be undone. This is a theme of the work presented in Voiceovers which makes it surely one of the most important recent exhibitions of video art seen in this country.

The pop star of contemporary video art, Mariko Mori, does her own less visceral performance for video. Kumano generates an auratic distance between the audience and the persona she presents. These pieces, like much of her work in video and photography, play with iconographies and project a simulated sense of the sacred, eg in the pastiche of the cybernetic tea ceremony. In a sense she is updating the imagery of the spiritual with the cyber-chic at the centre. And why not? Her task is made easier by her telegenic presence and the skill of the armies of assistants who produce exquisite images. Ken Ishida's ambient music score for Kumano establishes the mood of contemplation while we watch this cheeky play of cyborg signifiers.

Lin Li's voiceover to the video Soul Flight reassures the viewer about the images we see. Her naked body prostrate on a mountain top while vultures tear at piles of blood and meat which cover her is explained as the performance of the sky burial. This is a remarkable piece of intense performance making for video and a powerful re-enactment of a liminal rite: in between death and rebirth, sky and land, soul and body. The piece is, if anything, too short. We move from the images of the body, flesh and birds to 'Afterwards we had a cup of tea' all in a few minutes. It is a mild but pleasant shock and another example of what critic Susan Buck-Morss says is crucial to Benjamin's enterprise, the restoration of the sensory experience of perception to the field of Aesthetics so that the construction of the modern human as an anaesthetic persona may begin to be undone. This is a theme of the work presented in Voiceovers which makes it surely one of the most important recent exhibitions of video art seen in this country.

Voiceovers, The 5th Guinness Contemporary Art Project, curator Victoria Lynn, Art Gallery of NSW, Oct 8 - Nov 14

Philip Brophy's Cinesonic column returns in the new year.
Diving into the virtual

Kathy Cleland immersed in the translucent worlds of Char Davies

Based in Montreal, Canada, Char Davies is best known for her acclaimed immersive virtual environments Osmose (1995) and more recently Éphémère (1999). These works are notable not only for their exquisite translucent visuals and evocative soundscapes but also for their creative interface. In her immersive environments, the user, or more accurately, the "immersant", does not just manipulate a mouse or joystick but touch and point with a dataglove, they are immersed in a virtual world where the body is the navigational interface. Immersants are strapped into a motorized harness and breathing and balance determine their movement within the worlds. There is a paradoxical freedom from the physical limits of the body as you float through the world on a meditative journey but this is coupled with an intense bodily immersion of scuba diving where the experience is evident on the faces of people. Davies presents us with more than a virtual reality representation of nature; her work is a reconstitution of nature, a second nature, where we can see through the underlying grid and code that the environment is based on, and the conceptual overlaying of culture in the upper level of layers to the translucent vistas that explore the inner workings of natural forces and processes.

Although her artistic iconography is drawn from nature and natural processes, Davies says, "It is not, there's a sense of a physical boundary but instead, a reconstruction of nature, a second nature, where we can see through the underlying grid and code that the environment is based on, and the conceptual overlaying of culture in the upper level of layers to the translucent vistas that explore the inner workings of natural forces and processes.

Like Osmose, Éphémère includes archetypal elements of nature (earth, rock, tree, river) but in this work the metaphor is extended to include bodily organs, blood vessels and bones. The work is structured vertically into 3 levels: landscape, earth, and interior body—each level evolves through transformative cycles of germination, growth, decay and death and immersants can also 'cross' from underground river to bodily artery/vein. Each journey through Éphémère is different and, like Osmose, the experience is determined by the immersant's breathing and balance.

In her online documentation of Osmose, Davies introduces her work with a quotation from Gaston Bachelard's The Poetics of Space. "By changing space, by leaving the space of one's usual sensibilities one enters into communication with a space that is psychically innovating. For we do not change place, we change our nature.

In documentary footage of Osmose, the effects of this 'psychically innovating' experience is evident on the faces of people taking off their head-mounted displays at the end of their immersive experience. The common facial denominator is wide-eyed dreamlike wonder, some are moved to tears. Most of them are almost speechless after the experience, those who could string a few words together beyond 'wow', that was 'amazing' compare the experience to meditation or to a religious experience. The phenomenological experience of the work appears to induce a contemplative meditative state which blurs the boundaries between inner/outer and mind/body. The experience of seeing and floating through things, along with the work's reliance on breath and balance as well as on solitary immersion, causes many participants to relinquish desire for active 'doing' in favour of contemplative 'being'" (Char Davies, "Changing Space: Virtual Reality as an Arena of Being" in The Virtual Dimensions: Architecture, Representation and Crash Culture, ed. John Beckett, Boston: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998).

The introduction via the means of virtual reality of new experiential spaces opens up the possibility not only of new experiences but new modes of experience with the potential to change human nature itself. Comments Davies, "Such environments can provide a new kind of 'place' through which our minds may float among three-dimensionally extended forms in a paradoxical combination of the ephemeral immaterial with what is perceived and bodily felt to be real" (ibid). Although science fiction literature and film has started to sketch out this terrain, in the real world we are just starting to glimpse some of the possibilities of these new technologies. Exactly what the long-term ramifications of this will be for human nature is a topic that will be of increasing importance as we move into the virtual reality domains of the 21st century.

Char Davies' visit to Australia in June-July 1999 was hosted by Cyber Dreaming, an Aboriginal multimedia production company based in Queensland. In Sydney, iLux media arts presented Davies' keynote address at Flashpoint 99 architecture and design conference, University of NSW, July 12. More information about Char Davies' work can be found at http://www.immersence.com/

Kathy Cleland is a curator, writer and educator based in Sydney. She lectures in Communications and Multimedia at Central Queensland University, Sydney International Campus and is currently curating a new Cyber Cultures exhibition for the year 2000.

Blood on the keys

Joni Taylor enters Linda Dement's In My Gash CD-ROM

Interacting with a CD-ROM is, at its most basic, an inane exploration of someone else's digitally constructed space. In Linda Dement's CD-ROM In My Gash, the process of navigation is as penetrative and confronting as the work itself. The user, and it is definitely a user here, has a sense of control that borders on sadism, voyeurism and rape. Each click of the mouse leads to a further wound, slit or cut in a virtual skin. The breathing and the intercutting of textual fragments. This pristine surface transgresses a natural boundary between the fluids of our bodies and the outside world. In this work there's almost blood on the keyboard.

Incorporating chilling sounds, bits of video footage, photography and extremely beautiful animation, the work is a direct confrontation with female disembodiment and sexual horror. The point of entry is the "Gash", slang terminology for vagina, but also representative of a bleeding slit or wound. The user explores the 'narratives' of the character ULYSSES MESS BITCH by entering 4 different Gashes. The directions are simple: "Go Left", "Go Right" and "Go In". The process of entering this gaping, bleeding Gash is not an easy one. It reveals fragments of memory, of the pain and horror contained within. She's a young girl. A Dirty Workout by Typhoid Mary, which as if by internal camera probe, through the landscape of the Gash, triggering images and sounds. Flowers, syringes, cigarettes and metal spikes fade in and out of the screen. The sounds are of severing and tearing, desperate pantings and blood tingling waves. The video sequences are evocative of surveillance footage and clandestine filming. Encounters with a bad cop, trashy hotels, stabbing rages and blood drenched bathrooms.

As in a razor blade to the flesh, Dement seems to slice through the physical boundary existing between the screen and the self. Using the sterile mathematical coding of computer software, she has managed to create a totally visceral, 'wet' interior realm. The surfaces are slimy and shiny. Sometimes bleeding, sometimes not, there's a sense of a never-ending secretion. She overlays notions of a 'nice' cyberfeminism; being explicitly female but overtly non-erotic. The Gash has been dismembered from the female body. It is now a portal of memory. And it has reclaimed the corporeal.

In My Gash is not easily accessible. Currently awaiting classification, and with the recent draconian net laws, Dement's work would find it hard to exist on a local server. Sold, with an R-rating, it would fail to work as a satisfactory form of porn. However, In My Gash is a phenomenal piece of digital art. It may soon exist in a gallery space as her previous Cyber Flesh Girl Monster and Tales of Typhoid Mary have. But the real interest lies in whether it's actually taken home and played along with the not so life-like Lara Croft.

In My Gash was produced in association with the Australian Film Commission. The CD-ROM launch was presented by iLux media arts at the Museum of Sydney, August 29.

Joni Taylor is a Sydney-based freelance writer. She currently edits and writes art and music reviews for the Sydney City Hub.
Screen capture

Needea Islam reviews essays on cinema and performance in Falling For You

Like much of its content, the title of this book itself performs. It addresses the reader directly, and as if this weren't enough, it announces that it has already been won over; but that's where or what? Coupled with any notion of performance is some sense of who is being performed to, the audience which brings performance into being. This collection of essays addresses this audience, and acknowledges the often perplexing but crucial nature of this particular position.

In their lively introduction Lesley Stern and George Kourias outline their originating intention to expand the ambit of traditional discussions about performance in cinema through the discipline of film theory and criticism. Generally these models have revolved around a somewhat narrow set of articulations—explorations of acting in the cinema and the star system for example. Stern and Kourias argue that while these studies may be rich and insightful in their own right (their endnotes contain a useful list of some of the more noteworthy examples), cinematic performance is in fact both more complex and expansive than this. It intersects and is undertheorised, and again it is from this that what we see on screen and the body of the viewer.

Joan giveaway's 'Acting Out' explores directly the relationship between corporeal presence on screen and the body of the viewer. Joing Weels' shark monologue from Lady From Shanghai, his essay concerns itself with the affective transfer between performing and viewing bodies, and in so doing underscores the way in which descriptive writing is almost always circular; rarely transparent or disinterested. Lisa Trahair's essay "Foot's Fool: Metamorphosis in Buster Keaton's Sherlock Jr." approaches Keaton through Baudrillard's logic of the object, as opposed to the subject. This highlights again the fundamental connection between the performing body in its mechanical manifestations and early comedy.

Other essays directly address the question of the relationship between the performer and audience. Chris Berry's "Where is the Love?: The Paradox of Performing Loneliness in Ts'ai Ming Liang's Vin L'Amour" examines, among other things, the false sense of omniscience that viewers can possess when watching classic realistic cinema, through the reading of a film where the illusion of the solitariness of the character is crucial. Through this, the complicity between the viewer and cinematic text is also looked at.

In Lesley Stern's "Acting Out of Character: The Sunday of Comedy as Historian's Text", the mobilisation of histories as a "loopy system" or circuit between actor, film and viewer enables an understanding of performance as occurring through various points of the body and therefore allowing for a more diverse range of readings than those based on the more common psychological models of identification in cinema. Pamela Robertson Woljic's essay "A Star is Born Again or How Streisand Recycles Garland" looks at the play between performer, persona and the performance of celebrity. The productive dimension of the audience; the idea that it is the performance of an audience as an audience which allows for celebrity to exist is also touched upon. Sophie Wise's "What I Like About Hal Hartley, or rather, What Hal Hartley Likes About Me: The Performance of (The Spectator)" takes this one step further by arguing that Hartley's viewers are themselves "displaced into the film" and are put to work in the service of the films as critical readers, in order to render them sensible.

The breadth of this collection encourages a re-assessment of not only the films discussed, but also that we watch films in general, which aspects we are attuned to and which we take as givens. And, while the essays all have something particular to offer and to add to the discussion; those that explore modes of performance produced by the technology of cinema are the most engaging.

In his paper "Improvisation and the Operatic: Cassavettes' A利亚man (Under the Influence)", George Kourias counters readings of the director's films as capturing random moments of improvisation by exploring the specificity of Cassavettes' cinematic practice and the way in which it allows for cinematic performance to be understood as productive rather than reproductive. Following Jean-Louis Comilli's observation, "cinema is the motor", he discusses the way in which Cassavettes' overenactment, "opens up the film to points of view that cannot be contained by narrative" and what happens to a performance before and after a scene passes. He focuses on what is precisely cinematic about Cassavettes' work. Jodi Brooks offers a reading of Cassavettes' Love Streams in "Crisis and the Everyday: Some Thoughts on Gesture and Crisis in Cassavettes and Benjamin" as a film "written through by crisis" on every level, and suggests that it is through this that the film's gestural practice develops. In locating both crisis and gesture historically through the work of Benjamin, the way in which performance and narrative in Love Streams is brought into being through the ordering of time and the body by the experience of cinema itself, is explored. Beginning with the conjecture that "the slapstick bodies of American cinema may be taken as allegorical of film's relationship to modernity", LAleen Jayamanne artfully examines the temporal, historical and mimetic constitution of the slapstick gag through the figure of Chaplin, in whom "modernity and mimesis totally collide." The weaving together of often disparate ideas is at once playful and scholarly: an at times dizzying re-reading of a familiar figure.

Each of the essays in Falling For You obviously works through much more than has been briefly outlined above. As a whole, however, the book is centered on the idea that writing about film, and particularly descriptive writing, engages with the affective dimension of cinema; with memory and emotion as much as with the visual and the logical. Film is thereby brought into cinema as being as fascinating as what makes us cry or think. It looks not only at the ways in which cinematic bodies perform to create affect, and the interplay between screen performance and viewer, but also at how writing itself becomes performative, gestural, in its insistence to capture a retrospective experience. The existence of this book points towards a kind of critical renewal for writing about cinema, brought about by the unwieldiness of description itself.

In digital years, our coursework masters degree is at least 40 years ahead

With the pace of digital technology, they say one year's the equivalent to five years in the future. In 1993, UWS Nepean became the first Australian university to offer a design coursework Masters in Digital Media - 4 years before any other institution.

"It's great to be able to experiment with new concepts and ways of working... the course is totally absorbing... and challenges you to think differently."

Tess Dryza
Creative Director
Multimedia
Open Training and Education Network
OTEN

"...in a new medium which is continually changing it's imperative to have the skills of exploration which allow practitioners to push the medium. This is where the technology drive comes from. The combination of pushing, the fusion of experimentation, imagination, conceptual and practical skills that the MDES course offered me are invaluable in achieving this."

John Horniblow
Director of Interactive Services
SPIKE
LOS ANGELES, TOKYO, SYDNEY, MELBOURNE, AUCKLAND

"The versatility of the Masters Coursework program allowed me to choose and build a personalised course structure, using the many various subject components available. I was able to pursue my specific areas of interest within the digital environment and thus gain invaluable experience in ways of working with both new and existing software applications."

Ian Shakeshaft
MultiMedia Producer
CADRE design

For more information contact Gae Sharp on (02) 9852 5425 or g.sharp@uws.edu.au
OR visit http://www.design.nepean.edu.au
OPENchannel is a direct descendant of one of the first local video access centres set up by the Whitlam government in the early 70s to help community groups access the means of production. For over 20 years it has had an eventful, continuous history of activism and cultural production as part of Melbourne's independent production community.

Located in a cultural precinct in Fitzroy that also includes the Melbourne International Film Festival and 3RRR, OPENChannel today is a membership-based resource that provides much-needed support for an exciting range of film, video and new media production, while assisting in the training and development of, and communication with, practitioners in screen media.

