Collaborating with Audiences in the Creation of Site-Specific Performance
Or
Transgression, Endurance, and Collaboration in
Windblown / Rafales

By Andrew Houston

> The possibility of mutual transformation of both the observer and the
> performer within the enactment of the live event in unscripted ways is
> extraordinarily important, because this is the point where the aesthetic
> joins the ethical. The ethical is fundamentally related to live art
> because both are arenas for the unpredictable force of the social
> event.
>
> Marina Abramovic[1]

  I am an artist-researcher who might otherwise be considered a 'director' of site-specific performances. I don't always call myself a director because when I am not working in the theatre, this title can sometimes be inaccurate. I have created site-specific performances for seventeen years. In 2002, I co-founded a site-specific performance company in Saskatchewan, with the help of the University of Regina, where I was employed, called Knowhere Productions. This company emerged out of a desire on the part of scenographer Kathleen Irwin, filmmaker Richard Diener, and myself to collaborate on performances that use a site as a resource for creation. Knowhere Productions still exists today, but my artistic involvement with the company more or less ended with the project I want to address here, entitled *Windblown / Rafales*, a multi-media site-specific performance in Ponteix, Saskatchewan, performed on July 15, 2008. In this writing, I want to describe an approach to site-specific performance from a director's perspective, and in so doing I want to address the crucial function of collaboration in the process of creating this kind of performance. Here collaboration happens between artists, between artists and the site, between artists and the site's inhabitants, between artists and the audience, and finally between artists and those who have commissioned the work. Site-specific performance is unique for the various ways in which all of these levels of collaboration contribute to the ethical and aesthetic stakes of what artist Marina Abramovic describes as 'the social event' of performance. In the following pages, I want to focus on how a certain kind of social event was created through collaboration between the audience and the artists who created *Windblown / Rafales* in 2008.

the 'c' word

  Before I address my approach to creating site-specific performance, including my role as a director in this process, I want to be clear about how I define 'collaboration'. In the last ten-years or so, my approach to making performances, whether I call myself a director, dramaturge, co-creator, or some combination of these, is to explore the particular dynamics, mechanics, effects and distinct ways of knowing that are generated by dialogical exchange, whether it is between artists, artists and non-artists, or artists

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and environments. In my experience, site-specific performance is always a process of working across artistic disciplines, as each project I work on involves theatre, dance, music (sound), and video. Collaboration in this context involves the development of strategies to facilitate understanding and inspiration across cultures, expectations, traditional understandings and behaviors. This consciousness is then applied to the site in that we question the ways we operate within places that are foreign to us. We develop techniques to enable a greater sense of participation and opportunities for engagement, which hopefully generate new ways of relating to and talking about our surroundings - particularly ways that resist reification, possession, appropriation, or nostalgia.

Ideally, the collaborative process for creating performance from a specific site is the beginning of developing tools to help build 'architectures' of co-reliance, trust, and respect between artists, and between the artists, the site and its inhabitants. The performance (the outcome of this process) may allow collaborators to explore the ramifications of shared / multiple authorship; they may explore various ways to maintain and sustain what is necessary to keep collaboration engaged, while allowing all participants to develop strategies for critiquing the process. Finally, collaboration differs from collective creation, which has a long and proud tradition in Canadian theatre history. In my reading of this subject, collectivity is grounded on the desire for absolute communion, commonality and consensus. In contrast, collaboration is open to disagreement, conflict, contradiction and difference; the focus is negotiation and trust. Collaboration promotes a dynamic of reciprocal openness, a willingness to be affected. The goal of collaboration in my work is to develop dialogical strategies and promote dialogical processes.

the host / the ghost / the witness of site-specific performance

Site-specific performances use the site as a resource for animation, and as such these are performances conceived for, mounted within, and conditioned by the particular qualities of the site. Animation may illuminate historical, archaeological, architectural, or other discursive details of a site, but this process may equally bring to life non-discursive aspects, such as memory, myth, and dream. Indeed, in the way this process draws upon the site as a source of information and inspiration, the site and its native inhabitants become collaborators in the process of animation through performance.

