

Evoking poetics of memory through performing site: *Naik Naik*, a Malaysian Australian collaboration in the world heritage setting of Melaka

Cheryl Stock

Queensland University of Technology, Australia

c.stock@qut.edu.au

Abstract

Memory, time and metaphor are central triggers for artists in exploring and shaping their creative work. This paper examines the place of artists as 'memory-keepers', and 'memory-makers', in particular through engagement with the time-based art of site-specific performance. *Naik Naik (Ascent)* was a multi-site performance project in the historic setting of Melaka, Malaysia, and is partially recaptured through the presence and voices of its collaborating artists. Distilled from moments recalled, this paper seeks to uncover the poetics of memory to emerge from the project; one steeped in metaphor rather than narrative. It elicits some of the complex and interdependent layers of experience revealed by the artists in *Naik Naik*; cultural, ancestral, historical, personal, instinctual and embodied memories connected to sound, smell, touch, sensation and light, in a spatiotemporal context for which site is the catalyst. The liminal nature of memory at the heart of *Naik Naik*, provides a shared experience of past and present and future, performatively interwoven.

Keywords: dance, site, memory, poetics, Melaka

Introduction

Memory, time and metaphor are arguably central triggers for artists in exploring and shaping their creative work. David Carlin (2014, p. 7) in his introduction to *Vault*, begins with the proposition that 'we think inevitably in and through metaphors' and finishes by posing the question 'Is time itself a metaphor?' (p. 10). In these two propositions, there lies another metaphor; of memory embracing time in a continuum of past, present and future. Such a continuum is also encapsulated in the poetic phrase 'memory-keepers'. Although the term is mainly used to refer to historians and archivists (Gibson, 2014, p. 4), it could equally be applied to the arts; in terms of communicating to and with the world through human experience across time. Like history, the arts also tell stories, often abstract, non-linear, elusive and, at their most potent, transformative.

The nature of memory

This paper examines the central place, not of the narratives of history, but of artists as 'memory-keepers', and indeed as 'memory-makers', and the power of differing kinds of memory and metaphor in shaping our evolving experiences and knowledge of the world; in particular, through ephemeral engagement with the time-based art of live performance. It is beyond the scope of this paper to elaborate on the complex nature of memory but it is of note that recent interdisciplinary studies link neuroscientific understandings with those acquired through the humanities, in particular the arts. Nalbantian, Mathews and McClelland (2010) in *Memory Process*

discuss the multifaceted nature of memory across many fields. However, it is the 'complex, personal memory experiences of human beings' (Nalbantian et al., 2010, p. 2) that is of key interest to us as artists, and the notion in interdisciplinary memory studies that:

memory is an important part of human identity. Indeed we might readily change the Cartesian human dictum "I think, therefore I am" to "I remember, therefore I am" (Nalbantian et al, 2010, p. 5).

Phenomenological studies in tandem with scientific studies recognise that cultural as well as personal memory plays a significant role in creating and experiencing art; not only in the cognitive domain of the mind but in embodied, physical, kinaesthetic and affective realms. It is well recognised that meaning is actively constructed through memory, incorporating procedural, emotional and sensory dimensions (Nalbantian et al., 2010, p. 7). The overarching domain of '*implicit memory* [which] allows unconscious recollection to guide perception, action or behaviours' (Nalbantian et al., 2010, p.7) generates conditions for both creating and experiencing the arts, especially 'the imaginative component [found] to be inherent in memory' (p. 22). In both memory and art making, the following claim by Nalbantian et al., is relevant:

[A]s words such as *pattern*, *fluidity* and *rhythm* emerge in the study of memory, there is a growing recognition that memory is not only composed of some identifiable traces, but is also a process and activity ... 'relational', 'provisional' and 'artistically constructive' (2010, p.24.)

The provisional, relational nature of memory is evocatively expressed by Argentinian poet Juan Luis Borges who offers a metaphor, 'of the mirror by which memory becomes a fluid montage of myriad reflections' (Borges cited in Nalbantian et al., 2010, p. 23). The fluid and metaphorical nature of memory, as outlined in this brief theoretical introduction, provides a background to considering these aspects in an artistic journey of live performance, specifically around site.

