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>>>>>>PERFORMING>>>MOBILITIE  
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> > > edited by Mick Douglas >

> This publication was produced following the PERFORMING MOBILITIES program of TRACES expositions and PASSAGES mobile performances at RMIT Gallery from 25 September to 24 October 2015 and at Margaret Lawrence Gallery VCA from 9 October to 7 November 2015. An accompanying PERFORMING MOBILITIES ASSEMBLY symposium took place at RMIT University and University of Melbourne Faculty of VCA & MCM from 8 to 11 October 2015.

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> > > PERFORMING MOBILITIES was the Australian regional cluster contribution to PSI #21  
> Fluid States: Performances of Unknowing > a networked, year-long program initiated by  
Performance Studies international (PSI).

Throughout 2015, fifteen regional performance gatherings were staged in diverse global locations in order to rethink performance ideas and practices in terms of shifting geopolitical and sociopolitical realities.

> **PERFORMING MOBILITIES** explored how contemporary life in Australia, the world's largest island continent, is framed by borders whilst constantly being reconstructed through dynamic processes of mobility.

The program sought to creatively and critically explore forms, forces, dynamics, meanings and consequences of performing mobility. It proceeded through journey-based projects that manifested TRACES in gallery expositions, via PASSAGES of mobile performance, and through an ASSEMBLY symposium.

Proposals were invited from artists, makers, writers and researchers for interdisciplinary creative projects and performances, temporary interventions, performative presentations and academic papers. The ASSEMBLY fostered transdisciplinary encounters with artistic research and critical reflection to investigate intersections of performance and mobility that are of Australasian regional relevance and global resonance.

> A rich media archive of the project is available online at [performingmobilities.net](http://performingmobilities.net)

CURATOR > Mick Douglas

COMPANION CURATORS > David Cross > Paul Gazzola > Bianca Hester > James Oliver > Paul Rae > Laurene Vaughan > Meredith Rogers > Fiona Wilkie >



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> > > WORLDS IN MOTION > curatorial statement > Mick Douglas

Worlds are in motion, as always. Re-enter this dynamic flux anew – here and now – by drawing your attention to five currents of momentum at play in *Performing Mobilities*.

Firstly, you might notice the increasingly hybrid and layered ways in which individual human creativity operates. Curator, artist, writer, academic, agent, performer, activist, organiser, self-realisers all of these roles are inhabited by many of us in the same moment. The bricolage of an individual's multiple practices is enmeshed in the inter-dependencies that make up a bundle of social ecologies. These characteristically conversational modes of operating eschew fixed positions to foster exchange, dialogue and inter-action. And so this program is generated by the weave of relationships between a core group of individuals, each of whom oscillates between many of these roles.

Next, we might sense a rising creative attraction toward direct, demonstrative ways of working and living. Performative modes of practice value the doing of action, often with embodied intelligence, over the representation of thought and interest. With sensory awareness, we note that it is not only the human that is performing. Other species, materials and forces are also in dynamic interplay, doing what they are doing, feeding back into the systems of which they are part, and affording the more and less possible shape of things to come.

Thirdly, we encounter the near and the far in fluid interchange, as systems of movement are simultaneously entangling placements and displacements. Specific localised events dynamically aggregate as patterning forces at global scales, such as when a viral media image of a tragic event 'there' prompts a change of response or policy 'here'.

Performing Mobilities was embedded in the networked conversations of a globally distributed series of fifteen regional events as part of the Performance Studies international (PSi) 2015 project 'Fluid States: Performances of UnKnowing'. As the Australian regional contribution, this program specifically explored regional relevance in relation to the global resonance of mobilities.

As we move toward real and imaginary horizons, the fourth current at play is an experience of unfolding emergence. Giving over to multiple forces gives rise to events beyond the human dimensions of predetermined intent. When we speak of 'the journey' or 'process', we allude to how the unconscious, along with all that is other-than-human, comes into play, to elicit the real, live, serendipitous and happenstance, despite ourselves.

Performing Mobilities was as unknown as it might be known, with most participating projects newly generated, unfolding and emerging into relations with one another.

TRACES of movement projects were installed in two galleries to explore and reimagine systems of movement, place and event. The projects indicated tensions around the movement of people migrating countries or crossing a city; the movement of cultural ideas and social practices; the movement of matter through time and across space, and through transformations of state; the movement of other-than-human species; and the movement of the forces that shape and change weather, land, water environments, and ecosystems. Works invited us to move with them. At RMIT Gallery, Jondi Keane and Kaya Barry's PAN & ZOOM, an interactive performance installation of expanded image-making and viewing, invited visitors to collaborate in making digital imagery in order to re-explore relations between media technologies and embodied experience. At Margaret Lawrence Gallery VCA, David Cross and Jem Noble conducted the live process of building a HOUSE OF WISDOM, inviting visitors to join afternoon lectures, performances and critical reflection and exploration of ideas and practices for self-improvement.



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## &gt;&gt;&gt; COMPANIONS &amp; CURATION

Following the 2015 events of Performing Mobilities, Curator Mick Douglas gathered the Companion Curators in mid 2016 for a discussion to reflect on the project.

## I: Dramaturgy

Mick Douglas (MD): The project of Performing Mobilities emerged over a number of years through dialogue. It commenced through my conversations with you Fiona, and then gathered shape and momentum through the discussions of this group. Having performed the mobility, as it were, let's revisit the three-part dramaturgical structure that gave rise to the project: the seven-week programme of TRACES expositions of journey-based projects held in two university galleries at either end of the central Melbourne city; the one-week programme of PASSAGES of mobile performances departing from the galleries; and the four-day ASSEMBLY that brought the whole Performing Mobilities activity into a state of culminating intensity, with people offering and experiencing performances, events, interventions and scholarly presentations. What were the virtues and limitations of this curatorial dramaturgy? Did it enable engaging with and thinking about performance and mobility together in particular ways?

Fiona Wilkie (FW): The different patterns offered ways for people to move in and out of experiences, spending lengthy moments of engagement over multiple weeks, or for a quick intense period. I came in by plane for an intense week and then left, so my experience seemed to roughly match the people who also came for the Assembly, whilst many others dropped in and out of the gallery expositions and performances over a longer period. These patterns enacted relationships between movement and stillness and so on. The Assembly tried to gather and allow space for multiple ways of thinking mobility and performance together. There was a strand around disability, immobility and interdependence; another strand around indigeneity, belonging, place and movement; there were strands around walking arts, migration, refugees; around global commerce, shipping and cargo, and so on. There was something really useful about accommodating all of these things, but we couldn't possibly do justice to the political and the social and the cultural aspects of every one of them. There are hierarchies inadvertently produced by the structure.

