

Forced Mobility within a Mobile Performance Structure: Australian Performance Exchange's 'Origin-Transit-Destination'
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This paper explores the development of the mobile performance structure in the performance piece, Origin-Transit-Destination (O-T-D). It examines how the 25-seater bus operates as a capsule for an intimate encounter between audience and asylum-seeker-artists and of engendering a sense of a shared journey.

It examines how the mobile performance can reference the asylum-seeker state of forced mobility, of perpetual motion, of shape-shifting, of transit after transit, of crossing borders: geographical, cultural and psychological. Similarly, how the audience's relationship to the artists and the work moves throughout the performance: from witness and confidante, to fellow-traveller, participant and activist.

O-T-D responds to the rapidly deteriorating public discourse that renders the asylum-seeker invisible, untouchable and in stasis. O-T-D counters the immobility of this discourse with a flexible, mobile structure which is a key medium for the transmission of stories of forced mobility and a possible fulcrum for identification with religious, cultural and political others. The asylum seeker artists telling their stories are always in control of their representation.

This mobile structure marked a critical point in the ever-evolving conceptual framework of the work, from its beginning in Indonesia as a commentary on the third-person depiction of the asylum seeker, through the prism of the Indo-Australian relationship, to its present form privileging 'real people' as agents of their own representation. This was accompanied by a deliberate focus on young adult students in Western Sydney as audience/community/voters/co-travellers.

The paper concludes with an examination of how O-T-D #2, the installation created in the gallery for Performing Mobilities, distils the simplest and most visceral images and stories from the mobile live performance into a video installation that can only be fully experienced while in motion.

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Origin-Transit-Destination
Shahla Shohani on running machine in front of media montage

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