The centre provides substantial production and post production facilities and equipment (including studios, high end-on- and off-line edit suites, a multimedia lab, and production offices), and maintains an involvement with the wider film and video community through seminars, forums and other events. It also houses a number of industry organisations, including the Melbourne offices of the Australian Screen Directors' Association and if (independent filmmakers) magazine.

OPENChannel's Executive Director, in the following note of possibilities of new projects, Helen Bowman writes: "OPENChannel's production arm, OCP Limited, makes high quality innovative programs, as well as co-productions with independent film and video makers, ranging from documentaries, drama, and television series, to corporate and training videos. Assistance is offered to emerging practitioners for their professional development. A range of subsidies in-kind have been created, including desk and phone access, studio and editing time, and support for projects on which OPENChannel may act as executive producer. Currently in development under the OPENChannel umbrella are several documentaries and a low budget feature film, while consultant John Pierce is exploring opportunities for multimedia production. A program of community events brings large audiences into the OPENChannel's Fitzroy premises. Programs include 2 popular open screening nights each year, at which members show their latest work, and screenings and discussions by filmmakers that are held in conjunction with ASDA. An ambitious joint project with if/rom magazine, The Lowdown Live seminar, is planned for March 2000, and will provide info on independent production from those who actually do it, including how to source alternative funding, improve scripts, learn about distribution and marketing. Also scheduled in March is a joint event with Experimenta: a kind of post mortem into Y2K and what did or didn't happen, while a conference is planned for August which will address issues of surveillance, privacy and moral responsibility, and the way artists are using surveillance as a theme in their work."

Art in residence

This has been the first year for a new project for OPENChannel, an artist-in-residence program. Tina Gonsalves has been in residence since July, and she is very enthusiastic about the experiment. "It's been a fantastic time. They have a great technical set up here, and they've given me access to everything, from the multimedia suites, Media 100 suites, to a mastering suite, digital video cameras, studio—it's a great process. When I'm creating new work, if I need some more footage, I can go straight into the studio, shoot it on the blue screen with digital video, then digitise it into the computer—a very organic process."

For the last 2 years OPENChannel had been supporting Gonsalves' short animation and video pieces, so she was the natural choice for the centre's inaugural residence scheme. "It know's something; that they would want to take it further, with a more formal selection process, so I guess I'm here to see if it can work. It seems to be very positive. I've been working on 4 different projects. One animation, wounded, won best animation at the F1 digital Arts Festival. I've also been part of MAAP's (Multimedia Arts Asia Pacific) online artist-in-residency program, working with artists in Korea, Beijing, and Perth, and trying to get my own website online—which should be finished soon (www.tinagonsalves.com).

A united front

At a time of decreasing government funding overall, and increasing pressure from the mainstream production industry for access to government funding, it is not surprising that development and production, there has been great stress on the screen culture sector to which OPENChannel has traditionally supplied funds and support on its main funding mechanism, the Industry and Cultural Development (ICD) branch of the AFC. Revised ICD guidelines were approved at the AFC Board meeting in November and now state: "the objective of the Industry and Cultural Development funding stream is to support and promote initiatives of national significance that will strengthen Australia's creative industries and arts driven culture in Australia. To do this, funds are invested in screen organisations, companies and individuals, and to support industry guilds and associations. Support is through recurrent funding to major screen organisations and events and through project funding to one-off events and development activities."

"Identifying the necessity for a united front, and emphasising links with the spectrum of Australian screen production, the national network of screen resource organisations has established a new association, Screen Development Australia (SDA), to provide a formal model through which the network would continue to promote, deliver, and promote Australia-wide initiatives underpinned by best practice methodologies."

OPENChannel and SDA's other member organisations (Film & Television Institute in Perth, Media Resource Centre in Adelaide, Metro Screen in Sydney, and QPix in Brisbane) play a key role in providing early to mid-career film and multimedia makers across Australia with affordable access to production equipment and advice, subsidy programs, professional development and accreditation, early to mid-career film and a range of special projects. SDA is committed to: the development of a growing network of film, video and new media makers; actively engage with the production, economic and aesthetic issues facing the industry; the development of complementary and diverse pathways into the industry; increased audiences for Australian films and new media works; and ensuring access and equity in processes and resources. SDA will enter into a range of partnerships in order to maximise the production resources available in its membership of screen organisations, and to ensure that the most appropriate resource is dedicated to the production of art and feature films and feature film companies, independent practitioners, and organisations which are not available to participating these resources. SDA will enter into a range of share agreements in order to maximise its artistic and cultural resources in this way.

Helen Bowman comments that the screen resources organisations are now in a great position to continue to support the development of a united front at a local level whilst providing a strategic national infrastructure. "Our role is very much about innovation and leadership, providing a broad range of people with the opportunity to realise their creative voices in film and digital media."

Tina Kauffman profile's OPENChannel, Victoria's screen resource centre

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Hands-off credentials

Dean Kiley at Bendigo Art Gallery's Byte Me

An atavistic shudder went through the suddenly-silent crowd. We 'knew', of course, we all 'knew', the same way we always knew already about The Crying Game. But now someone had come out with it and it was discomforting.

"We'd done the rounds of the exhibition space and chuckled knowingly at how the art (full of sound and furious interactive multimedia) was so loud we couldn't properly hear the artists and commentators talking about the art. We'd been patient through the setting up of laptops and the suddenly-silent crowd. We 'knew', of course, by Cinemedia on funding practices and inevitable irruptions of screensavers into talking about the art. We 'd been patient properly hear the artists and commentators always knew already about tongued sounds, voices speaking, slowed...

Mitchell Whitelaw explores the Dead Centre of Norie Neumark's latest collaboration...
The Wetware season

The Wet in the Northern Territory. And sure
within its walls (happily the fantastic annual
diversity with stunning artefacts exhibited
Geraldine Tyson of 24HR
Brisbane - based cooperative multimed ia
world .”

Molnar,
Mindil Beach on the other . In the clammy air,
the weekly market and citizens gathering at
event)

foreshore , is a microcosm of the local
gallery of the Northern Territory, built on the
Council) , and gave an overview of much that
Australian Film Commission ( primary
development of the internet can be seen as a
continued from page 17

and Maria
Greg
Miltie

report from the NxT Multimedia Symposium in Darwin

The first day of October is the first day of
The Wet in the Northern Territory. And sure
enough, Darwin experienced a night time
shower after the evening opening of NxT. This
multimedia symposium, and its sibling event
before in other states, set out to expose ways
in which, in the words of the coordinator Mary
Janet, "artists have challenged, examined and
graped with technologies in ways never even considered by the corporate
word ."

Hosted by the local office of QANTM (the
(Brisbane-based cooperative multimedia
-CMC) in close collaboration with

The plurality of voices online and in other
cultural structures is more about networking, webgrrls, geek girls,
Faces, OBn, online publishing, career

organ(ics)...

continued from page 17

material things. In games like Doom bodies get
splatter into an homogeneous pixelated goo; "Neurones" remind us of bodies' differentiation,
and of their entanglement in cultural structures
(hence the play on the Australian "dead centre"). The Neurones event suggests a point out in the
dystopian one where the "meat" is nothing but
for technological renovation. Here, the
machines are assimilated by the body and its
wandering metaphorical organs.

If there is something dissatisfying about the
piece, it's perhaps that these ideas don't develop,
but rather, remain elusive in the work itself,
broken into metaphorical fragments and left
for the visitor to reassemble. If a computer is a
digestive organ, what value does it extract from
its fodder? How do we tell an excursion from a
vital nutrient? The metaphors pulse and grumble
and ficker richly, but they stay indistinct-only
spelt out in Neurun's written statement.
Perhaps this is only fitting since our own internal
worlds aren't as cut and dried, as easy to
sort out, as the odd pang, gurgle or spasmodic
emission as evidence of their operation. As Dead Centre
points out, these leaves them open to personal
and cultural reconfiguration—shifty, slippery
nears.

Dead Centre: the body with organs; Nora
Neumark and Maria Miranda, with Greg White
and Amanda Stueart, The Performance Space
Gallery, Sydney, July 9-22

Mitchell Whitehead is a new media theorist, artist
and educator based in Sydney. He is currently
completing a doctoral thesis on artificial life in
new media art.

East Timorese participants at Nxt Symposium

tactical alliances between artists and
campaigns, or websites to provide
information counterfeting the claims of
private interests, and acting as
Artntercommicatlon points for popular campaigns
such as Jabulka.

Peter Callas showed an early 2-screen
video work which, utilizing footage from
the Vietnam War, demonstrated the subtleties
of irony in relation to race and the culture
of militarism. The survey of his work finished
off the complex ways in which the modern
electronic cultures of the Japan he
encountered inexorably pushed the advances
of cybernetic prostheses. He had created
electronic horizons in cities like Tokyo where
the landscape horizon had long been
obscured.

"The computer as an intelligence
amplifier" was how John McCormack
characterised the human evolutionary stage,
though his own work concentrates on a move
away from carbon-based life forms to those
based on the life-synthesising silicon chip.
In the pursuit of complexity from simplicity,
he demonstrated the "Evolve interface he has
developed which may become a market
item offering the experienced user ability
to create Artificial Intelligence environments
through this code-writing software.

Josephine Wilson described online
writing conferences, including Ciphers
(www.ensemble.au.com.au), her recent
online project collaboration with Linda Carroll.
Josephine Starrs previewed the new CD-ROM
she produced with Leon Crisiewski: Dream
Kitchen takes the Doom gaming conventions
into the kitchen where, equipped with egg
flips and other utensils, various animation
horrors are dealt with in hilarious style.

The updated version of Cyberfeminism is
more about networking, webgrrls, geek girls,
Faces, OBn, online publishing, career

participant's pot of "greetings, respect and
language": "Bala'nda (white fella) don't listen
carefully or respond with appropriate
structures..." Her work has been concerned
with addressing such shortcomings in the
health industry.

Staff from Batchelor College discussed and
showed work derived from the adaptation of
electronic technologies into the Indigenous
education environment of that campus, in
particular, digital archiving approaches to
stories from the communities.

East Timorese refugees in Darwin were
hosted throughout the symposium, utilising
the online facilities and, during the final
emotional session, immersing themselves in
Michael Buckley's CD-ROM collaboratively
made with the Melbourne Timorese
community. East Timor, Culture, Resistance
and Dreams of Return allows a "rich plurality of
voices in a "social interactive
documentary" in which the developer had
more of a curatorial role in the design and
production rather than its author or
director.

The plurality of voices online and in other
public spaces was celebrated throughout the
NxT event in a spirit of mutual respect for
language and cultural difference. However,
the impetus of rapid advances into digital
culture during the decade by Australian artists
is in danger of dissipation through reductions
in levels of infrastructure support. The
increasing babbles from websites is daunting to
most potential audiences. Whole areas of
research as well as artifact are denied
beneath the weight of Microsoft-style
marketing. The artefacts alliances between
artists, Brazil and Europe, supported by the New
Media Arts Fund of the Australia Council.

The NxT symposium showcased a
significant national record and described
innovation in The Top End setting. The next
event needs to be more risky and project into
the future with an image of multimedia art as
a form of ubiquitous social interaction.

NyT Northern Territory Exposure Multimedia
Symposium, Darwin, September 30 - October
4.

Mike Leggett (legartk@ozemail.com.au) gave a
talk at the symposium on his curatorial
research recently undertaken in the USA,
Brazil and Europe, supported by the New
Media Arts Fund of the Australia Council.
WriteSites

Kirsten Krauth reviews Patchwork Girl and speaks to Eva Gold about the first-time inclusion of hypertext into high school curriculum.

The Board of Studies of NSW recently incorporated Patchwork Girl and other hypertext works into the new Advanced English curriculum for Year 12 for 2000. I spoke to Eva Gold from the Board about the implications of this decision.

KK Why did you decide to include hypertext? Is this a decision a world first?

EG The new English HSC courses have a much broader definition of 'text' to include other than print texts. For this reason, hypertext works into the conventional types of texts. For this reason, the definition of 'text' to include other than print texts. The potentiality of hypertext works into the conventional types of texts. For this reason, the definition of 'text' to include other than print texts. This change is in recognition of the pervasive influence of the visual and the electronic on our modes of communication and ways of thinking.

Hypertext is seen as particularly important because of its non-linear structure and the reshaping of the directions of the reading experience. This makes students aware of their own reading and writing practices of more conventional types of texts. For this reason, hypertext is also helpful in introducing students to the more theoretical aspects of the nature of reading and writing and so provides a sound basis for the more abstract elements of Advanced English and for further study in the subject.

I have been told by several people that this is a 'world first' and that the use of hypertext in the curriculum will be viewed with interest by various educational institutions around the world.

KK What in particular appealed to you about Patchwork Girl and Samplers? Did you consider other hypertexts as well?

EG The committee did consider a range of hypertext fictions but the appeal of these 2 lay in their accessibility to HSC students. The text selection committee considered many hypertexts too difficult or sophisticated for HSC students. They were clearly directed at an adult audience or at university students. Samplers [Dena Larsen] was considered valuable as it played with notions of short story structures in an amusing way. Patchwork Girl is well regarded as a rewriting of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, a text that has worked well with students in the past. The committee believed that this connection with what is known by teachers through familiarity and students through popular culture would assist in the introduction of a new form.

KK Also on the curriculum is Mange's non-fiction A History Of Reading and Italo Calvino's If on a Winter's Night A Traveller. Are there connections made between these texts and hypertext fiction? Calvino's book seems a very useful and sophisticated example of playing with, and subverting, narrative structure, of a text that reveals itself as a constructed object and discloses the reader's role in the construction of the text hypertexts self-consciously do...Are these links explored with students?

EG Yes. The elective in which these texts are found provides students with the opportunity to "explore the ways in which different assumptions about reading and writing affect the language of texts...and consider how language shapes the relationships between readers, writers and texts."

KK In terms of responding to these works, do students submit an essay? Are they encouraged to experiment with the way they hand in work, eg creating a website or putting their essay on disk and adding hypertext? How would this affect teachers marking, if students moved beyond the traditional essay and into multimedia themselves?

EG Students compose spoken, written and visual texts in a range of genres and media. This means that while the essay is an important form for responding to texts, it is far from the only one. There are many opportunities for students to develop their skills of composition using computers and blending the verbal with the visual in as many ways as the medium offers.

The new HSC is outcomes-based and assessment is based on the extent to which students achieve the course outcomes whatever the content or medium through which they do so. Students are encouraged to compose in a range of modes and media. To ensure this, there is an outcome that states: "A student assesses the appropriateness of a range of processes and technologies in the investigation and organisation of information and ideas." This outcome can be achieved through work with hypertext.

Of course, this does not change the fact that teachers' marking is affected with every change of question. Different criteria are applied to assess the learning outcomes depending on the demands of the question.

•••

I think I've created a monster...