MD: In that dramaturgy, the Assembly of people and activities provided the most intense experiential element of Performing Mobilities, and I notice it has made the strongest impression on our conversations reflecting on the whole project to date. I hope the catalogue publication will offer engagement in the Traces and Passages programmes that offered slower, less intense forms of encounter. Yes there are weaknesses and strengths produced through the structures embedded. And that raises for me how the program had a lesser degree of Indigenous involvement and contributions that came to fruition than was hoped for, because of various people's circumstances. I feel the responsibility for that, and disappointment with it.

Blanca Hester (BH): When holding open a space for multiple strands, as soon as you bring greater attention to one of those strands, you have to really rework at a structural level. The whole curatorium would've had to be restructured with Indigenous involvement influencing the way the whole project unfolds. And likewise for any of those strands.

MD: Yes, by privileging the networked breadth of the program, the emphasis became the weave of intersecting examples of mobility and performance. I'm interested in how mobility projects gather momentum, conduct movement, and create moments of intensity.

Laurene Vaughan (LV): I felt there was a sense of revealing different arrangements of proximities through this movement. The long process of development towards the gallery works and the performances over the seven weeks made the Assembly so rich. Early on in the process, Mick engaged the curatorium group in the experience of walking salt from Flinders St Station to

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Docklands and unexpectedly travelling on the river - it shifted us from talking about what it could be to an embodied experiential moment about how this might be.

David Cross (DC): Yes, our terms of engagement started with praxis. I was performing my own mobility from the very first moment. We weren't thinking about how we would structure it, we were actually engaging in doing it. I think the profundity in that is the way in which once you've cast the die, it's really going to determine what you do.

LV: The work was embodied; it wasn't an event that was purely conceptual. If you wanted to be part of it

Meredith Rogers (MR): You had to move!

DC: The dramaturgy had two factors in train. It's us sitting round a table, plotting a praxis and how a gallery show sits in relation to temporary performances, in relation to a gathering, in relation to a publication. Then there is the reality of confirming a gallery space, who can join in, what the budget is, and how this is going to come together. There was a lovely oscillation between the purity of ideas generated on criteria of artistic and intellectual capital, that was then mediated with pragmatic realities. For me, it is that balance between a fluid set of ideas, and paying homage to gallery practice, to temporary performance practice, to site-based practice, and to our reflections on that, and at the same time, knowing that we had finite energies, finite money and a lot of stuff out of our hands. To me, that risk is still one of the most beautiful things about what emerged through Performing Mobilities, partly because of planning and partly because of luck.

MD: Does actively working with contingency play a role?

MR: It is also to do with the participants, and I think because there was an appetite to engage.

DC: Yes, the quality of artists and performers and thinkers was excellent. But there's also something about careful orchestration. Sure, there was space for the happenstance, but the care of thinking through the different modes within the Assembly, for example, enabled that beauty to happen.

MD: Is that something particular about the intersection between performance and mobility?

MR: Yes, because once you're talking about mobility you're talking about movement between, so that you're then always in a state of enquiry and discovery and between-ness.

LU: The idea of embracing fear to see what would happen is very important – a certain bravery, which is consistent with both performance and mobility. There has to be a certain ambition about where you want to go. And I think there was a certain bravery of knowing that some things could completely go wrong, but if they did, they would be what they would be.

## II: Curatorium structure

MD: Let's talk about our roles. I sought out to create a network of relations between people involved in Performing Mobilities. At the core was the interweaving of the multiple roles that many of us have played: as being part of this organising group of this multi-layered project; of undertaking the role that I proposed to you as 'companion curator' to participating projects; of inviting you to undertake and propose your own project as an artist, and a performance, scholarly presentation or artist's talk that would be reviewed for selection by this group alone.



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with other invited proposals. How did you experience taking up multiple roles? Was this enabling or inhibiting? Are there virtues to this approach?

BH: Well, I loved it! It deepened relationships within my own network. It's always productive to engage with people through different registers. And I think it brings a greater sense of responsibility to those of us on the curatorium, to each other personally and intellectually.

MD: Many of us were already experienced in working in, as you put it, 'multiple registers', in roles as organisers, initiators, curators, academics, activists, and as artists undertaking project works. However often those roles are not overlaid in the same frame; they're often kept separate.

BH: Which establishes a hierarchy. So for example, I felt that I was able to be really honest working with Australian Performance Exchange. I could bring a criticality to the discussion because, like them, I was also an artist (as a member of Open Spatial Workshop) participating in the Traces programme and could talk with empathy to the process, allowing me a greater criticality, and an honesty to bring to bear in the discussions.

DC: It's incredibly audacious to think that we can play those roles simultaneously. We tested the nature of how those roles can be blurred, how they can be set in a register next to one another. But I think we found a limit. I found that the different headspaces of being a curator, a writer, a panel chair, and of being an artist were extraordinarily difficult to find an accord with – particularly as it became more intense around the Assembly.

MR: I thought that the companion curatorship was really quite difficult at times, but it was a learning role for both participants and became an expansive process.

FW: We were inventing what we might mean by 'companion curator' all the way through. Inevitably, like any set of relationships, some will have worked better than others, and some worked just differently. It was left open, so that it could be the relationship it needed to be.

LU: I felt that I had the role of host. There was this dimension of care. It wasn't necessarily something I had to have, but I felt aware of wanting to help hold the space of the event.

BH: Mick, being the OSW companion curator, set an example for how I might improvise my being in a companion curator role to others, or do it differently. I love this working in response with, against, and through something. That was productive because, in a way, that becomes a 'companion' curator, not in terms of the curator to artist relation, but in terms of curator to curator, slipstreaming, the same as the artist slipstreaming with the artist.

DC: It was an exercise in a radically interrogating praxis.

FW: Rather than simply gathering a set of proposals and putting them into a program, which is what generally happens, we attempted to set up space for conversations to happen.

MD: I think you're making a distinction between a predetermined directorial approach of commission and selection, and an emergent process of discretion and inclusion. The structure that we were exploring tried to create relations between the participating people and projects, trying to allow the relations between them to emerge over time. I trusted that the emergent process would enable the artists' project interests, and our curatorial shaping of the overall project, to be responsive to one another.

