here/there/then/now
site, collaboration, interdisciplinary performance

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stairs to nowhere *here*
deep crevices with no purpose *there*
pillars in dialogue with floating objects *then*
the inviting void of the black box *now*

where textured memories embedded in stone and metal merge with human presences

In 2002 a site-specific collaborative performance project *here/there/then/now* resulted in a performance season encapsulated by the above poem. Retrospectively, the production has become a site for investigation into the nature of site-specific performance and interdisciplinary collaboration.

1. Background to *here/there/then/now*

here/there/then/now brought together ten independent artists in the performing and visual arts to evoke three discrete sites *here, there* and *then* to come together in a performative dialogue, *now*. Set within the walls of an old powerhouse on the banks of the Brisbane River, converted to a Centre for the Live Arts, the artists sought out the more intimate, half-hidden spaces of this massive structure in a collaborative performance.

Purpose

The motivation for the project was not only an exploration of sites within the Brisbane Powerhouse. It also came from a strong desire to support creative partnerships, established

and new, in an interdisciplinary project in the local arts community. The project was initiated, paradoxically, by privileging and deconstructing the solo form in the context of the growth of often isolated independent artists within Australian choreographic practice. The solo form was transplanted into a collaborative context to acknowledge the increase in interdisciplinary practice and the multiple imaging of single forms which have led to more flexible performance platforms. In this endeavour, we sought to theatricalise site-specific work whilst maintaining respect for the integrity of the sites.

The celebration of the Brisbane Powerhouse as a venue for 'live arts' also informed the project. As artists we wished to rekindle the unique experience of 'liveness' that the virtual world, in which many artists are now immersed, cannot replicate. One strategy was to re-engage audiences in live performance by providing choices on how to view the works and from where. We aimed, perhaps ambitiously, to emulate the proposition of Meredith Monk (in Kaye, 2000: 203) that 'one of the beauties of live performance is that it ignites a space and time and then disappears'. The erasure and ephemerality of live work, inhabiting the sites only to disappear, was fundamental to our purpose, although the strength of memory in leaving traces was perhaps a conceit we also harboured.

Concept

The concept of *here/there/then/now* was to create three discrete performances in different sites by three creative teams (with some crossover of personnel) to culminate in a fourth site where memories of the first three coalesced. In the promenade journey from site to site, we aimed to provide a fragmented and porous intertextuality. Remnants of visual, auditory and kinetic texts created in individual sites were transposed and de/reconstructed to provide stimulus for accumulated readings in the fourth and final site. Separately and together these performance events built a poetic narrative, connected through time, site and an immersive audience experience; a narrative revealed and concealed by the embodied experience of site.

Collaborating artists

The artists included five dance/theatre artists, one singer/songwriter/performer, two composers/soundscape artists, one visual artist, one lighting designer, one media artist (visualisation, photography, videography). The artists were a dynamic mix of experienced

mature artists and emerging artists, independent and highly skilled in their own domain. All had some contact in various ways with the Brisbane Powerhouse, and the diversity of art forms, practices and cultural backgrounds amongst the group encouraged particular and individual responses to the site.

2. Notions of site in a performance context

Some artists had a long history of working together whilst others were connecting for the first time, and it was the site that became the glue for the collaboration. We met there, brainstormed ideas there, ate there and worked there whenever possible. Unlike the more neutral space of a theatre (despite the diversities within this generic term) the site was not just the repository of our creative ideas; it was the source. Indeed, as Kaye suggests (2000:1), site-specific work can be defined and articulated 'through properties, qualities or meanings produced in specific relationships between an "object" or "event" and a position it occupies'. In this case the event and position became 4 events and 4 positions; 'here' and 'there' in the 'then' and 'now'.

Position or site became the place in which our work was embedded. De Certeau (1984:17) speaks of place as 'a practiced space'. He further argues that whilst space is an 'ordering system' with a certain stability, the practices of space(s) within place operate as 'ordering activities' and thus give rise to multiple and unpredictable possibilities (in Kaye, 2000: 4-5). The 'spatial practices' created through performance thus become the active agent, together with time, in temporarily enlivening and transforming space (site) into a durational and performative environment.