As I insert Shelley Jackson's Patchwork Girl into the a drive, it's the first time I've experienced hypertext on disk rather than on-line and I'm in an unfamiliar iconic landscape, Storyspace. I have 2 new things to read, the programming tools and the work itself. Reluctant to read the Help menu, I start to explore: 'Tree map, bet.' 'Chart View of Patchwork Girl.' Design and structure. Grid-like maps. Writers as construction workers. A graphical interface dissectioning "a modern monster."

Patchwork Girl looks at the act of writing as much as text itself, "tiny black letters blurred into stitches", as a creation process not full of Mastery, this is a woman making a monster, this is MaryShelley. The metaphors ofquilting and patchwork have been consistently used for hypertext writing (eg Trac's Noon Quilt project), sewing together nodes, acknowledging the process as much as the outcome, its made-

In text, Patchwork Girl seems overwritten, full of churning and astonishment, but perhaps this is to reclaim the monster, to re

Junk

Alex Hutchinson on the game

Sales of home consoles and software will this year break 20 billion dollars, surpassing the Hollywood box office for the first time in ten years. It means that more people are playing games than going to the movies or reading books. It means that games are now quite probably the single most popular form of entertainment on the planet. Most astonishing of all, it means that people will soon be forced to acknowledge (at least the possibility) that digital entertainment has finally crossed the line from spotty boy's wasted time to viable art form.

In October Sega launched its new 128-bit 'Dreamcast' console in Australia after selling over a million units in 2 scant months overseas. Not to be outdone, Nintendo and Sony have both announced new systems, pitched (as they always are) as more powerful than their predecessors, capable of dragging twice as much eye candy around your TV screen at twice the speed in half the time. It is doubtful whether this alone will entice reluctant gamers into the fold or convince you that games are a serious artistic rival to books or cinema.

The potentially revolutionary aspect of these new systems is hidden in the way their manufacturers (especially Sony) are describing them. If the hype is to be believed, we are on the threshold of a new entertainment age. Sony is calling the processor at the heart of its new system a 'motion Engine.' That might be a rather grandiose moniker if it wasn't for the chunk of metal and plastic, but it marks a fundamental shift in the way games are approached by developers and the way consumers are willing to accept them.

But comparisons between video games and other arts are inappropriate. In video game circles, the term interactive movie has been an oxymoron for years. In the past, the outcome was invariably an unplatable series of choices interrupted by simplistic choices leading to fragmented (and badly acted) sequences involving B-grade actors and ex-porn stars. Games developed would benefit from dropping the movie tag altogether and following industry leaders like Square where Final Fantasy series has long been pushing the boundaries in digital storytelling.

Progressive games developers are already beginning to look for ways to tell better stories and communicate ideas in a non-linear fashion. Game levels are being replaced by game environments, single tasks or goals are replaced by multiple side quests which (in the best examples) actually affect the main storyline depending on what angle you take. New synchronous, New asynchronous play for the discerning player include Vampire: The Masquerade from Nuovo Software which allows one to become the vampire, changing enemies, and situations into the path of other players at will. Or the recently announced Republic, from Elkor which boasts a million unique characters and an infinite polygon engine in its simulation of (wait for it) an entire Eastern European country. If that doesn't impress you, remember that the game's total level is rock solid right down to individual flower petals and autumn leaves.

Whether either game turns out to be any good doesn't matter right now. What is worth focusing on is the emergence of a new form which is in the process of changing the mainstream media. Secondary conclusion. But is it the death of the Hollywood blockbuster and the schlock movies? You never know. How many times can you watch the same kid kill his dad for an annual fee? The future is huge. More huge than the latest advances in video game technology. What will be the final product? Will people eventually make games a serious artistic player.

Primary conclusion. Will this new game depth devour the arts as we know it? Of course not. If you need evidence you look no further than the dialogue in films and DVD movie games. In fact, a game like Elite Doesn't Matter Most, a movie that clearly didn't kill film despite various doomsday prophecies. However it does mark the emergence of a new format which is in the process of changing the mainstream media. Secondary conclusion. But is it the death of the Hollywood blockbuster and the schlock movies? You never know. How many times can you watch the same kid kill his dad for an annual fee? The future is huge. More huge than the latest advances in video game technology. What will be the final product? Will people eventually make games a serious artistic player.

This is the first column in a series on trash and pop culture by Alex Hutchinson. Alex Hutchinson is an Adelaide based writer. His work has appeared in magazines like Overland, Sigil Journal and Evil and was also runner-up in the HGF/Flamingo short story competition in 1998. Alex@bigpond.com

control. Patchwork Girl becomes about losing that thing you desire most, a metaphor for all parents: "Far from sentimental, we were both wet in the knowledge that we would soon be parted; seeing each other still nearly stuck us both up, and in any case, there was the total anachronism in a novel that makes you distrust the author, and regret the time already invested in a world gone paper-thin."
The Asia Pacific Triennial, at the Queensland Art Gallery, has become one of Australia’s most successful innovative visual art events. EachAPT is eagerly awaited and the contact with artists through conference and partnering is a critical component. Unlike supporters include John MacDonald (curator), Australian Art, National Gallery of Australia who likes the way artists are also our partners. Opponents include Benjamin Genouchio (visual arts critic for The Australian) who judged APT3 arbitrarily weak and politically compromised because of its identity. On the contrary, an enormous support for the quality of the event and an acknowledgment of the overt politics of many of the works. Occasionally, you’d hear something like “it’s not as political as APT”, but the component was widely regarded as disappointing save collective concern voiced through it for the plight of the Timorese. The APT3 digital art, MAAP99 (Multimedia-Australia-Asia-Pacific) made a perfect collaborator for APT, offering in its own workshops, screening exhibitions, a conference and partnering APT3 in its Virtual Triennial. MAAP99 is a seriously growing concern, reached by many through the web and offering a rare celebration of emerging art forms. Thanks to sponsorship from the Australian Council and MAAP99 RealTime was able to be on-line, in print and on-line for three mini editions covering both events. A small selection of articles is reproduced here from RealTime report on APT3 and MAAP99 visit our website http://www.artsunlimited.com/—openplay

Feature: RT @ APT3 & MAAP99


Now if you are not a net-lover like me you will get thrashed through to the online worlds and I guess rather than thinking that the Indonesians were given a raw deal. When you do, you find that there are still some interesting explorations that betray a touch of sense of humour. Duyun’s little film is an allegoric transformation. By W. Christopher goes right into funny animal hoaxes, “his postcards from the edge” and “throwing hopes” are intense evocations of how contemporary Indonesian politics permeates the everyday. These are strong, simple applications of the web to represent personal experiences.

Krissa Murri appropriates and responds to the new social realtion is a more engaged way. She says that “in the last one decade, Indonesian TV’s commercial advertisements have radically pushed a social agenda through an image and cliché. The lack of warmth and the pervasiveness of tampaos ads on Indonesia TV prompted Murri to respond with a provocative anti-ad for which she represents tampaos commercials in order to show how the tampaos can be used for other domestic applications. She also presents an interactive with useful instructions for transforming the tampaos into a teabag or a cold compress for use by men to cool their brains.

In fact there was a fair bit of humour in this exhibition, particularly from the female artists. This seems to be something of a prevailing trend in Perth. Amanda Alderson presents a remarkably apt anthropological study in game format of going out on a Saturday night south of the river in Perth with the scuzzy males that inhabit the region. This interac tor is a cleverly designed artwork split out of the ubiquitous and terrifying symbols of suburbia—the big green rubbish bins.

The adventure starts from the invite on the mobile on Saturday afternoon and goes through all the painful riches of choice from brand of Blake to drinks, pick-up lines, cars, clothes, choice phrases and pale clothes that can be had on this night. At every point there is a choice but the range of choices is hilarious and enticing. The selection of guys to go out with is big but believe me after this, you will never go out with that type again. It is a cripplingly correct representation of the Saturday night party scene with superb sound bytes to accompany the decisions that you make. They capture all the proudly mono-ethnic beauty of the Aussies. I went through and picked two of people to try my luck with different guys. This is potently precise contemporary anthropolo gy (she must be an insider) sprinkled with colourful linguistic and cultural particularities of Perths. It’s classic! I was wondering what the Indonesians made of this piece.

The exhibition is a powerful venture into new territory. It would have been good to see even more cross-cultural experimentation along the lines of Christiana and Kathy Barber’s collaboration. We can only hope that this program continues and develops in the future. Existing stuff.

The artists are: Krissa Murri, Rikke Konsens and W. Christiana of Bandung, Indonesia and Kathy Barber, Matthew Hunt, Amanda Alderson and Rick Verney of Perth.

Graziela Dologeved

Missile: Shanghai N.2

http://www.shanghart.com/shengsen.htm A horrifying account of a city. Disturbingly, beautiful, eerie: it radiates from underground outside. Signs seem commerce, religion, prayer, cult ural/social life, sexulence, citizen, politics, food, poverty. Fractured, glitched, glitched, glitched. The images. My choice of image. A tour at my digression: ‘Like a touch screen (almond)’ to go. Here. And next. The windows—fire, and the glass of a kind of prayer or chant. To walk through, (unknowing). And how did I acquire this privilege of choice? To enter through the definition. The translation (reading) language, defined, drawn upon and against the images. French, Chinese, English. Subtitles, translations, parable, and the written word. Many altars, trade, colour and overloaded. With meaning. Or the extraction of (the) history. To trust the documentation. To listen, witness and understand. A circular reference, the recurring picture, assemblage and juxtaposition. Against a glowing (white) background, fragmenting, fragmented, fragmenting, 3-5 layers. “Three generations of architecture” (52.8m.). A silent photo-file. Summers, tons, of possible begin­nings, endings, a hope (even lovers walk here), maybe faith, signs of friendship, icons in isolation, li ttle devils appear, useable objects, they pose for the camera (what are the symbols? which way to go? do I go on?). Scene: street market, the people of a city, there is light, dawnlight, a morning, immersed in it. Beyond, the unknown. The internal, the lost external, in the city in destruction, layers of a new structure, a blan ket over the past. Villages of poverty slammed against ancient city, from horse to machine, from horse to whole city is a workshop” (28h.). Again, a document. Where to next? This is easy to had at. A look at a white perforated space. Moving, shifting with gap, snapping. Gossip and cries, remains of a former city. Here, now, bulldozer, construction, alterations, on a urban stage...Forthcoming city divisions and ‘self-colonised’ sects of a people, access to new technology/ franciscal influence” (45m.). Franchised worlds. This investigation circles the city and reports back fear, loss, depredations, awaiting the upbeat, upheaval, transformation. What to do. They shed a light of ashes, clouded by grey dust, attest foundations and miracles. The2 N2 makes no claims yet screams the loudest. The phot ographer (seemingly) unidentified [Chen Zhen Ed] but like a guide clock, (aconnexion (for) history].

Jasmyne Seeley

Hong Kong—rebelling on disappearance

Self Made Cinema is one of these layers. It is a progenitor of these Hong Kong—curated by Jo Law and currently touring Australia. These dynamic and diverse videos are united by a common subject and focus: “the body,” a body that has rebelled against the grid with images. Images are now the utility. Images in frames and covered in layers that disappear in a layer of images compressed in frames.

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Jo Law

State Library Theatre, September 4, 2004

Hong Kong has not disappeared. It has rebelled. It has produced a creative industry that thrives with diversity and utility with images. Images are now the utility. Images in frames and covered in layers that disappear in a layer of images compressed in frames.

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Mr Salmon is a dazzling animated symphony of salmon swimming up river and across sushi bars. It is vibrantly textural and colourful. It could be an urban metaphor for swimming against the flow of history as a vital death impulse only to become an appetising visual delight for video voyeurism. The ingredients of Hong Kong's cultural hybridity are combined with morbid fascination, humorous irony or traditional Chinese narratives. The vitality of HK is the pianissimo of innumerable cultural influences. Further, for hyper-turbulent existence, the homogenisation in the drive for new taste experiences.

Exquisite video techniques are common to all these works. This manifests the "survival myth" of Hong Kong's storied history from the original Hung's Love entrances with modern primitivist images set to the incredible driving rhythm of the Riding the Roller coaster in ecstasy. It is an agitated eye peers into the future. The personal became vital. The wock was rhythmic in a cascadal dance of erotic transformation in this sublime appropriation of the trance chant.

Urban repulsion is combined with morbid fascination. The power of that lating chord that is down a gunbarrel playing merry hell through the heavenly boys' own world of GJ Jews and Bombay Bandits. Cox's imaging scans oscillate with a magnetic force of 8 indi•

Frederic Lichtenstein's One Minute Project an assemblage of video through its staging as a disturbing. A different way of looking—both for the eye looking out and for us looking in on the eye. The challenge for us is to look at this eye with a lack of empathy. To look at HK and not see a reflection of our cities in its myriad mirrored skyscrapers. To see something new and as yet unmanned.

All of the Self-Made Films are startling in their origin. From the raw and uncensored video medium to the unrehearsed and unstructured texture. The shape, the form, the image and information flow did not create a sense of clamber. These works present a completely different conception of spatial and temporal dynamics and give us a new view of the moving image. It must be the rolling movement of the sea in small ever-changing spaces. Discarded frames within frames, layers across frames in perpetual motion can be an unpredictable harmony of vision. Their highly personalised essayism reveals new ways of seeing that will not disappear in the future.

The nature of crowds that we had to wait for email in the next day to hear that Robyn Archer had broken into a spontaneous yodel to dispel any bad omens.

Small words

Opening essay, Asia-Pacific Triennial

Artists Talk: Tiana Sanjaya, Han Myoung

A one night stand, Michel Tuffery and Patrice Kaiklekoete

AP3 opened on Thursday night with an estimated throng of 3000 at the QAG with events engaging the entire city. The curators of the Asia-Pacific Triennial (APT) have decided to leave the Sun Soo-Jak's subtle statement are moved to make way for speeches. Before Shy Yong's succinct instructions for the performances, a traditional martial arts ceremony is performed for the visitors in front of the stage. The event features a range of traditional Chinese martial arts presentations from local martial arts groups as well as a range of traditional Chinese martial arts performances.

The modern and the futuristic coexist in a seamless dance of erotic transformation in this sublime appropriation of the trance chant.

The personal became vital. The wock was rhythmic in a cascadal dance of erotic transformation in this sublime appropriation of the trance chant.
tative video animates various transcend slices through her body, as in the Visible Human project (www.nlm.nih.gov/nmrs/researchavourable)

2 Adam Donovan’s refugee prostheses from the

3 The obvious cultural marker, such as the chengakam glimpsed in several of the images, is not where I see this later intention. Instead it’s Amanda’s response to the same struggle in a broader cultural context. She seems to hold two views. Amanda points to a cut-off image of her seared face, glaze neatly placed over them, staring blindly at a mirror.

3 My project is to understand how I am, I reconstruct memories, and re-present them. As a Singaporean of Chinese descent, I’m marked by 2 cultures, East and West, and am struggling to reconcile the two. I want to find these unsaid/undone things.

3 A photograph of her mother and herself together, apart, past lives, present moments, bits and pieces. Including two small framed photos of her with other strong black locks, their status ambiguous. Amanda points to a cut-off image of her seated in a chair. A wall framed by the interface. It raised the question: is there a distinctly digital aesthetic, that we need to do before we begin to define it and work with it?