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## > > > COMPANIONS & CURATION

FW: I think we set off the possibility for conversations to start beforehand, to circulate around the events, to continue afterwards, but that means we can't capture everything that came under the umbrella of this thing we set in motion.

MD: There was an effort to have creative practice work and scholarly reflection in the same conversation.

FW: It's a cliché that often at scholarly events, the most interesting and useful stuff for your ongoing work is the stuff that happens in the coffee break, but there are different languages that people coming from one or other of those groups are used to working in, and it can take a while for those to settle with each other.

DC: How does one sustain an ambitious multi-voiced project with the ambition that we put on the table over a period of time? How might have we thought through the notion of intensities? How can you establish a really rich and vibrant and celebratory sense of praxis in an organisational structure like ours over an 18-month period?

MD: I was very conscious of cultivating conditions where there's an interweave between social actors – particularly the multiplicities of being artists, curators, writers, academics – to actually explore the multi-layeredness of what it is to cultivate exchange, and what it is to move together. I felt it was necessary to mobilise a grouping, to mobilise connections between individuals who cared, because to me that was part of what was going to generate ways to reveal something about our contemporary condition, and the different forces of mobility that we experience.

DC: Could the means of doing so been improved?

MD: It could have been more time efficient. We can territorialise responsibilities, such that an autonomy of action can take place within those territories. But whilst that gains something in terms of time efficiency, it also can have the consequences of reducing attention and capacity for working the threads of relation between entities.

### III: Transdisciplinarity

BH: Artistic work is assembled through a whole range of methodologies, some more scholarly, some more experiential, so for me, artistic research is already a convergence of research enquiries,

## COMPANIONS &amp; CURATION

and the same potentially goes for scholarly output, right? To bring them together foregrounds and embraces the truth of research in a way – the multi-modal, multi-registered way that research happens – that takes different formats and can achieve different outputs. It's very true to form in my own experience of producing work, where artwork is, like interrogating the archives, writing, collaboration, site research, field work, critical, dialogical process, studio production. So it already contains multiple registers. As workers, we are thinkers and writers and presenters and artists and friends: many possible relations go into the mix of making work.

LV: Similarly, I think there was an equity of literacies in the programme bringing richness – a literacy of performance, of image, of text, the literacy of discussion, and of silence. Holding these with the same emphasis in a space allowed for each to speak, and allowed people to enter and leave as they could.

MR: Yes, a capacity to take in and embrace other forms that you might not ordinarily.

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## > > > COMPANIONS & CURATION

MD: I wanted us to reflexively explore this kind of multivalent and networked milieu of contemporary cultural production that we exist within, so that the movement patterns of people, practices and ideas could be attended to in the ways in which they fold back into the larger emergent project.

FW: I particularly enjoyed that, through the structures that we set up and the spaces to break out of those structures, we were enacting the ubiquity of the themes that we were arguing. I do think there was a fundamental premise that Performing Mobilities isn't a niche topic within performance studies, but is actually something we need to tease out, because these are conditions that we find ourselves working, living and operating within. Mobilities can become about so much that it becomes nothing – a vague, empty concept. So for me, that was the value of having very specific foci, asking what do we mean by that in this instance, and in this instance? People come with very particular examples, either through a piece of creative work that they've produced, or a piece of writing or whatever, and these examples gave important moments to get down to the detail of what does mobility mean in particular instances.

BH: It's important to offer a critique of the endless mobility that we all find ourselves in, and the kind of post-Fordist labour that we do as artists in terms of an endless readiness and mobility across registers, across disciplines, as that's what neo-liberalism demands of us, constant fluidity, right?

FW: Yes. And it can't be expected that we carry on in a kind of business model, where our labour is moved unproblematically from place to place, as if there's no other ties or anything that would connect it to places, particular places at particular times. Seeing Paul Gazzola and his partner coming along to events with their babies was a good reminder of ties to people and places.

BH: Maybe that's one way for the future. In a workshop I did in New Zealand, when we went down to the Marae, there are mattresses and people laid down on them, and they're still participating now. This space of accommodating the body, accommodating children, accommodating nursing mothers – it is really important that there are multiple spaces, sites and opportunities for gathering in a range of different ways, and for incorporating other knowledges and Indigenous practices.

#### IV: Fluid States – Performing Mobilities

MD: What are your reflections on the interrelation between our Performing Mobilities regional activities project and the global PSI project 'Fluid States: performances of unknowing'?

FW: It was a kind of micro/macro model. We were doing on a smaller scale what Fluid States seemed to be doing on a larger scale. We didn't have to artificially have the conversation about what a Fluid States model of research and thinking and gathering might be, because we were enacting this on a local regional level. For me at the moment everything is about mobility. However, the invitation that Fluid States set up for participants seemed to presuppose a particular kind of staying at local levels of mobility, which isn't actually how many people operate in their working lives, in their scholarly lives, in their artistic lives and so on.

DC: I think we use this constant logic of delay. We never allowed people to settle on an ideology, a kind of framework, a kind of system, if you like, that enabled them to put it in a box and then to be able to take a step out and say 'it was this'. I think because the project has this extraordinary elasticity, and a commitment to a pan-disciplinary engagement in the process that people felt incredibly compelled, because it didn't fall into an easy typology of being a project of a certain kind.

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## > > > COMPANIONS & CURATION

MD: Does this delay reveal something of the value of performativity as a mode of knowledge construction?

MR: It is true there's something unique about the performative gesture, in terms of a way of thinking about how we are, and where we are, and what we are, that takes us beyond. The gesture of performance is a way of knowing, or not knowing, as the case may be.

DC: It's where liveness in praxis exists. I do think that, to some degree, Performing Mobilities is the triumph of a new kind of academic worker that is fully cognisant and embracing of praxis. The fact that so many people in this group are academics is something we haven't really talked about. This was a strongly academic-driven set of people who put this in train and, to some extent, we were trying to voice our dissatisfaction with the academia that we live in, the conservative constrictions and the silos, etcetera. Performing Mobilities gave us a genuine sense of joy to engage with a richness of ideas and practice that was not stultified by neo-liberal forces.