Memory and live performance

Hansen and Barton in their article entitled *Memory* (2011) asked Canadian performing artists to articulate their conceptualisations of memory in relation to contemporary performance. Underpinned by the 'understanding that performing *is* memory' (Hansen & Barton, 2011, p. 4, emphasis in original), artist Ame Henderson devised 'performance strategies of retelling personal stories or remembering movements danced in the past based on the understanding that the act of remembering is "a function mostly of our imaginations"' (cited in Hansen & Barton, 2011, p. 4). In dance this act of remembering is associated with repetition as both a condition and a process. However, the notion of repetition becomes an impossible project if memory is only ever an altered reconstruction of the original. The shifting nuances of created and then remembered movement or remembered sensation of movement (as in improvisation) change imperceptibly with every performance, creating it anew even as we recognise what went before. This process also constitutes a kind of forgetting which Robinson (cited in Hansen & Barton, 2011, p. 4) suggests creates 'physical and metaphysical openings' for transformation through the act of remembering; privileging not only imagination, but embodied, kinaesthetic,

emotional and muscle memory. It is arguably through these liminal openings that a poetics of memory emerges.

The place of memory in site-specific performance

As a time-based kinetic art, (live) performance reinforces the earlier proposition of memory as a metaphor for time itself. The ephemerality of live performance ensures erasure as a pre-condition with an ongoing presence only in remembered form. Meredith Monk (cited in Kaye, 2000, p. 203) reflects that; 'one of the beauties of live performance is that it ignites a space and time and then disappears' but, as Lacy (1995, p.180) reminds us, it nevertheless survives 'over time as myth and memory'. Whilst memory is most often associated with time, connection of memory to place is a rich area for enquiry in dance and performance. In site-specific performance this relationship is a key factor.

However, much writing on site-specific dance focuses, not on place in association with memory, but on place in relation to embodiment (Hunter, 2005 & 2009; Kloetzel & Pavlik, 2009; Munjee, 2014; Tang, 2007), involving practices which Kaye (2000, p. 3) refers to as 'performance of place'. Embedded in this concept is a shared experience of site in a three-way relationship between the work and its performers, the site, and the spectators. The specificity of site, which gives the form its name, foregrounds site as the source and realisation of the work, and not merely as a container for creative ideas. McAuley (2012, p. 32) describes site-specific work as that which 'emerges from a particular place and engages with the history and politics of that place'. Such engagement marries past and present, creating the conditions for a different sensibility of time and duration, often experienced more fluidly than the usual prescribed parameters of in-theatre performances or events.

Although there is less writing around the interdependence of site and memory than around that of site and embodiment, time, and the history/politics of place, the former is implicit and ever-present in site specific work. McAuley (2012, p.49), in noting that 'place is a powerful stimulus to memory', directly links 'place-activating memories' to storytelling in a way which permits 'the past to resonate in the present', in 'a cultural act of recognition of who we are'. This article contributes to those investigations of the complex inter-relationships between site, embodiment, identity, story-telling and place, through examining a multi-site performance that foregrounds connection of memory to place and time through the voices of its participating artists.

Scoring the site

In theorising these multi-layered relationships, there have been a number of models outlining approaches to creating site dance. Hunter (2005, p. 367) maps a four part process of experiencing, expressing, embodying and receiving the site that encompasses both performers and audience. From a spectator viewpoint, Munjee (2014, p. 131) equates site with socio-cultural spaces, referencing Soja's *Thirdspace* (1996) in her text which she says 'embraces plurality of spatial understandings'. Munjee proposes a layered approach to experiencing and valuing site dance underpinned by Soja's three key concepts: perceived space (physical and geographical); conceived space (socio-cultural conceptualisations); and lived or 'third' space (actions and somatic engagement).

My own engagement with site as a director and choreographer is partially influenced by early experiences in the late 1970s with Marilyn Wood and her Celebrations Group, which worked exclusively on conceptually based site-specific urban projects in the United States and beyond for almost 30 years. In adapting her original process over the years, I adhere to the major premise of immersion in site and the belief that site dance is a non-transferable event, resulting in the site 'choreographing' the work rather than artists imposing pre-conceived interventions in the site. In the 'scoring the site' process, the evolution of site dance through immersion initially involves spending many hours over several visits alone and silently:

- observing spatial qualities, energy, sounds, movement;
- sensitising oneself to the surroundings—in the sites and around, above and below the sites;
- inhabiting the site through improvisation;
- mapping the site, physically, cognitively and imaginatively.