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Goings global

APT: Beyond the Future, Queensland Art Gallery

A highlight at the portals of the art gallery is now a ubiquitous art-historical, announc-
ning and summarising the exhibition’s theme. These are not only art-historical inventions but also a step beyond the art-historical paragra-
ph of APT3. Beyond the Future is Hau Biao, a Chinese Totem. This pair of inflatable red pillars is more than a symbolic guarding of the Forbidden City, facing Tiananmen Square. Shaped in the form of a dagger-sax, with guard-dog atop, the origi-
nal Shanghai exhibition of 2003 was modelled on the Forbidden City gateposts.

These artistic inflations like Maria Kozic’s bouncy inflatable towers have been created over 100 years. Originally direction markers for the Forbidden City, facing Li’an Men Square, they were later banned as part of the respon-
sibility of the art gallery, facing Tiananmen Square. Shaped in the form of a dagger-sax, with guard-dog atop, the original Shanghai exhibition of 2003 was modelled on the Forbidden City gateposts.

Apart from the symbolic guarding of the Forbidden City, facing Li’an Men Square, these artistic inflations like Maria Kozic’s bouncy inflatable towers have been created over 100 years. Originally direction markers for the Forbidden City, facing Li’an Men Square, they were later banned as part of the responsibility of the art gallery, facing Tiananmen Square. Shaped in the form of a dagger-sax, with guard-dog atop, the original Shanghai exhibition of 2003 was modelled on the Forbidden City gateposts.

APT3 artists are carefully revising the Un-
iversal Exhibition’s legacy of an ideal (though his-
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The communication theme has its lighter side in the interactive-intensive Kiwi APT section (thronged by all ages). Sow the move. New English Calligraphy Neill Xue Bing, and a truly amazing project, Sketch goldfish in Sarawak’s Kuala Lumpur studio-redacted resident of ancient Ayuthaya. Fill out a questionnaire for David Alexander, build your own home Sweet Medya. Meet Masao Nakamura’s translation exercise. Write a letter and lodge it in one of Li’s drain-cleaners. Build your own model of the MIT Dome by Bill Gates. Attend others’ private mail. Visit the APT3 website on the computer. Eat kangaroo荟 and frog’s legs from Mela Jansen or an elegant mobile kitchen. Attend the conference. Sign petitions calling for an immediate UN peace-keeping force in East Timor.

Inactivity is not a model for activism, however. The least ‘interactive’ work in the APT are the Indonesian installations which deal with organised violence and militaries. Indeed, an expressionistic aesthetic based on the body as anti-war has charac-
teristics with universal works of art, APT as representing a banned, progressive tendency in the form of the 33-year-old New Order regime. The legacy continues in Tiana Samajja’s Thinking With The Knife, which assembles the words and actions of street-rence bands. Individual elements within the installation worked well, such as the military camouflage T-shirts worn by the 13-year-old Yosef from the Balinese Yogyakarta workshops, which will shock em of ans. I believe the museum architecture of the exhibition, the conference and the exhibition seems in immediate ret-

wife to be extraordinary tinly. These international art events have traditionally served as political ambassadors, and while the APT is not, it is an important state agency. This APT is long on artis-
tic creativity, but short on political imagination. By failing to substantiate the art gallery’s claims to be a powerful independent forum, APT3 unintentionally looked more to past inter-colonial display and larger than “Beyond the Future.”

Bing Pop!
Rick Verty tells you to follow MAAP99 network artist Feng Meng

It’s been a truly lethal schedule for us this week, what with both the MAAP activities and workshopping ideas for our networks. collaborative site and all...so this seems like a rare, quiet moment. To make it even more special, there’s the APT3 project, a major new project from Hong Kong to Balkan.

RAMANNA Hussein’s hospital-mosque room also seeks an ethics of communication across cultural, eth-
nic and religious divides. A space for healing, Hus-
sein’s project before her death is a space that is heard as a ‘hospital’ for the body and a ‘mosque’ for the ‘soul,’ as Gulamshahrmed Sheik points out in an essay-accompanying the exhibition. Hussein against fundamentalism has inspired many. A con-
vergent yet visually compelling meeting space is pro-
vided within an installation in an artist from Kerala’s na-

icly displaced: APT3 and the senses
Tanoa Miyajima, Sang Ye and Geremée Barme

When the sense of smell is displaced, the world is a different place. The world is a different place when the sense of smell is displaced.

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Art patron as lucky winner

The opening reads:

Tourism, human circulation considered as consumption, by-product of the circulation of commodities, is fundamentally nothing more than the leisure of going to see what has become banal. The displacement of visits to different places is already in itself the guarantee of their equivalence. The same modernization that removed time from the exchange also removed it from the reality of space.

The removal of the reality of space and time from global economics, militarism and marketing is what New Orleans is all about. It is the mixing up of all that technology, all that glamour with what really, truly makes it all happen. Guns, police and men in uniform.

The right to autonomy, for Taiwan at least, is the right to reinforce itself as a site of marketing, promotion, manufacturing and global commerce. Its value to the west as well as to itself is through manufacturing, technology, trade and commerce. These are the official monetary values which is willing to hold proudly like a moral shield when the time comes to confront China with real guns and real artillery.

To treat the world as a site for play and for recreation is for the average tourist seldom liked to the realpolitik which underpins the global economy. Few international tourists in Baku know of that island (or this island of Australia for that matter) as a training site for the Indonesian military who have applied their deadly skills in subordinating East Timor for 25 years. Thus in reality as it is a tourist, tourism, is even though masked, linked directly to war—"holidays in other people's misery" as the Siamese say. Or as Belsen is a Gas, to quote the Sex Pistols.

I'm reminded in New Orleans by Melbourne artist Troy Incrocer and also the work of Patricia Piccinnic. It shares with that Melbourne mid-90s techno school of design art a similarly garish, cartoon iconography appropriating the hyperbole and breathless optimism of advertising. That's Melbourne's future days for you.

Like Incrocer's work, there is little overt or direct criticism of the society of the spectacle, rather a kind of bitter-sweet postmodern fascination with its means of operation. The pink inflatable trees of New Orleans are an "artistic" equivalent of a similar and playful pomo kitch-wright-large. They say "This is your future commercial world, only by being safer and more obvious, it is now a subject for informed consideration."

Inflatable art is popular these days. Like television jingles, and the theme songs to 70s sitcoms, inflatable art connotes retail, point of sale, promotional entertainment and marketing. The giant inflatable display stand culture of the suburbs. It is a place we all know about as we enter from the 'bubs in Australia because we probably preferred that when we were not around the suburban dinner table. It is what M.C. Escher called "third nature." The media as a real and self-defining space of the imagination and shared, collective identity. It is real, but not real to us. It looks like current graphics and shares with it a provisional kind of geopatrimonial temporalities. If postmodernism were a presence it would be simultaneously virtual, online, inflatable and on the Toys R Us stand.

This is possibly why the 2 giant inflatable red column bushes bounce around outside the entrance to the gallery. The stetically classic bit of state institu-"tions, who are in the same genre, are like Troy Incrocer as Jeff Koons-like—a similar and playful pomo kitch-wright-large. They say "This is your future commercial world, only by being safer and more obvious, it is now a subject (or informed consideration."

I was also interested at the comparison the work of Masako Nakamura with the displays in the gallery. Her large inflatable figures are very similar to the figures in the inflatable displays. The figures are the offi- aionary values of the public, the community and the local. They are properly connected for artists who use the net. The EFPPOs and Visa connections always seem to be at the same time the most effective and the second best, relying. Enjoy a total experience you have never known. If you make reservations now, all the gifts are yours to take home!

Anyway, you kids at home to surf to: artsurf.com

The opening screen reads

Welcome to Neo Orleans, the world's largest, best chain travel agency "New Orleans" the site proudly presents the Neo Orleans Holiday Deluxe Super Combination Service. All tours are famously beyond belief. Enjoy a total experience you have never known. If you make reservations now, all the gifts are yours to take home!

Oh, I get it, it's a parody of travel advertising...but just as a jocular, irreverent, humorous treatment...enough so or be processed.

Of course, in a room in a 2001 space station awaiting transportation...or reborn...or to be processed.

Curiously, this approach to the surface of formal and casual, there is a cultural quest to question the meaning of this Chinese proposition? Why my discomfort with this proposition, this particular proposition? It is the most imposition of this "New Art" that has been long tolerated? Why my pleasure with the clearly framed alternative, which could also be anywhere, just as a cultural"artistic" perspective, but feeling more real, done for please not for presence, for comfort, but, a step back, just as strange. The question might break up the rhythm, I lower the elevated dance floor out to these cultural spirits.

I need a seat, but for my next long encounter one is not to be had. Sang Ye and Stermatte's Hau Bao, a Chinese Totem is a more cerebral experience, a cultural studies adventure. As a strip of printed information on the wall, and there Hau Bao axes (precursors to the Tianammen Square monu-ments)—and the huge inflatable figures that frame the gallery entrance. They seem these 'drag-axes' were once used as road markers, indicating direction. Later, large scale, sculpted versions were used for the purpose of/post police complaint, the writers free of the possibility of prosecution...until tyrants decided otherwise, the Hau Bao became indicators of a ruler's supreme authority. Aspects of this icon also reminded an emperor of his responsibilities—to look out to the world from this position, to be mindful of the vote. The video is the centrepiece of this educational installation, and it's a dizzying por- tion of the factory of a couple of thousand people. I analyse the colour, to watch its effects on the yellow, until Queensland An Gallery offers an exhibition with the major light source—2 giant McDonald's at the entrance. The work, from Japan is sponsored by Masato Akamura. I am back in the real world, the one I can see, touch, and smell. I set myself in, a dark catacomb, another pace to I myself, a dark catacomb, a windowed, darkened space. I am pondering bodies, light, and aurally aware of the bending of sound, the space, the reach for the patience, adds up, strange with the beat, a caring, a single, orange, wearing, fear of the red history of a couple of thousand years of incense and their relative absence of fire in parts of China; out the elevated dance floor to these cultural spirits.

Keith Gallach

(queue)
**Languages of fascination**

Keith Gallash talks to Benedict Andrews, resident director Sydney Theatre Company, and director ur/Fastest, Adelaide Festival 2000

**KG** How do you feel about joining a state theatre company?

**BA** I've done 3 projects with the Sydney Theatre Company in the last 4 years as Associate Director, with Maggie and directing Patrick Marber's Closer just before I came here. Part of me kind of likes the idea of working within a bigger company and still getting to explore diversity in my work.

**KG** You don't want to be locked into a conventional program?

**BA** No and from the first discussions I had with Robin Nevin I think she didn't think she was interested in that and Wesley Enoch (the other resident director at STC) has obviously got very specific interests. She's interested in artificing not in artifice but we might be in the same programme but what we might learn from the company. I quite like being in one space for a time and actually having time to develop some ideas or an attitude or a rehearsal as well. And also just getting to know a community of performers up here. It's a good opportunity.

**KG** It can be pretty bleak outside the make-up room.

**BA** The diminishing frequency of grants means that grants are more and more like capital and you have to get money to do one show every 2 years.

**KG** I believe really strongly in the place of state theatres. Certainly when I first graduated (from Finders Univeristy) I felt I was working in opposition to a mainstream tradition which I'd been so excited by. I quite liked that. Not that there was so much any more. But even looking at the big European companies now and seeing that they can't do really polished work and often have too much of an obligation?

**KG** You don't feel governed by nationality when you're doing that or feel that your first obligation is?

**BA** Sure, I like nationalism too. But I think there's a form of nationalism that's a cliché, that's just another performance genre. A friend came along the other day to see a play of mine at the state theatre and said, gee it's sort of like Cassavetes. Someone else said it looked like Abel Ferrara. That was a form of, if I don't know the realist or realism or heightened realism but everything within that nationalism was very beautiful and committed and almost like it was an essay in an ID magazine or a Prada ad—we actually used those really compressed Prada ads with the white stripes and the white background that was like the visual aesthetic of an ID magazine or a Prada ad—we actually used those really compressed Prada ads with the white stripes and the white background that was like the visual aesthetic of an ID magazine or a Prada ad—was actually imposed. I'm saying because it was imposed. I'm saying that it's the desire of the work you want to create. Is that even possible?

**KG** What about vision? You're still relatively young and you have that train of thought which I'd call contemporary performance. Its kinship is with Robert Wilson, the Wooster Group etc. and that has an awkwardness, an awkwardness that is very strong in Sydney because the early 80's in its own distinctive ways. In ur/Fastest, you have enormous licence. The constraints are in the material and in the space. I mean you can sit on the stage and you're free to cut and paste, to create images and situations. When you go to get something done like the Maritave Maritave or Marber, are they different worlds for you or do you see them as part of a continuum, or do you see a certain kind of constraining responsibility when you get on to that mainstage playing to that subscription audience?

**BA** Not with the Maritave. Having done the workshop you can play around the work around really strongly and you have to because La Dispute is a bit of a freak in the Maritave catalogue. It's really of the moment. It's almost like a dress rehearsal for the tour drawer. It's a beautiful little table that you need to play with. It almost had a Leocadio feel about it in workshop. It's really lovely to watch and little little dashes on a page, so again it's outside the mainstream. And when I did I purposely chose pieces which couldn't be seen as auditions such a miniature and such an obscure piece, but I was interested in that and Wesley Enoch (the other resident director) was interested in that and getting to explore diversity in my work.

**KG** That's something I think you could probably have exploited much more. Having set up all of your platform the grid which the work happens virtually forward of the grid which defeats a certain number of actors. It's certainly something that made you notice when you watch European theatre, that depth of field can be astonishing and not just as naturalistic perspective. You realise how two dimensions are imposed. I've watched some of ur/Fastest because it's not fair to comment too critically and I look forward to seeing the finished work in Adelaide after its German appearances. I could see what you were doing with the bodies and the gestures, but I couldn't quite see the choreography, I couldn't see the choreography was what you were doing with the bodies and the gestures, but I couldn't quite see the choreography. So everything was really stylised but there was a strong emphasis on image and gesture and recurrence in the way you were doing it. I felt your performers were on the edge of that.

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**KG** We're working with all of the actors except one at least once before, some before as many as 4 times before and couldn't do the type of work I do without the shorthand language that we have. I don't want to lose that. But that is something that's imposed on them in ur/Fastest because it was developed by them with me over the process.

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**KG** I wasn't saying it was imposed. I'm saying I can't really see it. Maybe I'm used to seeing people trained in Butch or Suzuki and so on, so when they do things like that new reworking of ur/Fastest and I'm very interested in that all. I'm not interested in that all. I'm not interested in any of the choreography looking like choreography. Part of the point is that there are those bodies that are often really sloppy and really different, really idiosyncratic bodies that will then hit these tiny little things and throw them away. I can't choreograph at all in a postmodern ballet way—as much as I am interested in that. I can't do it because my body can't do it. But I am very interested in private little choreographies, so I'm starting to play using my own little languages of fascination. So in the simple act of crashing into the table, I make sure it's not a dance fall. We're trying to keep that looseness out there too.