MD: I'm often conscious of averting the territorialising impulse of an organisational form to claim a mandate over a project. This project needed to be built upon our mobile relations and to start to build a field of work, rather than reproducing the interests of organisational forms.

DC: And in that sense, there are kernels of a new model for how pan-institutional education might operate.

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A FEW STEPS NOT HERE NOT THERE

Mammad Aidani, Omid Movafagh, Mike Fard, Mohsen Panahi &amp; Hoda Kazemitame

The displaced stranger

Respondent &gt; Evelun Tsitos

Performing Mobilities challenged audiences to take the leap from being passive to active participants – literally. Many works were only fully activated with physical engagement.

I am asked by audiences to act as the 'interpreter' when I take guided tours through RMIT Gallery exhibitions. 'But what does it mean?' and 'what does the artist mean?' are frequent questions. In turn, I ask the audience to do some work and throw the questions back. 'How does this work make you feel?' and 'what do you think the artist is trying to say to us?'

Audiences don't want to give the 'wrong' answers, but we all take our own subjective interpretations into exhibitions, and can't help become intellectually and emotionally involved in the work if we find it speaks to us.

*A Few Steps Not Here Not There* by Mammad Aidani, Omid Movafagh, Mike Ford, Mohsen Panahi and Hada Kazemitame, invited audiences to engage not just intellectually but emotionally and empathetically. The installation explored asylum seekers' experiences of displacement, with group members using Aidani's narrative of exile as a way to negotiate their own responses to the longing of the past and the uncertainty of the future in a new country. What does it take to belong in a new place? How does one find familiarity in a new location?

Located in a narrow exhibition space at RMIT Gallery, the installation provided a theatrical space with black walls that enveloped the audience and focused attention on an illuminated chair facing a screen that played the looped short film. This intimate setting included two facing bench seats, forcing the audience to look at each other while reading the handwritten text chalked on the black walls. These words created the somewhat unsettling talking points for the audience – 'talking about substance does not make you a person with substance', 'I write to forget and it is not possible', 'words, in what language?', and 'trees' The phrases, mixed with Persian text, were introspective, making reading the words seem voyeuristic.

The work is a new installation of Aidan's text, which he wrote after arriving in Australia in 1988, exploring both the invisibility and disruption that an 'alien' feels and causes in a foreign country. How do you find your place within a new space? You walk, you feel the city beneath your feet, and you see what is the same and what is different. People, architecture, nature, trees

As a child of migrants, this installation resonated with me. I remembered stories that seem embedded in my DNA: my father not speaking the language and looking 'foreign' and a 'wog' as a 1950s Greek arrival in contrast to my mother, the blue eyed blonde, alienated by her German name and accent, a hated interloper in post war Melbourne. Melbourne is my home, but I felt the story of movement and identity as I watched the film and read the walls.

There are few things as unsettling than the spectre of homelessness, disruption, exile and reinvention. With economic uncertainty and the images on the news each night of the European refugee crisis, it is hard to turn away and pretend disruption is not in our midst.

The group of older women who sat with me as I gave a guided exhibition tour had no migrant experience to share. Yet they were moved, and unsettled, by the installation.

Despite what governments and politicians and fanatics may try to tell us, people do care about the refugee crisis, and *A few Steps Not Here Not There* provoked discussion about what it might mean to start again in exile, where the food, customs, culture and language are very different, and you may be utterly alone.

There were questions: 'Is the man in the film an actor or an asylum seeker?', 'I hope he is alright - do you know what happened to him?', 'It's awful being lost in a new place', and 'There must have been terrible things that happened to him.'

*A Few Steps Not Here Not There* strips back stories of the courage and tenacity in finding exile to reveal the ongoing vulnerability and fear of the displaced stranger in a strange land. It is this naked authenticity that connects so powerfully with the audience.



















CRUISING (A JOURNEY INTO CULTURE)  
Chris Barry

Respondent &gt; Petronella Vaarzon-Morel

Today, residents of the town camps represent diverse language groups comprising local Arrernte and people from remote communities. Still economically disadvantaged, people's lives are marked by uncertainty, flux and contingency as they negotiate state interventions and their complex, intercultural life-worlds. People highly value sociality and there is much to-ing and fro-ing of people between the town camps and other places as they visit relatives, participate in social events such as funerals and ceremonies, and otherwise conduct business. Hence the mobility of Aboriginal people is not merely physical but cultural. In the last few decades, Aboriginal art has exploded onto the world stage, and with it the work of Barry's subjects. Their depictions of daily life in the town camps and houses challenge mainstream media images of dysfunction associated with cultural difference. They also paint self-portraits, which playfully reference selfies that are captured on mobile phones and circulated on social networking sites such as Facebook. The quiet dignity, measured pride and sense of being at home in the world conveyed by the subjects in Barry's compelling photographs attest to their intimate relationship with her. In posing for Barry, the artists are self-consciously engaging in a performance that says 'we are here' and beckons viewers to positively reimagine their relationship with Aboriginal Australians.

1 S. Greenblatt, *Cultural Mobility: A Manifesto*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010.



















FRICION ATLAS  
laJetee



















O-T-D#2 ORIGIN-TRANSIT-DESTINATION  
Australian Performance Exchange

Respondent &gt; Caroline Wake

It is a stellar title – poetic, bureaucratic, and acronymic all at once. Yet perhaps my favourite aspect is the #2. Over the past fifteen years, I have seen scores of performances made by, with, and about refugees and asylum seekers. These include autobiographical monologues, verbatim and documentary plays, physical theatre productions, circus and comedy acts, as well as performance and installation art. No matter the genre, they rarely – if ever – have a second life. One or two have toured, three or four have been photographed, five or six have been anthologised.<sup>1</sup> Thirty-two have been catalogued in an appendix to Rand Hazou's article 'Staging Hidden Stories: Australian Theatre and Asylum Seekers'.<sup>2</sup> The rest, however, live on in our oral histories of performance: remembered but not recorded, and thus with less cultural respect and reach in a world that privileges the written word.