The temporal and the spatial are inherent in all arts practices and thus form part of a common conceptual language in interdisciplinary practices. However, in *here/there/then/now* the specific kinaesthetic and visual understandings of dance became a strong foundation informing the architectural setting. These understandings were embraced, re-interpreted and transformed by the other participating fields of practice.

Whilst all the disciplinary elements were integral to the evocation of site, it was the moving body and its relationship to duration, site and objects within the site, which became a primary source of metaphor and narrative. The body itself was treated as a site containing a repository of its own performing and lived histories, which connected with the inherent and imagined meanings and associations of the old industrial powerhouse, to communicate new and unexpected stories. The body simultaneously was a site for 'spatial practices', both within the body and beyond the body, activating kinetic pathways and leaving traces at and between the architectural sites. If, as Foucault suggests (in Wodiczko, 1992: 199), 'our position in society is structured through bodily experience with architecture', the body and site relationship explored throughout *here/there/then/now* provided an experiential framework for the viewer to make connections, particularly in the shift between power and powerlessness of the body in relation to the chosen sites.

The body, however, does not only construct meaning through its relationship to site, but also to the aural and visual elements and objects (including light) introduced into the site, all of which contributes to what Kaye (2000: 8) refers to as a 'writing over the site'. The Brisbane Powerhouse has retained the graffiti from another incarnation as a derelict building and squat for the homeless, and so *here/there/then/now* became a 'writing over' the already overwritten site. In the process of performance - 'acting out' the writing over site - Kaye suggests that the site becomes a kind of palimpsest which is written on and then rubbed out again (2000: 11). The ephemeral nature of performance in relation to site-specificity is reinforced as the performers move on from the site thus rubbing out what they have written.

3. 'writing over' the sites of *here/there/then/now*

In *here/there/then/now* the erasure of the first 3 sites were temporarily postponed as trace elements entered and regrouped in the fourth site bringing memories, people and objects from the other sites into dialogue. Viewers were led by guides to the various sites where they entered four very different worlds, theatrically constructed but dependent on the sites in which they were situated.

here

The caption of ‘stairs to nowhere’ to describe the site of *here* is apposite. A large barred ‘pit’ at one end of the main hall of the Brisbane Powerhouse contains 2 flights of steep metal stairs which indeed appear to lead to nowhere except the dungeon-like space far below. In fact, there is a door, unseen by looking down into the space, which opens onto the side of the stage of what is now the Visy Theatre; the fourth site *now.*

here, in responding to both the architecture and atmosphere of the site, evokes both the "humanity" of the body within an industrial space and ‘images of an imagined and iconoclastic "hell": with its chamber/dungeon-like feel’ (Lucas: 2002). A study of contrasts between victim and aggressor, this solo tour de force ‘plays with the incessant presence of the stairways within the space, all of which lead and entice the eye both up and down’. It also plays with the relationship of the viewer to the performing body, ‘with its “reality TV’’ feel of observation, and eavesdropping’ (ibid). Lit only by candles and drums of fire, the site becomes a heightened theatrical and dramatic space of homely objects and chilling presences, where fire represents warmth, power and danger. The site equally becomes a shadowy realm of dreams and memories in shifting dualities of private moments publicly revealed, truth and lies, the hidden and the exposed. ‘Let's watch the animal in the zoo, so fascinating and yet so dangerous!’ (Lucas: 2002)

Created and performed by Brian Lucas, an experienced and well-known solo performer with a dance and theatre background, *here* involved narrative text and an eclectic sound score by Brett Collery. The audience viewed the performance from above looking through bars into the site, protected from the hell-like environment, but without the fourth wall of the theatre.

there

Leaving the sound of the Shangri-Las the audience is led from *here* to *there*, to a very different enclosed space. Situated in the lower region of the Powerhouse, behind the steps leading to the foyer of the Visy Theatre, the barred, vertical site of worn concrete provides a small cage-like area of entrapment, both real and metaphorical. Shadows and blinding light alternately reveal and conceal the world of the isolated.

