



The Necessary Stage
Australia-Singapore Collaboration

PROPOSAL UPDATE

(5 Feb 2008)



THE NECESSARY STAGE AUSTRALIA-SINGAPORE COLLABORATION PROPOSAL UPDATE (5 Feb 2008)

From 30 January to 5 February 2008, Madeleine Flynn, Tim Humphrey, Kim Lawler, Tony Yap, Haresh Sharma and Alvin Tan met at The Necessary Stage Black Box (Singapore) for the first phase of a new Australia-Singapore collaboration.

As part of our research, the artists shared personal stories which revealed themes of adoption, displacement, conversion, translation, mobility, family, land and journey.

Besides sharing our past works, we also made field trips, conducted interviews and created nascent works exploring sound, movement, text and multimedia.

From this process, new working approaches across disciplines and cultures emerged giving us a way to work together for the future.

POINTS OF DEPARTURE

After 20 years, a Singaporean catches up with an old friend who has married, migrated and given up her citizenship. When they reunite in virtual space, each seizes the opportunity to re-introduce himself/herself.

A Malaccan-born radiographer living in Melbourne for 30 years returns for his mother's funeral. He is surprised by his family's ready acceptance of his homosexuality.

An Australian journalist departs the Great Sandy Desert and heads to Singapore in search of the 'Orang Asli' - the indigenous people of South East Asia.

An Australian couple and their son visit Fort Siloso at Sentosa. They show him Australia's wartime heritage. He tells them that he already knows everything about the Fort because he plays the The Fall of Singapore (Battle of Fort Siloso) on his Playstation II.

An Australian lawyer living in the city needs to be rejuvenated regularly by camping in the bush while a Singaporean kleptomaniac prefers the comforts of urban culture, choosing to encounter the rural unknown through the movies he watches. They meet to take a road trip together.

A Singaporean anthropology graduate tussles with a naturalised Australian's narrative; projecting himself as a Malaccan woman interviewing a member of a remote Australian Aboriginal community.

A 16-year old Australian is killed by a crocodile at Sungei Buloh wetlands. He reincarnates as a dangerous mosquito who witnesses a road trip.





POINTS OF CONSIDERATION

These real and surreal scenarios allow us to explore imagined and/or real histories, lineages and geographical spaces.

Defining lineages as the expression of connections over time allows us to explore the affinities of both blood and non-blood relationships that interweave across landscapes.

Is it then ever possible to live with a fixed identity?

Through a method of excavating stories from ourselves and the network of communities we work with, this inter/intra-cultural process explores the intricacies of host-inhabitant relationships in the light of our global village. How do we incorporate the global in search of our new national identities? How the global offers entry points to the intra-cultural relationships and how the perceptions of the various ethnic and national identities inhabiting our geographical land makes us see the realities in what we imagine is our global village.

FUTURE: FURTHER STAGES

We plan to meet again with all artists involved including designers and performers.

Date: 21-30 July 2008

City: Melbourne

Participants: Madeleine Flynn, Tim Humphrey, Kim Lawler, Tony Yap, Haresh Sharma and Alvin Tan + Jane Nolan, Leroy Parsons, Chua Enlai and Alin Mosbit.

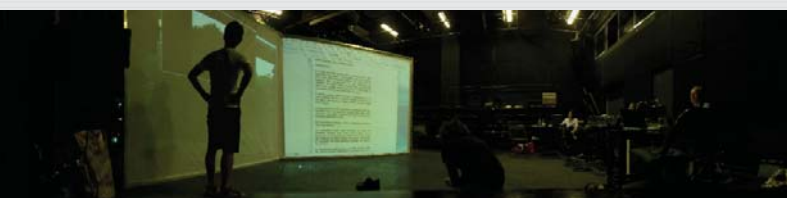
During this phase, the artists will be collaborating to create a few episodes/scenes as a works-in-progress. We plan to hold a presentation for an invited audience of colleagues and peers for feedback.

Date: 9 February - 15 March 2009

City: Singapore

Participants: Madeleine Flynn, Tim Humphrey, Kim Lawler, Tony Yap, Haresh Sharma and Alvin Tan + Jane Nolan, Leroy Parsons, Chua Enlai, Alin Mosbit, Vincent Lim and Mac Chan.

In this final phase, the artists will meet to rehearse towards the premiere of the work in Singapore. We intend to tour the work across Australia and Asia.





INSIGHTS ON THE WORKSHOP

All members of the creative team are mid-career artists with many credits to their names. The first stage design workshop (Jan/Feb 08:Singapore) revealed that each individual artist is already following a clear line of development in their work.

As such, the inter-cultural and inter-disciplinary processes are a matter of encountering each other's work and working processes. Through these encounters, we have and will discover opportunities that can allow for a combined synthesis and also individual creative developments.

For example, choreographer-dancer Tony Yap has been searching for a writer who can understand his complex and particular cultural journey to develop text-content in his solo performance work. Meeting and working with playwright Haresh Sharma during the workshop is making this possible.