In its first iteration, *Origin-Transit-Destination* was a mobile performance that took audiences around Sydney's western suburbs. In Auburn, marshals took our mobile phones, gave us numbered badges and put us on three buses. On the Red Bus, we listened to Osamah Sami and Ram Adulazeez sing, play guitar and tell stories. In Villawood, we stopped in the carpark outside the immigration detention centre; seconds later security guards approached and sent us on our way again. This time we were accompanied by two different artists: Daniel Saeed and Shakufa Tahiri. In Fairfield West, we stopped in another carpark, this time outside a supermarket and underneath a billboard of a politician where Saeed and Tahiri asked his image, and implicitly the audience, what he was doing and why. We reboarded the bus, along with artists Jamal Ali Al-Hallaq and Mohammed Alanezi. Finally, in Liverpool, we disembarked and entered the Casula Powerhouse where Sean Bacon's video dominated the foyer and the performers played a strange soccer game and conducted a brief citizenship test. In the final room, Shahla Shohani, a Kurdish-Iranian artist, ran on a treadmill while her video self narrated her escape, occasionally interrupted by a media montage. The night ended without applause: audience members retrieved their phones and retreated home.<sup>3</sup>

For me – and I realise that my experience may have been atypical – the installation in the Margaret Lawrence Gallery at the VCA was both a continuation of this live performance as well as a remediation of it. Media scholars Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin define remediation as ‘the representation of one medium in another’ or ‘the formal logic by which new media refashion prior media forms’.<sup>4</sup>

*Origin-Transit-Destination #2* was a remediation in the sense that it represented the live performance by including some of the same materials: Bacon's footage and Shohani's treadmill. It was also a remediation in the sense that it recomposed the prior performance, by absencing the live body of the performer and pointing to this absence by leaving an orange life jacket lying on the floor. I recall Alanezi's story about a life jacket – he took his own but gave it to a fellow boat passenger, a small girl, who he was worried would drown without it – but I did not remember the object itself. Perhaps that's because it was not a life jacket. When I looked more closely, I realised that it was a small backpack: brightly coloured, decorated with daisies and butterflies, and a bit dirty. Did it belong to someone? Had I misremembered something, even everything? Did it matter? Suddenly I was struck by the horrible mismatch between all three objects in the space: the screen that displayed an endless sea; the treadmill that sat clumsy and motionless; and the backpack – a bouncing hindrance when you're running and a dragging weight when you're swimming. I felt my own backpack pressing against my neck, which was suddenly hot and clammy. I wanted to go home.

1 Emma Cox, ed. *Staging Asylum: Contemporary Australian Plays About Refugees*, Currency Press, Strawberry Hills, 2013. See also 'Art & Asylum: Politics, Ethics, Aesthetics', *RealTime*, 7 September 2010. <[http://realtimearts.net/feature/Archive\\_Highlights/9992](http://realtimearts.net/feature/Archive_Highlights/9992)> accessed 1 June 2016.

2 Rand Hazou, 'Staging Hidden Stories: Australian Theatre and Asylum Seekers,' *In/Stead*, no. 3, 2010 <<http://www.insteadjournal.com/article/asylum/>>, accessed 1 June 2016.

3 For a more detailed account, see my review: Caroline Wake 'Shoulder to Shoulder: Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, *Origin-Transit-Destination*', *RealTime*, no. 126, April-May 2015, pp. 6-7, (<http://www.realtimearts.net/article/issue126/11877?>), accessed 1 June 2016.

4 Jay David Bolton and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media*, MIT Press, Cambridge MA, 1998, pp. 45, 273.



























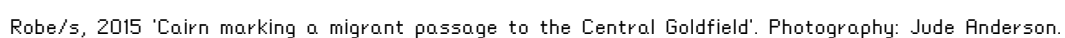
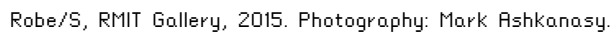
ROBE/S  
Punctum



*Robe/S* culminated in a collective walk for Performing Mobilities participants, from the original Central Goldfields alluvial gold rush site in Chewton, through a migration landscape, to a gathering at an ancient rice paddy field site at Vaughan Springs (a total walk of 2.5 hours) ahead of the Performing Mobilities Assembly in Melbourne.

ROBE/S  
Punctum

ROBE/S  
Punctum













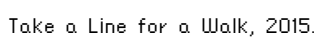
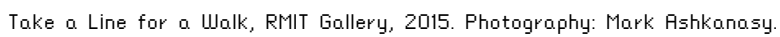








TAKING A LINE FOR A WALK  
David Thomas & Laurene Vaughan





























>>>>>>PERFORMING>>>MOBILITE  
REFORMING>>>MOBILITIES>>>>>>:

> > PASSAGES > mobile performances > >







BIT-U-MEN-AT-WORK  
Julieanna Preston and Jen Archer-Martin























>>>>>>PERFORMING>>>MOBILITIES  
RFORMING>>>MOBILITIES>>>>>>>:

MALAYSIA AUSTRALIA RAFT PROJECT (MARP)

Anthony Pelchen, Tony Yap, Trevor Flinn, Kavisha Mazzella, Robert Millar, Frank Tagliabue, Alison Eggleton, Pete Grey, Karin Matsuda, Andrew Lindsay - Australia; Soong Ro Ger (Roger) - Malaysia; Monica Benova - Slovakia (Jacqueline Schulz - filming and editing; William Heathcote and Matthew Vaughan - additional video and stills).



MARP, 2015.



MARP, 2015.





































REPEATING SILENCE  
Chris Braddock

As a performer sifts through that which enters a shifting membrane of a public performance, the public sphere can be made to flicker and multiply the number of thresholds that cradle presence, intensifying the inter- and intra-actions laid bare. The public, of course, can hold steady to their intended course, pause to consume that which is offered by a performance or choose to participate in the coursing anticipation that flows through the veins of an emerging event such as Chris Braddock's work, *Repeating Silence*.

The pace and the scale of the performance images distributed through a live feed on the armature or to nearby screens and tablets, are not wildly out of sync or size with human scale. The speed is just slowed and the scale is neither huge nor microscopic. The technology in *Repeating Silence* momentarily conjoins interior space with the not-yet-collective space bursting the flickering bubbles of attention and inattention, interest and care, impatience and eagerness to learn. The technology nuances the movement of one sphere into another in opposition to a spectacle of sheer size or speed.

The dynamic spatial and temporal flickering of this work turns the event into a point cloud. The atmosphere becomes hyper sensitive. Its animate qualities, in part, depend on the self-affecting system Braddock sets up through and with the technology. The feedback is designed to exceed itself, feeding outward – or 'forward' as Mark Hansen suggests – expanding the membrane of a constantly enfolding/unfolding shared event.

