Listen carefully, the dance is whispering....

Articulating Praxis
Identity and Place through Dance

by

Kathryn Ann Ricketts

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

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Thesis abstract

With a series of dance solos called Lugs, I have been exploring notions of emotional and physical displacement through the telling of personal stories, mine and others. This thesis explores concepts and theories, which brings an articulation to my practice as artist, researcher and teacher. With A/r/tography and Performative Inquiry as foundational methodologies utilizing transmediation techniques; specifically image, text, and spoken work to embodiment. Through a variety of performance theories, I probe the moments in my improvised performances where the immediacy and integrity of my decision making process works in direct relation to the audience, the story, the performance artefacts and the context. In this investigation I explore further notions of Appelbaum’s (1995) *Stop* and Fels’ (1998) *Space Moments* of learning where an absolute astuteness and availability to the moment allows for possibilities of change. The thesis recalls many Lug performances, artist residencies and a conference presentation; these reflections are woven between theorists such as Bhaktin, Butler, Bhabha, Irwin, Fels and practitioners, Babar and Brecht. Through two simple charts, one created at the beginning of my research period and one at the end, the thesis illuminates an important shift in the problemetizing of my practice addressing the importance of the hermeneutic reading of my practice and emphasising that the articulation gained in my methods and theories allows for a greater commitment to being present to the unknown variables I invite into my work which generate from this liminal and space of inquiry. My emblematic phrase ends the thesis;

Listen carefully, the dance is whispering.....
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For his extreme patience
Dedication

to my boys
Listen carefully, the dance is whispering....

Articulating Praxis
Identity and Place through Dance
M.A. Thesis
Kathryn Ricketts
Overview of Thesis

Intro

This series of chapters will look at the history of my practice and the origin of my research work within the context of proposed theories and methods. I will also be dissecting some of the more charged pieces of vocabulary used throughout the thesis tagging it with my own intentions and implications of meaning. Through this intro I intend to locate myself as artist/researcher and teacher within the frame of this document and my continued inquiry.

Lug Descriptions

This chapter begins with a particular description of Lug as the ignition to my inquiry. It is within a framework of questions that I begin to articulate the praxis involving Lugs. The description of three additional Lugs will illuminate key aspects in the inquiry that are distinct and important as the platform for my further exploration into theory and methods.

Theorizing Inquiry

This chapter has narrowed my theoretical explorations to a selected few scholars and explores their theories in relation to my articulations of Lugs as I locate them through Transmediation techniques, performativity through text and verbal language as well as the two important methodologies in my research; Performative Inquiry and A/r/tography.

Lug Trilogy

This series of three Dance/Theatre monologues are exploring a new form of Lugs, which move beyond silent poetic narrative. In this chapter I am proposing that theoretical issues can be explored and challenged through a Performative Inquiry. In the case of Lug Trilogy I am looking at issues in education.
Teaching Stories

This chapter is a reflection of two distinct residencies whereby my work as artist/teacher was informed by the methods and theories I have been able to articulate throughout my research. Both reflections illuminate the common questions and illuminations that surface from my continued inquiry.

Summary

This Chapter will coalesce the articulations of my praxis and consolidate my observations proposing my continued research with Lugs.

Visuals

As my background is both visual arts and dance, I have found my work throughout the masters program has been located both kinaesthetically and visually. This chapter is a tribute to the visual work that has been a valuable part of my inquiry both in the form of photos and power points.

Figure 2  I Felt Awe
Through the methodologies of A/r/tography and Performative Inquiry, how do I conceptualize and articulate the transmediation of personal stories to poetic embodiment and how does this process impact my notions of self and place?
Introduction

Ancestry of my Practice
Chasms of Spectatorship
Unpacking vocabulary
The Ancestry of my Practice.

One evening in 1981 I tumbled onto Simon Fraser University’s main stage and rolled repeatedly over a suitcase until I had arrived centre stage, I climbed onto it and there I perched peering pensively through the fourth wall. The choreography was called Departures, my first performance and my world debut as an eager, bold, and quite unseasoned dancer. The choreographer, Jorge Holguin, a visiting student from South America shaped his metaphors flamboyantly. His Latin, surreal, sensibility was in good form, moving us through both profound and banal perspectives of arrivals and departures, and all the critical spaces between. As the lights faded on stage, the final line from the sound track echoed, “Call collect anytime”. For the audience, there wasn’t much hope for profound resonations as I am sure the ecstatic, gleeful exclamations of the dancers backstage seeped recklessly into the theatre. I was propelled off stage with excitement and relief, confident that I would be a performer for life! I had never felt such crystallized intensity and knew that this experience would resonate with me for a long time.

Despite the deeply poetic implication of this work, the post performance reflection was entirely narcissistic. All those people paying for parking, babysitters and tickets to watch me. I am sure the costume made me look great and I didn’t forget a single count! What more could they want?! The fact that we were dancing an immigrant’s story of arrival and departure, of place and displacement, of identity and heritage, ancestry and roots, seemed to pass me by. The fact that we were raising issues of how the living can die and yet continue to live as a ghost of oneself, that all of what one knows can disappear in loss of value and respect as a result of displacement, seemed to wash over me. My engagement with the work certainly was not about...
meaning but rather self-acclamation. I am a dancer, I performed and the audience likes me. Most importantly, I looked good!

This was my world of dance for many years with varying degrees of authenticity and depth but never leaving this island of self-affirmation through recognition, no, adoration of form. My friend the choreographer did in fact die but not without me stopping all activity in my life to be by his side and act as his friend, collaborator, nurse and embodied inspiration for the last moments (1 ½ years) of his life. Together we created intensively while he was dying and I was living fervently, double time, and in doing this my world of dance radically shifted. I heard the voice of the dance and my body, the dancer, became purely the access point. Jorge died far too young and with far too much work yet to be done. I will never forget something he said amidst fever driven monologs that were mostly incoherent “I am not finished yet...” At the age of 29, it was the first death I had witnessed and I knew again that my life would never be the same. I had been present for a dying process and recognized the terrible beauty in this journey, potent with creativity combined with an almost acidic lucidity. The vitality in this crisis where imagination lacked the balance of the body, where a man could be wrapped in a blanket in the studio, grey and weak and use my body as a vehicle for his voice, was profoundly transformational and a pivotal point in regarding my journey in dance from where I stand now. I am now beginning to understand the ancestry of my practice. I understand how that experience informed my current work as I embrace the voices of others and move it into kinaesthetic space to be heard and felt by those who witness. I hoped then and now that this amplification becomes a kind of resuscitation of the ‘self’.
I have always been interested in crisis and the rupture it produces from a continuum into an opening of the unexpected, revealing possibilities beyond one's imagination.

For the past 20 years I have been working with marginalized groups in areas of disempowerment or disenfranchised members of the community. Whether it is physical disabilities, racial/sexual/gender injustice or intersocial dysfunctions, I have always been able to trace it to identity and sense of place within oneself in relationship to family, friends close community and to a broader level of global community. As the borders in our world become blurred with heightened information access and intercontinental fluidity I often witness not necessarily racial discrimination but rather symptoms of cultural claustrophobia on a global scale. With this murkiness I observe not necessarily a cultural diversity but rather a cultural hybridity, which results in an identity crisis on a monumental scale. We are so occupied with underlining the fact that we are all equal that we forget the value of distinction.

Working in schools, cultural groups, inner city drop in centres and with elders and physically challenged has provided me with the panoramic view of dance alive and well outside the very small world I started in. As I continue to work in the schools as an artist in residence addressing “anti-bullying” issues, I have realized that I am not dealing with bloody noses in the corner of the school and echoed calls of “ragheads”, “chinks”, and “niggers”. In fact it is the opposite. Instead I am dealing with the profound silencing that comes with the “re-orientation” of place and home that immigrants are obligated to undertake. When asking an Asian child her name in the classroom she responds “Donna”. She tells me this is her Canadian name. I ask for her Asian name and after a few tries with gentle guidance I have it. May I call you by your birth name? The student reveals a grateful and embarrassed smile. This is undoing the
cultural silencing and finding the whisper that most likely has forgotten its language. Below is a poem from an Asian girl in one of my classes, she was embarrassed by it and felt that perhaps she had done the exercise wrong. I responded by saying, “I will have to buy you a blank book and I want you to promise me you will continue writing poetry.”

This silencing forces the ritual, the traditions, the prayers, and the songs out of the body. My interest has been to unearth these buried treasures and to cast them back into space to be valued, recognized and celebrated. I want children, teens, adults and elders to speak, write, dance and sing about their community, their homes their family and by being a catalytic facilitator and director in this process, I hope that some kind of empowerment can result.

Recently I had the honour of teaching in a mixed abilities school for dance in London. I was performing with Jade who has severe cerebral palsy. We stood facing each other palms of our hands pressing into each other, bearing each other’s weight, a kinaesthetically co-dependent relationship. With a professional able-bodied dancer it would be an exercise achieved quickly and then ready for layering of content or other physical complexities. With Jade, this was enough. I was constantly re negotiating our relationship of fulcrum and balance as the tremors in her body sent layers of
information through mine. It was her body’s song and I was learning the words. This is what I consider true dance.

The next step of my journey has been to take this information and move it into my skill base. To listen, process and refine, then dance these stories of arrivals and departures, identity and borders, place and home. How can one man’s story of a move from Mykolayiv to Chilliwack, squeeze the heart and bring knowing smiles to those who have departed a homeland and arrived on strange territory even if only on a poetic level. I began to formulate this interest with a series of solo dances called Lugs. In September 2006 I began a methodology course (A/r/tography), which was fortunately centred on the theme of luggage and it was here I began to explore notions of displacement and identity through movement in an entirely new way. The class started with a stream of consciousness creative writing exercise where we wrote for 10 minutes based on the theme of Luggage. Perhaps luck or perhaps a very lucid moment resulted in a short piece of prose, which became the foundation of my research work for the next 1½ year. The writing is included below;

Suitcase

The first image I see is trembling hands

Hands that are manifesting the potency of the moment
The second image I have is of a glance a sweeping and momentary look behind

Drinking in a last image and wanting to preserve it

Departing and arriving

Moving forward and leaving so much behind

A trajectory into present weighted with a memory

There is sadness, loss, longing for what can and never will be

There is a density in the environment, the air is acrid, the surface is mottled and the noise is industrial and yet for a fleeting moment there is a silent, suspension...

The suitcase is lifted

The feet are moving

The present engulfs and suffocates the life that we know

All that is familiar is lost

All the threads that weave the value and meaning of self and place dissolve in a short breath

The suitcase is heavy although it is holding very little

The hinges and latches are rusted and unreliable and so there is a leather belt that is wrapped around the base and through the handle

The suitcase is placed with the others and the feet move forward to the next arrival, which will become home for a while

With an oversized overcoat, a large hat and a bulky leather suitcase, my Chaplinesque character began to tell the stories through a poetic narrative with dance as the vehicle. Each Lug traverses an arc in narrative and structure traveling from one point of Departure to another of Arrival with a crisis point in-between. This crisis could be loss of language, transformation of immediacy and presence to memory or shifting emotional, cultural and personal artefacts to practical objects of survival. Questions are
provoked from this such as; “What would I take with me if I could only take one bag?”
“How would I survive in a new land?” “Do I need my family around me?” “Who is my
community right now?”
Through spontaneous graffiti from the audience, to found letters, to emailed memories I
base the solos on stories of others. With saxophonists, improvisational singers and
digital artists I collaborate through structured improvisations.

Throughout running my professional dance company in Denmark (1986 – 1996)
I recognized many threads running through my choreographic work that continues
today. I have always made work, which addresses identity and place. My works have
been located in moving buses, warehouses, on scaffolding, in courtyards, with dancers
addressing archetypes within an isolated context.

Figure 5  Lester
Dancer – Christian Holland
Photograher – Jens Hemmel
Figure 6  Kaspar Hauser 1  
Dancer – Thomas Eisenhardt  
Photographer – Jens Hemmel

Figure 7  Give us this day  
Dancer – Thomas Eisenhardt  
Photographer – Jens Hemmel
The second important observation of my practice is the continued interest in balancing refined craft with unpredictable reality. Balancing on bags of shifting sand or teacups perched on baldheads provoking the tension that comes with unmeasured factors. This is vital to the level of astuteness the performer brings to the work and in turn the audience brings to the witnessing. In this way, Lug carries the threads of my historical interest in place and identity, and plays with weaving material that is thoroughly researched with unknown factors. I rarely perform a Lug which doesn’t move me to tears immediately after. This is a far cry from my first performance at Simon Fraser University. Do I look good? Did I remember all the moves? Was there a large audience? Will I get a good review? These have now become irrelevant concerns.

When a 50-year-old woman from Poland comes up to me after performing a Lug in the middle of Yaletown one spring evening and says, “You just told my story” I know that I am listening to the dance whisper and it seems that to my delight, so are others.
(lüg), What and Why
To pull or carry with force or effort: *to Lug a suitcase upstairs*
To introduce or interject in an inappropriate or irrelevant manner: *to Lug personalities into a discussion of philosophy.*
(Of a sailing ship) to carry an excessive amount of (sail) for the conditions prevailing
To pull or tug laboriously.
(Of an engine or machine) to jerk, hesitate, or strain: *The engine Lugs when we climb a steep hill.*
An act or instance of Lugging; a forcible pull; haul.
A wooden box for transporting fruit or vegetables.
*Slang.* a request for or exaction of money, as for political purposes: *They put the Lug on him at the office.*
A ridge or welt that helps to provide traction, as on a tire or the sole of a shoe.
*Masonry.* either of the ends of a Lug sill.
*Carpentry.* (in a double-hung window) one of a pair of projections extending downward from the ends of the meeting rail of the upper sash.
A leather loop hanging down from a saddle, through which a shaft is passed for support.
An awkward, clumsy fellow.
A blockhead.
A man; guy.
A device that grips and holds tightly.
A metal or plastic clasp for holding together papers, letters, etc.
An article of jewelry or other decoration clipped onto clothing, shoes, hats, etc.
A flange on the upper surface of a horseshoe.
Also called Lug. Shipbuilding. A short length of angle iron connecting and maintaining the angle between two members or surfaces.
An embrace.
To grip tightly; fasten with or as if with a clip.
To encircle; encompass.
To block by illegally throwing the body across a player's legs from behind.
A quadrilateral sail bent upon a yard that crosses the mast obliquely.
Any burrowing annelid of the genus *Arenicola*, of ocean shores, having tufted gills: used as bait for fishing.
A handle or projection used as a hold or support.
A Lug nut
Lugsail

A projecting part of a larger piece that helps to provide traction, as on a tire or the sole of a boot. A copper or brass fitting to which electrical wires can be soldered or otherwise connected. A clumsy fool; a blockhead earlap, probably of Scandinavian origin

1624, "handle of a pitcher," from Lugge (Scot.) "earlap of a cap, ear" (1495; in 19c. Scotland this was the only word for "ear"), probably from Scand. (cf. Swed. Lugg "forelock," Norw. Lugg "tuft of hair"). The connecting notion is "something that can be gripped and pulled." Applied 19c. to mechanical objects that can be grabbed or gripped. Meaning "stupid fellow" is from 1924; that of "lout, sponger" is 1931, Amer.Eng.