there investigates reactions to situations of extreme stress, and the divergent coping mechanisms adopted when confronted with confinement. Incorporating dance/physical

performance with acoustic unaccompanied voice and projected imagery, an Australian dancer Leanne Ringelstein and Thai singer Nok Thumrongsat explore performative differences and similarities through sharing an intimate world of no exits, where time and memory distort concepts of reality. The dense layering of stylised, choreographed movement is contrasted with the distilled improvised soundscape of unaccompanied voice which draws on a traditional Thai singing technique, a presence in Nok's life since childhood**.**

Audience can view this work from three vantage points – through the bars of the site at two levels and from above looking down into the site. Since site lines are restricted, a video is playing on the wall of the top level. Created by Ian Hutson it is a layered montage of still and moving moments from the work, overlaid with sparse text, referencing rather than replaying the live performance.

then

The first two works are, as their titles suggest, predominantly influenced by spatial concepts of the sites which they inhabit. The third work *then* plays more with concepts of time and objects. Choreographed by Vanessa Mafé in collaboration with installation artist Jondi Keane, Taiwanese dancer Ko-Pei Lin and sound composer Stephen Stanfield, *then* sets up a collaboration 'focussing on the theme of the "still-life" as its organising principle. Ideas concerning distorted beauty, fragmentation of the body in space, heightened colour and unconventional framing are explored to reflect a Baroque sensibility' (Mafe: 2002). The score similarly is constructed of sound fragments, electronically manipulated to represent the decaying process of "still life".

The site for *then,* open but supported by massive stone pillars, is the foyer entrance to the Visy Theatre and a thoroughfare to the outside and the banks of the Brisbane River. Despite its present incarnation, this area provides 'a source of spatial and historical associations for the viewer' (Mafe: 2002). The space links performer and audience within a public access area. However, the dancer moving amongst the hovering objects of the fragmented still life introduces another experience to the viewer; the sensation of a painting taking on a kinetic life and at the same time creating a contemplative theatricality, in a shifting kaleidoscope of framed images.

now

The audience enters the small downstairs Visy Theatre from the foyer of *then* into a conventional fixed seating arrangement of audience on three sides in a semi circular arrangement and a thrust stage. A sunken pit dividing audience from stage is lit and filled with fabric to evoke a kind of moat separating audience from performer. The stage itself, with a graffitied back wall and three staggered pillars approximately one third downstage, is stripped of all other fittings returning the space as much as possible to an architectural site.

now, the inviting void of the black box, treats stage as site and becomes a sparsely fragmented repository for what has gone before. The performers bring with them the histories of their sites, as well as the histories of their dancing bodies. Intersecting solos create performative dialogues in which serendipitous and intentional juxtapositions make new narratives and other histories. The emerging relationship of bodies and kinetic pathways to the new site are played out against visual and aural connections to the sites left behind.

Created by Cheryl Stock in collaboration with the performers from the other three sites, Ko-Pei Lin, Brian Lucas, Leanne Ringelstein and Nok Thumrongsat, the sampled and reconstructed montage of other sites are echoed in the soundscape of Stephen Stanfield and in the abstracted, changing projected images on the pillars by visual artist Ian Hutson. Lighting by Jason Organ creates a shifting and at times disorienting environment for the audience. This is reinforced by the escape from the defining boundary of 'the moat' into the protected audience space by Brian Lucas, with a confronting repetition of the narrative from *here.*

Indija Mahjoeddin (2002:39) wrote of *now* from an audience perspective*:*

> *Girl eats orange,* transforming still life. *A story is retold*, transforming the past. Finally, a step forward, into the unknown, into future stories. The *re*-action becomes *a*ction; relationships move beyond design and sensation and begin to initiate meanings for the spectator, allowing us to become active listener, not just voyeur.