This individual pursuit is then shared with the collaborative team leading into the next stage of a collective exploration of site through improvisation and discussion. In my experience, working on site in every rehearsal is paramount so individual journeys and connections to site are shared, allowing architectural pathways and relationships to emerge in an organic process that gradually builds a narrative of site.

It is also crucial to acknowledge that the sites are normally shared public spaces between performers and passers-by / audience. Although one can create site dance viewed from a single vantage point, it is more immersive for spectators to be able to watch from several vantage points, traverse the site, come and leave at any time, choose whether to observe or maybe participate, or simply share the journey as witnesses moving through the site; experiencing the site in the same duration but from a different perspective to that of the performers.

Of course in order for creative artists to fully engage in a layered and respectful way with site, the above processes do not happen in a vacuum. It pre-supposes that background research, on and off site, has occurred in terms of the site's historical, socio-cultural and community relevance as well as its past and present uses and purposes.

Contemporising the past in the heritage setting of Melaka

Wherever one travels, there is inevitably an experience which leaves its mark on one's memory that is connected to a particular time and place. Such an experience leaves a trace on the psyche and for an artist often becomes the inspiration for a creative work. And so it was with *Naik Naik (Ascent)*, the multi-site performance project in the historic setting of Melaka, that I will attempt to partially recapture through the presence and voices of its collaborating artists.¹

Prior to the start of rehearsals in November 2013 I had travelled to Melaka three times and kept returning to two of its most celebrated sites. These sites are the historic Fort A Famosa at the base, and St Paul's church ruins at the peak of Bukit St Paul; the hill overlooking the city which one can access from several sides

via steep stairs or winding paths. Through my participation in 2012 MAPFest (Melaka Performance and Art Festival) which comprises three evenings of short performances by independent artists held in St Paul's church ruins, I often had occasion to climb Bukit St Paul, mostly beginning from Fort A Famosa.

As my familiarity with these sites grew, so did the ideas for a sunset promenade performance beginning at the ancient fort and finishing at the church, in a processional prelude to the MAPFest evening performances. Having identified these two sites and the sweeping hillside between as a third site, preliminary concepts emerged of a physical and metaphorical ascent (*naik naik*) to symbolically unearth the layers of history embedded in this world heritage listed area, so well-trodden by locals and tourists. The hillside may appear a peaceful site but it belies a bloody colonial history and centuries of bodies buried beneath. The spirit of the hill seems to also whisper its pre-colonial originary stories. MAPFest Director Tony Yap refers to the city as a 'port of call for Melakan spirits'², past and present, recalling shaman ceremonies from his childhood. There are also reminders of recent memory paths when *merdeka* (independence from colonial rule in 1957) was proclaimed and now celebrated every year at the plaza opposite the fort ruins.

Background and context

Through discussion with Tony Yap (who also performed in the work) we identified a team of collaborating artists, with whom I began an email dialogue followed by meetings in both Malaysia and Australia. At the same time I undertook background research which I shared with my colleagues. It was difficult to ignore the power of history and myth which the sites evoked, even though they were so well known and perhaps even verging on cliché for the Malaysian artists, whilst still fresh and fascinating for the Australians.

Melaka is believed to have been founded around 1400 by a Palembang prince, Parameswara, who was expelled from his country. After years of wandering he was resting one day under a tree when one of his follower's dogs cornered a white mouse deer that kicked the dog and pushed it into the nearby river. Impressed by the mouse deer's defiance Parameswara founded Melaka after the name of the tree under which he had been sitting. Today the mouse deer (*kancil*) remains a metaphor for courage, cunning and resilience. Despite its ubiquitous image the *kancil*, a potent symbol of Melaka, did feature in a small section of the work.

Melaka was originally an international port under a sultanate but was colonised by the Portuguese in 1511 when Fort A Famosa was built at the base of the Melaka hill (Bukit St Paul) and destroyed by the subsequent Dutch colonisers in 1641. St Paul's church at the top of Melaka hill was also built by the Portuguese and then reconsecrated by the Dutch, to be controlled by the British from 1824, occupied by the Japanese in 1942 and used in the 20th century for ammunitions storage.