A sail with four corners that is hoisted from a yard that is oblique to the mast [a projecting piece that is used to lift or support or turn something Marine worms having a row of tufted gills along each side of the back; often used for fishing bait Carry with difficulty; "You'll have to Lug this suitcase" Obstruct; "My nose is all stuffed"; "Her arteries are blocked"

*Arabic* يَجِرُ يَخْبَبُ

*Czech* vléči

*Danish* slæbe; hale
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<td>Turkish</td>
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(lūg)

verb - to traverse a contiguous arc of arrivals and departures

Kathryn Ricketts

My research has involved investigating identity and place within the language of contemporary dance. I have been working with disenfranchised groups such as physically and mentally disabled, elders, inner city/alternative school children and immigrants for approximately 25 years. This work has been a process of unearthing their individual sense of self in relation to place and bringing this to an authenticity of embodiment. In my process of listening and gathering stories, songs, prayers, fears and memories, I invite a catalytic process whereby anyone can explore identity and place from a literary or visual location to an interpretive kinaesthetic language. In this work I search for lived moments of vulnerability, which are then carefully crafted into small scenes to be remembered and sequenced later. I have witnessed the participant’s shared moments of loss or crisis as well as pride and revelation and know that this is a position of honour and must be held with sensitivity and mindfulness. The resulting performances of these shared processes have become a testimony to a discovered agency, a voice that in many cases has been muffled or even muted by hegemonic constructs of assimilation both culturally and existentially. This process moves further into a personal embodiment as I allow these stories to filter through my own lived experiences resulting in a series of solos called Lugs.

Lugs explore an arc of tension between points of arrival and departure. This arc invariably arrives at points of crisis, pivotal points in the poetic narrative and in the dancer’s body. Physical, emotional and imagistic reverberations and ruptures stem from these points producing vital energy. This liminal space charged with tension, produces what Eugenio Barba described as sats.

Sats can be translated with the word “impulse” or “preparation” “to be ready to....” In the language of our work it indicates, among other things, the moment in which one is ready to act, the instant
which precedes the action, when all the energy is already there, ready to intervene, but as suspended, still held in the fist, a tiger-butterfly about to take flight.
(Barba, 1995, p. 40)

In this instant, which precedes the action, there is a construction of availability, a “decided body”. Movement that is activated without chronology or logic but rather with an astute presence to a moment. This moment is referred to by David Appelbaum as the stop moment where historical knowledge is suspended and a revelatory opportunity is produced.

One comes to an end, the other opens. Between closing and beginning lives a gap, a caesura, a discontinuity. The betweeness is a hinge that belongs to neither one nor the other. It is neither poised nor unpoised, yet moves both ways. It is this space that is the primary subject of my interest. It is the stop.
(Appelbaum, 1995, p.15)

The suitcase, an important component of the dance, reveals an artefact as a trigger or rather a catalyst to these stop moments. This artefact has ranged from an old crusty piece of bread, a worn letter, coins, jewels or a small helium filled balloon in the shape of a heart. In one Lug, I use a square piece of sod as a metaphor for the delineation of land of heart. Piecing a sense of place like squares of sod to construct the yard, the back yard and the place where we feel safe. In working with sod I explore displacement, delineation, here and there, cultivation and rawness, past and present, contrivance and authenticity and the notions of constructing identity through a hybridity of cultures. Dark soil, warm and granular on the bare feet and grass soft and pungent. The senses are collaborating in the witnessing of this story. A dialogue is fostered through the accumulation of moments between source material, those who witness and my body’s a receptor
I work/play with a mindfulness and kinaesthetic astuteness weaving the tools of improvisation with an attentiveness to each moment. Nachmanovitch refers to this as “the power of free play sloshing against the power of limits.” (Nachmanovitch 1990)

These kinaesthetic investigations are not fleeting documentaries of lives lived and lost nor do I act as a conduit through which another story is told. Rather I portray rhizomatic journeys, a/r/tographic impulses of tangled and woven impulses both others and mine.

Memories may be provoked, feelings may be triggered, concepts revealed. It is an invitation for those who witness to become available to this provocation. Reciprocity within a suspended poetic narrative is unravelled. Availability is the key factor for both the dancer/researcher and the audience— availability to allow an excavation from the strata of our memories, images and emotional states in regard to identity and place.

As a solo dancer, choreographer, teacher and now researcher I am constantly finding ways to locate this vital creative potential and to continue to develop questions and observations within my praxis in relation to these creative opportunities. This inquiry informs how I can cultivate environments that are based on curiosity, vulnerability and honesty exploring personal testimonies of place and identity and then responding with Lug solos.

As I continue my inquiry I ask myself questions such as; how does the purpose of Lugs is to inspire an understanding and appreciation for the language of poetic embodied narrative and then an invitation to move beyond witnessing to active engagement as a catalyst to discovery. This is achieved through my research with Lugs embracing the methodologies of both Performative Inquiry and A/r/tography. As I research further I posit that both methodologies are tools inviting us as researchers/teachers to shift the way we perceive self and place. My research work with Lugs has provoked a shift in my perspective of the performer’s embodiment of virtuous skill as the exclusive effective ingredient. The results of my inquiry have moved the
boundaries of performer/audience beyond witness/process/interpret to an active engagement with possibilities for change.

How can one embody a borrowed memory? Is it possible to own, borrow, rent another story with authenticity? How can one contain the echoes of another life within the complexity of our own? How can these Lugs as kinaesthetic interventions of (dis)placement and identity stored in our luggage, serve as an embodiment, no, emblem of these shared testimonies of belonging?

Several aspects of Lugs have and continue to stoke the fire of my inquiry as I coalesce the history of my practice with “non dancers” I ask the question whether authenticity can co-exist with virtuosity and in turn can I, and the community groups I work with, embody a language that inspires, informs and empowers with mutual respect and appreciation? In both situations reciprocity through an active discourse serves as the foundation, and it is here a creative language surfaces articulating this praxis.

My thesis is hinged on the question;

How do I conceptualize and articulate the methods and theories of transmediating personal stories into a silent, poetic embodiment and what happens to our notions of self and place in this process?

How is this question located as artist/researcher/teacher? In moving through this inquiry I come to understand a clearer stronger theoretical and methodological framework and consequently I am able to construct a space of freedom where curiosity can abound.

This articulation of practice allows for a confidence to work within the unknown and often challenging parameters of community based art projects with a competency to relevance and efficacy. As improvisation is the core of Lugs it is essential to maintain the integrity of this by juxtaposing theories, methods and skill
with spontaneity and immediacy. It is this combination that brings the authenticity of the work to meet the history and refinement of the practice.

This theoretical and methodological articulation is an inquiry into the how, what and why of Lugs as I trouble and probe the angles in relation to existing theories such as Marjorie Seigal’s (1995) transmediation, Judith Butler’s (1997) performative speech and practices such as Barba’s (1995) theatre of transition, that intersect with and weave through mine. This work forms a valuable foundation where the breadth and diversity of community engaged projects can be built with strength and clarity leading to explorations and celebrations of cultural and existential distinctions.

Figure 10 I Am Here
The Roundhouse Community Dancers
Photographer – Kathryn Ricketts
Unpacking Language

I have selected key words that appear throughout this thesis and from which many of my theories are hinged. For the purpose of clarification, I would like to briefly locate myself in this vocabulary. This linguistic collection consists of;

**Identity**
**Empowerment**
**Place**
**Availability**

There comes a time in the writing of a thesis where I sense there must be a lone voice. The scholarly fervour of actively seeking alignments, intersections and rebounds with other scholars, rests and there must be a faith in the containment, absorption and resonations that have resulted from this. It is academic writing ‘unplugged’ and yet not identifying itself to the privacy of a journal. This is how I will briefly reveal my linguistic intentions and clarify the potency of these words.

**Identity** has been tossed about with such familiarity that associative and cognitive meaning is no longer a possibility. It is a branding of a socio-cultural phenomenon that challenges the possibility of resonating hermeneutically. *Hoover* is no longer a brand name but has graduated to the ranks of a verb “Can you hoover that rug?” *Heinz* has transformed to a noun, “Pass the Heinz”. Historicity combined with current patterns radically shifts our language creating a linguistic stasis. I am hoping to crack this stasis by claiming a very personal handling of this word.
Identity has lost its clothes, like the emperor, it has become a projected figment, an automatic signal to the cultural chaos we experience through globalization. In my use of Identity I am attempting to bring back the micro perspective without losing the broader interconnectedness to community. Many of my residencies in schools are based on celebration of cultural diversity, in response to discriminatory issues. These residencies are titled “Who am I, Who are we?” This question starts with locating self within the hyper personal and then extends to the layers of immediate and global community.

I am interested in the word identity carrying personal potency to bring it back to the simplicity of self without the necessity of carrying the weight of global implications. Although this is virtually impossible, the very intention brings a self-focused moment, which is equally as necessary as global awareness.
Place – I often write about this notion of exploring “sense of place” and it is worthwhile to dissect this phrase in the asking of what does it mean to have a sense of something as all encompassing as place, and is place a location in this case or a concept of safety? As I am working with the body as a medium in my practice there are often no immediate words to what is felt or perceived in a physical exploration-rather the notion of multi layered perceptions of the immediate moments transpire and shape the next transpired moments heightening the senses in the process. Often when we search for words to describe a kinaesthetic experience, the participants will emit sounds or gestures instead of words. This is an attempt to share or even substitute language with other forms creating a three dimensionality to language. The language accesses all senses and moves through space in all directions. This engagement of all senses in exploration of a concept is what leads me to use the word sense instead of understanding. This multi directionality pertains also to place as a non-fixed location in space but rather a ‘site’ in the heart.

Table 2 Place
Empowerment a term used far too often by the milieu in which I locate myself now as community arts/ based researcher/practitioner. We like to think of ourselves as having great impact on our participants to a degree where there is a tangible efficacy. A transformation. Empowerment is often thought of as an energy that radiates from the core outward, it has an extraversion in its impulse and penetrates circles of pre-conceived oppression. I see empowerment as an action of removing the encircling layers of repression opposed to a penetrating trajectory from the core, allowing these layers to dissolve the forces that silence the voice. Just as it is noted by Brecht (1995) that acting is not about accumulating skills but rather a peeling away of layers of resistance and repressive inhibitors, empowerment is the result of courage, the courage to reveal vulnerability opposed to the power to dissolve repression.

The final unpacking of vocabulary is availability. Many times I have heard people say that my process is transformative which makes me very nervous. I can only create a
possibility, an invitation for transformation. I create the environment where structures are built so that unknown factors can be explored. In this constructed space we cultivate a sense of heightened trust and respect which is what I term “safe space.” This is an invitation to shift and allow the ground we normally plant ourselves on to crack and allows a new light source. This structure of allowing the exploration, inviting the rupture to illuminate new perspectives is what I call availability.

Table 4 Availability
Chasms of Spectatorship

In this chapter I examine notions of place and identity and their interrelationship through the lens of contemporary dance. I am researching a variety of literature based on socio-political theory in theatre, performance theory; arts based research and theories of transmediation from text to interpretive, embodied play.

My history of performance has journeyed through a myriad of theories and methodologies; I seem to have arrived at a place where I have the greatest insight as to what my research and practice are not. In explaining my work to others I am constantly met with the query “Is it therapy?” or “Is it like playback or forum theatre?” I am adamant to reply “no!” and then in addition, “My motivation is not transformation but rather invitation”. None the less through this negation of descriptives or categorizations I begin a process of elimination, and in doing so am arriving to a place of definition.

My literary research, in relation to my dance work focused on notions of identity and place, has led me to explore the history of Agit Prop, Theatre of the Oppressed and more generally, political theatre as well as notions of performance theory. In turn this has led to investigations/definitions of, and relationship between audience and performer to more contemporary methodologies such as A/r/tography and Performative Inquiry. Further to this inquiry I am examining the relationship between researcher/teacher and performer and how this work relates to literary scholars’ new findings with their work through a transmediated process of interactive exploration. As a strong advocate of the performing arts being more than an act of spectatorship, I am the most satisfied when the work renders a bridge between audience and performer, constructing a dialogue where illumination or even empowerment result; however, I am
conflicted by virtue of strong traditions of codification in viewing and participating in the performing arts.

Through this prismatic method of inquiry I will start with the specific focus of historical, dramatic methodologies as a means to engage and inspire audiences to political action. Bertolt Brecht worked counter to Aristotelian theatre— that which portrays conflict to be resolved within the tidiness of the stage context— in that he asks audience members to be active critical thinkers in the viewing of performance. They engage intellectually and emotionally, problematizing character, plot and meaning; it is through this that the audience, becomes engaged politically. The camps in terms of audience definition as expounded by performance theorist (Patterson, 2003) hold that audiences are either reflectionists as interventionists or realists with a modernist viewpoint. The argument is that the realists portray an accurate rendition of reality and Frederic Jameson questions reality in stating: “By encouraging an aesthetic of mimesis or imitation, tends to perpetuate a preconceived notion of some external reality to be imitated” (Jamieson, 1979, p. 30) Conversely, the modernist employs a subjective, emotionally blurred lens: a montage of fractured meanings described by Lukacs as montage; “the technique of juxtaposing heterogeneous, unrelated pieces of reality torn from their context”. (Lukacs, 1980. p. 43)

There will always be arguments between these perceived binaries with the objectives of performance accessibility, critical engagement, emotional/political substance, relevance to phenomena; however, these are all attributes which can be both achieved and dismissed in both forms. Victor Turner’s performance theory explores this theatrical paradigm in another related binary: “social” and “aesthetic” dramas both of which hinge on this notion of transformation. He speaks of theatre “as a way of
experimenting with, act out and ratify change” (Turner, 1969, p. 23) He then dissect this transformative potentiality into three categories:

1) in the drama, that is, in the story
2) in the performers whose special task it is to temporarily undergo a rearrangement of their body/mind.
3) in the audience where changes may either be temporary (entertainment) or permanent (ritual)
   (Turner, 1977, p.123)

Aesthetic drama provokes a change in the audience in relation to the performers, whereas Social Drama considers all participants in the dramatic event even though actors are specific to the performance.