Establishing collaboration with whom and what you find on site can probably be best described with the help of a scenographic metaphor from site-specific theatre designer, Cliff McLucas, whose work with Mike Pearson in Brith Gof was crucial to the development of the genre in the United Kingdom in the 1980s and 1990s. McLucas characterized his site specific theatre designs in terms of a "trinity of creation" wherein "The Place (the Host), The Performance (The Ghost) and The Public (The Witness) create a composite that becomes what is known as the 'work'"(McLucas 2). McLucas's model is useful for understanding the collaborative quality of site-specific performance creation because of the way that a site's discursive detail is understood – its history, politics, or economics; a site is always shadowed by the possibility of other versions or perspectives on these details, and the work of the artists is to try to keep the possibility of these other versions viable for interpretation by the audience. Here the 'ghosts' are the various approaches to animating the host created by the artists and interpreted by the audience. McLucas calls the audience 'witnesses' because ultimately they play a crucial collaborative role in piecing together the 'ghost stories' however they may be conveyed using theatre, dance, music, or video. The role of the witness is crucial in furthering the creative process,

in piecing together the found and the fabricated, and thus the collaborative role of the witness is a key concern in the creation of the site-specific performance. In the case of the work Knowhere Productions did in Ponteix, Saskatchewan, the development of trust and co-reliance in the community was essential not only for the collaborative creation of a successful performance, but for the larger goal of the town, the social event in which the performance was to play a part: their centennial celebrations.

a first collaborative agreement

In summer of 2007, Knowhere Productions made a pitch to the community of Ponteix to create a site-specific performance as part of the town's centennial celebrations in 2008. Knowhere had been invited to make this presentation by Father Keith Heiberg, who was then the parish priest of Notre Dame d'Auvergne, the church at the core of this small prairie town. Father Keith, as we called him, had seen a couple of Knowhere's previous site-specific performances, and was excited about what we might bring to the town's centennial. Our presentation met with approval, and then plans were made to secure funding while preparation began for the event. Briefly, in exchange for mostly in-kind support that took the form of room and board, some technical supplies, the labour of a local craftsman, the participation of the church choir and a local folk band, the use of various buildings for rehearsal and performance, Knowhere would source our own funding in order to support a variety of artists who would contribute to the performance. A year prior to the performance of *Windblown / Rafales*, a collaboration was established between Knowhere Productions, the town of Ponteix, and the Parish of the Church of Notre Dame d'Auvergne.

Ponteix, Saskatchewan

In 2007, the population of Ponteix was approximately 500. This was somewhat of a concern as the town's population at one point in its history had been closer to 5000. We soon learned that the town's origins date back to 1907, and a scouting mission conducted by Father Albert Royer, who came from the parish of Ponteix in the region of Auvergne, France. He established the French-speaking parish of Notre Dame d'Auvergne, north of the present community, across the Notukeu Creek. In 1913–14, as the CPR was building its line toward Shaunavon along the south side of the Notukeu, the community shifted to the present town site on the rail line, retaining the name Ponteix in honour of Father Royer's former parish.

Easily the most prominent landmark in the town is the pair of bell towers of the Notre Dame d'Auvergne church, which was built in 1929, and is the largest column-free church in the southwest of Saskatchewan. The church is full of remarkable statues of various biblical figures, but most notable is a 500-year-old oak sculpture of the Virgin Mary holding the dead body of Christ in her lap—a gift to Father Royer that came from France after reportedly surviving the French Revolution hidden in a haystack, and a shipwreck in its journey across the Atlantic. Every July 16, to commemorate the founding of the community, four members of the parish carry the statue of the Virgin Mary around the town followed by a pilgrimage of parishioners, a tribute to Father Royer's Marian vision that became the town of Ponteix.

secular artist in a sacred place

It doesn't take long to see that the parts of Ponteix that are prosperous are relatively close to the properties of the Notre Dame d'Auvergne church, while the parts of

town that appear the worse for wear are on the outskirts and, remarkably, on the main street. After driving down Centre Street (the main street) past some fairly derelict looking properties, we arrive at one of the handsome buildings beside the church, the residence of the Sisters of Our Lady of Chambriac, an order who joined Father Royer in Ponteix in 1913. Not being Catholic, nor even a practicing Christian, I was taken in by the mystery and bearing of the nuns. All of them were elderly, and many of them had worked in relief projects around the world. They all seemed to have retired in Ponteix. In particular, I remember my first conversation with Sister Mary Paul. After dinner, we sat together for about 20 minutes talking, and she told me about the work she had done that week. Three parishioners had passed away, and Sister Mary Paul had shared with me the experience of being with these people just before they died. All had been elderly, all had lived full lives, yet the experience of facing death in this community is especially hard; as the population threatens to dip below 500, the people of Ponteix become anxious about the future. This conversation had a huge impact on me and on the direction of the work we were about to do.