These and other historical and cultural facts gleaned from our research informed the development and performance of *Naik Naik* but only in as far as they provided a context for the sites. Of more direct interest were the personal and cultural memories of the sites by older Melakan residents. In remarking 'the hill was always part of my life', Colin Goh told stories of rolling down the hillside on squares of cardboard as

a child and later studying in the quiet breezy afternoons by the church. Josephine Chua described herself as a young schoolgirl standing in a line and waving as she witnessed the Queen of England descend the especially constructed handrail for the steps from the church to the fort. As she pointed out, it does not matter if her reminiscences are accurate—it is her recollection that gives them meaning and importance.

Sharing the journey—the collaborative artists

Gathering and revisiting memories, often unconsciously, through simply being on the hill every day, quickly became a strong part of our creative agenda once the artists came together in steamy Melaka. The diverse backgrounds and even more diverse experiences of the artists revealed highly individual creative and performance approaches and became a rich source for memory-keeping and memory-making in evolving our work together.

Our interdisciplinary team comprised eight established and emerging artists across a range of movement, voice, music, design and sculptural practices.³ My own directorial and choreographic role soon morphed into that of a curator and facilitator with each artist taking on a key role in shaping the work. The performer / creators included Tony Yap, founding festival director and a Melbourne-based Melakan artist of Peranakan origin. He is steeped in a spiritual practice that stems from Malaysian trance dance known as the *sen-siao* ('spirit cloud') tradition which he combines with psycho-physical research, Butoh and other Asian cultural forms, voice and visual design. Tony works closely with Irish born Brendan O'Connor whose early training in contemporary dance has been superseded by the strong trance traditions he now shares with Tony Yap in an ongoing commitment to MAPFest. The youngest performer was Australian, Tim Crafti, a mentee of Tony whose long classical training has recently begun to merge with more somatic approaches, in particular Feldenkrais Method.

Critical to the project was WeiZen Ho, Melakan born but raised and living in Australia since she was eighteen. She works primarily in sound and movement arts, drawing on imageries from dream processes, myths, historical lineage and ritual, as well as physical Mandala and animistic rituals. Whilst Tony and WeiZen foregrounded their Chinese Malay (Peranakan) sensibilities, the other two performers as Malay Muslims brought different cultural practices to their performative presence. From Kuala Lumpur ('I am pure Malay'), Azura Abal Abas (Alla), like WeiZen, was a mother of two and a strong grounded woman. Her performance background is eclectic, beginning in her own words as 'a very raw dancer from the street', and later training in Malayan folk and court dance, contemporary dance, and at the time undertaking an MA in dance. Her younger colleague, Rithaudin Abdul Kadir (Din), revealed a charismatic and distinctive movement practice, with his fundamental dance knowledge informed by the traditions of his home state of Sabah. Proud of his heritage and closely connected to his family lands, we referred to him as Dinsabah.

Also crucial to the project were the composer and installation artist. Chor Guan Ng, a Chinese Malaysian composer from Kuala Lumpur, is a classically trained musician (French horn and theramin), but better known for his mobile phone orchestra compositions and interactive works in collaboration with dance and theatre

artists. Although starting later in the project, he became a unifying force through his evocative and often surprising score, forging aural connections between site, sound and performers, and providing live music across the sites by working with six young students from Pay Fong Middle School Wind Band. Sharon Jewell is an experienced Australian visual artist and sculptor working across a range of practices and committed to environmentally sensitive work using natural materials. Sharon was always on site, constructing and installing wooden sculptures from found branches and debris, as well as creating a river of sticks across the expanse of the hillside, a metaphor for the Melaka River winding through the city.

Shaping the journey through metaphor and memory

In the following fragmentary account of our creative site journey distilled from moments recalled, I seek to weave a performative poetics of memory that emerged from our work together; one steeped in metaphor rather than narrative. As a starting point for our site explorations we worked from a broad concept for each site; 'gathering' (at the fort), 'remembering' (on the hillside), 'becoming' (at the church). The colour blue which denotes spirituality in many cultures was also used as a metaphor for ascent from sea to sky, with the fort being historically at the sea wall (now reclaimed land) and the church at the top of the hill etched against the blue sky, from where one can glimpse the meeting of sea and sky. These simple triggers informed the emerging structure and content of the work.