That's it—a place that exists but doesn't exist, where you take things from the rest of the world, from daily reality and they become warped or distorted in there and therefore reveal more about it. A special other place, a hidden place, a hidden landscape. So that's the crossover with naturalism, that's what pushes the naturalism into something else. I guess also in my training I was very influenced by Brecht and that idea of creating us to see things in another way. To push that across into hallucination I think is interesting.

**BA** Perspective.

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Glenn D'Cruz reports on the 5th Performance Studies Conference in Wales

The picturesque Welsh town of Aberystwyth lies at the end of a railway line. It is not an easy place to get to as many of the delegates to the 5th Performance Studies (PSS) Conference will attest. The journey to Aberystwyth from almost every international airport in the UK is nothing short of arduous (my 7 hour journey from Heathrow was particularly testing for my fellow performance-skinned heads who kindly offered to put me on the first plane back "to wherever theuck I came from"). However, over 400 delegates, a few from exotic, distant locales like Australia, made the pilgrimage to Wales, enduring the hazards posed by jet-lag and the United Kingdom's privatized railway system, to pay homage to something called Performance Studies. While not exactly far from the metropolitan centre, Aberystwyth, to paraphrase the words of conference director Richard Gough, stands on the edge of Europe, looking west across the vast expanse of the cold Irish sea. For Gough, the town's geographical location 'on the edge' made it particularly suitable for a venue that aimed to map the boundaries and unexplored hinterlands of performance studies. The conference was sponsored by the Centre for Performance Studies at the University of Wales and Performance Studies International, it was titled *Here Be Dragons*. This phrase, borrowed by medieval cartographers when they reached the limits of their knowledge concerning the territory they were mapping, suggests something more than mere academic discipline. Given the size of the conference, it is highly probable that individual responses to PSS will differ markedly. Bearing this in mind, I attended the following sessions to provide the description of the first plenary session. According to the conference organisers this session was intended to set the tone for the conference by issuing a series of stimulating provocations.

The first plenary session foregrounded the underground performance studies. Speakers of various hues and nationalities problematized the discipline's "international" pretensions in a bid to avoid the pitfalls of opening proceedings with a single, universal keynote address. Guillermo Gómez-Peña, the "world renowned" Chicano experimentalist, began with a witty diatribe against academia. Describing himself as "the Mariachi with the big mouth", Gómez-Peña posed a series of provocative questions: what is the responsibility of the critic in relation to the artist? How do we define a "performance"? What is performance? As a performance artist, Gómez-Peña felt particularly privileged by the fact that critics rarely interact or directly converse with the objects of their analyses. The performance becomes the object, a self-styled mouth-piece, interpreting performance from the position of a spectator, rarely making the effort to actually engage performers in conversation. "I feel a nostalgia for colonial anthropology," Gómez-Peña declared, "because at least anthropologists sat around the campfire and drank with us."

Gómez-Peña also expressed concern about the paucity of serious academic criticism dealing with performance events that take place outside the theatre world's major metropolitan centres. (London, New York, Paris, Berlin). Why is this work ignored, he asks? What forums do marginalised, non-continental artists have for "writing back" to the centre? Content with rallying against the elite, ethnocentric perspective of academic critics, Gómez-Peña took a swipe at "fashionable theory", arguing that its criteria for establishing aesthetic excellence generally depends on the pronouncements of various "in-vogue" Gallic theorists. "I suggest", he said, tone pitched firmly in cheek, "that artists form a review board to monitor the ethical behaviour of theoreticians."

Having castigated academics and theorists Gómez-Peña then berated anti-intellectual performers. "Can we bridge the gap between uninformed theory and anti-intellectual art?" he inquired. This was a thought-provoking challenge; his next question--"Is there any systematic study of knowledge, transmission and innovation?"--is not to say that the current crop of performance studies cartographers are actually comfortable with this. Indeed, many delegates expressed various anxieties about the state of the discipline: is performance studies a distinct academic discipline? How does performance studies relate to academic disciplines like cultural studies? Given the size of the conference, it is highly probable that individual responses to PSS will differ markedly. Bearing this in mind, I attended the following sessions to provide the description of the first plenary session. According to the conference organisers this session was intended to set the tone for the conference by issuing a series of stimulating provocations.

These questions were also taken up by the following speaker, Anjil Kumal from the Seagull Foundation for the Arts in Calcutta. Questioning that metaphors of journey and border crossings exist because they assumed, quite incorrectly as it happens, that dragons did not really exist, Anjil Kumal remarked, a more apt title for his presentation might be: "Can we bridge the gap between uninformed theory and anti-intellectual art?" he inquired. This was a thought-provoking challenge; his next question--"Is there any systematic study of knowledge, transmission and innovation?"--is not to say that the current crop of performance studies cartographers are actually comfortable with this. Indeed, many delegates expressed various anxieties about the state of the discipline: is performance studies a distinct academic discipline? How does performance studies relate to academic disciplines like cultural studies? Given the size of the conference, it is highly probable that individual responses to PSS will differ markedly. Bearing this in mind, I attended the following sessions to provide the description of the first plenary session. According to the conference organisers this session was intended to set the tone for the conference by issuing a series of stimulating provocations.

Languages of fascination continued from page 25

KG: There's a difference between that and the focus of the performer's body. I thought, at this stage, where the movement was focused as they could be and was nor the overall performative language. But if you can keep working together...

BA: We're very different but very close. There's a wonderful sense of family. At the same time, I couldn't want to close off an ensemble—to miss the pleasure I get from working with a 65 year old actor who I've never met and don't

The picturesque Welsh town of Aberystwyth lies at the end of a railway line. It is not an easy place to get to as many of the delegates to the 5th Performance Studies (PSS) Conference will attest. The journey to Aberystwyth from almost every international airport in the UK is nothing short of arduous (my 7 hour journey from Heathrow was particularly testing for my fellow performance-skinned heads who kindly offered to put me on the first plane back "to wherever theuck I came from"). However, over 400 delegates, a few from exotic, distant locales like Australia, made the pilgrimage to Wales, enduring the hazards posed by jet-lag and the United Kingdom's privatized railway system, to pay homage to something called Performance Studies. While not exactly far from the metropolitan centre, Aberystwyth, to paraphrase the words of conference director Richard Gough, stands on the edge of Europe, looking west across the vast expanse of the cold Irish sea. For Gough, the town's geographical location 'on the edge' made it particularly suitable for a venue that aimed to map the boundaries and unexplored hinterlands of performance studies. The conference was sponsored by the Centre for Performance Studies at the University of Wales and Performance Studies International, it was titled *Here Be Dragons*. This phrase, borrowed by medieval cartographers when they reached the limits of their knowledge concerning the territory they were mapping, suggests something more than mere academic discipline. Given the size of the conference, it is highly probable that individual responses to PSS will differ markedly. Bearing this in mind, I attended the following sessions to provide the description of the first plenary session. According to the conference organisers this session was intended to set the tone for the conference by issuing a series of stimulating provocations.

The first plenary session foregrounded the underground performance studies. Speakers of various hues and nationalities problematized the discipline's "international" pretensions in a bid to avoid the pitfalls of opening proceedings with a single, universal keynote address. Guillermo Gómez-Peña, the "world renowned" Chicano experimentalist, began with a witty diatribe against academia. Describing himself as "the Mariachi with the big mouth", Gómez-Peña posed a series of provocative questions: what is the responsibility of the critic in relation to the artist? How do we define a "performance"? What is performance? As a performance artist, Gómez-Peña felt particularly privileged by the fact that critics rarely interact or directly converse with the objects of their analyses. The performance becomes the object, a self-styled mouth-piece, interpreting performance from the position of a spectator, rarely making the effort to actually engage performers in conversation. "I feel a nostalgia for colonial anthropology," Gómez-Peña declared, "because at least anthropologists sat around the campfire and drank with us."

Gómez-Peña also expressed concern about the paucity of serious academic criticism dealing with performance events that take place outside the theatre world's major metropolitan centres. (London, New York, Paris, Berlin). Why is this work ignored, he asks? What forums do marginalised, non-continental artists have for "writing back" to the centre? Content with rallying against the elite, ethnocentric perspective of academic critics, Gómez-Peña took a swipe at "fashionable theory", arguing that its criteria for establishing aesthetic excellence generally depends on the pronouncements of various "in-vogue" Gallic theorists. "I suggest", he said, tone pitched firmly in cheek, "that artists form a review board to monitor the ethical behaviour of theoreticians."

Having castigated academics and theorists Gómez-Peña then berated anti-intellectual performers. "Can we bridge the gap between uninformed theory and anti-intellectual art?" he inquired. This was a thought-provoking challenge; his next question--"Is there any systematic study of knowledge, transmission and innovation?"--is not to say that the current crop of performance studies cartographers are actually comfortable with this. Indeed, many delegates expressed various anxieties about the state of the discipline: is performance studies a distinct academic discipline? How does performance studies relate to academic disciplines like cultural studies? Given the size of the conference, it is highly probable that individual responses to PSS will differ markedly. Bearing this in mind, I attended the following sessions to provide the description of the first plenary session. According to the conference organisers this session was intended to set the tone for the conference by issuing a series of stimulating provocations.

These questions were also taken up by the following speaker, Anjil Kumal from the Seagull Foundation for the Arts in Calcutta. Questioning that metaphors of journey and border crossings exist because they assumed, quite incorrectly as it happens, that dragons did not really exist, Anjil Kumal remarked, a more apt title for his presentation might be: "Can we bridge the gap between uninformed theory and anti-intellectual art?" he inquired. This was a thought-provoking challenge; his next question--"Is there any systematic study of knowledge, transmission and innovation?"--is not to say that the current crop of performance studies cartographers are actually comfortable with this. Indeed, many delegates expressed various anxieties about the state of the discipline: is performance studies a distinct academic discipline? How does performance studies relate to academic disciplines like cultural studies? Given the size of the conference, it is highly probable that individual responses to PSS will differ markedly. Bearing this in mind, I attended the following sessions to provide the description of the first plenary session. According to the conference organisers this session was intended to set the tone for the conference by issuing a series of stimulating provocations.

Languages of fascination continued from page 25

KG: There's a difference between that and the focus of the performer's body. I thought, at this stage, where the movement was focused as they could be and was nor the overall performative language. But if you can keep working together...

BA: We're very different but very close. There's a wonderful sense of family. At the same time, I couldn't want to close off an ensemble—to miss the pleasure I get from working with a 65 year old actor who I've never met and don't
Melbourne Workers Theatre journeys into the dark of heartlessness

At the Melbourne Showgrounds, the power of Melbourne's Crown Casino is countered with another spectacle—the Melbourne Workers Theatre's production of Tower of Light. This is, at first, a theatre of inversion, a carnival, a savaging of the casino's exploitation of the gambling impulse. Instead of the dream of winning, we are shown (and kind of participate in) a nightmare of infinite loss in the shape of a relentless morality play on a miracle play scale—but, oddly, with no procession of saints. After some initial fun, it's all hell the way. It's a descent into damnation, through a sparkling TV game-show studio (undaintingly boxerwise in Castle Pavilion 1) into purgatory—the losing couple in a vicious battle in a circus ring sandpit—into further tempest (he gambles her away), damnation (they are driven away in a white van) and hell fire—a large puppet version of a loser is burned while a sax-led band raunches away. This is no literal representation of a casino, but of our culture as a futuristic game show, winning in terms of happiness credits, and all of it dominated by one man, ever present-big-brother Kurtz (a kind of Kremlin), who only appears on screen mouting platitudes. This is a culture for winners, not losers, but it needs losers so that it can function. Melbourne Workers Theatre pours out from The Doubter's Companion: "From the moment a government encourages its citizenry to finance the state by gambling—which means by drearily playing through inanity, work and productivity that state is in an unacknowledged crisis."

As in carnival there is a sense of celebration and occasion in Tower of Light, a pagant of reics replete with community brass band and choir, other participating groups, impressive big sets (especially the sweeping, curved wall of the game show studio) and props, a circus ring, a monster, a puppet, plus big screen video projection, some of them computer-generated. But there's not much joy, and little revolt in this carnival. This is about losers losing all. The woman, the initial winner in the game, is increasingly beaten, then withdrawn from the husband, initially wary, surrenders totally to impulse, gambling away home and finally wife. Other than a group of protesting Vietnamese-Australians outside the gates of the pavilion, there is little else to this drama than the blunt ironies that the dialogue and projected texts pump out. The wife's reaction is hopeless, totally wordless, reduced to a weeping match with the man—we become the circus audience to this spectacle of punishment and betrayal. It's all very illustrative, but not much more than that.

As we watch the couple fight on and on to no avail, we become aware of something else out of the circus ring, a figure suspended horizontally in the near distance, gurgling and muttering, lit red, tilting down towards the vertical, a half-man, torso in a suit, the whole of him encased in plastic fed by liquids through tubes. He's a kind of heaven, rattling off a reprise of his credos and achievements, a stream of stream-of-consciousness ramblings, wickedly funny (though like the couple's fight desperately in need of editing and shaping). It's the real Kurtz. This Frankenstein-venomous-cum-devil has the best writing—a rich expression of his mad hubris, achievements and doubts.

The nature of gambling, its hold on the psyche, the drive it unleashes, doesn't get a look in; its embodiment in the couple is simple to the point of simplistic. What we witness is the fall of the characters as they take with them, and the Horror as the pair meet the literally in-human Kurtz. But they have been given neither language nor personalities. Initially this works well in the way the woman is introduced into the production, simply as a naive member of the audience—it takes us a while to register that she is a performer. Against the smirking hard sell of the compers, the relative innocence and gullibility of the couple is convincing, but thereafter their portrayal is narrow, the work's moral impulse overriding any possibility of complexity.

Tower of Light is a labour intensive multimedia work, sometimes entertaining, sometimes impressive (as the wall of the studio set up opens and we are led through a heavenly gate framed by a choir and into purgatory), sometimes problematic. Kurtz first appears in our giant projection outside the studio where we wait to enter, entertained by a brass band, a few of us selected for high steam on wheels and champagne viewing. He appears again on screen inside, making platitudes of self-help and hostility to losers. Digital read out and projected phrases saturate us with the ideology of the prevailing culture ("there is only chaos...embrace it...the new religion of the millennium...risk all."). There are amusing chores operated by a big media-adept crew—a direct video line from the box office—the night's door take for the Melbourne Workers Theatre is up for a bet; pretaped satirical testimonials from Tim Costello, Ron Barassi and others; contestants drawn from the audience are multiplied across the space on screens. Once the couple are fully implicated in the game, a camera pierces into their household, assaying what can be gambled away. So far, so good. A sense of high-tech studio is palpably grasped and Kurtz establishes himself to see the monster behind the electronic mask.