Viewers' relationship to site

The viewer as both voyeur and active participant were important to the project. Whilst the viewers do not intersect or physically enter into the sites in the way that is often possible with site specific performance, viewers are nevertheless crucial in defining and constructing the experience of site. Led from site to site in a promenade journey by guides, spectators are able to move around the sites but not within them. They are able to change their points of view and relationship to the performing body; looking down, in and/or across rather than viewing the performers from a fixed vantage point (with the exception of the fourth site). Their mobility at each site and between sites assists in making causal links between the sites and their stories. Rosie Klich describes the audience experience, suggesting (2002: 1):

> Each performance draws the audience physically lower into the building, reflecting the deepening immersion experienced by the audience. This concept of depth resonates throughout the work and the space itself is integral in the growth of thematic meaning.

4. Metaphorically *here/there/then/now*

Whilst one of our purposes was to provide an immersive and layered experience of site and performance for the viewer, another was to explore, as artists, the spatial and temporal dimensions of the emerging works and of our interdisciplinary collaboration. The metaphor of the title permeates the content, process and outcome of the project.

Both real and imagined space and experience encapsulates ***here*** and ***there.*** The site locations are scattered, dislocated and seemingly random, although it is possible to construct a literal and symbolic journey from one to another. The stories embedded in the site *here,* in this place, are transformed from the stories within us brought from *there* – elsewhere. In relation to the participating artists, we are metaphorically placed here and there: within diverse cultures, aesthetics, art forms and range of experience. We were also often physically here and there during the collaborative process, due to the sporadic nature of independent work. For example, during our intensive four weeks of 'full-time' rehearsals, Brian Lucas was 1000 kilometres away making another work, communicating by phone and e-mail. His physical separation for three weeks became a strongly felt absence in the construction of *now* where he appears sporadically in the final work as powerfully present and affecting, yet disconnected from the bond formed by the three women.

The temporal dimensions of the project form a bridge between ***then*** and ***now.*** The meeting of the past history of a site with the present interventions of live performance can only be experienced in the moment *now.* The original conceptual development and group of artists *then* (2001) was necessarily transformed by changes of date, personnel and even sites by the realities of *now.* And finally the 2002 performance *then* is now erased and replaced by this documentation *now.*

5. Dimensions of collaboration

Revisiting *here/there/then/now,* through its documentation 2 years after the event, has given rise to considerations of the nature of collaborative and interdisciplinary processes which inform projects of this type. In its basic form collaboration is the harnessing and implementation of individual and/or collective ideas by a group with a common goal, concept or purpose. Similarly interdisciplinary projects engage with individual disciplines to work towards common understandings and outcomes. Although interdisciplinary and collaborative are not interchangeable terms they are in the case of artistic projects interdependent. Interdisciplinary practice involves collaboration between distinct disciplines with different approaches, viewpoints and forms of expression. Like collaboration, interdisciplinary practice entails a shift in processes of creation, observation and reflection compared with the pursuit of practice led by a singular discipline. At their most satisfying, both practices become an ongoing journey of discovery, questioning, and discussion, requiring multiple interpretations and knowledge.

Artistic collaboration generally entails working with ideas that seem new or original, or transforming existing ideas and concepts in fresh ways, thereby relying on the cultivation of group innovation and creativity. Group creativity theory can provide a framework for examining and perhaps challenging our intuitive notions about artistic collaboration. Nijstad & Paulus (2003: 327) claim that 'a group's creative potential first and foremost depends on the level of diversity in the group'. Of course, diversity alone does not engender creativity. Conditions such as context, leadership issues and feedback mechanisms can either grow or stunt the level of group creativity (ibid.) and thus collaboration. Key areas of collaboration

are defined by Pritzker & Runco (1997: 115-141) as communication skills, developing a positive environment, decision making strategies, recognising the individuals within the team and resolving conflict and risk. These conditions and key areas arguably fall into two interdependent but differing dimensions according to project participant Ian Hutson; the relational / creative and the transactional / task.

Communicative relationships

Communication is the essential ingredient of any collaboration with participants developing what Grau (1992: 19) refers to as 'a communicative relationship'. In a transactional sense these relationships develop between collaborative partners and between teams, within the ongoing performative development of the work and eventually with the audience. In the creative dimension Eva Karzag (2003: 13) points out the importance of the dialogic relationships between the things (objects/actions/events) themselves that the artists produce and not merely between the artists and their processes. Karzag views collaboration 'as a multi-way conversation: with materials, with the body, with places, with memories, and later with others who encounter the work'.