Social Drama feels closer to my work in that it does not ride the binary so radically as does Brecht’s notions of audience engagement. This blurred line between audience and performer begins to diminish what I call the chasms of spectatorship.

The lights are out, the chasm between the stage and the auditorium defines the distinction between virtuosity/craft and the critical or maybe just thirsty eye. We as artists wonder why we are losing our audience to the world of “digi-fix” Why D.V.D. over live performance? A possible answer, “Because I get it and if I don’t I rewind and play it again or pop in another option.” The luxury of being lost has long been smothered in the world of digital media. And so that chasm carved by tradition perpetuates a hit and miss criteria in impacting an audience; if they do not feel lost, the performance has been successful.

I have always been interested in turning on the lights, crashing the myths and informing, even inspiring audiences to be unafraid of the beast of abstraction. I have done this through lecture/seminars, panels and informal presentations with the intention to service the artist and to foster understanding and appreciation for those on the other side of the chasm. This objective, with all its valour, nonetheless perpetuates the
distinction and hierarchy of the tradition – that is to say, information transmission from here to there as opposed to experienced learning and cognitive witnessing.

These notions of experiencing drama as an active audience member as opposed to passive observation is echoed in Augusta Boel who was seriously influenced by Paulo Freire’s work, These cultural activists believed in moving theatre from a didactically motivated place to inspiring action towards sociopolitical change within the marginalized groups their work was addressing. Boal’s design of Forum Theatre invited audience members to move between performer and spectator role with the ability to act out the impetus for change thus bridging the separation (chasm) between audience and performer. This dualism in role is what he calls the spect-actor. Forum Theatre is facilitated by a so-called neutral character, The Joker, who navigates the exchange between audiences and performers through a series of stop actions where the audience moves into the scene and re-constructs the action and initiates from within, thereby addressing an oppressive point in the play and instigating a resolution to this point. I have never seen the Joker as playing a neutral role— in fact quite the opposite, as they always seem to delight in the insidious sense of power derived by riding the wave between two forces: oppressor and oppressed. With the deftness of a political acrobat the joker has the power to judge, permit and suspend action. And although progressively distinct from its predecessor of Russian political street theatre, it still does not move far from the definition of Agit-Prop; propaganda combined with agitation. This notion of constructing agency for transformation with the disenfranchised seems close to my work yet feels not only contrived and condescending but also self-righteous and hypocritical. This subtle difference in what I hope to achieve in my work brings me to the concept of availability.
David Appelbaum speaks of this notion of availability within his work on the embodiment of knowledge. He defines the difference of knowledge perceived through oneself as an extension or a piece within a framework as opposed to feeling as though one is the site or vessel of information to be experienced: “It becomes instead a container of an unknown identity through which move currents of sensation, themselves percipient and mindful of a reality to which the organism belongs” (Appelbaum, p. 78, 1995). Availability is very different than provocation, the word I associate with Boal’s (1995) spect-actor. Availability is a calling, an unveiling, an invitation to The Stop as a transformative moment in-between.

When I began working with marginalized groups in our community, my research provoked a radical paradigm shift for me and with this an increasing awareness of aligning methodologies and theories. I observed dance living with a vital force in the most unexpected groups: wheel chair users, elders, teen substance abusers. Members of our society who have otherwise felt silenced, disenfranchised and forgotten were embracing my explorations of movement and its direct relationship with memory, text and value with open minds and hearts. This affected me deeply creating a Appelbaum’s (1995) would Stop moment in my life as a performer/teacher/researcher:

I had exited what was known and re-entered a new space where traditions of thought had ceased. With both awe and sense of mild discomfort I knew that dance was not exclusive to aesthetic virtuosity, but rather belonged to a much broader realm.

In my process of listening and gathering stories, songs, prayers, fears and memories, I searched for lived moments of vulnerability which were then carefully crafted into small scenes to be remembered and sequenced later. I have witnessed the participant’s shared moments of loss or crisis as well as pride and revelation and know the honour in this position must be held lightly. The resulting performance of this
shared process became a testimony to their voice, a voice that in many cases has been muffled or even muted by our society.

**Mythification of Home**

The sense of muffled voice and in many cases a cultural muting propelled me to look into the concept of Diaspora, particularly its focus on the concept of homeland.

Traditionally the meaning of Diaspora was specific to the exile of Jews and their disbursement throughout Europe signifying oppression, degradation and erosion of identity. Currently, Diaspora, is a term that can imply general cultural displacement as William Safran generalizes:

> “Diaspora community” seem increasingly to be used as metaphoric designations for several categories of people – expatriated, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants and ethnic and racial minorities *tout court* – in much the same way that “ghetto” has come to designate all kinds of crowded, constricted, and disprivileged urban environments, and “holocaust” has come to be applied to all kinds of mass murder.
> (Safran, 1991, p.83)

He goes on to outline four distinctive points that work off of Walker Conners’s original concept, “That segment of people living outside the homeland” (Sheffer, 1986). These points, Conner posits, are the finite measuring of the Diaspora:

1) they or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original “centre” to town or more “peripheral”, or foreign, regions 2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland – its physical location, history and achievements 3) they believe that they are not – and perhaps cannot be - fully accepted by their original homeland, its physical location, history, and achievements 4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return – when conditions are appropriate.
> (Safran, 1991. p. 83)
However, further in this article, another scholar Boulder speaks about a “mythification of the past.” He also cites a cartoon, which appeared in Le Monde several years ago, the cartoon showing an old man who says “I have never lost hope of returning to my homeland some day. However, I no longer remember where I came from” (Safran, 1991). This notion of homeland as vague concept rather than a living memory interests me. Stuart Hall writes of the ephemeral quality of displacement,

> Identities are formed at the unstable point where the ‘unspeakable’ stories of subjectivity meet the narratives of a history, a culture. And since the colonized subject is positioned in relation to cultural narratives which have been profoundly expropriated, he/she is always “somewhere else”; doubly marginalized, displaced, always other than where the subject is or is able to speak from. (Hall, 1987, p. 34)

The homeland becomes a myth held to the light allowing the utopian ideal to wash over the hardships of being a minority in what Safran (1991) calls the “host country.”

It has become increasingly clear to me that my research investigating identity-making and notions of place addresses existential borderlands opposed to a geographic phenomenon. The location of my Lugs are not centered in a cartographic framework where customs and practices are prescribed by tangible delineations but rather they transcend to existential planes where value and meaning resonate from deep within the heart. These cultures and borders are then working on a shared plane embracing shared lived experiences. Recently I was engaged in a poetry and movement residency at a high school where we followed the theme “if you really knew me”. Although the classroom had a high ratio of immigrants the subject matter of their poems were more about displacement of the heart. I have included here a poem and image from one of the students as it addresses so beautifully the notion of “other” that is the underbelly of the diaspora lens.
I cannot hate.
Because if I hate.
I still care.
But I'm done hating
And waiting
For you.
To come back
And I'm done caring
About what people think,
And I’m done believing
In what I used to
Believe in.

Because no matter what,
Nothing
Will ever
Be the same.

With permission form Stephanie Chan & Emily Louie

This is not to dismiss the disruptions that occur when moving from Mykolayviv to Chilliwack but to recognize that this move is the skin of a story that resonates deeper within.

Cultural Identity is a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as ‘being’. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending time, place, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything which if historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialist past, they are subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power. They always exist within, and must be thought through, not outside, difference. Far from being grounded in a mere recovery of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past. Stuart Hall, Cultural Identity and Diaspora, 1990’ of the past, (Hall, 2001, p.104)

Boulder asks an important question at the end of his article, and why must we construct binaries that locate us as found or lost, placed or dislodged?

French Philosopher Jacques Derrida calls Difference: ‘the playing movement that produces these effects of difference, a weave of similarities and differences that refuse to separate into fixed binary oppositions’. They know that everyone comes form somewhere, speaks
from some place, is multiply positioned. But they don’t see cultures as autonomous self-sufficient entities that bind people forever into common scripts or seal them off from a wider dialogic conversation. Akobena Mercer argues, they are committed to abandon the hierarchies’ of binary thinking ‘so as to enter the over-determined spaces in between which relations of identity and difference are actually lived’.

(Hall, 1987, p. 36)

Hall addresses this further inquiring: should there be a new lens on the notion of citizenship that allows for cultural alignment with heritage including language and ritual practices as well as extraterritorial interest without this equivocating a cultural disloyalty? The answer to this question should undoubtedly be yes, opening borders should be synonymous with embracing a holistic notion of citizenship.

My work with community groups in unearthing their cultural practices and bringing this to an authenticity of embodiment was a step forward from the information transmission of process; however, disengagement occurred with my self as an artist as I moved into another place of “privileged facilitator”. I felt the missing limb of a performer’s drive for excellence in all aspects; political, social, emotional and physical. I was encountering a duality in my investigative practice. Was it not possible to embody the elite emblem of a trained, experienced dancer and yet abolish the chasm of aesthetic discourse? Richard Schechner speaks about the craft of the performer metaphorically as a circular printing press where the performer has the skill base to return to the beginning point of a performance time and time again. “The actors make a journey that ends where it began, while the audience is “moved” to a new place” (Schechner, 1975). This craft is also revealed in a slightly different way by Ryszard Cieslak of Polis Teatrik Laboratorium, who speaks about material evolving out of an extensive process of via negativa, a relentless process of rejecting a relatively large percentage of the material explored in rehearsal. When a score is designated, it is like a
glass encasing the flickering light of the candle. He speaks about the flame as what
illuminates the score:

The flame is alive. Just as the flame in the candle glass moves flutters,
rises, falls, almost goes out, suddenly glows brighter, responds to each
breath of wind - so my inner life varies from night to night, from
moment to moment.
(Schechner, 1977, p. 19)

Schechner discusses a dependability in form constituting the craft of the performer
whereas Cieslak (Schechner, 1977) speaks of the lifeblood of a performer alive and
changing but also within a sold structure.

Authenticity/Virtuosity

I believe that the work I was doing with community groups felt like one foot on
the dock and one in the boat, as though attempting to embrace two ways of approaching
performance and reconciling myself through a compromise of both.

It was in September 2005 that I realized with a simple solo investigating place
and identity that I had crossed the border into an entirely new way of working
integrating two important methodologies; Performative Inquiry and A/r/tography. Lynn
Fels describes Peformative Inquiry;

Performative Inquiry is a (re)search methodology that explores
recognizes honours the absences, landscapes and moments of learning
realized through performance.
(Fels, 1998, p.28)

Although Performative Inquiry is a methodology that embraces that which is
unknown with a curiosity led by the body, it still raises the question of craft and
virtuosity. Does this mean that anyone can be an artist and can and should perform?
Imagine if we transferred this notion to brain surgeons or rocket scientists. Are we then
assuming that it takes no skill to be an artist? How then do I reconcile my 10 years of
rigorous training and another 10 of dedicated apprenticeships? As I research further I
posit that Performative Inquiry is a tool inviting us as researchers/teachers to shift the way we perceive information in relation to our own sense of self. This concept then has far more breadth than the question of virtuosity and authenticity and how it relates to my work as a professional performer. Fels underlines this breadth;

By embracing performative inquiry, I am proposing that performance as research (verb) is a journey of "knowing, doing, being, creating" and that it is through performative inquiry that we may come to an "interstanding" of our journey/landscape that is imagining of our universe. (Fels, 1998, p.28)

The trilogy of knowing, doing, being is also echoed in A/r/tography’s notion of metissage, and integration of the teacher, artist and researcher who through active inquiry hyphenates these roles by creating through interdisciplinarity.

Theory as A/r/tography creates an imaginative turn by theorizing or explaining phenomena through aesthetic experiences that integrates knowing, doing and making: experiences that simultaneously value technique and content through acts of inquiry; experiences that value complexity and difference within a third space. (Irwin, 2004, p.31)

Not only had I encountered a methodology that recognized the plurality of my focus as a teacher/artist and researcher but it also recognized the nature of work with this notion of displacement, a recognition that there is a liminal space between notions of home and realities of isolation, a third space where a vitality is discovered. This liminal space is where borders and barriers, culturally/socially/emotionally are erased. Smith explains;

The typography of borderlands is simultaneously the suturing space of multiple oppressions and the potentially liberatory space through which to migrate toward a new subject position. (Smith, 1993, p.169)

The methodology of both A/r/tography and Performative Inquiry are deeply hermeneutic practices, which depends entirely on integration and interpretation of
experiences that convey meaning always in the process of becoming. Another explanation: a way to make strange familiar and familiar strange. A slippery slope for those who need replicability, verifiability and generalizability, instead, the researcher requires faith and a strong sense of experiencing and critically processing global design opposed to a micro-analysis. To be able to piece the fragments of research together – a mosaic construct of meaning. Performative Inquiry invites an intertextual learning calling an otherness into being through play and explorations. This is an invitation to the student, researcher, dancer, and teacher to experience the unfamiliar against the familiar and by doing this arrive at a place of discovery. In this way I refer to my qualitative research as having a catalytic validity. Fels and McGiven underline this “an opening door, momentarily, unrepentantly, we recognize this stranger which is us” (Fels, McGiven, 1998)

Addressing identity and place, Japanese performance artist, Aoki, acknowledges Performative Inquiry through the following quote: “consider identity not so much as something already present but rather as production in the throes of being constituted as we live in places of difference” (Aoki, 1993, p. ?) 

A much healthier view of investigating notions of cultural identity through an immediacy and astuteness to the present opposed to the lost myths of Diaspora philosophies.

**Embodying the Other**

In my research I ask participants to embody the murkiness of their cultural losses, to then enter this inquiry with my personal interpretations of these kinaesthetic testimonies.

Again I ask, “How does one embody a borrowed memory?” Is it possible to own, borrow, rent another story with authenticity? How can one contain the echoes of
another life within the complexity of one’s own? This inquiry is part of my research through Lugs when I dance the words “I was left alone at the station with only your aromatic handkerchief as an artefact,” it is not the station and the handkerchief I dance but rather the implications of these words. The text becomes a catalyst to my own losses and resonances. This filtering allows the words to move from specificity to a simple reverberation, which echoes in both the performers/participants as well as those who witness.