In the relative cool of early morning, we began each day with a group 'warm up' at the 'red square'—a terra cotta tiled area at the base of our 'remembering hillside'. Early rehearsals consisted firstly of exploring the 'remembering' site, individually traversing and lingering on the hillside. Personal and cultural memories of sights, sounds, smells and stories began to uncover traces of history and narrative hidden in the layers of meaning of these sites; not literally, but through association and sensation.



The 'red square' and 'remembering' site. Photo: Sharon Jewell

We would rehearse again just before dusk and into the approaching darkness—it felt different then, a place of shadows which could evoke dark and conflicting memories, but equally a magical place of distant flickering lights, humming insects and scurrying night creatures. Composer Chor Guan who brought together so many layered memories through his music—culturally, historically and environmentally—spoke of the 7–8 pm time of our scheduled performances as ‘a golden hour’ because this is when ‘the cycle of living is changing ... the night creatures are waking, the daytime creatures are going to bed—they are overlapping each other, overtaking each other ...’. It was indeed a time when touch, smell and listening took over from our visual senses and perhaps took us deeper into the well of memory we were seeking to reveal.

As rehearsals progressed, the site itself created a community of practice of collective experiences, through conscious and chance connections, juxtaposed and intersecting crossings. An evocation of place gradually unfolded through performative contemplations in which recollections—real, imagined, sensed—lingered on traces of history, hidden or partially and silently exposed, and became interwoven with personal and cultural stories as revealed by our presence in the sites, in the present.

Memory gathering

Surprisingly, the performers did not begin at the fort as planned, although most of the audience gathered there. It became a prelude to the work where the fort became an absence of site for the performers, only remembered through a lone horn player stationed immediately above the fort summoning the audience to begin their ascent on the flickering candlelit pathway. Din commented on this in relation to the spectators’ experience:

It is so interesting when we do nothing at the Fort—because before there are so many things, there is so much there. Let them feel with the sound, with the horn, let them feel this is a magnificent place a long time ago and so much happened there before ... be[ing] there in the silence with the sound of the horn is so mesmerising

Through always meeting at the ‘red square’, the performers begin to gravitate toward the lower western side of the hill in a small gully marked by stele-like stone slabs. It became a place of waiting, of gathering for a journey—a place of stillness underlying historical and cultural turbulence. For Alla, the experience of gathering is ‘deep and really intense’ because of the strong connection of Melaka with Malaysian identity but also with the colonial past. She portrayed dual identities across time, culture and history merging memories of locals, ‘fishermen and their wives and also the connection with the colonial; where the port has always been a place to wait’.



Alla—gathering memories in a duality of past and present. Photo Nadia Nadesan

WeiZen on the other hand, with a strong sense of her migrant identity and Melakan heritage, spoke of being ‘linked to personal family history and ancestral history’ and ‘revisit[ing] all these memory paths to really trace back to a way of living that my ancestors used to have; just to connect because they are not here anymore.’ Thus she experienced ‘gathering’ as an invocation which was:

elemental—the calling of everyone’s energy, everyone’s ancestral energy and offering it in connection to the audience as well—the spirit of people and place comes together in a summoning.

In an article on the re-creation of historical dances, Buckland (2013, p. 30) writes of the mutable nature of cultural memory and ‘the interplay of present and past in socio-cultural contexts’. This was borne out in *Naik Naik* as experienced by Din in speaking about:

the memories of our own culture—we have a specific way of doing everything and then playing it to the site but doing it in a contemporary way I can relate it to the traders way back then ... while we are gathering there they are gathering also



'gathering'. Photo: Nadia Nadesan

Remembering

If 'gathering' was a place of waiting and invocation and the beginning of a journey, the expansive sweeping slope of 'remembering' became a repository of fleeting converging memories across cultures, centuries and present experiences, as the performers sensed each other's journey in a common goal to ascend and both hold and discard their individual and collective memories on the hill. At one point Alla collects a pile of leaves on the hill which she then scatters and rolls down after them. She describes these actions as 'gathering collective memories' which connect past and present and for each memory, 'if you like it you keep it, if you don't you throw it [away] but still it is there ...'