My conversation with Sister Mary Paul and my relationship to her and to her faith in the face of death and adversity, got me thinking about another Catholic, a lapsed Catholic named Michel Foucault, who has said the following about the term "transgression":

> Perhaps one day it will seem as decisive for our culture, as much a part of its soil, as the experience of contradiction was at an earlier time for dialectical thought. But in spite of so many scattered signs, the language in which transgression will find its space and the illumination of its being lies almost entirely in the future" (Foucault as quoted in Stallybrass & White 200).

For Foucault, transgression is the interrogation of boundaries; a study where what is in question is the limit rather than the identity of a culture. But, as Allon White and Peter Stallybrass remind us, "cultural identity is inseparable from limits, it is always a boundary phenomenon and its order is always constructed around the figures of its territorial edge" (200). In my first visit to Ponteix, I was struck by the prominent boundaries in the town, between those within the Parish of Notre Dame d'Auvergne and those outside, between the vision of a prosperous, thriving future and that of death and the specter of a ghost town. Drawing on this understanding of transgressive limits from Foucault, I understood that the nature of future collaboration in the town's centennial celebration would need to address the reach of the church's bell tower toward the prairie sun, but also the shadow it casts on the town. Indeed, we needed to animate this collaborative space, in fact a space of moral speculation in Christian theology, between standing in light and casting a shadow, between making the light visible through reflection and acknowledging the darkness in this act.

Through meetings over the year, between July 2007 and July 2008, it was agreed among the principal artists involved in this project, as well as among representatives from the community, that the focus of *Windblown / Rafales* would be to explore the boundaries that Foucault understood as thresholds of knowledge. Beginning with the notorious wind in this area, we wanted to explore and understand survival for this community – despite the remoteness, the challenges of a rural, agrarian existence, and again the challenges of the weather; we wondered what gave them faith at this time

in their history – the celebration of their centennial – to live, to thrive, in "next year's country", as this drought-prone region is often called, and carry on.

transgression exposed as counter-sublimation

Our performance pressurized the domain (by "domain" I mean a manifestation of power exercised through place) of Ponteix's Catholic community in such a way that the political unconscious of this town was revealed as well as the repressions and social rejections that have formed it. In *Windblown / Rafales* transgression illuminated a kind of reverse or counter-sublimation that exposed the discursive hierarchies and stratifications of bodies and space that the Catholic part of the town has produced as the mechanism of its symbolic and material dominance (White & Stallybrass 200-201).

Here the idea of transgression is being applied in an unusual way: the term, as Steven Dollimore suggests, connotes "a powerful ritual or symbolic practice whereby the dominant class squanders its symbolic capital so as to get in touch with the fields of desire which it denied itself as the price it paid for political power" (Dollimore as quoted in Stallybrass & White 201). This process is often associated with carnival or other carnal events where socio-political status is abandoned in pursuit of the fulfillment of appetites. In *Windblown / Rafales* the appetite revealed, I think, is a profane death-drive. Transgression often happens in pursuit of that unattainable surplus of enjoyment, whereas in *Windblown / Rafales*, the abject is exposed; in the shadow of the church, a scene of neglect is realized in a dying town; that is, a materialization of a kind of problematic enjoyment around which the drive circulates.

As the performance moves from place to place in Ponteix, beginning in the Notre Dame D'Auvergne Church, then across the church's grounds to the site of the former Gabriel hospital, through an orchard, out in pilgrimage through the town, and back to the Parish Hall, relationships of power within as well as between each of these 'domains' are revealed. According to White & Stallybrass, domains are crucial to the process of sublimation of unconscious drives. As the performance of *Windblown / Rafales* moves away from the domain of the church, a displacement of the site of liturgical discourse occurs in the form of an imaginary dialogic between the sacred and the profane; in this sense 'between' is an examination of what theology scholar, Rina Arya identifies as a "limit-text" or that which queries boundaries that are repressed in other texts (Arya 32). Here the spectator performs an act of faith in the way they endure the journey of the event, but also in the way that they bear witness to an event which destabilizes the domain of the sacred.