However, despite the futurist setting and the multimedia investment, the presentation of the game is curiously old fashioned. In an increasingly bizarre pick-a-box routine, the game pivots on an endlessly splitting cube; large on-stage black cubes open to reveal smaller glittering multiple cubes, open further to strings of tiny cubes, and resolve in a handful of glitter thrown in the air, with the gambler guessing against impossible odds, which is the box. Certainly there's an ugly wit in all this clunky old showbusiness and it does generate a sense of an infinite capacity to lose. But, simultaneously, a fascinating computer-generated version of this endlessly splitting cube is projected as a kind of illustrative backdrop...and ignored. This looked like a lost opportunity. I would have loved to see the screen cube as the centre of the game and the players interacting with it. The studio setting and the scale of the sets and the techno-buzz of the event seemed to demand it—something more than video projections and digital readouts. Instead we are given a lo-tech guessing game, again side-stepping a complex issue, the appeal and range of gambling possibilities and what they involve—skills, strategies, the interplay of

appreciation, the moral complete.

Susie Dee's direction of Up the Ladder (with Wesley Enoch as co-director for the 1997 Festival of the Dreaming version) was a more engaging example of a theatre of involvement, doubtless to do with the intimacy of its boxing tent, a sharper sense of humour, a little less blunt moralising, more subtle performances and a little more subtle characterisation, and a better awareness of its audience. In the true spirit of carnival, a more subversive approach to Tower of Light might have seen a dike battle between good and evil, room for effective collective action. Instead we are offered a fatalism denying the possibilities of redemption, reform, action. Kremln-Kurtz lives. But as a number of people told me, "It was fun. It was great fun." Sometimes, but otherwise it was thin, heavy-handed, under-written and over-written, the performances good and bad. The design, the lighting, the sound, the music, the marshalling of information and community forces were impressive, but this was a dark journey into heartlessness and hopelessness—the losers deserve a better deal.

KG
The earth is the centre of the universe. We know that.

During the pre-show set-up for Thackwray's new work Plastic Space—texts about plagues and devils accompanied by ominous rumblings—the crowd at the Sydney Theatre Company's free Parramatta Riverside performance area is humming with excitement. Choreographer Garry Stewart describes this new work as the Parramatta Riverside Is humming. 'Plastic Space—texts

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It's meant to be a movie with a kind of dreamland. Hal Hartley feels—hard to pull off in a conventional theatre. Unless you project onto the ceiling for closeups. Unlike Sam James' clever play with cameras in Space 1999 at IPS earlier this year, in Plastic Space—the camera and hence on interception between live performance and video closeup which might have made some of the playing. The actors are possessed in pairs. There's beauty in possession. We're engrossed—for a time. There's some nice play with a head—one dancer watches another so closely as to be separated in an offstage corridor. This captures us; but then, like the device, frees us too quickly. Abducted in an offstage corridor. This captures us; but then, like the device, frees us too quickly.

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Sad protest
For all its noise, outbursts and raucous skills, Sidekatch's discursive epic about the history and impact of flight paths over Sydney is melancholic, the mood signalled by a springshot of freezework from a Tavern or a Vaaks (the meditative New Melancholia which so soothes our end-of-century angst), a sadly harmonious prelude as a sole reaper stands on chairs before us against a backdrop of 4 screenslargely displaying throughout the performance an innocent world of domestic objects and gardens

Crushing these stillnesses, these evocations of silence, is the scream of aeroplanes—recorded and actual in this flight path performance (with sound levels seemingly set in the theatre for the benefit of the hearing-impaired). In solos and duos and an escalation into group scenes, the performers give voice to and re-act the agonies of the neighbours and whose families are blighted by the protest involvement, loss of homes, inadequate and tardy compensation, and with satirical verve perform a surreal naturalisation ceremony which smugly welcomes new citizens to a free society that squashes democratic rights in favour of airlines and tourism. A great platform arranges of empty subways and houses sold to new, unsuspecting migrants by devious real estate agents; a geranium plant is threatened; a grim scenario emerges

Marrickville maelstrom
As a professional community theatre company, Urban Theatre Projects are known for their sharp work in burns on seats but more in engaging with their western Sydney audience in ever inventive locations. Their pop-up outings have been bundled onto trains (Tacktrip, 1997), let loose amongst other people's neighbours (Speed Street, 1998) and taken on tours of Bankstown's suburbs (subtopia, 1999). For their next event, Tabernacle, a collaboration with the performance ensemble Gravity Feed, the location is "a hole in the urban fabric", more particularly, the rooftop carpark at Marrickville Railway Station and the instructions "wear sensible shoes (not sandals or Gravity thongs) and be prepared to work up a sweat as you'll be swept from place to place in a paranoid and obsessive world."

Those of you who get enough of this at home may be wary but anyone whose experienced one of Gravity Feed's intensely atmospheric, site-based productions (you can never get it right) where the performances are changing shape as doors open and walls close, will know when its perfume is mimicking those signs used to control crowds or traffic (Craig Walsh; Richard Grayson, Lucy Mills, Ian Thompson, Josh Mann, E.C. Brown) and loopy video (David Granote) reminiscent of footage seen on club walls.

The Sydney Festival (like many others) has moved towards being an 'experience' rather than merely a music event, and its recent relocation to the RNA Showgrounds in many ways clinched this. What better place than a showground for the mother of all shows. Especially one concocted from a mix of illusion, fantasy and Alice's wonderland.

The Lidv's 1997 was like that. The festival (like many others) has moved towards being an 'experience' rather than merely a music event, and its recent relocation to the RNA Showgrounds in many ways clinched this. What better place than a showground for the mother of all shows. Especially one concocted from a mix of illusion, fantasy and Alice's wonderland.

The Lidv's 1997, the performances were given a serious place in the programme, my last Lidv foyer was marked by an uneasy relationship between the purists and the artists (including the likes of Sidekatch Theatre and the Honolulu Sisters—a young women's physical theatre troupe). This time artists appeared to have been given the brief of responding to the showground's environs and the many milling bodies. There was side-show-style signage (Mek Kent), text installations mimicking those signs used to control crowds or traffic (Craig Walsh, Richard Grayson, Lucy Mills, Ian Thompson, Josh Mann, E.C. Brown) and loopy video (David Granote) reminiscent of footage seen on club walls.

Time for a quick tour of this year's performances, with no apologies for the inevitably selective list of performances you may or may not have seen.

Main Street, recorded string orchestra work from a Taverne or a Hotel "theatre critic" who's experienced one of Gravity Feed's performances (you can never get it right) where the performances are changing shape as doors open and walls close, will know when its perfume is mimicking those signs used to control crowds or traffic (Craig Walsh; Richard Grayson, Lucy Mills, Ian Thompson, Josh Mann, E.C. Brown) and loopy video (David Granote) reminiscent of footage seen on club walls.

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Positioning passions

Erin Brannigan interviews Wayne McGregor about Chunky Move's Choreolab

Wayne McGregor is a London-based choreographer and performer whose company, Random Dance Co, has a residency at The Place. He has been commissioned to create works by companies as diverse as Shobana Jayasingh Dance Company and the Birmingham Royal Ballet and has also done extensive choreographic work for theatre, film and advertising. He was everybody how to do it, but because it's a genuine choreographic structure your vocabulary into a coherent some of those principles have just been thase which still give them enough scope to apply to thase with a group of dancers and that is evaluated­ with a group of dancers and that is evaluated­. Then there might be a choreographer, and I'm not just saying they do doing them. I've recently done a choreographic workshop with Josh Cohan in London where he remembered me for 2 weeks. You have to choose the right time to do it for yourself—in the middle of creating a new work not to be the right time to do a choreographic research project with someone else, although sometimes it might be. If you don't have opportunities to extend your process you become very myopic in your approach, and your work becomes very habitual.

WM There is definitely a hunger for the information and for giving things a go—a really positive attitude to that. I think it's also clear that the people hadn't really done that many choreographic workshops because the kind of analysis of the ways in which you talk about and evaluate and critically write the choreography—perhaps wasn't as forthcoming as in other places where they've had a lot of experience at doing that. I think it's a very hard thing not only talking about your own work but somebody else's in that kind of context. And I think the more we go on this work the more vocal they are becoming. Len of people position themselves in relation to work and say they either like it or don't, but this is about looking at the work in relation to the task and to see how far we've gone in fulfilling it.

EB How did you learn your choreographic skills?

WM I did a 3-year dance degree which was primarily focused on choreography and it really was a kind of 'craft' approach. So it wasn't so much about innovation in relation to language but about the difference between form and content and how you structure language; a formal approach is almost like music— a technical approach like music—where once you've got all that ammunition you can really subvert it and explode it. So, I did that and when I was at the Josi Limon School in New York and while I was there I was able to participate in a range of choreographic workshops with all different choreographers working in New York. I think the best way to learn about choreography is by doing it and that's what Forsythe has written—that the only way to master choreography is through practice.

EB But here is the economic problem of offering choreographic work on and the space to work on; the opportunities to choreograph are few and far between for a lot of practitioners.

WM It's interesting... in England a lot of young choreographers, and I'm not just saying they do this for experience, they work in community centres or with young people, and that's in no way a compromise. It's actually testing choreographic ideas in a very valid way. And I still do a lot of that work myself— we have a large educational and community program and that's not to get funding to do other work, it's actually an opportunity for choreographic investigation. And it may not be—technically—that you are after, but choreographically I'm able to test something new every time. I find the more I do that, the more it's informed my work.

EB What was your knowledge of the Australian dance scene before you came over?

WM I didn't know much—I'd done some work with Company in Space and had really loved that—their use of new technology and development of new software and ideas of presence are really exciting. And my development director, Sophie Hansen, used to live in Melbourne so she gave me a lot of information about the scene here. But we don't get to see a lot of Australian work in London—the last thing I saw was Meryl Tankard. I think our assumptions are that it's very American post-modernity, quite traditional in its form. Or we know the real flashy companies like Sydney Dance Company. But it's been a real eye-opener being here, seeing some of Gdeo's work on video, talking to people and seeing that really innovative things are happening here. The profile isn't massive but the work is here.

Choreolab 1999, presented by Chunky Move, July 26 - August 6

The crowd at Whylah's Middletown Theatre was buzzing as a sea of lights filled the stage and fell on the closed forms of 3 dancers. The heavy bass of a rhythm and blues track vibrated through my ribcage. In a prelude to the main performance of the evening, 4 short dance pieces introduced themes of cultural diversity and turned the audience onto the physical dynamism of D-Faces of Youth Arts, a company integrating performers with and without disabilities. I broke into a sweat just watching the dancers warm up.

D-Faces began their piece with a maze of movement, image, sound—sculpture—a pulsating urban landscape: kids rollerblading, skating, running, playing, traffic blaring. Into this were woven heartfelt confidences and angry insults. It is here, within the schoolyard, that young people explore the politics of identity and culture and identity. From the chaotic world of a roller Skating rink to the raving and wild soundscapes of a bustling urban landscape: kids rollerblading, skating, running, playing, traffic blaring. Into this were woven heartfelt confidences and angry insults. It is here, within the schoolyard, that young people explore the politics of identity and culture.

Directed by Sasha Zahra, Beautiful People suggested that occupying a polarised position of self-definition is a conflicting place to be. The fluidity of the piece and its movement between the social and physical worlds, between dance and life, is manifest in the piece. It is here, within the schoolyard, that young people explore the politics of identity and culture.

Beautiful People D-Faces of Youth Arts, Middletown Theatre, Whylah, South Australia, November 6

Manipulations & Hands, Northern Rivers Conservatorium, Lismore, October 30-31. For more information, call 02 6623 4213, fax 02 6623 5891, email igneous_mcc@yahoo.com

IGNEOUS, an integrated dance company based in Lismore, recently gave previews of their movement and multimedia performance installations, Manipulations and Hands (works in progress), where the audience were encouraged to move through the space and surf the interaction of dance, drama, video, slides, soundscapes, live music directed by Sue Fiske, choreographed by James Cunningham and created in collaboration with the cast, the works explore the ways we use our hands to express, to threaten, to love and to create. Kath Duncan, star of the documentary My One-Legged Drum Lover, contributed text about hands. "You can't hold a true glove without being in the world of the other. People move, counter move, and with their hands and feet and fingers, a dance is formed. Always moving, I feel like that's the same as a dancer."

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Wayne McGregor, Random Dance Co

Michael Taylor

EB How did you find the participants' contributions to the workshop?

WM One of the reasons I like doing these workshops is because it's a genuine opportunity of genuine something positive comes out of the kind of collaborative process. Because I know it was going to be quite a diverse group of choreographers here in Melbourne, I thought I needed to be more inclusive with ideas I've used to create some choreography on the computer that has then been used as movement-based interventions generating new content and for giving things a go—a really positive attitude to that. I think it's also clear that the people hadn't really done that many choreographic workshops because the kind of analysis of the ways in which you talk about and evaluate and critically write the choreography—perhaps wasn't as forthcoming as in other places where they've had a lot of experience at doing that. I think it's a very hard thing not only talking about your own work but somebody else's in that kind of context. And I think the more we go on this work the more vocal they are becoming. Len of people position themselves in relation to work and say they either like it or don't, but this is about looking at the work in relation to the task and to see how far we've gone in fulfilling it.

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Who said?

Grisha Dolgopolov at PICA's Dancers are Space Eaters festival

There is an Old Law (God knows where it comes from) that says genres cannot be mixed. Yet, it would seem that the post-Star Wars audience demands that genres be mixed in a big way. So why is there so much policing of the boundary lines in favor of the land? Why is there always a little panic when dancers begin to speak? Perhaps it is something about the limitless intelligibility of rhythm and the abstraction of dance that sin as a bumbling race between the minds of the pokers and kids them when genres are mixed. But genres need to be mixed. To know the law, we need to test the limit of the law.

Dancers are Space Eaters, the third biennial festival of contemporary dance at PICA, tested a whole clump of limits. Despite the attention to the issue, dancers using spoken text was not really a point of anxiety for this well-balanced festival. There was a strong blend of dance films, forums, performances, Q&As sessions, informal drinks, workshops, overseas guests and local artists with good attendance that created a buzz.

A then blossey racoon in a precise observation of the narrative arc of a drinking session. Happy Hour is made up of all those meaningless fragments of bar room crap—its an essay on loneliness, pettiness and poignant clichés.

"The artist who wrote this song is a fucking genius" is repeated again and again, spilling the usual madness of drinking intimacies across the sodden floor. "It's just rubbish!" says Houstoun in her perfectly pitched quiet voice (that insinuates this is not a performance), as she points to an ashtray or the performance or what we may think of her performance. Her twisted idiosyncratic brim with double shots of humour that gradually transforms into strangely insightful introspections as the conversation drops suicide down the glass. Here there are no questions about the text/monotext movement—'tis a heady mix.

Grisha did advance the dull dance/text by theorising the possibility of incorporating movement, music and song in an integrated whole—I only wish I'd seen it in practice.

Rakini's R.E.M (Rapid Eye Muovers) were by turn tillinglating, captivating, thought provoking and yes, she did dance, and I thought how much can be said with just one swirling hand. Yet it was her text that made this a very funny performance. Indeed, if a common theme did emerge in the 3 weeks of this festival, it was the place of stand-up, skinny-down, movement comedy in postmodern dance. It all went beyond burlesque and into off-the-cuff, witty soft-shoe one-liners. There was no need for the safety of parody. Strange Arrangements and Sesh Teile & Rob Griffins were hilarious. But Wendy Houstoun is the Woody Allen and Dawn French of solo movement theatre.