The work is a peripatetic. The performer, the mediated spaces and amorphous attention of passers-by circle around a small slowly slower point in time and space. This system, gently held by the performer, is a bubble machine that with each breath and movement of the head, emits fragile spheres of collectivity that break on the hard and soft edges of the shape of passing awareness.

101









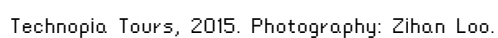
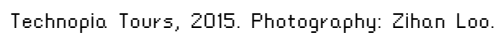








TECHNOPIA TOURS - WORKING MELBOURNE  
Kim Donaldson



THE TOUR OF ALL TOURS  
Bill Aitchison



*The Tour of All Tours* is a guided tour like no other: a performance that takes the form of a guided tour, the subject of which is other tours (real and potential, guided and otherwise) available in Melbourne.

*The Tour Of All Tours* brings visitor and local into the same frame as equals. It achieves this by focusing upon the experience of taking tours in the city and looking at what the different tours do and don't tell you about it. Ritchison has presented versions of the project in cities around the world, including Stuttgart, London, Beijing and Amsterdam.

*Aitchison reforms the guided tour into an engaging and truly unique medium for art outside of the institution and in the public sphere. For 90 minutes, Aitchison interrupts and utilises this stage to show us, the audience, the layers of branding, expectations and reality of which it is comprised. Aitchison's quirky and peculiar mix of disclosure and captivating storytelling offers fun and enlightenment (Time Out, Beijing).*













VERY LOCAL RADIO (IN FOUR MOVEMENTS)  
Sasha Grbich/Heidi Angove

At midday, I tune in to *Very Local Radio*, a live performance and/as live Internet radio stream that uses portable broadcasting technologies to highlight interactions of sound, place and space in realising an ephemeral community. Internet radio is the only way to hear the broadcast, though the live performance can be witnessed. If you spot a shopping trolley laden with broadcast equipment and a boom microphone being pushed through Melbourne's city centre – across four trips, back and forth, along St Kilda Road and Swanston Street – you are likely witnessing the live event. But without your headphones connecting you to that online stream, you cannot know what is being broadcast.

I hear the microphone moving through space. The music of buskers regularly fades in, lingers, and fades out – accidental music tracks interspersed in the broadcast, activated by, rather than curated for, the microphone's presence. I hear the passage of a bustling world through the shifting boundaries of the microphone's sphere, the technology's reach, the broadcast's documentation and projection.





VERY LOCAL RADIO (IN FOUR MOVEMENTS)  
Sasha Grbich/Heidi Angove



Very Local Radio, 2015. Photography: Zihan Loo.



Very Local Radio, 2015. Photography: Zihan Loo.











>>>>>>PERFORMING>>>MOBILITIE  
RFORMING>>>MOBILITIES>>>>>>:



WALK WITH ME  
Deirdre Heddon

Walking Interdependently  
Respondent > Fiona Wilkie

*'This is why I don't go for walks', Tiz tells me, as we pause the audio play Walk With Me to navigate a section of paving that has been dislodged by tree roots. 'Because when you're walking you're in your rhythm and don't have to think about it, whereas I'm in my chair getting colder and colder and trying to negotiate the terrain and dropped kerbs, and get round tricky paving slabs or roots sticking out all over the place. It's not relaxing. I'm really concentrating the whole time – you know, everyone else is walking along having a chat and I'm absorbed in not crashing or falling off a kerb or something'. My sister and I are using Deirdre Heddon's audio walk as a rare opportunity to go for a walk together, but it becomes clear that what it means to 'go for a walk' is not the same for each of us.*

Developed as one of the outcomes of the *Walking Interconnections* research project, *Walk With Me* shares dialogues between disabled people and sustainability practitioners as they take a walk together. The project 'explores whether there are skills, insights or knowledge that disabled people can offer to our understanding of living sustainably, in particular recognising our interdependency with others and our environments'.<sup>1</sup> In ten scenes, across 30 minutes, audiences are invited to walk while listening to conversations about, among other things, routes and risk, access and awareness, wellbeing and hybridity. One speaker reflects upon the desirability or otherwise of weeds; another considers the possibility of rethinking waiting time as an opportunity rather than a problem; many chart unexpected obstacles and the necessity of detours. Undertaking the walk with my sister – she in her wheelchair, me on foot – reminds us both that narratives of walking usually, and apparently unproblematically, adopt an able-bodied perspective. The critical literature on walking claims that it creates opportunities for reflective thought, that it is based upon physical contact between the foot and the ground, that it occurs at a pace of three miles an hour – claims that are often challenged by the experiences of people with disabilities.

*A photograph. Tiz and I stop for a selfie before we get much further than the end of my drive, and before we press play in sync. Looking back at the image now, I note three things: that I'm wearing fewer layers, in anticipation of being able to warm up on the walk, that Tiz is carrying my bag for me at this point, hooked onto the back of her chair, and that she's experiencing this walk far closer to ground level than I am (I'm stooping to take the photo).*

I've written about walking elsewhere, noting that it sets the terms of reference for all other mobile practices. I've suggested that 'ideas about speed, freedom, creativity, city, landscape, access and agency all become significant in a critical vocabulary because of the ways in which artists and others work through walking'<sup>2</sup> – and I've attempted to interrogate this model by showing how it has been complicated by a variety of artistic works addressing other modes of transport. What *Walk With Me* reveals is that walking as a practice is already complicated by a range of augmented walking experiences: with mobility scooters, trikes, walking sticks and guide dogs. What it also reveals is that prizing autonomy and agency might mask the need to find more sustainable, ecological models of movement: ones that aim for interdependence rather than independence and that value shared wayfinding and reciprocal knowledges.

1 Text from the audio play, available from *Walking Interconnections* website, <http://walkinginterconnections.com>, accessed 4 February 2016.

2 Fiona Wilkie, *Performance, Transport and Mobility: Making Passage*, Polgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, UK, 2015, p. 18.