Cultural, historical (or ancestral) and personal memories feature strongly in the artists' interviews and more profoundly in the performances themselves. For two of the Malaysian artists, WeiZen and Din, another kind of memory—instinctual, played a seminal part in the performance of site. In the 'remembering' section on the hillside the spirit of the *kancil* was evoked as a strange and mostly still, camouflaged animal presence; referred to by WeiZen as 'hiding an eye'; a metaphor for half-memories and 'hidden truths and hidden histories'. In taking on the spirit of the *kancil* and its 'vibrational energy', her pathway followed the contours of the hill, never taking a direct path and always in half shadow. Din, growing up in Sabah and closely observing mouse deer in his homeland, was mesmerised in his portrayal of these elusive creatures, noting that 'each tiny sound will make them still and blend with the soil—when they trust everything then they move, then they move ...'



Instinctual memory—Din. Photo: Nadia Nadesan

Memory as a state of becoming

As the performers, alternating between stillness and movement, human and animal presences, reached the top of the hill, they transitioned from ‘remembering’ to ‘becoming’. Looking back to discard their memories on the hillside, a vocal invocation of suffering and entoning from Tony, Din and WeiZen echoed across the hill in the night air. Then, in a ritual procession the performers slowly entered the church, past the bell tower where the wind players had assembled. Led by Brendan who was carrying one of the wooden frames like a crucifix, Chor Guan remarked it was as if he were ‘coming from the future’, embodying ‘past, present and future—like a timeline’.



Invocation from 'remembering' to 'becoming'. Photo: Ross Searle

Site memory

This account elicits some of the complex and interdependent performative layers of experience evoked by the artists in *Naik Naik*; cultural, ancestral, historical, personal, instinctual and embodied memories connected to sound, smell, touch, sensation and light, in a spatiotemporal context. What remains to acknowledge is the memory of the site itself, which was the catalyst for all of the evocations of memory present in the work.

Whilst the work created was mostly contemplative it grew out of bitter sweet memories and did not deny what Din calls the 'hardship of the site itself', echoing the experiences of the artists that 'to be up there with the history and background and everything that happened it is not an easy site'. To return to the theoretical premise of site-specific performance that the site creates the work, we were in so many ways, visitors; looking, listening, learning, sensing, traversing.... for as Chor Guan notes:

the site itself has its own spirit or the spirit that has been and yet has been de-activated... so when this kind of performance is happening at this kind of site it is not only to activate the site itself, to give new energy to the space but also it... is very much like triggering the memory of the site.

Making new memories

The ephemerality of *Naik Naik* allowed the site to return to itself leaving behind experiences recalled through a 'poetics of memory'. The liminal nature of memory at the heart of *Naik Naik* provided a shared experience of past and present, performatively interwoven, but it also created a future for new memories to coalesce. In this way time, memory and metaphor collaborated with site through the embodied presence of the artists, who were not only 'memory-keepers' but 'memory-gatherers' in their transition to becoming 'memory makers'.

I leave the final word to our youngest collaborator Tim as he leaves the site and *Naik Naik* behind, reflecting on:

the journey of the time here and especially the last performance because every time I touch the grass I know it is the last time I touch the grass on the hill.... Alla touches my head, it is the last time, I can feel her hand but how much can I soak it into my skin... you can feel and feel and feel but then you just have to let go.

1. As acknowledged at the end of this article, a broad account of the *Naik Naik* project appears in a book chapter on site-dance (Stock, 2015). I would like to thank the book editor Victoria Hunter and Routledge for their permission to revisit *Naik Naik* in order to focus specifically on the artists' responses to site and memory.

2. Interviewees are listed below the references. Although a professional arts project, *Naik Naik* was also a research project in which participant observation and artist and stakeholder interviews provided a context for the work. QUT Ethical Clearance ID: 1300000501.

3. *Naik Naik* was supported by Australia Malaysia Institute, QUT Creative Industries, MAPFest.