In the relational dimension of collaboration, interpersonal communicative relationships of mutual respect and interactive support create an atmosphere of openness and sharing. Competitiveness within collaborative projects is not generally conducive to creative outcomes since the sharing of ideas inevitably becomes conditional, which tends to reduce the effectiveness of communication. In interdisciplinary collaborations communicative relationships are enriched through valuing the *differences* in language, aesthetics, processes, or outcomes in order to encourage new avenues for understanding and expressivity. At the same time, these relationships need to be dynamic to energise creative processes, highlighting the importance of what Nijstad and Paulus (2003: 327) term 'authentic dissent' or diversity of opinion, which (according to group creativity theory) stimulates creative thinking. In a collaborative performance context this dissent often plays out as creative tension and at its most productive results in artistic breakthroughs.

Commonality/diversity

The interplay between commonality and diversity is another generic dimension of interdisciplinary collaboration. Common creative agendas which allow for diversity and cross over of practices, approaches and ideas arguably depend on discipline based confidence and expertise. Commonality can be manifest in a myriad of ways. In a collaborative project between dance maker Eva Carzag and visual artist Chris Crickmay (2003: 11) elements such as line, shape, texture, colour and action created the basis for a common language, with movement as a shared interest. In *here/there/then/now* evocation of site rather than the development of creative elements was the common agenda.

Collaboration and creative relationships are both proactive and reactive, involving divergent and convergent processes (Nijstad & Paulus, 2003: 330). This creative give and take between participants and their ideas is embedded in the valuing of diversity within established common ground. Diversity can take many forms. Apart from the diversity inherent in the different disciplinary practices, particular aesthetics, varied cultural backgrounds and levels of experience of the individual participants, *here/there/then/now* comprised four collaborative teams of between three and seven artists. Within the overarching concept of the project, these four teams were able to create distinct works in their specific site, allowing for team-based differences within the one overarching concept. The teams ranged from a long-term partnership to a team that had never worked together before, but all four groups had one person that was new to the group, pro-actively promoting our desire to establish fresh creative/communicative partnerships.

The artists working across teams shifted their collaborative approach according to the dynamics and creative process emerging from the site and combination of artists. Choreographer Vanessa Mafe and visual artist Jondi Keane had 'a long history of working together through the open investigation of ideas' (Mafe: 2003) and had already established images as the foundation for a common language. Vanessa's relationship with the young dancer Ko-Pei Lin was more that of a mentor so it was necessary to 'establish a way of working together first and then identify "breakthrough" creative experiences beyond the usual dancer/choreographer relationship' (Mafe: 2003) into a shared conceptual understanding and realisation; and thus a collaborative relationship.

Composer Stephen Stanfield also worked with differing collaborative processes. In *then* initial discussions of the concept and viewing of images and movement of the work in progress led to the concept of 'still life and decay' as the compositional starting point. He states that 'in this collaborative relationship composition and choreographic processes were almost entirely independent from one another, but converged with the visual art and lighting installations quite successfully' (Stanfield: 2003). However, in working on ***now,*** parallel to the choreographic process, 'past sounds were manipulated and re-contextualised in time and space creating a sonic wash of fragmented, distorted, and distant memories *…now'* (ibid.) With regards to the collaborative process, he states that it 'was quite organic with the music and choreography developing symbiotically' (ibid).

Although the gathering of diverse elements inherent in interdisciplinary performance collaborations may not necessarily result in any immediately recognisable common approach, the processes arguably reveal evolving 'patterns, threads, tensions and themes' (Clandinin and Connelly,1994: 423), providing a sense of coherency, albeit sometimes fragmentary in *here/there/then/now.*

developing a shared language

Finding some level of commonality within the diversity of such practices requires developing a shared artistic language. Interdisciplinary collaboration could be described as an interactive dialogue but one in translation to and from the disciplines involved. How do we enable discipline specialists to find the spaces between their individual practices in order to discover a shared creative/performative language based on common principles? Mafe (2003) suggests that we allow 'what is there to form the interdisciplinary language being created for each particular project'. In *here/there/there/now* what was there was the site; an architectural environment.