>>>>>>PERFORMING>>>MOBILITIE  
RFORMING>>>MOBILITIES>>>>>>:





>>>>>>PERFORMING>>>MOBILITIES  
REFORMING>>>MOBILITIES>>>>>>>>

## >>> ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The program Performing Mobilities is inherently built through the critical insights, creative initiative, collegial generosity and goodwill of many. My discussions around intersections of performance and mobility began with Fiona Wilkie. The ambitious PSI Fluid States project that provided an international context for a series of comparative local enquiries has been graciously led by Marin Blazevic, Dorita Hannah and Bree Hadley and their team, with PSI President Maaike Bleeker always warmly demonstrating her support. Early discussions with Meredith Rogers for Australia's contribution to Fluid States helped generate the initial momentum for what has emerged. I am most grateful to the companion curators and fellow organisers and friends – David Cross, Paul Gazzola, Bianca Hester, James Oliver, Paul Rae, Laurene Vaughan, Meredith Rogers and Fiona Wilkie – for accepting my invitation to join this experimental undertaking, and for their willingness to creatively and critically explore ways of working, including an enormous commitment to discussions face to face and virtually, with or without my cajoling antics often involving cheese on the side. A special thanks to Kate Riggs who has been an unflappable organiser and ally throughout. The Assembly was so generously brought into being with the voluntary enthusiasm, initiatives, and fast-quipping humour of Felipe Cervera and Amaara Raheem, Taco and Coco. Thanks again to long term collaborators Neal Haslem and Rob Eales for the constant development and refinement of the project communications and online platform, and to Din Heagney for making our words make better sense. The keen support and commitment to the project shown by the RMIT Gallery team led by Suzanne Davies, and the Margaret Lawrence Gallery led by Vikki McInnes is greatly appreciated, along with the commitment of the RMIT Design Research Institute, the extra support bought by James Oliver from the Centre of Cultural Partnerships at UCA, and the Melbourne Social Equity Institute support initiated by Julie McLeod. Dealing with Auspicious Arts Inc's Deirdre O'Brien is always pleasingly dependable. Lastly, thank you to the many artists and writers who have brought their practices, concerns and engagement to Performing Mobilities.

> Mick Douglas

>>>>>>PERFORMING>>>MOBILITE  
REFORMING>>>MOBILITIES>>>>>>:

## > > > CURATORIAL REVIEW PROCESS

A two-stage call for proposals was conducted. The first stage called for proposals for (a) TRACES of journey-based projects, (b) PASSAGES mobile performance projects, and (c) ASSEMBLY events. The second stage called for ASSEMBLY (d) papers and performative presentations, and again for (c) performances, interventions and events. All proposals submitted in both stages were blind peer-reviewed by the nine organising group members.

The organising group of companion curators was formed under the invitation of Mick Douglas. Each member was encouraged to propose contributing projects for blind-peer review. The organising group members were invited to take the additional roles of 'companion curators' for TRACES and PASSAGES projects, with the intent of: fostering a rich interweave of creative practice and critical curatorial guidance; reflecting on the multiple modalities through which these individuals are currently working; and representing the increased intermixing between the creative arts sector and the academy.

> PERFORMING MOBILITIES ACCEPTANCE RATES

	Proposals	Accepted	Percentage
TRACES + PASSAGES	46	14	30%
ASSEMBLY papers and presentations	55	43	78%
ASSEMBLY performances, interventions and events	43	20	46%

> PERFORMING MOBILITIES ATTENDANCE

> RMIT Gallery

Opening night attendance: 399 (gallery count)

Total Attendance: 2947 (gallery count)

> Margaret Lawrence Gallery VCA

Opening night attendance: 300 (gallery estimate)

Total Attendance: 2000 (gallery estimate)

> Assembly

Registered participants: 126

>>>>>PERFORMING>>MOBILITIES  
REFORMING>>MOBILITIES>>>>>>

## &gt; &gt; &gt; BIOGRAPHIES

Mammad Aidani is an Iranian-born playwright, theatre maker, director, poet and philosopher whose work uses the performing arts as a medium to address the trauma of violence and alienation in diaspora communities.

Bill Aitchison is a performance artist who has presented his performances, soundworks and videos in galleries, theatres and festivals in Europe, Asia, America and The Middle East. [www.billaitchison.co.uk](http://www.billaitchison.co.uk)

Heidi Angove is a technologist and artist with more than 18 years of experience in the IT industry.

Jen Archer-Martin is a spatial designer and teaches at the School of Design, Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand.

Australian Performance Exchange (APE) creates performance work at the interface of intercultural practice and community engagement, responding to the politics of identity, social justice, colonialism and international diplomacy. [www.australianperformanceexchange.com](http://www.australianperformanceexchange.com)

Chris Barry explores photography, performance and auto/biography within Aboriginal sociality, working with specific Aboriginal families in a town camp in Alice Springs for the past 14 years. [www.chrisbarry.com.au](http://www.chrisbarry.com.au)

Kaya Barry is a new media installation artist and researcher who recently completed a practice-led PhD at Deakin University. [www.kaya.com.au](http://www.kaya.com.au)

Tania Beer is a scenographer and Research Fellow at The University of Melbourne.

Cameron Bishop is an artist, curator, writer and Lecturer at the School of Communication and Creative Arts, Deakin University.

Lucy Bleach is a Hobart-based artist and Coordinator of Sculpture at the University of Tasmania.  
www.lucybleach.com

Maaikje Bleeker is Professor of Theatre Studies at Utrecht University Netherlands, and president of Performance Studies international.

Michelle Braunstein is a PhD candidate in creative writing at Murdoch University.

Chris Braddock is an artist, writer and educator in visual arts, performance and performance philosophies, and is Professor of Visual Arts at the School of Art & Design, AUT University, New Zealand. [www.christopherbraddock.com](http://www.christopherbraddock.com)

Brogan Bunt works in media art, photography, writing, and lived action, and is Associate Professor at the Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts, University of Wollongong. [www.broganbunt.net](http://www.broganbunt.net)

Benjamin Cittadini is a writer, director, researcher and live performance artist.

>>>>>>PERFORMING>>>MOBILITIES  
REFORMING>>>MOBILITIES>>>>>>>:

## &gt; &gt; &gt; BIOGRAPHIES

David Cross is Professor of Visual Arts at Deakin University whose curatorial practice includes 'One Day Sculpture' across New Zealand, 2008-09, and whose art practice often involves inflatable objects and structures that draw audiences into unexpected situations and dialogues.  
[www.davidcrossartist.com](http://www.davidcrossartist.com)

Nadia Cusimano works across dance, performance, theatre and dramaturgy.