References

- Buckland, T. J. (2013). Dance and cultural memory: interpreting *fin de siècle* performances of 'Olde England'. *Dance Research*, 31 (1), 29–66.
- Carlin, D. (2014). Metaphors and data. *Vault: the non-stop performing history of Circus Oz*. Exhibition catalogue by David Carlin & Paper Giant (pp. 7–10). Melbourne: The Arts Centre.
- Gibson, R. (2014). The archive of undisclosed action. *Vault: the non-stop performing history of Circus Oz*. Exhibition catalogue by David Carlin & Paper Giant. (pp. 4–5). Melbourne: The Arts Centre.
- Hansen, P & Barton, B. (2011). Memory. *Canadian Theatre Review*, 145, Winter, 3–5.
- Hunter, V. (2009). Experiencing space: the implications for site-specific dance performance. In J. Butterworth & L. Wildschut (Eds.) *Contemporary choreography: a critical reader*. (pp. 399–416). London & New York: Routledge.
- Hunter, V. (2005). Embodying the site: the Here and Now in site-specific dance performance. *New Theatre Quarterly*, 21 (4), 367–381.
- Kaye, N. (2000). *Site-specific art*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Kloetzel, M. & Pavlik, C. (2009). *Site dance: choreographers and the lure of alternative spaces*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.
- Lacy, S. (1995). Debated territory: toward a critical language for public art. In S. Lacy (Ed.) *Mapping the terrain: new genre public art*. (pp. 171–185). Seattle: Bay Press.

- McAuley, G. (2012). Site-specific performance: place, memory and the creative agency of the spectator. *Arts: The Journal of the Sydney University Arts Association*, pp. 2–51. Retrieved 27 November 2014 from: <http://openjournals.library.usyd.edu.au/index.php/ART/article/viewFile/5667/6340>
- Munjee, T. (2014). Appreciating 'Thirdspace': an alternative way of viewing and valuing site-specific dance performance. *Journal of Dance Education*, 14 (4), 130–135.
- Nalbantian, S., Matthews, P. M. & McClelland, J. L. (Eds.) (2010). *Memory process: neuroscientific and humanistic perspectives*. Cambridge, MA, USA: MIT Press.
- Stock, C. (2015). From urban cities and the tropics to site-dance in the world heritage setting of Melaka: an Australian practitioner's journey. In V. Hunter (Ed.) *Moving sites: investigating site-specific dance performance*. (pp. 385–404). London: Routledge.
- Tang, A. (2007). What do you perceive to be the challenges and/or opportunities for your work when applied to place/site and 'communities'? *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 12 (1), 93–118.

Personal Interviews (conducted by the author)

- Abas, Azura Abul (Alla), Melaka, Saturday 23 November 2013
- Abdul Kadir, Rithaudin (Din), Melaka, Sunday 24 November 2013
- Chua, Josephine (Jo), Melaka, Wednesday 28 August 2013
- Crafti, Tim, Melaka, Monday 25 November 2013
- Goh, Colin, Melaka, Wednesday 28 August 2013
- Ho, WeiZen, Melaka, Sunday 24 November 2013
- Ng, Chor Guan, Melaka, Sunday 24 November 2013
- Yap, Tony, Melaka, Wednesday 28 August 2013

This article has not been published, submitted or accepted for publication elsewhere. However, a book chapter has been published that includes discussion of *Naik Naik*, (in terms of interdisciplinary collaboration, logistics and intercultural considerations) entitled 'From urban cities and the tropics to site-dance in the world heritage setting of Melaka: an Australian practitioner's journey'. In V. Hunter (Ed.) *Moving sites: investigating site-specific dance performance*. (pp. 385–404). London & New York: Routledge.

© 2015, Cheryl Stock

Biography

Professor **Cheryl Stock, PhD, AM** has a career spanning four decades as a dancer, choreographer, director, educator, researcher and advocate. Cheryl is Secretary General of World Dance Alliance and Adjunct Professor in the Creative Industries Faculty at Queensland University of Technology where she previously held positions as Head of Dance and Director of Postgraduate Studies. Founding Artistic Director of Dance North and currently Artistic Advisor, Cheryl has created over 50 dance works as well as 20 collaborative exchanges in Asia. Her publications and practice encompass interdisciplinary and interactive site specific performance, contemporary Australian and Asian dance, and practice-led research. Cheryl is a recipient of the Australian Dance Award's Lifetime Achievement and in 2014 was awarded an Order of Australia. http://eprints.qut.edu.au/view/person/Stock,_Cheryl.html

www.accentedbody.com