It is illuminating to examine Tschumi's (1994: 15-16) definition of architecture as encompassing space and its use or 'the concept of space and the experience of space'. Tschumi (1994a: 31) claims that the experience of architecture is about the gap 'between ideal space (the product of mental processes) and real space (the product of social practice)'. If we replace 'architecture' with 'site' this definition provides a lens for developing some

common concepts as to the interpretation of site (real space) through performance (ideal space).

Tschumi (1987: 5) also proposes three interacting structures rather than a unified structure in his architectural concepts:

- structure of 'surfaces' ('the system of spaces')
- structure of 'lines' ('the system of movements')
- structure of 'points' ('the system of objects')

This dynamic system of intersecting structures provides both the basis for an interdisciplinary creative language and a conceptual underpinning for interpreting site (real space) through the imagined ideal spaces of performance.

Similarly, the base structures underpinning an art form or discipline can also provide this foundation for a shared collaborative language. Taking dance as starting point four basic elements, not unlike those proposed in the architectural example can also be 'translated' into the basis for a common language:

- space / design / shape – 'architecture' or structural elements
- rhythm / flow / duration – temporal elements
- dynamics / force / energy – textural elements
- body / instrument / object – visual/kinetic/aural elements

The resulting interdisciplinary kinetic performative language is poetic rather than prose-like because of its 'multiple, symbolic and elusive meanings' (Hanna, 1997:147)

affirmative behaviours and decision making strategies

It is difficult for a shared artistic language to evolve effectively without simultaneously establishing supportive interpersonal relationships. On the relational level, consideration and trust are required and on the transactional level dependability and timely responses. Whilst there is a danger in early consensus or giving into conformity pressure (Nijstad & Paulus, 2003: 329), in advancing ideas, there is also some imperative to keep decision making 'moving along' (Pritzker and Runco, 1997: 138) so as to enact the ideas put forward. Ideas

generated lead to selection of ideas. High levels of trust are therefore important so as not to include poor ideas for the sake of harmonious relations. It can also be counter productive to be overly critical of ideas as Nijstad & Paulus (2003: 330) point out. Self-reflexivity as well as team-reflexivity assists in finding a balance between procrastination and hasty decision making.

Decision making in a collaborative environment does not have to imply equal distribution of roles and responsibilities as in a collective model. In *here/there/then/now,* whilst embracing shared responsibility there was also an acceptance of the need for leadership and allocation of roles. As the conceiver of the project my role was one of coordinator in which a directorial lead was implicit. This consisted primarily of a consultative process involving ways of integrating visual, theatrical, auditory elements, and links between sites. In relation to the first three sites I acted more as a 'participant/observer'. A 'leader' for each site team either emerged organically or was negotiated, making for a distributed system in which roles shifted according to the needs and particular skills and interests of the participants. It became important that every member participated to varying degrees at all levels of the project including budgeting, marketing and scheduling.

The four site teams were largely autonomous which was conducive to difference in the imagining of sites into performance whilst maintaining a broadly agreed artistic agenda. Overlap of personnel in each team was conducive to conceptual and language commonalities. Because members had different expertise, problem solving was easier in that there were varying approaches to problems and their solutions.

6. Collaborative Challenges

No creative project is without its problems and in the case of *here/there/then/now* four of the original ten team members were replaced and threatened to destabilise the project in very different ways. The most devastating was the sudden and tragic death of a key member resulting in an eight month postponement of the project, since at first nobody had the heart to continue. Not long after we re-grouped and prior to beginning rehearsals, an experienced choreographer/dancer who had done the concept mapping for one site was offered and

accepted full-time work. Her replacement decided to use the same site but an alternative concept emerged. Her collaborator, unknown to the rest of us, stayed on and became a central participant, visually documenting the entire project in addition to his own creative input.