Briefly, I want to use the first two parts (called stanzas) of the performance as examples:

Stanza One took place in the church, a place usually reserved for solemn, sacred reflection, prayer and religious ritual. After a significant amount of negotiation and collaborative, creative compromise, the parish council and Father Raymond[2] approved our performance in this space.[3] The text, which was written and spoken by Ken Wilson,

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[2] The presiding priest, who replaced Father Keith months before our arrival in 2008.

[3] The negotiation concerning the content of Stanza One and Four, written in advance of our rehearsal process, often happened between Kathleen Irwin, the project's producer, and the members of the committee organizing the centennial celebrations. However, Stanza Two and Three, written by various artists on-site, did not go through this process of negotiated approval.

was a secular mass, resembling both folktale and sermon, as it celebrated significant people, whose humble efforts helped shape the town and its prosperity. The performance included three silks, symbolic of the French flag and prominent in French Canadian Catholic imagery; we used these silks to materialize many aspects of the story. We also used dried Russian thistle to represent a kind of sublime hope that this community has always maintained about its survival. In the 1930s, during the worst draught in history in this region, this thistle was all that would grow. So people and cattle alike would eat it, and little else. Now that the town is on the verge of extinction, people think about the Russian thistle and what it represents more than they ever did. Finally we used Kantoresque mannequins, or puppets, as we called them. Tadeusz Kantor's *Dead Class* was an important influence on how we represented our association to the more alien aspects of the Catholic ritual in this community, as Kantor states about his style's relationship to Catholic worship, "The mannequins, and the actors who animate them confirm the dualism of the Sacred and the Profane, or more precisely, of the tamed ritual and the distortions that destroy its order*"* (as quoted in Krzysztof 104). Moreover,

> "…The faces of the mannequins lure us into a cozy world of home, while simultaneously suggesting a pseudo-life of dead movement, of death imitating life. The mannequins are at once relatives and at once baggage of the fears and obsessions that each person in the congregation takes with them into death" (as quoted in Krzysztof 107).

Here the body is both a promise and a failure of life. The physical score between the actor and puppet is solemn, respectful and contemplative, yet the way in which the puppets materialize death reveals the closeness of the community to this state and challenges the metaphysical approach of the church to its presence.

Stanza Two focuses on the role of the nuns and the dying body in the peoples' faith for the survival of the town. Here the spectators spend time with three women (as performed by Melanie Bennett, Eugènie Ducatel, and Regena Maler), as part of a slow procession through the parish hospital. They bare witness to the convent hospital as a site where death is not denied, rather it is the focus of faith, as Melanie Bennett's text suggests:

Last Rites

The last Utterance of the reprobate or rogue.

Blood pouring out of cavities from the Spanish flu.

The priest coming to anoint the sick.
A ritual of transformation to the bedside.

Bread for the trip across the abyss.

The act of putting the sick at the centre of the ritual.

Taking away the curse of affliction.

Transforming them from objects of repulsion to individuals worthy of honour. (Bennett, from "Hospital," *Windblown / Rafales*)

Here, both the conventions of the centennial and the church are subverted in that the materiality of an actual dying body is presented as central to the mass; in this stanza, the performance of the mass is presided over by women in the convent hospital, rather than by a man in his domain of the church.

empathy in collaboration and the relational dramaturgy of the migrant pilgrim

Our use of empathy here reflects the perspective of open systems design developed in the social geography of Richard Sennett, who is "inspired and excited by places where he does not belong and by people who are not like him" (Sennett 11). His approach to designing environments for cosmopolitan existence provided useful inspiration for the dramaturgy of this project because of the way he articulates empathy as a relational, collaborative link between people sharing the same space and navigating the power differentials and ethical dilemmas of cultural difference. In his work, Sennett is also concerned about the agency of the migrant, and as 'migrants' to the community of Ponteix, the following passage by Sennett was instructive:

> "My version of cosmopolitanism names something positive in
> the psychology of migration, views the migrant as more than a
> hapless victim of necessity. A distinction first drawn by Adam
> Smith, in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, helps elucidate this
> positive view. Sympathy he understood as identification with
> the ways of life, and particularly the suffering of another, as in
> the adage "treat thy neighbour as thyself." Empathy he took to
> be a different kind of regard: curiosity about lives the observer
> cannot pretend to understand. Empathy of the Smithian sort is
> the positive experience migrants can have of a foreign city (or
> town)" (Sennett 11).