A/r/tography and Performative Inquiry have been key methodologies as I work through notions of arrivals and departures and the liminal spaces between. These spaces are spoken about as the potent spaces emotionally and intellectually in both these methodologies. Through a qualitative interpretive research paradigm with a catalytic validity, I have constructed a scaffolding whereby Performative Inquiry and A/r/tography can function as methodologies to my thesis research. My subjects of research are far from controllable and my form of exploration/investigation is never predictable. As Carson and Sumara (2001) state in regards to action research: “These interpretations are always in a state of becoming and can never be fixed into predetermined and static categories”. (Carson and Sumara, 1997, p.?) Despite the unpredictability, there are patterns that begin to shape and form my research. The Chaplinesque character, donning an oversized overcoat and hat (both distinguished and impoverished), carries both humour and sadness. Behind the overcoat is a trained body with the ability to move beyond the capacities of most archetypical characters living in theatre. This combination of literal and abstraction gives context to the work, yet prevents it from becoming a linear narrative or docu-dance, allowing an instinctive and imaginative interpretation as an entry point rather than a literal “reading” of the performance. Viktor Shklovsky (1984) writes about this as ‘ostranenie’ defined as
being ‘that of making strange’ Discussing Vygotsky’s theorizing of the relation between aesthetics and emotionality, Linquist states: The relation between art and emotion is not an original thought but is most interesting because Vygotsky (2003) links the emotions to thought. Then the aesthetics get a new role in the process of consciousness.

In exploring reality and imagination, Vygotsky’s theory of creativity examines not the pendulum between but the blurred borders; in fact, Linquist continues to write about Vygotsky’s theory of assimilating one concept into another as follows: Imagination is based on elements taken from reality, which means that “the creative activity is directly dependent upon the individual’s experiences, and the extent and degree of variation of these experiences” (2003) Conquergood speaks more about the blurring of boundaries by saying they are merely membranes ready to be punctured He proposes that the movement between the two domains of knowledge, objective and imaginative, as the key to meaningful impact in performance: “Performance studies struggles to open the space between analysis and action, and to pull the pin on the binary opposition between theory and practice.” (Conquergood, 2002, p.145)

Conquergood goes on to explain a concept extremely important to my work with marginalized groups. He speaks of the dominant epistemologies in reading meaning and acknowledging the subtler, concealed or masked signs of meaning from marginalized groups— what Foucault coins “subjugated knowledge” and Certeau calls “the elocutionary experience of fugitive communication” (Conquergood, 2000, p. 146)

Subordinate people do not have the privilege of explicitness, the luxury of transparency, the presumptive norm of clear and direct communication, free and open debate on a level playing field that the privileged classes take for granted.

(Conquergood, 2000, p.146)
This is where the term transmediation, coined by Marjorie Seagal (1995), becomes extremely relevant; this is the transfer from one perceived sign system to another through two distinct forms of language. All of the following scholars, O’Toole (O’Neil and A. Lambert, 1982), Heathecoate (1992), Conquergood (2002), Sumara, (2001) O’Neil, (1982) and Seagull, (1995) write about the importance of knowledge through embodiment; of working between points of knowing; of permitting experiences which refuse to be located in static definitions. They all acknowledge the process of dramatizing as an invaluable mean of constructing meaning, interpreting self and other and of defining disparate points of connects and disconnects.

This becomes an invitation for catalytic processes to explore identity and place from a literary or visual location to an interpretive kinaesthetic language i.e. prose or an image. I have been able to incorporate this concept in my research in both ways. Below are an image and a chart demonstrating how I have used the technique of transmediation to analyze text and image and then to transform to personal, kinaesthetic expression.
Image to Action: transmediation from image to movement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of photo</th>
<th>Impression</th>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>Action or shape</th>
<th>Movement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Man and woman with rope</td>
<td>Loosely tied</td>
<td>Chosen restraint, anxiety and relief</td>
<td>Restricted, bound and release</td>
<td>Hard, sharp movements alternated with flow in-between</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above chart shows a breakdown of analyzing instinctive responses from an image with incremental breakdowns into components, which lead to movement. A dissection, which transmediates from instinctive response to concrete action.

Table 6 Concentric text analysis
The above chart indicates how using a specific source text can incrementally transform to another discipline through a personal associative process. Key words are derived from the text i.e. anticipation, separation and unknowing and reverberate with a potency moving then into a personal expressive form i.e. movement or poetry. The process ends with a constructed device to encourage reflectivity by, in this case, writing a letter back to one of the main characters of the source text.

Although my character/dancer from each Lug is primarily silent, I have shared rich collaborations with other artists such as an improvisational singer, live musician, digital artist and storyteller. In every case the arc between arrivals and departures is explored with sensitivity and astuteness to the pivotal points in the spaces in-between or as Irwin refers to the third spaces (2004). In many cases the Lugs also integrated written or spoken words from the audience either through letters written or memoirs shared. These additional sources of inspiration are embodied and like the train station/handkerchief example, transformed, inviting a hermeneutic reading and thus moving it away from the authorship of its source. Availability is the key factor for both the dancer/researcher and the audience availability to allow an excavation from the strata of our memories, images and emotional states in regard to identity and place.
Figure 13 Lug 1
Photographer – Jenny Arntzen
Dancer – Kathryn Ricketts
Lug Descriptions

The Fertile Ground of Inquiry
Hyde Park
Chinatown
Yaletown
The Fertile Grounds of Inquiry

Sowing Self

The Richgate project is now in its second year of celebrating the City of Richmond and specifically eight family stories of immigration, heritage, lineage and most importantly, their sense of place and belonging. Richmond, the island of fertile soil for the taking and for the landed. I performed a Lug in Banff at The Provoking Curriculum Conference and will use this Lug as a segue into the inquiry of Lugs, their theories and methods.

The conference, which claims to be the vessel for all that is provocative, bold and innovative in curriculum studies seems to overlook the fact that performative explorations/propositions in curriculum theory need space and surface to tango with theory.

The edge of chaos is where life dances to action. And it is in this space, on the edge of chaos, we suggest, that Academic performance executes its glorious tangos
(Fels and Stothers, 1996, p. 257)

Tables filled the room concealing their temperance, their hyper mobile possibilities with overlapped white tablecloths. Chairs are the moat that surrounds this island of convention – information transmission broadcasted through pressed shirts and tasteful jewellery. The tablecloths are instantly peeled back. (This will clearly be part of my warm up) Tables are snapped down into flat tablets and whisked into the hotel hallway. An agitated hotel service supervisor is standing at the door. He is claiming with ample irritation that “The room was set up exactly how it was ordered!” “Yes …we understand and yes we will recover the (decency of the) space at the end of our session.”
Where does performativity as a real possibility begin? With the conference coordinator? The concierge? The hotel service manager? Or with me, the dancer, in the moment I stand poised in the space we have carved ready for my cue? Where is the 4th wall? (The invisible barrier of safety between the audience and performer, the splash free zone). Am I able to see those who witness my dance? Will I provoke them to tuck their feet neatly under their chair as I begin full-bodied motion in space, threatening their kinesphere? Will the intimacy of this space construct a sense of entrapment or ease in spectatorship or will it address the complexity of a voyeur with no choice but to be present at the keyhole?

I stand with my back to the audience, suitcase by my feet. I know the suitcase will be heavy (I had filled it with small pebbles and a brick the night before). I had requested a piece of sod from the concierge (was this some kind of Dadaist room service?) “No” “How about soil?” He looked out at the snow-covered ground “No” then he led me to a huge ceramic pot in the middle of the lobby and pointed to the base of the plastic palm “How about rocks?” A late night excursion to the Northwest corner of the underground parking lot revealed a huge pile of small stones and a shovel. I filled the antique round suitcase with the metaphor for my next Lug. On my way back I noticed a small abandoned pile of granite bricks and took one for good measure. Not your traditional preparation for a conference presentation. This was already a provocative start; both the Concierge and the Hotel Manager hated me.

A recall
The music or rather church bells and cows in a pasture begin; I have my back to the audience. I slowly lower my body to the suitcase as one leg extends slowly behind me. An imminence to move into open space, I do so reluctantly. My focus is to the corner of the room (my home as I know it). I reach a trembling hand to that which I know, my
fingers are relaxed knowing there is nothing to hold onto anymore, a bidding farewell. Sadness and resignation extends from my eyes and palm of my hand. My right foot continues to extend behind me, slow and steady, airborne like a train through the mountains relentlessly driving forward. I raise the suitcase. The weight is my heart. I release it and raise it again – repeated attempts of reconciliation with fate. In this pattern of repeated compromise of the spirit, an accumulated strength is found not unlike an athlete. I have the surplus to hold the suitcase to my chest with one hand; I look up and see the audience for the first time. The 4th wall has dissolved for a moment. I have arrived to (dis)place(ment). With clarity, determination and anger I unhinge the suitcase, the lid opens and the small stones move to the bottom of the curved leather container. I place it gently on the ground and take a fist of rocks – not to take but to feel in my hand. Sometimes the telling is not for others but only to lay claim. This is my story. I was claiming my memories, my shards of self. I took the stones out and gently spread them on the white delineated stage (hotel tablecloth, now housekeeping hates me) I could see I was spreading seeds. If I am truly present in these improvisational journeys, I will consider each moment a surprising dialogue with all that is present in the room, people space, artefacts, temperature, light etc. Davis describes this emergent reality as a dynamic and responsive world;

Knowledge, as we have argued, is neither uncovered nor invented, but emerges in – that is, it is enacted through – the history of our participation in a dynamic and responsive world. It can never be understood merely in terms of either the actions of the subject or the qualities of the object because it emerges in the mutually specifying dynamics of their activities and reactions. (Davis, 1996, p.166)

I walked on tiptoe over the seeds. Although the rocks were sharp on my bare feet, I did not feel the pain, not as a dancer and not as the immigrant - A tenderness and astuteness
filled my body. What are these seeds? Why are they here? What will be cultivated? Not recognizing myself as particularly spiritual, I reflect on the Bible for a moment,

4 And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:

5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:

6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:

8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixty fold, some thirty fold.

(St. James version, Mathew, 13)

I move over the rocks with both curiosity and scepticism I work with delicate balance, tenuous positions and weighted resignation, playing with a sense of loss. As I plunge my fist into the suitcase of rocks again and find instead a small square brick. I pull it out and thrust it in the air toward the corner. I am challenging something, I feel strong in my anger challenging perhaps 'what was'. I place the brick in the middle of the scattered stones and balance on it – both feet precariously sharing the very small surface of this granite metaphor. Identity and place so intrinsically linked and yet so precarious that at any given breath I could lose my centre and fall. I believe the audience feels the reality of this charged moment. The possibility of falling is real. I remember Mathew in the Bible again and think about what makes us fall. What measures the success of arrival, Is it “assimilation”?

24 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:
(King James Version, Mathew, 13)
An amplified silence fills the room. Instead of falling I find a fluidity, which begins to move through my torso, arms neck and head. I have arrived (at least for the moment). The crisis/rupture (as there is always one in Lugs) transpired when I stepped off of the brick.

Just as there is an allocation of compassion in a grieving process (approximately three days for compassionate leave in a professional situation and approximately six months with friends and family) the intervention of supported transition mediating the forces of displacement are also temporary.

The brick as a moment of respite in an otherwise fractured sense of place and identity (the small stones) becomes transient or rather ephemeral in its solace. How can we consider ourselves fixed in space and time as our experiences continues to march us forward. A trajectory of factors shaping the “I am here”. As Eugene Barba reflects upon theatre in this way he writes: Theatre allows me to belong to no place, to be anchored not to one perspective only, to remain in transition. (Barba, 1995)

I pick up the brick, my arms feel strong, I extend my hand to the circle of spectators, and again the 4th wall dissolves for a moment. The question is posed with my body. Could this be your story? Where shall I locate this metaphor? Yes my Lugs allow fluidity in their metaphysical meanderings and my metaphors change identities as rapidly as each moment transpires. Nothing can be fixed even my notions of homeland transform as we move to new contexts the lens shifts colour. Davis writes about this fluidity;

It is not easy for us to talk abut moving forms and dynamic structures; it seems that it is the nature of our language to freeze, to fix, to isolate and to present in one word after the other a thread of some interpretation of the world.
(Davis, 1996, p.166)
I press the brick to my chest wanting to absorb it entirely. The granite has transformed to a soft vapour and I fold it into the place where my family lives despite geographic placement. The voice that resonates in my body as one arm extends (fingers relaxed) and yet my feet move me forward in the opposite direction.” I am here”

The Lug is finished and the room narrows to a pin size lens, my heart is racing and my mouth is dry. I am ready to release into a small weep but think better of it. I stand against the wall and take deep breaths waiting for the vulnerability of this moment to subside and to ‘arrive’ back into the room. The remnants of my journey; a wrinkled white sheet, scattered stones and an open suitcase bear the signs of an event now resonating in the conference room while we hurry forward to the next moment. The next presentation. No time to lose. A scholarly version of smudging takes place as I feel the event dissipate into other transmediations. The air in the room shifts and finds new configuration as words begin to push through the space.

The problem is.....

Isadora Duncan writes;

If I could tell you what it meant, there would be no point in dancing it.

Why is there no point in finding the meaning when I am dancing?

Kathryn Ricketts

Attending the sessions in between my performances at the conference (Provoking Curriculum, Banff, 2007) evoked confusion and frustration for me as I witnessed countless paper deliveries exemplifying the conventions of presentations
within a scholarly context. This in turn raised many questions for me in my role as young scholar, A/r/tographer and performer.