Kim Donaldson is an artist and curator whose self-initiated projects challenge exhibitionary form through a performative and many-faceted process that engages institutions, collections, artists and the public. [www.technoparkstudios.com](http://www.technoparkstudios.com)

Mick Douglas works across performance, art and design, and supervises creative practice PhDs at the School of Architecture and Design, RMIT University. [www.mickdouglas.net](http://www.mickdouglas.net)

Alison Eggleton is a visual artist and Curator at Horsham Regional Art Gallery, Victoria, Australia.

Mike Fard (Hamidreza) is a filmmaker, photographer and interior designer involved with the film industry since 1997, and his own studio Alftab Film Co.

Sally Gardner is Senior Lecturer in Dance at Deakin University, Melbourne.

Paul Gazzola works in socially engaged practice across art, architecture, performance, installation, choreography, scenographic design, video and theory. [www.paulgazzola.org](http://www.paulgazzola.org)

Smiljana Glisovic is a sessional academic at RMIT University in the School of Media and Communication.

Sasha Grbich is an artist, writer and lecturer working predominantly in the fields of sculpture, installation and video art. [www.sashagrbich.com](http://www.sashagrbich.com)

Ceri Hann teaches at RMIT University where he is also a PhD candidate who explores manifesting theory through action and refining awareness through performance.

Deirdre Heddon is Professor of Contemporary Performance, University of Glasgow with an enduring interest in the relations between place, politics and performance.

Bianca Hester is an artist and postdoctoral research fellow in the Sydney College of the Arts.

Fiona Hillary is an artist, curator, producer, and Lecturer in the School of Art at RMIT University with a specific focus on art in public space.

Paula Hunt is an artist living in Melbourne.

Lucas Ihlein works with social relations and communication as the primary media of his creative practice, and is a founding member of artist groups SquatSpace and Big Fag Press. [www.lucasihlein.net](http://www.lucasihlein.net)

## &gt; &gt; &gt; BIOGRAPHIES

Hoda Kazemitame is a graduate in Persian literature, storyteller and author of short stories and plays.

Jondi Keane is an arts practitioner and Associate Professor at Deakin University.

Angela Kilford is an artist based in Wellington, New Zealand. Her practice investigates memory, memorialisation and landscape.

La Jete is a design collaborative initiated by Paolo Patelli and Giuditta Vendrame that manipulates research, design, and art practice into self-initiated and commissioned projects. [www.lajete.info](http://www.lajete.info)

Maddy Macfarlane is a PhD candidate in the Faculty of VCA/MCM, University of Melbourne, and a broadcaster and trainer at PBS 106.7FM.

Camila Marambio is founder and curator of Ensayos, a nomadic interdisciplinary research program that considers Tierra del Fuego the centre of the world.

Sven Mehzoud is Senior Lecturer at Monash Art, Design and Architecture, Monash University.

Shaun McLeod, Peter Fraser, Olivia Millard, Sophia Cowen & Victor Renolds (About Now) are a collection of performers/performance makers. [www.oliviamillard.net/nowagain/](http://www.oliviamillard.net/nowagain/)

Graeme Miller is a UK artist working across performance, installation, video, music and sound in the spheres of dance, theatre, radio, gallery and public art. [www.artsadmin.co.uk/artists/graeme-miller](http://www.artsadmin.co.uk/artists/graeme-miller)

Omid Movafagh is an actor and director whose acting credits include the 2013 feature film 'Dark Ocean', a film about asylum seekers and refugees and the issues of diaspora; and the 2014 short film 'Like a Bear in the Night', a true story about a film director who has been arrested by the Iranian government.

Jem Noble is an artist working across digital image-making, video, music, sculpture, performance and text. [www.jemnoble.com](http://www.jemnoble.com)

Mohsen Panahi is a filmmaker, set designer, costume designer and photographer who was involved in set production in the Iranian film industry since the 1990s.

Eddie Paterson researches intersections between performance, politics and everyday life, and lectures in scriptwriting in the School of Culture & Communication at the University of Melbourne.

Craig Peade is an independent researcher and co-founder of ROARAWAR/FEARTATA.

Anthony Pelchen is a visual artist who formed MARP for Natimuk Festival 2013, and the visual arts program of the Melaka Art & Performance Festival 2014. [www.anthonypelchen.com](http://www.anthonypelchen.com)

Julieanna Preston is a spatial artist, architectural designer and Professor of Spatial Practice at the College of Creative Arts, Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand. [www.julieannapreston.space](http://www.julieannapreston.space)

Punctum Inc. is a central Victorian live arts organisation founded in 2004 and led by artistic director Jude Anderson, creating contemporary performances and blueprints for collaborative and interdisciplinary practice in regional and international settings. [www.punctum.com.au](http://www.punctum.com.au)



>>>>>>PERFORMING>>>MOBILITE  
RFORMING>>>MOBILITIES>>>>>>:

> > > BIOGRAPHIES

Lara Stevens is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Melbourne, where she is writing on ecofeminism in contemporary Australia.

James Oliver is a research artist and academic at the Faculty of the VCA and MCM, The University of Melbourne. [www.jamesoliverculture.com](http://www.jamesoliverculture.com)

Open Spatial Workshop (Bianca Hester, Scott Mitchell, Terri Bird) has developed a collective practice since 2003 involving socially-engaged methodologies, combined with materially-driven investigations, collaborative workshops, video-making, object production and writing. [www.osw.com.au](http://www.osw.com.au)

Jen Rae is an artist-researcher at the Centre for Cultural Partnerships, Faculty of VCA/MCM, University of Melbourne.

Paul Rae is a performance scholar, theatre maker and is Associate Professor at the, School of Culture & Communication, University of Melbourne.

Amaara Raheem is undertaking a choreography and performance practice based PhD at RMIT University.

Brian Tairaku Ritchie is a musician whose projects include Violent Femmes. He is also Music Curator at MONA in Hobart, Tasmania.

Meredith Rogers has worked in theatre as a director, designer, dramaturg and performer for 40 years and is managing editor of Australasian Drama Studies, co-editing a special issue 'Transported' arising from the Performing Mobilities Assembly.

Philippa Rothfield is Honorary Senior Lecturer of the Philosophy Program at La Trobe University, and reviewer for RealTime arts magazine and Momm Magazine, Korea.

Edward Scheer is Professor at the School of the Arts and Media at UNSW, author of *The Infinity Machine* published by Schwartz City Press in 2010, and former President of Performance Studies international PSI.

Josie Stockdill is currently completing a PhD at RMIT in Creative Writing.

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