This perspective is supported by Hal Foster, who stresses the importance of reflexivity but he also stresses the need to get other parameters of the relationship between art-researcher and subject, just right. For example, in response to the "dangers" of too little or too much distance, he

> advocate[s] parallactic work that attempts to frame the framer
> as she or he frames the other. This is one way to negotiate
> the contradictory status of otherness as given and
> constructed, real and fantasmatic" (Foster 203).

Foster's perspective gets to the heart of the collaborative relationship that the core artists attempted to generate in the creation of *Windblown / Rafales*. The ensemble of artists who lived in the gymnasium and home economics room of the local high school for three weeks with me included, Melanie Bennett, Ken Wilson, Eugènie Ducatel, Derek Lindman, and Regena Maler. Ken Wilson was our primary writer on the project, yet the others contributed to the eventual performance text, especially in the Third Stanza of the performance, were co-authorship among artists and community members with whom we spoke for this part of the performance, was welcomed.

The Pilgrimage, or Third Stanza of *Windblown / Rafales*, featured our performers creating relational animations of various objects on the tour that took our audience away

from the grounds of the church, toward the town's main street and into some of the areas of Ponteix that exist outside the realm of the church's good graces and benevolent influence. For example, Eugènie Ducatel animated the town's community notice board on Centre Street (the main street), situating herself and her own information between what was actually a neglected space and our spectators; and Derek Lindman hung paper money on a newly planted spruce tree just off Centre Street. An allusion to "the Money Tree" a famous sermon given by Father Royer, to new settlers in the region, it cautions to live wisely. The tree used by Lindman is obviously an import from a distant place, and he created an association between himself – also from a distant place – his knowledge of the tree's origin, and the problem of finding sustainable solutions to the town's survival. Dwight Denney, a local craftsman, who also became a contributing member to the performance's artistic collaboration, created a series of effigies that appeared in two public park spaces along the route of the pilgrimage. Two of these effigies, a man and wife, featured the following textual statements:

> Effigy One: She is self-loathing now remorse-full, fear and loneliness that added gravity to her fall […] She wears the chains of lust and greed like a badge, yet to nothing save her carelessly splayed leg is it tethered. She moves silently, her eyes downcast, all her dealings remain beneath the rose.

> Effigy Two: He eats his bread of bitter herbs mingled with dirt and his own sweat; beneath his fierce visage a little boy inside cowers trembling, and fear transmutes into rage. The after glow of his once pure aura just a reminder of his addictive nature. Standing like one of William Blake's fallen angels his shovel becomes a sword storming heaven even as he plants his garden here in hell. (Denney, from "Effigies," *Windblown / Rafales*)

Finally, the pilgrimage takes us to Regena Maller's story about her Uncle Jimmy at 141 Centre Street. Maller performs a memorial to an uncle who died due to complications of his alcohol addiction, away from their family, and this was the same situation – so we were told – about the former inhabitant of 141 Centre Street; a man who had tried to make a go of an accounting business, but a lack of success and an addiction to alcohol forced him to flee to Swift Current, where he passed away. In the window of 141 Centre Street, that forms the backdrop to Maller's performance, the audience witnesses the ultimate example of the sublimation of that which has been denied as existing in the town by the Catholic parish. In what remains behind the window of this apartment on Centre Street, the degrading state of this premises act as a kind of materialization of this former citizen's trauma and evidence of a perverse enjoyment (alcoholism), we can see how the decayed state of this premises reflects a kind of open wound of the community, a 'kernel of problematic enjoyment' as Jacques Lacan would say, that simultaneously attracts and repels us.

In *Windblown / Rafales* the appetite revealed, is a profane death-drive. Transgression often happens in pursuit of that unattainable surplus of enjoyment, whereas in *Windblown / Rafales*, the abject is exposed; in the shadow of the church, a scene of neglect is understood in the realization that parts of this town are dying, and the scene of this death generates a kind of problematic enjoyment around the drive that is revealed as its root cause.