Happy Hour was an incredibly exciting stand-up site specific performance at the Fuel Bar. Houstoun became barmained then brawny, bouncer and then the brilliant blonde, blond, bored, boring, inspiring, witty and contemplative work challenged established orthodoxy. One of the biggest challenges to dance curators came in the form of the new genre of stand-up-dance routines.

Grisha Coleman (a former member of the Urban Bush Women) one of the workshop teachers volunteered a cheeky work-in-progress from NY called Modern Love. This was an amazing blend of brilliance and pace, all wrapped up in her a cappella group's performances which are apparently a selection of scraps and vestiges from her a cappella group's performances which are

Urban Bush Women) one of the workshop forums, performances, Q&As ions, informal drinks, workshops, overseas guests and local artists with good attendance that created a buzz. A then blossey racoon in a precise observation of the narrative arc of a drinking session. Happy Hour is made up of all those meaningless fragments of bar room crap—its an essay on loneliness, pettiness and poignant clichés.

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It is performance at the limits. The audience didn't know these or where the end was—well it was at a Peter Stuyvesant after unceasing applause.

Melbourne's Tromtan & Morrish gave us Aqualanche, for the first 10 minutes a sublime dream of cardboard box minimalism taped with pregnant poignancy. Beautiful boxes. Great lighting. Unfortunately, the sublime dripped into the soporific and then into a yawning disappointment. Although along with Morrish, I too finishable cardboard boxes, his stand-up-bus-ka-bashing routine did not explore the full eroticism of a big, clean, hard cardboard box. The movement caused no groundswells and did not articulate anything new or old or witty or scophilic.

Alice Cummins and Tony Osborne's No Fixed Point was just that, an endless slippery chain of moments, movements, phrases, fragments, passages, blurs, bits and jokes. I have never before seen so sumptuous a performance retrospective. This was a tantalisingly different explanation of the artists' favourite fragments from their solo and collaborative works over the last 9 years that for me at least a standard (not the limit) for the genre. The chronological segments of the 7 works slid into a cohesive, dynamic unity and allowed an insight into 2 extraordinary performance careers. The extracts from No Fixed Point (1991) at the beginning of the evening looped piquantly with the new work The Perfect Couple (1999) devised specifically for the festival. The measured mad chase, passion and release of the first piece flowed into the desperate possessiveness of the last. Both performers displayed exceptional simplicity and pure markups. For both the devoted audience and the performers it was a highly emotional evening, rare in this unentomental city. It may have been prophetic that in tackling the difficulty of recreating old works, Cummins and Osborne signalled new beginnings. (And have left Perth for Sydney. Ed).

A weekend of 20 or more dance films and videos was an excellent and rare introduction to contemporary choreographers, many outside Australia—where this genre is more common. It's hard to tell in what order these video performances were made—stage and then video or self-sufficient films with movement. Probably a healthy confusion. My favourites included the 2 sexy and robust pieces by Chonmoe and the Featherstonehughes, Cross Channel and Perfect Moment (great art direction); Gravity Fed's strikingly affecting Bridge of Hesitation and The Welsh Men of Cambroo's inspiring Men, filmed in the Rocks with old felts shaking more than their tail feathers.

But the 2 most powerful, voluptuous and mesmeric films were DV8's Dead Dreams of Membrane Man (UK 1999) and Iztok Kovac's Vertigo Bird ('Slovenia 1996). They were erotic in wildly different ways but both focused on the rough-trade flat out passion of the scrambling escape from concrete spaces. A pregnant woman dancing hard on harder tiles and men hitting hard dance club walls even harder. These were visceral, explosive, full-contact ruminations into social spheres and hard body politics that left me screaming for more. They were even better on second viewing.

Grisha Dolgopolov is a lecturer, performer and director. He has just completed the premier season of his new performance Bombs & Suitcases.

Dance on wheels

Kat Worth reports on integrated dance in LA

Integrated Dance is at last being taken seriously by promoters, reviewers and by the dancers themselves. The form is not a new one but is often perceived as a niche market. The most striking new dance came from Producciones La Manga. Their work, CRANK La Cultura del Safo, was described as a "Wheelchair Dancing Investigation Project". Ten performers from Mexico City with and without disabilities worked together and received various grants and funding from the NSW Ministry for the Arts. The group was recently returned from a NSW Ministry for the Arts workshop and was performing at the Sydney Arts Festival. Their work was described as "an innovative and inclusive and it was often impossible to tell whether the dancers were wheelchair users or not. The work was hard and fast, using running themes for this on-the-pulse representation of Mexican youth street culture.

Dancers are Space Eaters is a vital, edgy festival of contemporary genus-busting that rocked my boundaries.

Dancers are Space Eaters, Perith Institute of Contemporary Arts, October 18 - November 6

Grisha Dolgopolov is a lecturer, performer and director. He has just completed the premier season of his new performance Bombs & Suitcases.

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Producciones La Manga, CRANK La Cultura del Safo
Did we dream this?

Keith Gallash and Virginia Baxter examine crime scenes at Sydney's Police and Justice Museum and the Australian Centre for Photography

Prelude: an opening

At the crowded opening of Crime Scene (curator Ross Glopp-Jones of the Australian Centre for Photography, Police and Justice Museum), we move slowly through the key room of the exhibition, curious about the shots of empty streetscapes where murders have taken place and been duly documented by police photographers whose constant practice yields a certain eeriness. The titles are profound. But there's still a chill, as if the photographs were records of hauntings—for barely a second your brain involuntarily fills in the fallen bicycle and the body of the 7 year old next to it. Ghosts. Further along the exhibition room, no imaging is required. Or if's of a different order.

Some of the opening-nights turn away. Others move in, peering—are we seeing this? A murdered mother and son in their tiny room beneath the frame of a bed, posed almost as if in prayer. This is almost too much. How can this be shared with those pressing in around you? You move on. An empty kitchen, mess, a solitary high heeled shoe. Rape scene. It's a chilling opening, this opening. A few days later in the Sydney Morning Herald, a newsreviewer wrote at last what he sees as inadequate notification at the entrance to the exhibition of what it contains (Warning: Scene with human remains). A marker near the altar, marked at least by the scale and the device and the dread—distress? Do we have the right to use such images to make an exhibition? John McPhee. "Still in awe of the devastated innocence of children's bodies, even when they bring back horrific memories? Do we have the right to use such images to make an exhibition? John McPhee. "Still in awe of the devastated innocence of children's bodies, even when they bring back horrific memories?" Do we have the right to use such images to make an exhibition? John McPhee. "Still in awe of the devastated innocence of children's bodies, even when they bring back horrific memories?"

The disturbing effect of Pieta is at first doubled in Cross Currents by the scale and the intensity and again, the sound. But this time the view is eye level. We're on the ground. In a train. In a hotel room. Closer. The black and white photography and the articule of its showing, however, are a little differing, this is not as literal as Pieta. The narrative piece at the end, the next scene, it seems at first corner. "Cross Currents looks at..." (the aftermath of the war) through a narrative dealing with the relationship between a young ma-and-older-who has fled from Croatia and the Serbian body-guard hired to protect her after she is forced into prostitution in Berlin (see Cross Currents, CD-ROM booklet). It's like a movie, the scale, the black and white evolving an earlier generation of war films. Banned, pinch points, surveillance, a sense of urgency, like a song you can't get out of your head. The images are equally disturbing, murder scene. though you've probably watched it three times now. The specificity of the stories, the ever increasing detail you find in the images, the links you make between these and what you already know about the Bosnian war and the eternal question, 'how could they do it?' (not quite yet 'how could we?')—that's something to wake up to at 3 in the morning, this is the work of the Trilogy. You are implicated by being put in the story, the experience, by being told (that can be enough—'D'Alpuget's story or Moti Vila Vlas), or by allowing it in—eye, ear, the stomach it hits—and out again—I will tell you what I saw, heard, felt... The Yugoslav War Scene is penetrating. Nikol Papastergiadis declares in the essay accompanying the CD-ROM that the works are "more like meditations on the nightmares of modernity rather than they are declarations of abuse and injustice in a specific place. It's always good to claim something universally for a work of art, it's a kind of relief and an elevation of the work as art, and they aren't actually, but the devil is in the detail, and De Favero and collaborators' arsenal of devices are too potent, too penetrating, too specific, to induce meditation. Fear comes first, and disbelief, and anxiety that stays.

Act 1: Another opening

As openings go, Dennis De Favero's Yugoslav War Trilogy exhibition at the Australian Centre for Photography is about crime, about bodies, about war. It is about cultural history. Interviews, computer-stored information and on-the-wall documentation open out the exhibition. Nonetheless, the photographs are uncompromising. The simplicity and their immediacy, are scanned upon your welfare and over the coming days they're impossible to delete. An uneasy question, is this work too soon? A day after you dream that perhaps you've murdered someone, that somehow you've been implicated...you are implicated.

Act 2: Deeper in

We're thankful for the time it takes to walk from Bondi to the Art Article, to the main gallery of the Australian Centre for Photography our field of vision is filled with huge black and white split-screen images of cities, male and female body parts, landscapes, forests, all stretched across the space, doubled and reversed and Rooschkans Test-like folding in and out of themselves, taking our eyes with them, drawing us in and in.

The disturbing effect of Pieta is at first doubled in Cross Currents by the scale and onto two intense and again, the sound. But this time the view is eye level. We’re on the ground. In a train. In a hotel room. Closer. The black and white photography and the articule of its showing, however, are a little differing, this is not as literal as Pieta. The narrative piece at the end, the next scene, it seems at first corner. "Cross Currents looks at..." (the aftermath of the war) through a narrative dealing with the relationship between a young ma-and-older-who has fled from Croatia and the Serbian body-guard hired to protect her after she is forced into prostitution in Berlin (see Cross Currents, CD-ROM booklet). It's like a movie, the scale, the black and white evolving an earlier generation of war films. Banned, pinch points, surveillance, a sense of urgency, like a song you can't get out of your head. The images are equally disturbing, murder scene. though you've probably watched it three times now. The specificity of the stories, the ever increasing detail you find in the images, the links you make between these and what you already know about the Bosnian war and the eternal question, 'how could they do it?' (not quite yet 'how could we?')—that's something to wake up to at 3 in the morning, this is the work of the Trilogy. You are implicated by being put in the story, the experience, by being told (that can be enough—'D'Alpuget's story or Moti Vila Vlas), or by allowing it in—eye, ear, the stomach it hits—and out again—I will tell you what I saw, heard, felt... The Yugoslav War Scene is penetrating. Nikol Papastergiadis declares in the essay accompanying the CD-ROM that the works are "more like meditations on the nightmares of modernity rather than they are declarations of abuse and injustice in a specific place. It's always good to claim something universally for a work of art, it's a kind of relief and an elevation of the work as art, and they aren't actually, but the devil is in the detail, and De Favero and collaborators' arsenal of devices are too potent, too penetrating, too specific, to induce meditation. Fear comes first, and disbelief, and anxiety that stays.

Act 3: Too deep

Model Vila Vlas is the third part of the trilogy and installed in the smallest room of the gallery. Another small room. Again, the frightening effect is doubled in the duplication of means. An horrific story unfurls in a blameless text and a set of cachetchromographs. A woman narrates the atrocities of the rape camps and a soldier who refused to take part is in turn murdered by his own family. After everything else, this, the most delicate of tellings has the most murderous effect. It is silent.

Act 4: Penetration

The specificity of the stories, the ever increasing detail you find in the images, the links you make between these and what you already know about the Bosnian war and the eternal question, 'how could they do it?' (not quite yet 'how could we?')—that's something to wake up to at 3 in the morning, this is the work of the Trilogy. You are implicated by being put in the story, the experience, by being told (that can be enough—'D'Alpuget's story or Moti Vila Vlas), or by allowing it in—eye, ear, the stomach it hits—and out again—I will tell you what I saw, heard, felt... The Yugoslav War Scene is penetrating. Nikol Papastergiadis declares in the essay accompanying the CD-ROM that the works are "more like meditations on the nightmares of modernity rather than they are declarations of abuse and injustice in a specific place. It's always good to claim something universally for a work of art, it's a kind of relief and an elevation of the work as art, and they aren't actually, but the devil is in the detail, and De Favero and collaborators' arsenal of devices are too potent, too penetrating, too specific, to induce meditation. Fear comes first, and disbelief, and anxiety that stays.

Act 5: The interpretation of dreams

Although passed over in the general coverage of the holocausts, these events involving genocide, rape camps and sexual slavery are in many ways defining symbols of a war which consciously used sex as a cultural and military weapon.

Dennis De Favero, The Yugoslav War Scene/CD-ROM booklet

This is a visceral work, it gets inside you and it's hard to get it out, as it's attached itself to your organs. And to your brain—it's psychological, in the sense that characters are created with depth or that a narrator explains himself, but in the sense that it does its work on you, becomes part of your psychology. Knowing this De Favero's work, we were obviously aware even going to the opening. And in Cross Currents' it's psychocanalytic, as a kind of visual, poetic intended, not the centre of the screen (where everything doubled is sucked in or pushed out) becoming an engulfing (wound) warp, where tangled tendrils resolve into sudden pudenta, limbs and armpit hair condense into a gown, two breasts merge into one primal one, 2 (brows are they?) fuse into something anal, an eye is fish-eyed lensed and doubled into a monstrous animal, that glowers at your voyeurism, but, look, there are tears waiting to fall...every orifice is open, forced or waiting.

Like a dream Cross Currents falls apart, starts up again, is remembered in fragments, is observed, is participated in, is triggered, like a neurosis, that most waking of dreams, it is something to go over and over, opening the CD-ROM, entering the hotel room, clicking on the door, the window, the TV, the bed, the bed, the bed...

Mediator's not the right word; the works are too urgent for that, too keen for you to feel their pain, too eager to implicate, to place you at this crime scene and give you coming back and back...though not quite to pin the crime on you. They are too often noisy, too sudden for reflection. But melancholy, there's something in that, later on, on the way home, the next day, a week later, a feeling, rather than an idea, the sad narrative of Cross Currents; the sense of aftermath, of unsolvable loss, the nostalgic wartime black and white, that drone, bodies folding into themselves, the sound of children's play. It was once hoped that the evils of the first half of the century had been conquered, but they have come back and back, slaughters and genocides, astonishing inequalities. Our anger and melancholy sit by side, just bearing the way to the black hole.