It is already a challenge to have only minutes to transform a room from what could be my parents’ living room (harkening back to my skits/interventions for company who had thankfully been primed with several cocktails) into a proscenium stage. Dimming the fluorescents, closing the door, drawing the curtains, and quickly instructing a colleague when to fade music down and then stepping into the hyper concentrated state of a performer all within a few moments, is not what I am accustomed to as a seasoned performer. Schechner, performance theorist, reflects on this space;

> These preparations literally “compose” the person and the group: they are a kinesic recapitulation of the rehearsal process: They allow for a settling into the special tasks at hand, a concentration by means of shrinking the world to the dimensions of the theatre.  
(Schechner, 1977, p. 136)

As the world as we know it shrinks and the theatre takes on a new heightened sense of reality. Scheckner writes about this specialized lens and how it provokes a reconfiguration of meaning;

> Activities thicken - get more complicated, dense, symbolic, contradictory and multi vocal-along a continuum of expanding consciousness.  
(Schechner, 1977, p. 136)

Schechner posits that this ritualistic behaviour holds a historicity far beyond the theatre and carries these implications to the present. Just as work with Lugs excavates lived moments from my past, the rituals of my performance become emblems of that personal historicity. Schechner writes about this pulling past to present as a convergence;

> Theatre doesn’t arrive suddenly and stay fixed either in its cultural or individual manifestations. It is insinuated along a web of associations spun from play, games, hunting, slaughter and distribution of meat,
ceremonial centres, trials, rites of passage and story telling. Rehearsals and recollections - preplay and afterplay-converge in the theatrical event. 
(Schechner, 1977, p. 136)

I am accustomed to this sacred space of theatre, permeating my life for hours, no days in advance. The preparations are rituals unto themselves involving training not so unlike an athlete preparing for a race or as Schechner would posit, a primate readying for the hunt. The final stage of these rituals for me, usually involve some kind of fast firing physical actions, a means of gathering emotional and physical power. Had I done this in the hotel room, broken lamps would have surely been the consequence. And so my performance began with me praying that no muscles would be strained, tendons torn or bones fractured. This would seem challenge enough and yet it doesn’t come near the abrasive doubt I hold in my heart and mind when not performing at the conference. As I move through sessions where tables are still up, fluorescents on full, papers held and read, I ponder my status as performer, certainly an absolute minority. Possibly seen as disruption to the conventions that are so well attended to by the other delegates. Germano Celant (1998) writes about performance artist Laurie Anderson and her relationship to space and spectator. I am particularly drawn to the notion that stage is a participatory parameter;

All of Laurie Anderson’s work is directed toward attempting to divine the principles of an “other” performativeness, where the stage is not a threshold that cannot be crossed, but rather a passage, an access to a dialogue between the vital core of life and the audience as a whole. Every event, musical or visual, is for her, an open, transparent instrument not only bound to her identity, but ready to dissolve to give way to a powerful current of real energy. She thus keeps a distance from the visual ostentation of self and narcissistic self-gratification and favours instead the irruption of a hidden condition of being. This brings Anderson, in her relationship with theatricality, to conceive the stage space as a participatory perimeter, in which the profound reality of life offers itself to perception and to the gaze of all. 
(Celant, 1998, p.15)
The performance is over and yet questions are whirring about me like a cartoon scribble above the head. How can I crash this chasm between spectator and performer? How can I integrate my practice with both theory and methodology? How can I encourage others to ‘read’ my work in this way? Questions that seem frayed at the edges, well worn by qualitative/arts based researchers who are used to dodging the bullets questioning rigor and validity. Thankfully, these questions have been successfully answered calling into the academy new languages of resonance, vitality and vigour. And yet I posit, if I may, that dance stands alone in the arts with the ripe and never fading stigmas that demand double time justifications of scholarly competence. My suspicion is that as long as I ask this question “How long this tired binary?!!” I will be in fact perpetuating the Cartesian split we seem so comfortable with, whether it be in the promotion or in the resistance.

I was constantly referred to at the conference during sessions I attended as a kind of distracting muse or worse, the entertaining exit to theoretical conundrums, textual murkiness or conceptual cul de sacs. “Maybe we should just let Kathryn dance the dilemma, the data, the hypothesis”.

It is in this space of frustration and misunderstanding where I begin to problematize my practice, my identity and my placement in the academy. How can I disengage myself with the romanticization and unfamiliarity of dance within academia when this is the very pedestal that dancers are placed on, and worse, have committed decades of training to achieve?! Dancers are just as guilty of maintaining this construction of myth, dance as the ethereal, mystic manifestation of all that is beautiful both in spirit and in body. What better way to reaffirm this then to search Google and see what the “famous” have summarized in their relationship to dance;
The dancer's body is simply the luminous manifestation of the soul
Isadora Duncan

Dancing is the loftiest, the most moving, the most beautiful of the arts, because it is
no mere translation or abstraction from life; it is life itself.
Havelock Ellis

I would believe only in a God that knows how to dance.
Friedrich Nietzsche

To be fond of dancing was a certain step towards falling in love.
Jane Austen

Dancers are the athletes of God.
Albert Einstein

All the ills of mankind, all the tragic misfortunes that fill the history books, all the
political blunders, all the failures of the great leaders have arisen merely from a lack
of skill at dancing.
Moliere

Nobody cares if you can't dance well. Just get up and dance. Great dancers are not
great because of their technique, they are great because of their passion.
Martha Graham

I don't want people who want to dance, I want people who have to dance.
George Balanchine

There is nothing more notable in Socrates than that he found time, when he was an
old man, to learn music and dancing, and thought it time well spent.
Michel de Montaigne

We should consider every day lost on which we have not danced at least once.
Friedrich Nietzsche

If I can not dance, I want no part in your revolution.
Emma Goldman

Dance is the hidden language of the soul, of the body.
Martha Graham

Dancing begets warmth, which is the parent of wantonness. It is, Sir, the great
grandfather of cuckoldom
Henry Fielding

I have no desire to prove anything by dancing. I have never used it as an outlet or a
means of expressing myself. I just dance. I just put my feet in the air and move them
around.
Fred Astaire
One is born to be a great dancer.
George Balanchine

Dance is music made visible.
George Balanchine

Man learned to resort to the dance when he felt helpless or fragmentary, when he felt dislocated in his universe.
Mary Austin
http://www.dancer.com/tom-parsons/quotes.html

The message is clear; dance will solve all if we could just let go into the joy and beauty of its purity. A resignation to complete aesthetic euphoria! Well I don’t think dance is pure. I think it is as messy as it gets as we try to navigate history and current thought with cardiovascular prowess, plasticity and muscul arity. A barometer of the politics of the moment voiced through gravity at play with the anatomy. It is a complicated physical, emotional and intellectual paradigm to reconfigure these binaries within an absolute immediate presence. There is nothing about that configuration or rather reconfiguration that tells me to let go, quite the opposite, get ready and hang on to everything you know and what you don’t as well! This is presence or Eugene Barba’s (1995) “decided body” is described by Schechner in the following anecdote;

This old man executed a few steps and chanted. His dancing and singing were poor by Western standards of energy, precision, invention, duration. But he commanded complete attention of the previously noisy, socializing crowd. His presence, not his professional skills, carried power: he was an agent, a funnel, a conduit for power and it was that power, showing meagrely through him as a tiny light at the end of a long tunnel, that held the audience.
(Schechner, 1977, p.154)

If I was only concerned with a performance that showed another dimension to what is considered theoretical rigor I would be satisfied with the generous applause after my presentation, the passing kudos in the hotel lobby, the smiling nods of acknowledgement that a risk was taken, but this is not enough. Perhaps I should be
satisfied with the acknowledgment of a successful transmediation with scholars whose seasoned critical receptors are exercised in a new way. But no, I am not. I want to shift this notion that static delivery of complex concepts needs a sense of poeticism placed only *adjunct* never *within*. Can we not find the fluidity and the poetry *within* the matrix of theories that are so earnestly grappled with? Stothers and Fels propose this duality existing through the form and the destruction of traditional form and it is here where they explore the delivery of complex concepts;

> Academic performance: A space of learning both within and without through which action-process occurs utterly through form and simultaneously through the destruction of form. (Fels & Stothers, 1996, p.257)

I will now expose a memory of Kathryn at age 11:

**Beads**

*I am half lying on an old blanket delegated to outdoor use, demoted from bedspread to drive in movie blanket for the back seat of the car to outdoor ground use. Our demotions of blankets seem to go from very intimate and private, behind closed doors and next to perhaps naked skin to very public and close to the earth. I loved the blanket with its various patches, haphazard and tender attempts to prolong its life just a little. I am half reclined and although this is more work on my body than sitting erect and I need to shift often as blood gets moved from one restricted area to another, I like it this way. The light is dappled under the apple tree and it is probably after school where the sun is that liquid gold and the shadows seem to go forever. The radio is playing all the songs I know too well and I sing the lyrics under my breath with all the sass and attitude of the singers who have lived and, loved and lost for at least twice as long as my tender years.*
I have all my small pill bottles lined up in various areas of the blanket navigating the creases and slopes. They are precariously perching, small cylindrical treasure chests bearing the tiniest of jewels. There is a reason they call them seed beads. I am a jeweller, a rock star and yet, an eleven year old with an expected amount of awkwardness with my motor coordination. Invariably the pill bottles would get knocked over. It was expected (and forgiven) that more than half the time would be spent recovering these minor and sometimes major accidents. I am recalling the major ones when I can see the beads toppling over the side of my patchwork island onto the sea of soft grass. The blades speckled with these brilliant and miniscule spots of colour were completely ignored; instead the 11-year-old fingers parted the grass and dug down into the damp, rich earth scraping for the jewels that had not been accidentally rescued by nature. As I mined for lost beads in the earth and surfaced them mostly embedded in my fingernails full of earth, I saw the others that had been resting on the blades fall stories below to the darkened earth. Some were surely to be rescued by the hands digging and scraping.

This memory has become an emblem for me and has surfaced and beamed its relevance into my life in many different periods and contexts. Why, even when I was 11, did I choose to bypass what was obvious, what came easy and why did I insist in scraping in the dirt below? They weren’t labelled seed beads exclusively because of their size. They were compact promises generating a condition key for my survival; resistance. It is no surprise when one collects memories in support of research strategies that fragments of the most unexpected relevance appear. I can suddenly hear the midwife say to me 13 years ago “I know pressing up against that is giving you some comfort but you will have to come out from under there, the baby is ready” Compact
promises, key requisites for survival; resistance. My research and inquiry into the integration of practice and theory becomes again my 11-year-old fingers and my 33-year-old birthing experience.

It is with dirt under my fingernails that I claim the dissatisfaction with kinaesthetic aesthetics. This form is so easily dismissed in the act of romanticization. Paley (Paley, 1995, p. 32) writes about three terms that encourage a multi-modal viewing of performance. Bricologe – a strategy for radical juxtaposition (i.e. a brick in a suitcase), Polyphonus – multiple voices and multiple realities (moving through many peoples stories and through various time periods in the same moment) and Rhizomatic – eluding absolute authoritarianism in interpretation (all audience seeing their own story and the complicated variations of this) Although I appreciate the move towards inviting a multiplicity of perception, in any case of categorization, it tends to limit or “fix” a perspective. Davis writes about the dangers of this from a hermeneutics standpoint;

Hermeneutical understanding continually seeks to excavate the ever-evolving conditions which make understanding possible. This does not mean that causes for understanding are sought; rather understanding is understood as a continuous cycle of re vision and the interpretation. Learning something new depends upon knowing something; at the same time new knowledge helps to re shape old knowledge. It is a circle of experience of understanding, which has indiscernible beginning or end points (Davis, 1996,p.157)

He furthers his ideas regarding to stasis

It is not easy for us to talk about moving forms and dynamic structures; it seems that it is the nature of our language to freeze, to fix, to isolate and to present in one word after the other a thread of some interpretation of the world. (Davis, 1996, p.162)

And within this resistance I move to the open spaces. Garoian (1999) speaks about these open spaces as the limen between two stable locations. The indeterminate, the
‘slippery slope’ most people want to navigate through this borderland to a place of fixed clarity, although it is a place for many artists to feel comfortable in, I posit that it is fairly un-chartered territory in the language of dance as an embodiment of theory. A place where movement can butt heads up against complex concepts and still not lose its ephemeral wonder. Paley (1995) speaks of A/r/tography as a methodology embracing this notion primarily with image and text.

The in-between spaces normatively explored though image and text create complex mix of within curriculum and leadership that generate caring for the creation of self through aesthetic excursions and incursions experienced in the recursive inquiry of A/r/tography. (Irwin, 2004, p. 35)

As I dig deeper into my practice I continue to ask the question, how can I embody, truly embody, my theories with the passion and mindfulness of a dancer and scholar, artist and philosopher. With the detailed angles of a prism refracting speculation and inquiry in a multitude of directions how can I embody this complexity? It is through the weaving and the rebounds between scholars, the balancing of opposites and the fusion of intricacies with pre-determined thought and lived experiences that I come to a place of momentary knowing. Eugenio Barba writes about these necessary tensions drawing from Asian principles of energy and intention with these two quotes;

In fact, in these movements, every point of arrival coincides with a point of departure. There are no pauses, only transitions. Every stop is a go, every kyu is a jo, every point of arrival-departure is a sats. (Barba, 1995, p. 112)

The energy, the thought action, darts slides, leaps from one of its possible temperatures to another, between Animus and Anima, engages the whole body even when the movement is minuscule, exploits the possibility of not being fully developed in space, of being withheld and absorbed. Its external rhythm can be matched with the internal rhythm in a consonant manner or by discrepancy and contrast, by hirparr hai. (Barba, 1995, p. 112)
Within the fleeting and fluctuating nature of inquiry there is a moment of resting on the head of a pin. Never to be held but to have known momentarily seems enough. A/r/tography is often described as recursive configurations of meanings that shift as fast as they appear, Irwin writes of research revealing meaning “through ongoing interpretations of complex relationships that are continually created, recreated and transformed.” (2004, p. 31) a rehearsal for Brecht was once described; “From this confusion however, more often that not, something new emerges” (Barba, 1995) As an A/r/tographic researcher I am becoming accustomed to working in a liminal space, sliding on the slippery slope, dancing on the edge.

Let your life lightly dance on the edges of time like dew on the tip of a leaf. (Tagore, 1949, p. 73)

I have moved far away from the conference now and am preparing for the next. With each paper I write and with each presentation/performance I am searching the means to deconstruct conventions of spectator and performer and yet hold fast to the reverence in the performance. The reverence that keeps my performance the same standard at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre (Vancouver’s largest formal theatre) as that of the Cedar Room at the Banff Spring Conference Hotel and yet able to explode into a multitude of possibilities, embracing and challenging thought, breath, heart, body and mind in the same moment. To sustain the reverence that honours the diligence and commitment to my training and yet to recognize it only as a vehicle to move far beyond aesthetics towards a critical theory.

I want to return to my discomfort with the fluorescents on, the papers held and read, to emphasize the point that I am committed to performativity as a true inquirer questioning and challenging the way we see theory as texcentric. Words will simply have to make more space. Conquergood (2002) refers to Hurston’s research coining
performative theory as subversive disrupting common notions of text as a the dominant form, he goes on to explain this issue in relations to literacy:

In Hurston’s example, the white man researcher is good not because he values literacy, but because he valorized it to the exclusion of other media, other modes of knowing. I want to be very clear about this point: textocentrism—not texts—is the problem.”
(Conquergood, 2002, p. 151)

Schaller speaks about the form of language as encouraging a stasis;

Words or a series of words are emergent phenomena that, because of their step characteristics, lack the property of efficiently representing continua or changes over time.
(Schaller, 1963, p. 227)

The beads are falling sometimes intentionally, sometimes accidentally. I am digging into the spaces in between. I have a feeling I will be celebrating dirt under my fingernails for a long time.

Let us read and let us dance - two amusements that will never do any harm to the world.
Voltaire
http://www.dancer.com/tom-parsons/quotes.html
Hyde Park, Speakers Corner
8 months later

This excerpt was initially written moments after my two performances at Hyde Park Speakers Corner. In honour the words that fell from my shaking hands – a stolen moment, immediately after in a café on Oxford Street. What filtered through, reverberating between adrenalin, relief and elation must be valued however my memory now of the event is a much more refined container, allowing, no, inviting my continued academic work, my history and my critical analysis to inform this pivotal point in my research.