Framing a vision of the pilgrimage as a collaboratory venture

In site-specific performance, it is common for spectators to be involved in the experience of the work through engaged forms of looking, which leads to piecing together the found and the fabricated, the host and the nature of the ghosts conjured in performance. To conclude this writing, I want to address an important challenge to the vision of our audience in the way we asked them to collaborate as witnesses during the pilgrimage of Stanza Three. Concerning vision, Anna Fenemore reminds us, "the act of spectating is fundamentally a spatial act…" the site-specific dramaturgy of *Windblown / Rafales* strove for this relationship to what our spectators saw in performance; instead of establishing a relationship that was *static*, *singular*, *bodily suppressed*, our performance attempted to develop an experience of the work that was replete with the possibilities to be *affective* and *alterable*; a means of discovering a *felt* experience and a *real*isation that is linked not just to the external visual object but to the experience of the self and others as spatial / social objects (Fenemore 103). In particular, our approach to the pilgrimage was an attempt to address that which is denied in the static, singular and symbolic performance of this community – in the church.

Here was an attempt to dislodge spectatorial experience from a purely visual object into the arena of the spatial object. This is done through addressing the two types of visual experience described by Martin Heidegger. First, there is "epistemological vision" which features spectatorial distance, objectification, and a frontal point of view. Significantly these all feature as major tactics of normative theatre practice in establishing a certain relationship to its spectator, but this frame of a relationship can also be seen in the way a congregation experiences the mass performed by the priest in church. Martin Jay asserts this epistemological vision to be the "assertoric gaze," a way of looking that is "abstracted, monocular, inflexible, unmoving, rigid, ego-logical and exclusionary" (Jay 148). In contrast there is "ontological vision", whose primary feature is embeddiness, where, as Jay articulates,

> The viewer is situated within a visual field, not outside it; his
> (her) horizon is limited by what he can see around him.
> Moreover, his relation to the context in which he is embedded
> is nurturant, not controlling (Jay 148).

This is the "aletheic gaze", which Jay argues is "multiple, aware of its context, inclusionary, horizontal, and caring" (Jay 148). In the way we structured the pilgrimage we attempted to establish this relationship to the town and to our spectators, our collaborators and confidantes on this tour, an approach that emphasized the proximity and vulnerability of the aletheic gaze.

As site-specific performance theorist Keren Zaiontz reminds us,

> Audience labour is not simply a matter of delegating critical acts to
> participants but is an encounter with those acts that occurs through
> such kinesthetic operations as touch and movement. By coming into
> contact (or proximity) with the discourses that are being dramatized,
> spectators navigate the artwork through what Gilles Deleuze and Felix
> Guattari call a "smooth space," a space perceived through direct
> physical engagement. Laura Marks in *Touch: Sensuous Theory and*

> *Multisensory Media* explains that smooth spaces are necessarily experienced at "[c]lose-range" and "navigated not through reference to the abstractions of maps or compasses, but by haptic perception, which attends to their particularity" (Marks quoted in Zaiontz 12).

Site-specific spectatorship, as Zaointz articulates, at "close range" shifts the parameters of conventional spectatorship for how it disrupts the binaries of performer/spectator and representation/real to that of "beside." She draws on Eve Sedgwick to help illustrate how conceiving of spectatorship as beside conventional roles and parameters of representation command a range of analytical possibilities that do not end in opposition:

> 'Beside' is an interesting preposition because there's nothing very dualistic about it; a number of elements may lie alongside one another, though not an infinity of them. *Beside* permits a spacious agnosticism about several of the linear logics that enforce dualistic thinking: non-contradiction or the law of the excluded middle, cause versus effect, subject versus object. Its interest does not, however, depend on a fantasy of metonymically egalitarian or even pacific relations, as any child knows who's shared a bed with siblings. *Beside* comprises a wide range of desiring, identifying, representing, repelling, paralleling, differentiating, rivaling, leaning, twisting, mimicking, withdrawing, attracting, aggressing, warping, and other relations (Sedgwick quoted in Zaiontz 13).

In addressing site-specific spectatorship as an experience of "beside" we may not only examine how audiences parallel, differentiate, identify, and mimic through their doubled position, but how in having to witness, 'lie', walk or otherwise actively respond beside the performer, the spectator beside the site and its inhabitants, we learn how such roles slide, embrace, and *fold* into one another through a deeply meaningful event of collaboration.

The idea of spectatorship that is beside both the conventional theatre binaries: representation / real and spectatorship / performer is important for how it creates a perspective on agency that is relational, performative and thus collaborative in the way it becomes contingent on varying local contexts. Site-specific performance takes account of 'local contexts' and transnational narratives while travelling between two types of knowledge: official centennial 'celebrations' and personal embodied 'stories'. In doing so, such a form may situate itself 'beside' hegemonic forms that so often limit theatre's impact as a social event.

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Bio

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