Dennis De Favero, Yugoslav War Trilogy, sound design Tony MacGregor, produced at the Institute for Visual Media (ZKM), Karlsruhe, Germany, 1999. Australian Centre for Photography October 1 - 24

Cross Currents, Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne, August 27 - September 25

Crime Scene, Police and Justice Museum, Sydney, November 17 to December 23, 1999

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Through song darkly

NORPA premieres the Grabowský-Balodis opera The Mercenary

In 1877 the Marquis de Rays advertised for settlers to found a new colony, La Nouvelle France, to the north east of Australia, near Rabaul, at a cost of 1800 francs for every 20 acre allotment and a 4 room house. Three hundred and four people, including a group of farmers from the Lombard region, set sail for their new home. There were deaths on the voyage and the colonists arrived to find no fertile land, no houses, and 5 months of death and disease before they left, on another tragic sea voyage, some to seek asylum in NSW, granted them in 1881. Eventually the Veneti came together again, some 50 kilometres from Lamington and established a prosperous community—New Italy. Librettist Janis Balodis builds a potent fiction on this piece of history, illuminating the complex origins of Australian culture (not long before the monocultural myths of the 1980s was applied with a heavy hand) and echoing in the allegories of personal guilt (including an incident atheist that can never leave God alone).

To get his 1800 francs, the Mercenary of the work's title has to kill a man in Italy, something his wife never forgives him for, and which troubles him the rest of his life, especially when, in the employ of a Caltari Polignicini, he murders again—this time Aboriginals. In a 20th century music theatre tradition of monodrama that goes back to Schöber, there is another journey through the dark night of the soul, with another murder, but painted from an overtly musical, political, and political. This is a musical monologue at the end of a man's life, an overdy social and political palette. The soul, with another murder, but painted over with the overdy social and political palette. The soul, with another murder, but painted over with the overdy social and political palette.

acoustics are centered on the semi-circle of musicians, is rich, dense and fundamentally melancholic, appealing more when spoken and opening out the space for Terracini to be heard (a real problem on opening night in the first 3 scenes—where it is tough to be denied key information—and recurring elsewhere). The more I watched, the more demanding and accessible, and has a pervasive modernist seriousness which surprised me (was I hearing an academic inscription or was it a belated influence?). The moments where it slips into an evocation of Italian folk music, or in the Cattle King episode, a witty and beguiling interplay between Italian and Australian traditions, are powerful and not just illustrative. Most existing are the lyrical, emotional high points, securely in the tradition of a refrain from an aria or even a theme from a musical, working closely and effectively with the libretto. Having only heard the score once makes it difficult to comment in any thorough way, and not enough to say whether I heard a really distinctive compositional voice. There were certainly times when I felt restraint would have benefitted the singer and the libretto (and the audience), but this is not to deny the often sublime combinations of instruments (viola, bass clarinet, piano accordion, guitar, percussion) in an excellent and really distinctive ensemble. Their on-stage presence, not theatricalised, was a key visual component. The writing for Terracini is fine, testing his range (taking it to an affecting falsetto over the child's coffin), maximising dramatic effect, mostly keeping the words clear, and shifting nicely between heightened operatic delivery and plain speech (and, if between, a less comfortable kind of Sprechstimme that felt out of place). In the end it's the lyrical passages of the score that stay, that work so well with Balodis' libretto, less so the moments of great passion where voice and ensemble lock in something less definitive (but a better sound balance could change my mind).

The Mercenary is a notable achievement and deserves a long life, but it will have a better one if its creators address a number of issues beyond the relationship between voice and instruments (both in terms of how they need to be followed through). In terms of direction, Crea's focus on the relationship between Terracini and his death—which is in an exhibitionist and creatively productive, but towards the end, is too restrained, as if there is nothing else to say through Terracini. Lyndon Terracini as the Mercenary works with a set of devices in varying permutations that, like the words, haunt as they come back to us with new meanings—a coffin to borne as perpetual burden, a child's coffin within, a cloth, a small crosses, a hat, a knife. The power of these is amplified by recurrent musical affectation by lighting designer John Raymond's transformations of them and the Mercenary's compulsive reiterations of actions into visual epiphanies in gold and purples.

Similarly, Eamon D'Arcy's magnificent set resonates not only with the sound of the singer and instrumentalists that inhabit it (the latter 5 form a broad semi-circle around Terracini) but with possible denotations—the belfry of a ship. "How do we die? Who holds the knife for me?" "This circle of trees could be the pillars of some ancient temple where nobody worships any more. Blackmen walked here but left no footmarks," a score of the world—or could it be a river—Terror in the belly of the whale, a sacred site, an evocation of the consciousness of one man with a set of haunting memorabilia—coffee stains and the knife which he obsessively plays with.

Paul Grabowský's score, which he conducts himself, is a grand score and tightly out of the semi-circle of musicians, is rich, dense and fundamentally melancholic, appealing more when spoken and opening out the space for Terracini to be heard (a real problem on opening night in the first 3 scenes—where it is tough to be denied key information—and recurring elsewhere). The more I watched, the more demanding and accessible, and has a pervasive modernist seriousness which surprised me (was I hearing an academic inscription or was it a belated influence?). The moments where it slips into an evocation of Italian folk music, or in the Cattle King episode, a witty and beguiling interplay between Italian and Australian traditions, are powerful and not just illustrative. Most existing are the lyrical, emotional high points, securely in the tradition of a refrain from an aria or even a theme from a musical, working closely and effectively with the libretto. Having only heard the score once makes it difficult to comment in any thorough way, and not enough to say whether I heard a really distinctive compositional voice. There were certainly times when I felt restraint would have benefitted the singer and the libretto (and the audience), but this is not to deny the often sublime combinations of instruments (viola, bass clarinet, piano accordion, guitar, percussion) in an excellent and really distinctive ensemble. Their on-stage presence, not theatricalised, was a key visual component. The writing for Terracini is fine, testing his range (taking it to an affecting falsetto over the child's coffin), maximising dramatic effect, mostly keeping the words clear, and shifting nicely between heightened operatic delivery and plain speech (and, if between, a less comfortable kind of Sprechstimme that felt out of place). In the end it's the lyrical passages of the score that stay, that work so well with Balodis' libretto, less so the moments of great passion where voice and ensemble lock in something less definitive (but a better sound balance could change my mind).

Lyndon Terracini, The Mercenary at NORPA
Resonating pain, percussive destruction

The Melbourne Festival premieres the Jonathan Mills-Dorothy Porter opera, The Ghost Wife

Composer Jonathan Mills and librettist Dorothy Porter have created a brooding, sometimes harrowing opera out of The Ossian Venus. They are not the first to tap into the Ossianic tradition (1807-1929). The short story has been adapted here sometimes with acuity, more often loosely (incorporating other significant influences and sources) and, inevitably in the dramatization, without the strikingly cool, third person detachment of the original, an account of a woman alone in a bush hut with her baby. Yet it is a habitable world. She runs outside for help, hearing a swagman break through the palings of the hut. She is vividly racked with fear of intruders in the very moment before the murder of the woman and the baby. Her callous husband is away and murdered. What melodrama there is in Baynton's short story is saved for the other half of her plot, that which doesn't appear in the score and libretto. Of course, the oh play was a work in concert, in galleries and studios, on-site, on paper and in your mind. Mills's driving their compulsions home.

In fact there is a frighteningly neuritic intensity in the opera at every level, going beyond anything in Baynton's telling. Whether or not "the intensity of (the woman's) action and emotion is a metaphysical is away dimension to the work" (program note), is debatable. Baynton's victim (the sad antithesis of Lauren's heroic drover's wife) is not neuritic, but in the Porter-Mills-Cook realisation, the elaboration of her fear writ through voice and body and the surrounding space feels uncomfortably so. The onstage rape and the build up to the offstage murder are elaborate compared with Baynton's few words. Porter's use of language, of lists, of words that strike fear, is almost incantatory, the words finding their way from mouth to mouth, with Mills driving their compulsiveness home. (Towards the end, you can hear the words come, not as a sound, but as an intimation that Porter restrained her lexicon just that little too much.)

Able performances from the 3 singers, fine small ensemble playing (percussion, viola, double bass, flutes, French horn, cello, clarinets, violin conducted by Richard Gill), and the positioning of the musicians in a semi-circle just forward of the performance area, all add to the sense of a focused, intimate, interior world. Stephen Curtis's set is made entirely of rough timber planking constituting the walls of the hut and a roof (not the galvanised iron of the story). Another wall of palings rises from behind, high above the house, suggesting that, for the woman, nature is just as confining as containing as her cage of a home. It was around the time of this production that, sadly, the visual artist Rosalie Gascoigne died. I sensed a likeness to her work in Curtis's design, the timber looks found, the colouring facture aged, and there's a simple horizontal and vertical play of blunt juxtaposition and fragile integration suggestive of the ghost's man-made world. It is, in many ways, an act of transformation and release. In Curtis's design its initial cool indifference eventually becomes, with Cobham's lighting, another amplification of a state of near hysteria.

The Ghost Wife is an engrossing creation, occasionally losing shape (in the central solo passage from the wife), balancing at times awkwardly between emotional restraint and excess. It is finely composed and tautly written—economy is everything, multiplying meanings and effects from small but rich resources right across the hour. The music is best when spare, distinctive in its composition for percussion, and effective with many touches that heighten not only the drama but underscore the work's fundamental interiority—a pizzicato nervousness when women speak with the swagman's tenor's pulsing insistence, the husband's bearing dominating a heavy-breathing bass and gongs against low sustained strings, the clack sharp of stones and the climactic percussive destruction of the house. What it all adds up to, beyond giving new life to one of the more frequently anthologised, though less than famous Australian short stories, I'm not sure. One thing is certain, the collaborators have made Baynton's story so much their own and absorbed so much else into it, that the connection with the original is, in many ways, only important as an impulse. Suzanne Spuneral will take a closer look at this issue in RealTime#35. In the meantime, Australian music theatre is blessed with a substantial new work, finely crafted and faithfully realised, provocative in its presentation, at every level of the production of a pitiless terrorising of a woman and the implicit evocation of a culture that would allow it.

Melbourne Festival, The Ghost Wife, composer Jonathan Mills, librettist Dorothy Porter music director Richard Gill, director Adam Cook, designer Stephen Curtis, lighting Ben Cobham, costumes Jade Fried, acoustic designer Neil McLachlan; the woman Dimity Shepherd, the husband Grant Smith, the swagman Karen Breen, percussion Craig Board, viola Jason Bunn, double bass Bill Castle, flutes Kaye Duffell, French horn Jules Evans, cello Leah Hooper, clarinets Lucy Jennings, violin Suamee Ng; George Freeth Studio, Victorian Arts Centre, October 15, 16, 19, 20, 8.30pm

An eye on the ear

Aphids in Ricefields at The Performance Space

There's a pervasive 20th century history of inventive ways of performing and producing music and sound in concert, in galleries and studios, on-site, on record, with tape and CD and now in new media in various combinations with the above. Musical performance is placed in a dynamic relationship with another form, medium or space. Juliana Hodkinson, a British composer working in Denmark currently collaborating with Aphids on their new Maps, is a key influence in their exploration of the relationship between composition/conceptualisation and the group's other important role in this development. Both companies don't think of Elision without thinking of Richard Curtis' design its initial cool indifference eventually becomes, with Cobham's lighting, another amplification of a state of near hysteria.

Ricefields is a seductively reflective experience, especially in Sydney where many of the audience found themselves on cushions on the floor of The Performance Space. The irony and seeing that is Ricefields is gently cumulative: the placement of rocks, wordless song, bottles engraved with parts of the score (held by audience members), the musical rustle of plastic bags; moments of performer isolation and others of intense collaboration (the musicians work together); small, paperly decorated sponges, hand painted tents glow like lanterns. There's a restrained theatricity (need to overcome awkwardness), and a sense of space as written, scripted, transparent, stable, fixed yet improvised, readable everywhere in the installation, a set of endlessly interpretable codes, architectural and eternal. The meditative whole is not a little Japanese in spirit—the starting point of David Young's composition/conceptualisation and the group's collaboration with violinist Yasutaka Hemmi was in Japan. Ricefields is a memorable experience and confirmation of a significant development in Australian musical performance, not at all without precedent but with confidence, vision and, already, the capacity to tour nationally and work internationally.

RealTime#35 - December 1999 - January 2000

Peter Humble, Yasutaka Hemmi, Natasha Anderson & Deborah Kayser, Ricefields Rosemary Joy

Aphids, Ricefields, composition David Young, installation Sarah Birne & Rosemary Joy sound design Michael Hewes, lighting Lisa Trewin, musicians Deborah Kayser (soprano), Natasha Anderson (recorder), Yasutaka Hemmi (violin), Peter Humble (percussion); The Performance Space, Sydney, October 19-21. www.bigfoot.com.au-aphids
The future makers

Chris Reid assases some of Adelaide's musical riches

Just when you thought new music meant a Scullinor, Cangyman or Kloene work to kick off the season, in Adelaide, the tension and breathy abounds with composers and ensembles as lively as they are diverse.

Pianist Gabriella Smart is a gifted and committed protagonist of 12th century music, appearing in concert and on radio. Her ensemble Soundstream features works by non-national composers, including The Firm, as well as major international players. Many SA ensembles rely on the successful recent staging of the Amicus ensemble radio qualia perform via the internet and electronic media. Visual art, theatre and dance. Adelaide is dedicated to training and It's for everyone. RT

ACME New Music Co, led by the energetic David Harris, co-composition lecturer at Flinders University, is an umbrella organisation centred on past and present composition students. The prolific ACME gave 10 concerts in 1999 with an additional seven to the 1st and UK-accredited Adelaide University, as well as ACME composers. Recently, Cuddfuder presented solo works by the typical experimental ACME composers and by Carpenter. In a 3 month pre-production period for Grandma's Shoes, dramatic artist Carswell was happy with the writing might not suit actors. Hathorn was inclined to move and it stayed with me..." says Quentin Grant. This is not unique to Australia. The multiplicity of musical directions makes defining standards difficult for young composers, musicians and audiences to do little besides declaring and dislikes. Adelaide has breadth and depth, some excellent composers and musicians, offers sometimes the opportunity to perform and to experiment. It deserves a wider press more focused on such music, comparable with the visual art press, and a stronger promotional and managerial support network.

ACME's upport, The Firm—established composers and ensembles. The ecleai Quentin Grant, Raymond Olapman-mith, Grant, who recently completed a 10 month residency at the ASO believes Adelaide is a good environment for composers. ABC radio regularly broadcasts their works, principally through New Music Australia, and SUV and 1MB2 also carry local work. New ideas abound. Ensembles such as Stella and Maximum Legroom combine music, theatre and dance. Frequent forays into the world of the contemporary composer, through泵. TheFirm.

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Online Australia presents:

Edge

Edge - Creativity in the Online World is a high level forum to engage a cross section of thought leaders from the online, communications and cultural industries in discussion about creativity, content and the internet. Tuesday the 21st December

Speakers include: • Senator Richard Alston, Minister for Communications, Information Economy and the Arts
• Evan Thornley, CEO and Founder of Looksmart
• Margaret Wertheim, Noted Science Writer and Commentator

Cultural Identity and the Online World

This is the final forum in a series of agenda forums which bring together a small number of key stakeholders to develop proposals concerning the subject of cultural identity and the online world in relation to Australia's information economy. Tuesday the 21st December

Online Australia Cultural Festival

Visit the Online Australia Cultural Festival - Bringing together Australia's Arts and Cultural organisations in one virtual place.

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