I had left my hosts in Blackheathe with suitcase in hand. They shook their heads, “It’s raining! It’s Sunday! You should be relaxing with a cup of tea watching cooking shows!” I know...I remembered reading Tennessee Williams prologue to The Glass Menagerie. He spoke of the vitality for the creative process as a kind of jewel that lies in the energy produced by hanging onto a rock face by ones finger nails (Williams, 1944). Was Hyde Park my rock face? What was my jewel? I was soon to find out.

I passed through several underpasses with buskers noting that these could be possible locations for Lugs, but understood that my destination may consume all of my Lug capacity for the day. When I arrived in the rain, the North West corner of Hyde Park, I was surprised by the lack of signage and designated location for speakers. An open gravel area served as the platform to exercise freedom of speech, as long as one was elevate of the ground. An interesting concept, a ladder for one and a milk cart for the other. There were three vague clusters of people with approximately thirty in each
group. Like diving into icy waters. I knew the plunge needed to be quick, I opened the suitcase and donned the hat and coat typical for my Lug character, I chose the cluster closest to the fence knowing that I would need to interface with an established crowd rather than create my own after all my suitcase could not take all of my weight and so my feet remained on the ground – ticket for freedom of speech denied (or not) and the fence? Well I guess I thought at the moment it was my only friend.

As I entered the group I realized that the tenacity that had brought me this far in the field of the performing arts was going to be key to my immediate survival. I could hear the crowd provoking the speaker, challenging her ideas, her language and even her grammar, the atmosphere was charged, I moved slowly, bristled with attentiveness, all senses astute. The speaker lashed out at me with scathing comments, scowling expressions and agitated gestures with one hand, the other holding on to the ladder from which she was perched, she was not young. I had now penetrated the crowd and was located in the speakers’ territory with some regret to my boldness I turned and asked the speaker to tell me something about this displacement. Big mistake!

Figure 14 Hyde Park 1
Dancer – Kathryn Ricketts
Photographer – Manolo Gonzales
From such delicate, vintage features came the most surprising collection of words as she adamantly claimed exclusive rights to her *speaker's box*. I did not speak with word for the remainder of my time spent in the circle and if it hadn't been for the crowd, which was beginning to grow, now I would have receded completely. As my body deflated and I began to move away from the speaker, she determinately descended her three rung ladder and moved it a few meters to the right the chasm between us deepened however the crowd simultaneously took steps back to compensate creating an even larger playing space. They seemed to understand that I was needing to use my body in space. They cheered me to stay in although I was facing away from the speaker and the crowd they understood the moment my body decided to endure the challenge and cheered as I took a long slow lunging step back into the line of fire. It was at this moment that I noticed a younger woman close by whose body was hinged on every one of my moves intent on following all of my impulses and at this moment I knew that I had an ally. This awareness was coupled with the sound of a camera capturing almost every move I made. The speaker was trying to maintain, no, dominate focus in the crowd. She emulated hate and her words were angry attempts to dismantle the state of the world, and I apparently was making a mockery of her diatribe. What exactly was my work in the moment of this Lug? I was caught in the crossfire of anger, hatred and bitterness as accusations traversed the playing space propelling me into motion, I was at moments a conduit and at other moments a receptor and then finally I was able to feel as if I was a transformer.
Ellie, my ally, spoke to my defence positing that my body was telling more than her works ever would and perhaps she should “shut her trap for a moment and listen.”

A penny was found on the ground and someone placed it gently in my hand. I understood the moment; the currency of language and the freedom of speech belong to everyone – even for those who are silent. Listen carefully the dance is whispering. I reached up to the speaker with the penny resting in my open hand Her free hand impulsively slapped my arm, causing the penny to fly beyond the crowd, my body reverberated in this sudden violent refusal of my invitation, an invitation to consider – language, the politics of language, the form of language, the tolerance and perhaps celebration of diversity in the telling of our stories. It was in this moment that my body softened and I felt the violence transform to generosity. I was exhausted, physically and emotionally (I was also very wet) It was raining hard now and I backed away slowly projecting a quiet grace. A hand gently bidding her to take care and to take love.

Hoping that the speaker will be able to find the cracks in her walls that must be there.
As I continued to back slowly, I stayed within my state of the dance and shifted my gaze to the cluster of people 20 metres away. Some of the crowd followed.

The second cluster was smaller and much tighter, almost intimate. I had regained energy in my transition from one cluster to the next. Unlike my slow, circuitous entrance with the first cluster, I arrived suddenly and with this abruptness seemed to shatter the intensity created between two men. A white middle aged Londoner stood suspended in space, an accusatory gesture hovered. A Muslim man of the same age was standing casually on a plastic milk crate. He was relaxed and clearly the fuel that was igniting the angry man below. The crowd turned to me, a cacophony of comments floated in the air. There was a jocular quality despite the edge of anger directed from the man who was challenging the speaker. Amidst a collage of comments one radiated danger to me “Hey waddya have in the suitcase a bomb?” I registered that this was disquieting and penetrated the playfulness of my objective. I understood my time would be brief but still had an urgency to craft a closure to my performance.
The angry man regained his momentum hurling accusations at the speaker claiming he had no God, no religion and that the space he occupied was not worthy of his attention then abruptly turned his body and his pointed finger to me claiming that I was just plain out of my mind.

My hand reached slowly up to him, an extended invitation. My heart rate, hidden under the excessive folds of my wet overcoat, would have broadcasted my bluff - calm I was not! His hand changed to a fist, we were far too close for my comfort. A moment of silence passed like a wave through the crowd as the conflict in our intentions hovered in space. Will he hit me?

I held my hand extended, my eyes fixed. The crowd began to jeer, “Shake her bloody hand for god’s sake!” Our eyes were fixed but I could clearly see the violent energy of his hand empty like sand it poured away – the fist remained. The decision was clear, the action was momentous my fingers slowly curled to match the shape of his hand, his eyes changed his mouth relaxed, he moved his fist slowly forward and tapped mine “Peace Man” he whispered. I backed away relieved and glanced up at the
speaker, my smile was for him, peace was spoken for his ears. He smiled back - again I felt the dance had moved a language through my limbs and in a site so charged with mistrust, pain, resentment, anger and hatred, my body had in some way played as a conduit/receptor and transformer for grace, compassion and reciprocity. I moved slowly to the centre of the gravel area, a place I would not have dared to occupy 1 hour earlier.

I stood in the open gravel area with the three clusters forming a triangle of distant tension. I was located in the centre. Warm and fragile I was feeling the reverberations of these two events wave through my body; it felt good to be in open space without fists and jeers. I peeled off the overcoat and hat and opened my suitcase.

My movements were efficient and telling even from the distance they were deft, agile. The actions of one not out of one’s mind, not strung out on drugs, instead there was an intelligence of movement that was recognized even in the school group of 10 year olds from Germany who had witnessed one of the events. As I began to fold the overcoat I began to notice a cluster of people surrounding me I was indeed silently and unintentionally making my own cluster!

Ellie, my ally from the first cluster was the first to arrive. “Who are you?” And what was it that you were doing?” I began to explain a little about my graduate work, my research through Lugs and what I knew about what had just happened although that part was the murkiest, I was still reeling.

“It was… I can’t even ….there are no…” Ellie spluttered through futile attempts to lace verbal language on what she had experienced – “Its O.K.” I said, “I understand”

A couple appeared at her side and the woman very quietly said, “I just never thought that language could be this”. She pointed to the folded coat on top of my suitcase. It was a complicated concept and she was both confused and happy for voicing it.
I then notice an eleven-year-old boy standing behind the first row of people. His body lengthened and his eyes beamed brighter with my attention. “What did you think?” He was with the school group from Germany and I could see his peer group urging him to return to the bus. He suddenly put up his hands as if showing the size of the fish he had just caught - then quickly moved it to a gesture with 2 fingers showing a space no larger than a few centimetres. It wasn’t just a little different. He then moved his hand quickly and with great excitement back to the enormous fish. Indeed his mind had just caught an enormous fish of an idea. He smiled, I laughed and thanked him but he was already running back to his friends.

I packed my suitcase and quietly began to depart from this charged site, then suddenly remembered the camera. I quickly returned to the location of the first cluster and introduced myself to the photographer making the necessary arrangements to purchase shots that had been taken. I then began my way back.

My world had shifted. My research had been impacted radically. As I passed through the previously noted sites as having great potential for a Lug, I saw them with very different eyes; the potency of the location had absolutely dimmed in light of the Hyde Park event.

I found my spot in the steady stream of shopping pedestrians along Oxford street, eyes fixed to the ground, still trembling, images raging through my mind with no apparent intentions of ordering themselves. Suddenly a young 15-year-old boy in front of me stopped in his tracks. The hardware jangling, the hair masking his eyes, the clothes some kind of goth/grunge combination, he turned and asked “You alright then?” Now I have heard this question 5,000 times since I arrived in England and I understand it is the equivalent to “how are you?” In Canada if we say “Are you alright?” it is saved for those frightfully pale or reeling with dizziness, in this case, I believe that through
the masking of indifference that his age group so aptly applies to their public from this young boy was actually concerned for my well being. I think the reverberations of this event had penetrated his kinesphere and the question was asked in complete earnestness. I answered equally so “Yes I think I am.” He continued walking.

Another astounding moment. I ducked into a crowded café for a coffee and to collect my thoughts and it was here that my first journal entry was written.

**Reflections**

What is this notion of the body working as a receptor/conduit/transformer? How is it understood so deep with an inane kinaesthetic knowledge and yet so difficult to articulate vocally? Clearly the crowd at Hyde Park understood my body’s role through Lug and yet Ellie could not find works to describe her lived experience. I have written about the kind of astuteness I brought to the role in my Lug the crystalline presence that was so strong that it abolished historical patterns in my body. Fear may have been felt but it was not acknowledged or acted upon within a known history. My question is do I bring my 30 years of dance to the arrival of this state of authenticity or is it just circumstantial? If acting is actually re-acting, an excavation of layers of inhibition and a good actor strips to the core with an exemplary ability to respond with an honest immediacy, does this translate to Dance? To a certain degree perhaps but what about the slow sustained balance work or the flexibility needed to extend my limbs in such a way to embody my extended thought toward the speaker?

What about the white, thirty year old man in the second cluster who was poised to punch? For thirty years I have been engaged in a physical training called body weather work. This entails rigorous, athletic crossings repeatedly with full-bodied movements that involve enormous summoning of strength, flexibility and cardiovascular power. These crossings demand a kind of animalistic state not so different than
one that is summoned before a major athletic feat. This state is a kind of hunger to get it right, then to do more and then simply to survive. The work ends with quiet meditative work developing keen focus and concentration. One of the exercises is an uncurling of fingers from fist to open palm in five minutes with eyes closed, attempting to achieve this task in even increments of movement, like sand through an hourglass. This exercise is done immediately following the gruelling cardiovascular work and usually the dancers can feel their own sweat drop onto their hand as they pull their focus from the large loud space of the training to a cellular awareness, a micro cosmic moment that evolves in miniscule and delicate increments. I have worked on this exercise both as participant and teacher for twenty years and have not perfected it but have understood this heightened awareness of energy seeping out of the body as vessel. It is this knowledge that lives in my body and surfaces in moments such as recognizing the man’s fist is no longer carrying aggression but rather and invitation to peace. It is in these moments that I recognize the training that must be there in my body as I move through this inquiry of embodying other’s stories.

Figure 18 Hyde park 5
Dancer – Kathryn Ricketts
Photographer – Manolo Gonzales
Chinatown

Although it was suggested that I perform my Lug in Shanghai Alley, I knew the location was wrong; the circle of posters outlying important historical features of the location permeated our ‘read’ of the space – leaving very little room for poetic interpretation. However the cement space in front of the Sun Yat Sen Garden was perfect! Although protected from the street it had a very exposed feel, wide open space, white cement with a large circle of tiles in the middle. Being a new immigrant, I suspect must feel like a combination of exposure, raw vulnerability combined with a sense of enclosure or almost entrapment. This space with its whitewashed cement cracked and littered with urban remnants, resonated with the promise of richness and safety (the garden just beyond); this contradiction in associations presented the complexity that is often the case when investigating notions of home within the context of immigrants. This diasporic lens set the context perfectly for this location of my next Lug.

This Lug was being presented with a class of schoolteachers currently engaged in grad studies at The University of British Columbia and enrolled in a class called Writing the City of which I was co-teaching. The objective of the class was to observe various distinctive sites with clearly distinct demographics and to interpret these socio-cultural pockets through the discipline of writing, movement and visual arts. One of the assignments in the course was to purchase two objects from a dollar store as emblems of our interpretation of Vancouver in general. I bought a dollar store harmonica and played with my inhale and exhales during our teachers meeting. I was suddenly distracted from my exploration as I saw Stanley one of our students from China leaving for the day. I ran after him and asked, “Do you play any musical instruments?” “No” he said apologetically and was gone. I returned to my teachers' meeting and fifteen
minutes later, Stanley returned, “Why did you ask?” “Well I am doing a Lug in a few days in Chinatown and I thought about you playing music as accompaniment “Oh” he said “What about that?” he said pointing to the harmonica “Well I suppose I could play like that”. I was delighted by his spirit to become involved “Sure that would be great!” Graeme Chalmers, the director of the course, was listening to the conversation and then seeing the glint in my eyes responded, “Oh so now I bet you will want thirty-six harmonicas!” Wow what an offer! “Yes of course!” and back we went to the dollar store. In fact we visited many dollar stores in Vancouver until we were able to purchase at least twenty. Did I have a plan? Not really, but I was going on Graeme’s instinct. There will somehow be a chorus of mouth organs.