In a similar way, the refreshing and questioning approach provided by an international perspective allows media artist Kim Lawler to enrich and extend her exploration of landscapes, geographical spaces and cultural narratives.

Her continued collaboration with Balgo Aboriginal Community in Australia explores a large collection of personal interviews about relationships to country and place. This process links closely with Artistic Director Alvin Tan and The Necessary Stage's history of creating work through extensive research and interviews based on social issues.

In developing music and sound, sonic artists Tim Humphrey and Madeleine Flynn have been used to adopting and abducting sound as symbols of their past and present encounters. In the present collaboration they are seeking the sound material within literal concurrence with text and visual developments.

They are interested in:

- > Developing sound pointers to "visual" (image/textual) "memory flashes", that may be superimposed over different time-scales (from very rapid to very slow);
- > Extending techniques of granulation into cross-modal textures. The granulated images forming textures from, for example, old photographs, collated moments of live performance, areas of costume, which then feedback as sonifications to the collaborative space.





CONCLUSION

A major benefit of the inter-cultural dialogue that occurs as a result of contemporary artistic practice is the allowance of new perspectives that an “outsider” view brings to the often stalemated “insider” discourses. We have experienced this fresh and challenging “outsider” view from both the Singaporean and Australian sides.

Our inter-cultural/inter-disciplinary approach is then inherently contemporary and engages with themes that are acute for both Australian and Singaporean societies.

BIOGRAPHIES OF CREATIVE TEAM

Alvin Tan: Director

Alvin is the Founder and Artistic Director of The Necessary Stage. Under Alvin, The Necessary Stage has grown from a society in 1987 to one of Singapore's most prominent and respected theatre companies. He is also one of the co-artistic directors of the annual international M1 Singapore Fringe Festival. One of the leading proponents of devising theatre in Singapore, Alvin has directed more than 40 plays which have been staged locally and at international festivals. Alvin has been awarded a Fulbright Scholarship and The National Arts Council's Young Artist Award. He has also represented Singapore in numerous international conferences and workshops.

Haresh Sharma: Playwright

Haresh is Resident Playwright of The Necessary Stage and co-Artistic Director of the annual M1 Singapore Fringe Festival. To date he has written more than 50 plays which have been staged in Singapore, Glasgow, Birmingham, London, Dublin, Cairo, Melbourne, Busan, Seoul, New Delhi, Hong Kong, Hungary, Romania and Tokyo. Haresh has a BA from the National University of Singapore as well as an MA in Playwriting from the University of Birmingham, obtained in 1994 on a Shell-NAC Scholarship. He has also been awarded fellowships and grants by the British Council and the United States Information Service, and was conferred the Young Artist Award in 1997. His play, *Off Centre*, was recently selected by the Ministry of Education as a Literature text for 'N' and 'O' levels, and republished by The Necessary Stage in 2006.

Madeleine Flynn & Tim Humphrey: Sound Designers

Madeleine Flynn and Tim Humphrey are Australian sound artists, composers and performers working collaboratively since 1993. They are recipients of many grants and fellowships including a Green Room Award for Outstanding Soundscape Design in 2003, an Asialink Residency at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music in 2005, and the Melbourne International Arts Festival Award for their sound design for *Source/Sauce*. Their research and practice are driven by their fascination with perception of people and sound in space. Tim's PhD systemized the experience of music performance and Madeleine's PhD is in the area of choreo-musical analysis. Recently they have performed in Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia. They will create a new work with Tony Yap Company for the Biwako Biennale in Japan in November 2007 and in December for Nettle Theatre Company, Korea. For more information, visit www.madeleineandtim.net

Kim Lawler: Multimedia Designer

Kim is a digital imaging and photographic artist. Her work has focussed on picturing country with a focus on the Kimberley region of WA. She has worked with arts centres throughout the Kimberley and is currently undertaking a PhD researching digital imaging of country with Indigenous People, through Deakin University and Experimenta. Kim is currently the LAB Creative Producer of Experimenta (Landscape and Memory). Kim and Maya Haviland, Principle Consultant of Side By Side Community Project Consulting, have also worked closely in the development of the Photo Me! Project in the Kimberley region of Western Australia, which commenced in 2005.

Tony Yap: Performer/Choreographer

Tony was born in Malaysia. Based in Australia for many years now, Tony was one of the principle performers with IRAA Theatre. Tony is committed to the exploration and creation of an individual dance theatre language that is informed by psycho-physical research, Asian trance dance and Butoh. Tony has collaborated with many companies and individuals in Australia, Indonesia, Italy, France, Malaysia, Denmark, Japan and South Korea, and has received a Green Room Award for Best Male Dancer for his solo work *The Decay of the Angel*. Tony recently returned to his birth-place to research shamanistic trance practice for a solo work, *E1*. Tony is also the Artistic Director of Tony Yap Company. [www.tonyyapdance](http://www.tonyyapdance.com)