D'Cruz (ibid.) describes succinctly the challenge which led to the replacement of the other two members of the team when she points out that collaborations 'at their worst…. allow some collaborators to colonise others and this is a most disempowering experience!' It became evident at the brainstorming stage of the project that the personal political agenda of one member was becoming an undermining and obstructive force, creating unacceptable and negative tensions. At the same time the personal artistic agenda of another member resulted in non-engagement with the site and therefore a threat to the integrity of the project which was site driven in its concept. Though difficult to ask these two very good artists to withdraw from the project, it was a decision which allowed the participants to re-group with renewed energy and a stronger common collaborative agenda.

7. Interdisciplinary collaborative outcomes

For the artists

Through the experience of *here/there/then/now,* it is possible to identify what may be considered defining outcomes in terms of interdisciplinary practice. Establishing a common working ground between disciplines which generates open lines of exchange would seem fundamental to interdisciplinary projects. At the same time, this process questions and offers alternatives for the conventions, vocabulary and assumptions inherent in each discipline, thus defining one's own artistic practice more clearly inside and outside the discipline. It also has the potential to shift, connect differently with, and transform one's practice, opening up new personal and creative possibilities and more layered approaches. The fluid morphing between created and creating images, objects and artists results in blurred and indecipherable 'ownership' of the resultant work in which ideas can emerge, shift and be transformed by group processes. On a broader level, interdisciplinary collaborations provide opportunities for expanded dialogue, for renewed investigative practices, and can lead to the building of

artistic communities. Such an outcome arguably contributes to the sustainability of artists through opening up new partnerships and more diverse platforms for their work.

For the audience

It might be argued that interdisciplinary performance also opens up expanded possibilities for its audience. The viewers' relationship to site has earlier been discussed, but their relationship to the performers also contributes to expanded understandings. Whilst an audience is viewing and sharing an *outcome* of the collaborative process, one could argue a collaborative *process* between performer and audience is also being enacted, which assists in the creation of narratives or 'meaning-making'. As Kemp suggests (1997: 172), 'even the most "immediate" sensation, the most direct aesthetic response, depends on expectations, on memories, on the sense-making power of the imagination.' She further posits that in a performative text (in Campbell, 1996: 9) 'the emphasis is on process, on meaning as *becoming*'. This becoming never completes its journey as erasure of performance from site is effected both by performers and audience.

8. Conclusion

Whilst every collaborative experience is distinctive, it is nevertheless possible to make observations about general notions of interdisciplinary collaboration. Enacting the strands of the collaborative process as discussed above were by and large a positive experience in *here/there/then/now*, and in many ways mirrored the description of Malaysian artist Marion d'Cruz (2003:77)

> Collaborations, at their best, are profound learning experiences that empower the collaborators to expand their visions and their creativity, give them courage, critique and support to move into areas of work they might otherwise not venture into, and provide exciting spaces for experimentation.

The experience of *here/there/then/now* demonstrates that the building of an effective interdisciplinary collaboration resides in establishing a common conceptual premise that allows for both personal aesthetic positions and specialist art form processes and outcomes, rather than attempting to work within a common creative process. This was also reflected in the concepts of the four discrete but interdependent sites.

Reflection on our experience of *here/there/then/now* reveals the central significance of developing interpersonal relationships of mutual trust and respect where creative compromises can be worked through as artistic challenges. Another finding is the centrality of narrative as a common meeting ground - deconstructed, abstract, through metaphor - and the creation of meaning by both pre-determined and serendipitous associations. Parallel to narrative and inseparable from it, is the fundamental need for effective communication; between the collaborative partners, within the ongoing performative development of the work and via audience immersion in the shared environment.

Analysis of *here/there/then/now* demonstrates that creative collaborations are successful because the focus is the work. Consequently personal agendas are left aside but the strength and diversity of the enmeshed personalities and specific expertise can be allowed to flourish. Leadership emerges as important; such as a facilitator / director who can drive the project externally and internally and bring together its disparate parts, but who does not lay claim to the creative territory which is always shared. Working in a common environment and using what already exists (in this case the site) allows an intertextual language to develop that is specific to the project. Finally, our experience acknowledges that specialists with considerable depth of practice will find the spaces between their individual practices in which to find a shared creative and performative language whilst retaining the accents and inflections of each discipline.

altering memories
weaving into the present
imaginings and actuality
here and there in the then and now

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