A combined conversation with Stanley brought a small story of his entry to Vancouver from China and his first experience of what was referred to as the Golden Gate - not in fact that of rich opportunities but in fact the Golden Arches of Ronald McDonald. It seems his first memory of assimilation was that of entering a McDonalds for a hamburger. He spoke about always feeling a little different and that never quite going away. I asked if he would be willing to start the Chinatown Lug with his story. He was excited and nervous by the idea and greeted me the next day with a copy of one of his ancestors head tax receipts asking if it would be helpful. I was again delighted; the Lug was starting to take shape! Typical of the Lugs I usually have either a prop or a strong concept concealed in the suitcase. It has ranged from bread to jewellery, sod to balloons. In this case I used the head tax receipt as the concealed catalyst bringing the Lug to a pivotal point or the point of constructive crisis.
The piece began with a brief lesson in how the harmonicas would be used; they were then distributed amongst selected audience members. Songs as we know it would not be played – instead both inhales and exhales would be sounded through the instrument, long tones with asymmetric intervals. A choral-like organism of breath tones, change occurred in the brief pauses between inhale and exhale. Individual voices embedded within a collective soundscape – a metaphor for Stanley’s experience of identity shifts with his immigration. Our voice is so connected to the fundamentals of our lives. Focusing on our vitals; breath – heart – cognisance, my choice of harmonica was as simple as this, keeping musical skill out of the paradigm and finding an instrument which was a clear extension of our vital self. I had rigged my harmonica with foam pads so I could keep it in my mouth without using hands. It would remain transfixed; an aural barometer of the effect exerted in my dance was another strong
connection to the vitals breath and heart. The piece began with a cluster close to Stanley I stood beside him with my harmonica playing quietly he told his story of the Golden Arches. He spoke of the feeling different, the wondering if he would ever belong and then I moved into the centre of the circle as Stanley encouraged the audience to spread out around the circle. An echoed pilgrimage, a homage to the hope and anticipation of moving forward into the unknown. I began to work with the suitcase as a source of tension playing with conflicts and tensions such as safety and unknown, obligation and negligence, longing and placidity. The contradicting ideas escalated working above and beyond the relentless atonal rhythmic drones of the chorus. An added surprise to the piece was that the harmonica finally planted in my mouth my teeth clamped shut worked counterpoint to the even dynamics of the chorus. It echoed my tempo of activity and heart rate precisely, a gift unforeseen but graciously accepted. Improvisation is entirely hinged on the performer’s ability to accept the gift, the unforeseen circumstances that may otherwise be perceived as a mistake or errors of judgement. Eventually I worked myself to a point of opening the suitcase and found the head tax receipt it caused me to hold it out the audience making the slow journey of the circle I was holding it out like a matador offering the ear of the bull- a combination of shame and pride coalesced to a question, but what was the question? It wasn’t until I had completed the revelation and my eyes met Stanley’s that I understand what the question was, “Shall I forgive?” I dropped the head tax receipt as our eyes became transfixed. It wasn’t the critical catalytic point I was surprised I thought it would be; it was in fact the harmonica. I moved towards him slowly reverently it felt ritualistic, the birth, no celebration of something momentous. I let the harmonica fallout of my mouth and caught it without breaking my gaze with Stanley. I handed it to him Listen carefully, the dance is whispering – “Here is the forgiveness, take it, this is your voice –
an invitation” Stanley reached out and took the harmonica and we began to walk together towards the street the walk turned to a run and we disappeared into Chinatown. Stanley no longer the little boy at McDonalds wondering whether he would ever have a voice – a voice to be heard beyond his family.

Later, after the performance, Stanley claimed that I had given him the courage to tell his story – to claim his story – to be his story. Had I illustrated what he had narrated at the beginning of Lug? I don’t think so, instead I believe I had found the centre, the spine of his secret and revealed it through movement the rest was a collision of accidents between craft and heart.

A few days later one of the students sent me this poem with a small note

**Reflections on Kathryn’s Lug**

Luggage gripped in hand  
Mother's blessing upon hair  
Last glimpse of home and land  
Journey begins to there  

The known is left behind  
Ahead lies only new  
Past imagery crowds the mind  
The remembered, the beloved, the true  

Greeted at the New Land  
By confusion, by uncertainty, by fear  
Searching for a helpful hand  
To make sense of this here  

Blending in day by day  
Slowly losing what is past  
Yet deep inside, it will stay  
The Luggage -and what's inside- will last

Jim Harcott  
6/7/06

Thank you Kathryn for inspiring me to write this poem. I was very moved by your Lug and remembered my own family's stories from the past. Regards and thanks,  
Jim  
(Apppears with permission from the author)
Yaletown

This particular Lug was part of the Vancouver International Dance Festival. The location, Yaletown, is high immigrant demographic and extreme urban core where many of the families come from rural European locations and are now stacked vertically in glass towers with cramped quarters, Vancouver is available to them mainly as a ‘view’. In the middle of this architectural density lay the Roundhouse, one of the turntables for Canadian Rail. The place of change, of shifting directions, and then moving on. A perfect place for my exploration of place suspended. It was my first outdoor Lug and I was interested in exploring the new possibilities that come with these parameters. What would normally be forbidden on the pristine surface of a dance floor and with electrical equipment could now be played with recklessly. Rocks, water, sand were all possibilities. The surface of the playing space was slats of wood and of course the tracks themselves. A physical testing of the space determined that running and jumping were fine but not subtler weight shifts and slides. I would be working with Julia Nolen saxophonist with this Lug who had collaborated with me several times already. The space itself was embraced by the glass towers, residences of Yaletown and then the wide-open sky carrying both a feeling of containment and expansiveness. We discussed where we would enter and the playing space for a substantial part of the piece and ideas of possible endings. We rarely discuss endings, as we are keen for the Lug itself to spontaneously shape the closure. My pre research for this Lug had taken me to several party and novelty shops as I searched for very small heart shaped balloons (the actual size of a heart) then the testing of helium, how much and how long would it sustain the airborne quality etc. How delicate was the latex, could it endure the rough surface of the ground. I was left feeling that my research could only lead me to a
minimal amount of confidence in the preparation for prop as metaphor as many variables would be left unknown.

The performance was scheduled for dusk and one of my students dressed in black would be moving subtly within the outer boundary of our playing space pointing a theatre light in the direction of our action. The beam of light pierced the lavender dusk light reminding us that twilight was imminent. Julia and I started on the tracks side by side moving slowly forward progressing in increments sometimes with the focus forward and sometimes behind us; it made me think about the seating on a train and the decisions we make to face our point of departure or our destination. Some are so adamant about this decision that they claim motion sickness if circumstance will not permit their patterned choice.
The suitcase is held close to my spine indicating the weight and the value. It reminds me of personal artefacts and its relation to identity. Moving into the half circle of the playing space was a difficult transition and I pulled slowly away from the tracks. My reality had arrived, a new beginning. The city lights were beginning to claim their impact on the descending darkness and the theatre light was carving piercing paths in space beckoning me to travel.

My reticence in arriving into the open space was also met with a sense of awe as I looked up at the glass towers teetering over me. This is my new home, acres of glass and steel, a forest of new opportunities. Julia moved about the space attentive to my movement and understood the tension I was feeling between the excitement and the anxiety of this urban play. Her notes were fragmented and gritty and escalating in rhythm and tempo as I shifted dynamics playing with my curiosity and the overwhelming power of the urban landscape. It transferred to a push/pull play escalating my actions to jumps reaches tumbles and rolls. My focus returned continuously to the suitcase - a friend/anchor and yet through the climax of movement and music became an obligation and restriction and at this point I moved toward the
suitcase and opened it - not quite knowing how the small heart in captivity would respond. It floated out of the suitcase moving away and toward the ground. It is in these moments that improvisational skills are used at their optimum to mask surprises and/or disappointment. This well researched prop, this potentially exquisite metaphor, just gracefully declined from the performance. I turned slowly away from the balloon allowing the disappointment to play its part my arm lengthened behind me as I walked away my hand continuing to reach for it. As I continued to play off this loss and Julia’s sustained notes embracing my longing I became aware of a sound from the audience, a small gasp, and as I lifted my eyes from the ground, I became aware of the heart floating back to me.

![Figure 22 Yaletown 2](image)

**Figure 22 Yaletown 2**
Dancer – Kathryn Ricketts
Photographer – Ernie Stelzer

It had regained its airborne status and was floating at eye level. I slowly reached toward it but the wind had now given it enough momentum to carry it slowly upwards. I continued to reach for it on toes fingers spread wide as it floated slowly and lightly towards the skyline.
The image had provided a resolution; it had given me permission and caused a decision in my body. I would move into this new home. I would allow this rigid landscape to fill me with its unexpected breath. Lightly, energetically my heart, which had been in captivity of regret and longing was moving into a place of discovery, yes with fear but also with curiosity. I began to walk towards the buildings of Yaletown, my walk escalated to a full-bodied run, my arms spread wide. My body was screaming “HERE I AM!!” as I continued full speed and disappeared into the urban forest leaving the beam of light and Julia’s notes hovering in the crisp air at the turntable.
Reflections on the Lugs

I have chosen these three Lugs out of the 35 I have performed as research as they exemplified aspects in my research that were distinct and valuable.

I entered a site potent with the invitation for political speech with my Hyde Park Lug. Clearly the speakers are engaged in a performative activity, which is beyond doubt brimming with intention. By the nature of Lugs as rooted in performance I was aligned with the expectations of the site but in conflict with the expected form. Most believed I was strung out on something as I was not “able” to speak and even when they beckoned me to language I resisted. It wasn’t until I moved to the centre and unveiled the character that people seemed to begin to fully acknowledge the possibility that speech could be embodied and still have political and emotional agency. When the speakers come to their spots with ladders and milk crates, they have clear intentions; their objective is to change minds, to make impact. The default is an elevation which gives right to accusation and resistance and from this premise they move into the heart of their language. Their words are hurled, casted into the crowd as arrows from broken hearts. In this way my Lug was displaced. If I had any objective other than to dissolve any attempts of having an objective, my Lug would not be true to its core. The integrity of the performance would be lost. The receptivity that must be there would be broken. I understood that there were moments with the crowd and the speakers where I intersected but in most instances, we worked with opposite forces in completely different directions. Later I realized it was the tension within these oppositional forces, which brought attention to the possibility of language being perceived in a new way.

Yale Town was my first Lug outside and therefore I needed to weigh out the challenges and the gifts of working in public space opposed to a constructed sacred
space of the theatre. The recognition of entirely new conditions did not just exist on a formal level but also on the plain of content. Demographically my playing space was steeped with stories of immigration, of many traveling from homeland residences much larger with much more private space. The fact that private residences are stacked close together in glass buildings with front and back yards being shopping streets and public parks, create another kind of “homeland”. I explored the integration of both form and content in this Lug by playing with the oppositions of space and restrictions, freedom and repression, being overwhelmed and finding a manageability and finding the balance between integrity and compromise.

China town was similar to the Yaletown in that it was working with the site as a key element, but it had an added few elements which brought it to a very special place. I worked with a personal recollection of immigration, which was integrated, into the piece. My storyteller, Stanley, immigrated with his family to Vancouver when he was just a boy and he brought his first impressions to the performance revealing his vulnerability and confusion. The audience accompanied the piece with harmonicas and so it was part of the performance to orchestrate this in the simplest way as part of the performance experience. Working in Chinatown with Stanley's story brought an authenticity and specificity to the Lug, which was both a gift and a challenge as it also walked the line of appropriation. I needed to both honour the authenticity and gently nudge it to a place where I could remember my displacement as a child and integrate it throughout, even at the crisis point when voice and agency grew out of a discovery of the head tax receipt which was revealed when opening the suitcase.

In all of the Lugs I feel that I was challenged to find the presence and astuteness to the challenges specific to each context, which are both practical and emotional. As I navigate difficult cracks in the cement as I leap through the dusk air, I feel that I have
eroded the attention to other details, which bring a more subtle emotional nuance to the work. It is my constant challenge to balance the practical with a much more complex framework of decision-making. In the case of Hyde Park, China town and Yaletown I felt that I had not struck the balance, however, within the challenges of The Banff conference I felt that for most of my four and a half minutes of dancing I was fully engaged both within the content, form and the practical conditions of the context. This Lug came after about one and a half years of research and problematizing this form and seemed to launch me into an entirely new set of issues. How to perform theory moving the dance beyond its conventional framework of perception?
Theorizing Inquiry

Singing the Silence
From Performativity to Transmediation to Embodiment
Singing the Silence

*The interstitial spaces between departures and arrivals*

Examining the primary pattern of Lugs, I am curious to probe the traversing of time, space and meaning in the points between arrivals and departures. An arc of transition, a rupture is imminent.

**Table 7 Departures/arrivals**

Both points in my diagram indicate arrivals and departures implying a contiguity of meaning in the traditional definitions of these words.

Departure – act of departing, a variation that deviates the standard or norm, euphemistic expression for death. Arrival – the act of arriving at a certain place, accomplishment of an objective. We will leave a location only to arrive somewhere else. The concept of blurring this provoked me to think of a discovery by the German Mathematicians August Ferdinand Möbius and Johann Nedic (1858). It is a surface with only one boundary – the borders are blurred - the inside becomes the outside and vice versa. It is called a Möbius Strip and is considered by mathematicians to be "non orientable".

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Table 8 Mobius' Strip

This single contiguous curve is similar to the arc in my Lugs in concept. The interchangeability of oppositions; outside/inside boasts a connectivity that is both balanced and fluid. Appelbaum writes of the temporality of this balance;

Sur-face is inter-face. Surface is a reminder of relation, a tangible sign of the fact that inner and outer mutually penetrate each other and that the distinction is a functional convenience. Surface is a concentrated meeting ground, a place where centrifugal and centripetal tendencies are momentarily held in balance. (Appelbaum, 1995, p. 81)

This borderless region is also reflected upon in Heidegger's analogy of the jug; the potter who shapes the jug does not only mould the clay but shapes the void, the emptiness, "The vessels thingness does not live at all in the material of which it consists, but rather in the void that holds it" (Bhabha, 1995, p.19)

In Lugs there is an inversion of perception in our cognitive patterns where Heidegger claims that we begin to decipher signs in a new way. To see the void as emptiness embraced by a tangible form is to be misconceived by the signs. The void is in fact neither fixed with form nor freed by emptiness but is holding a temporality that can be understood by Kapoor as the potentiality of expanding available space.

"Such an articulation through displacement allows us to decipher emptiness as a 'sign, where we really have exteriority of the inward,
rather than to pander to the look of the void as it signals a need to be fulfilled”
(Bhabha, 1998, p.20)

The notion of applying a sense of continuum to what is traditionally understood as punctuated, contained and finite, results in a disruption, an unsettling leading me to a more thorough inquiry. This disruption is reflected rigorously and endlessly by a wide scope of scholars; Homi K Bhaba (1998) speaks of the transitional space of the void, Shakespeare, the removal of ground, Appelbaum (1995) calls it The Stop, Eugenio Barba’s (1995) definition of this pre-expressed moment is called sets and Japanese Noh master Azume (1995) speaks of this as Ju Ha Kyu, and this only to name a few. I have narrowed my inquiry to these few that resonate a relevance to the performative nature of my work. Like a pinball, my curiosity rebounds and ricochets off of these varying and yet overlapping theories regarding the power of the third liminal space, the wound, the lesion.

There is a moment in which personal or cultural history stands before two diverging pathways. One leads to a repetition of the known, the tried and true, the old, the established. It is safe, secure and stable. The other finds a renewed importance in the unknown, the uncharted, the new, the dark and dangerous. Unfettered by accepted categories of thought, it might be immediately hidden away from view, out of fear or repugnance. The moment I speak of is not choice in the sense of deliberative reason but an action that choice stands on.
(Appelbaum, 1995, p.16)

This collision of the recognizable and familiar with radically new ways of recognizing signs is what cultivates this third liminal space. Before I linger in each of these scholars’ theories of this space of potency and transition, I am eager to return to the Möbius Strip(ness) of Lugs for a brief reflection on the transience and contiguity of the arrivals and departures in these kinaesthetic journeys.

They come together, in this uncanny relationship, by virtue of the difference that holds them apart; a contest between surfaces, elements,
The Möbius Strip(ness) of Lugs is reflected also in Heidegger’s metaphoric analogy of the jug speaks of the continuum of space and time provoking for me questions of the historicity of the arc I am analyzing. With all of this (dis)orientated borderless continuum, where and how do we measure personal history? Miller writes of Jaques Lacan (1986) that our history is implicated within an emptiness created with the rupture in this continuum (Miller, 59).

The important thing is that at a given moment one arrives at illusion. Around it one finds a sensitive spot, a lesion, a locus of pain, a point of reversal of the whole of history, insofar as it is the history of art and insofar as we are implicated in it; that point concerns the notion that the illusion of space is different from the creation of emptiness. (Miller, 1959, p.10)

I suspect that the making and defining of personal history is the key component in the investigation of Lugs arc from here to there. Leading me in two vastly different directions, which loop back and collide. When studying the ‘look’ of the Möbius Strip I was struck by the resemblance to a DNA double Helix.
In this multi directional and energized inquiry I am drawn from Heidegger's vessel to genetics structures. When looking at the double Helix I am reminded of the percentage of what becomes our personal history rests in the genetic instructions inside the nucleic acid, which the double helix is comprised of. The idea of this long-term space storage, our blue prints of self, nags and pulls at the notion of personal agency. As we move through time and space positioning and repositioning, locating and relocating how much is determined? In my pinball like fervour, I insert more curiosity and quickly rebound from genetic structures to philosophical belief systems. Determinism by definition, although there are hard determinists and soft determinists, operates on the belief that all of what transpires constructing history is determined through an unbroken chain of prior occurrences. This leads to the question is the chain a line or a spiral? Is it a continuum or is/was there a divine act that sets the rows of dominoes clacking forward? Some philosophers like David Hume claim that even though we have no control of our circumstances and choices - the 'interpretation' of events provoking voluntary action gives the illusion of agency. This brings me back to Jaques Lacan's writing of “the moment one arrives at illusion...” (Miller, p. 10, 1959) he speaks about illusion not as misconception but rather as a disruption - a suspension of patterned historical associations to problematize the obvious the habitual. In a conversation to Einstein, Piet Hein;

A physicist is walking along a beach and sees a five-year old child throwing flat stones onto the sea, trying to make them skip. Each stone makes no more than one or two hops. The physicist remembers that he, in his childhood, was very good at this game. So he shows the child how it is done. He throws the stones one after the other, showing how to hold them, at what angles to cast them, at what height over the surface of the water. All the stones thrown by the adult skip many times: seven, eight, even ten times.

“Yes” the child then says, “they skip many times. But that isn’t what I was trying to do. Your stones are making round circles in the water, but I want mine to make square circles.”

(Hein, 1968)
Einstein responded in the following way:

“Give the child my compliments and tell him not to be concerned if the stones don't make square circles in the water. The important thing is to think the thought.”

(Barba, 1995, p.92)

This is what Appelbaum (1995) refers to as the stop moment. Appelbaum believes that the stop lives in the interstices of action and that it rests in the moment before the action which aligns precisely with Barba's concepts of pre expressive movement called sats; the rallying of energy before a movement. This is the power in the stillness.

I recall the most powerful moment in my history of identifying sats was sitting poised with paddle in hand moments before a dragon boat race. The drummer at the bow barks mono syllabic commands equivalent to ready, set, go. It is the set moment in this instance or in any athletic race, which Barba is speaking of. The screaming silence, the abounding stillness - brimful of power, breathless and ready. Katsuko Azuma, Japanese Noh master, writes about breathless in a slightly different way but with the motive to achieve the same quality of physical/emotional astuteness.

‘Kill the breathing. Kill the rhythm’, Katsuko Azuma’s master repeated to her. To ‘kill’ breathing and to ‘kill’ rhythm means to be aware of the tendency automatically to link gesture to the rhythm of breathing, speaking and music, and to break this link. The opposite of linking automatically is consciously to create a new connection.

(Bhabha, 1995, p.32)

Appelbaum also speaks about awareness as action unto itself when viewing the divide between patterned and repeated habits and the unknown. This awareness is seen as the action of choice.

I now understand that the arc in Lug's arrivals and departures, a contiguous pathway without boundaries but with points of disruption where crisis between
oppositions colliding becomes an invitation to expression, not expression itself. The journey with suitcase is not what it appears. There is not necessarily a train station, a country, a passport or perhaps there are but entirely on a metaphoric plane; self, heart, values. There is no chronology, no E.T.A. it is a metaphoric trail I am blazing. The invitation to expression triggers the excavating process, “the digging into the bedrock of truth” (Appelbaum, 1995). Appelbaum writes of an unearthing of what is buried - pushed aside or perhaps forgotten, a surfacing of self.

A path of hieroglyphs and performs with which we draw nearer to ourselves (Barba, 1995, p.81)

I return to the Möbius strip as a symbol of the merging and blurring of our imposed boundaries - public/private availability/secrecy - practical/psychological - the existential meanderings of Lugs permits a re-joining of these ‘locations’ Appelbaum (1995) speaks of it as a membranes to be penetrated or as encrusted to resist. I posit that surface in the case of the Möbius Strip and the arcs of Lugs is a verb not a noun and therefore the 'surfacing' of self in the crisis points of stops in the arc is always in motion. Of course as a dancer I theorize and conceptualize through motion but as I ponder this I problematize motion as actually manifesting in stillness. Pina Bausch, (1984) German choreographer, reflects upon her interest in dance as being in the body not with the body. She watches her dancers with great satisfaction, still on their chairs. I am deeply moved by the dances made by elders in wheelchairs with my residencies in extended care wards. Their movement is barely discernable but it is abounding as the moment in the dragon boat. Homi Bhabhi writes about this merging when "the material and non material tangentially touch" (Bhabha, 1995, p.18) If we can look beyond the
illustration we allow the material in this case the body, to transcend this to a new plain of meaning. Kapoor, visual artist, speaks to this through the word availability.

In the end it has to do with issues that lie below the material, with the fact that the materials are there to make something else possible; that is what interests me. The things that are available, or the non-physical things, the intellectual things, the possibilities that are available through the material.

(Bhabha, 1998, p.18)

This notion of working through a material, penetrating the surface of the obvious does not imply that the material itself is a transmitter or vehicle. My body is not solely the delivery person to the metaphor below the surface. It is rather the technique that locates the interstitial space, the in-between temporality, or as Viktor Shklovsky would say "the act of making strange". (Heathcote, 1984) This is the dynamic space of stillness, the brimming of emptiness where conflicting spaces meet to form new meanings.

The true void – out of balance, caught between one temporality and another – becomes such a gathering place that stands in an oblique relation to itself and others. As a ‘diagonal’ event it is, at once, a meeting place of modes and meanings, and a site of the contentious struggles of perspective and interpretation.

(Bhabha, 1998, p.30)

Shakespeare’s ‘removal of ground’ is a beautiful phrase for this investigations of Lugs as I examine its relationship to time and space and question the construction of history and its relationship to self. I understand the complexity, depth and treasure that belong to what is considered disruption, crisis, and loss. “Like Hamlet’s Father, ghost walks the night, wafting us to a more ‘removed ground’ (Bhabha, p. 23). Who is the ghost and who is the father in this analogy of Lugs? No one and everyone. I posit that my performances of Lugs move from a transcending of specificity and belonging, in the sense of authorship, to anonymity. Anonymity is a collective ground where stories can claim new passports. Concepts move laterally losing the original authorship, ideas
become free agents. Where there is a possibility to acquire potency resonating beyond the source. Barba writes about this anonymity. The possibility to achieve this leap from specificity to openness is through cultivating the material. In the case of Lugs the stories are very carefully navigated by shaping the energy meticulously. Barba writes of this construct of artificiality;

In order to re-shape her/his own energy artificially, the performer must think of it in tangible, visible, audible forms, must picture it, divide it into a scale, withhold it, suspend it in a immobility which acts, guide it, with varying intensities and velocities, through the design of movements, as if through a slalom course.
(Barba, 1995, p.71)

Japanese performing techniques inspired by masters such as Tokuho Azuma and Katsuko Azuma embrace three forms of energy that work cyclically; this cycle is called jo-ha-kyu. Jo is to retain energy, ha is to break free and kyu is to build momentum to speed only to be stopped again by jo.

Both Grotowsky (1995) and Stanislavsky (1995), two of the most prominent figures responsible for the major shift in looking at their discipline as theatre of transition, speak about the score at work in a performer and the organic consistency of playing between 'organization' (the craft and skill demanded of an actor) and fortuitousness (the availability to the stop moments in a performance journey). Grotowsky explains the voluntary disorientation we allow as performers, the moving into a dark room to find the furniture, which results in a dilation of our senses and sensibility, an alertness beyond knowing ones lines.

I realize in my inquiry with this notion of pre-expressive states that I have been imposing a structure that would ensure this in all of my choreography to date. I asked men to balance real china cups on their heads and prepared the audience that the performance would stop if any of the cups were broken.
I employed a blind man instead of an actor to play the part; I balanced on real bags of sand shifting under my toes.

And now I move with a suitcase not knowing what my lines or my moves will be until I step onto the stage and begin constructing my own momentary history. Removing the ground, excavating the layers allowing square rings to appear. This is the state that must be achieved as a performer to honour the stillness, to be available to the wound and to sing the silence.
In this chapter I am exploring the aspects of language from text to speech and finally to performance. As I have been working with stories both spoken and written with my work in Lugs, I am interested in the theoretical framework of this.

Bakhtin’s (1979) “The Problem of Speech Genres” and Butler’s (1997) “Linguistic Vulnerability”—were both written within 30 years of each other. Both texts were part of a larger text, Judith Butler’s *Excitable Speech* and M.M. Bakhtin’s *Four Essays on Language*. Closer examination of the two texts results in an initial need for clarification of vocabulary. As I am initially addressing the power of language it is crucial that I investigate the categorical ‘naming’ of aspects of language through these scholars. The list could be endless but I have restricted this examination I will clarify but a few—*Utterance, Speech Act, Communication, Perlocutionary, Illocutionary and Rejoinders*.

Utterance is an expression of thought be it oral or written but according to Bakhtin—these utterances are hinged on a series of components; through thematic
content, linguistic style (which results from a selection of grammatical, phraseological and lexical resources) and above all, compositional structure. Bakhtin feels that utterance is comprised not only of the words we choose, the combinations and variations which he later calls ‘style’ to express a thought, but rather the compositional structure which he claims is the vital piece in defining utterance. Utterance then is composed of stylistic/thematic and compositional structures. And although each utterance belongs in a separate entity, which Bakhtin identifies as a ‘sphere of communication’, they can all be named, as these spheres exist independent of each other. Bakhtin calls them ‘speech genres’. Butler speaks about utterance as an almost insignificant part of the sphere of communication. The utterance, and here Butler refers to Austin (1962), philosopher of language, for vocabulary support, has its value within, what he names “a total speech situation”. This total speech situation houses what is named the “Speech Act”. Butler’s chapter on “Linguistic Vulnerability” investigates what constitutes a speech act primarily with the focus of injurious speech. It is almost impossible to delineate the “total speech situation” but again Butler borrows from Austin in his marking two important forms in the speech act, illocutionary and perlocutionary. Illocutionary claims consequence by saying, a deed is delivered; For example, “I now pronounce you...” however, this is not without recognizing the conditions of this utterance or as Austin would call the felicity conditions. This authority is recognized through a sense of repetition that warrants the value of an illocutionary speech act. Austin speaks of this as having the value of a ritual or ceremony.

Infelicity is an ill to which all acts are heir, which have the general character of ritual or ceremonial, all conventional acts. (Butler, 1997, p.1)
These utterances work in a sphere of operation that is comprised of more than the moment of utterance itself. This resonation beyond the moment is an important point to be analyzed and one that surfaces through the theories of all scholars explored in this chapter. The *perlocutionary* speech acts works as a kind of domino effect, the act of saying causes another effect.

In both illocutionary and perlocutionary definitions I can draw compatible comparison’s to Bakhtin’s notion of *speech genres*—Butler’s “total speech situation” and Bakhtin’s “sphere of communication” can seem quite similar except for the differences in two important terms; ‘speech’ in one definition and ‘communication’ in the other. It is not to deny that language, as an act exists within a realm as they name it—*sphere* or *situation* but there seems quite a radical difference between the terms ‘communication’ and ‘speech’. This difference is very important to note in my analogy; ‘communication’ has a centrifugal movement of action/reaction where as ‘speech’ act has a movement of trajectory—an event that moves outward, in other words, acts as a centripetal force. Both Butler and Bakhtin speak about the utterance potent within a fluid time frame;

The ‘moment’ in ritual is a condensed historicity: it exceeds itself in past and future directions, an effect of prior and future invocations that constitute and escape the instance of the utterance. (Butler, 1977, p. 3)

..its beginning is preceded by the utterances of other, and its end is followed by the responsive utterance of others... (Bahktin, 1977, p.125)

Butler speaks about this time fluidity as it relates to my final word in my vocabulary definitions, *Rejoinders*. Bakhtin explains the listener/speaker is not innocent of the lateral span of time in his utterance. He is in fact only a point on a continuous history of implied meanings.
He is not after all, the first speaker, the one who disturbs the eternal silence of the universe. And he presupposes not only the existence of the language system he is using but also the existence of preceding utterances—his own and others (Bakhtin, 1977, p 124)

Bakhtin speaks of any utterance as having to begin with all utterances that precede it and end with all the responsive utterances of others. This implies that utterances have no boundaries but Bakhtin reassures us that these boundaries do exist in the changing of partners in the act of utterance. The speaker and listener, which he calls ‘interlocutors’ indeed have distinct utterances, and this alternating of utterance is what he calls ‘rejoinders’. Butler on the other hand speaks of these rejoinders in another way. Her notions of speech leading to effects but not being the effect itself is the exemplification of what she considers the performativity of speech. Just as Bakhtin speaks of the temporal nature of utterance, Butler speaks of the performativity of speech without clear identifiable boundaries.

Understanding performativity as a renewable action without clear origin or end suggests that speech is finally constrained neither by its specific speaker nor its originating context, such speech is also marked by its capacity to break with context, thus, performativity has its own temporality in which it remains enabled precisely by the contexts from which it breaks. (Butler, 1977, p. 40)

When Butler speaks of “the contexts from which it breaks” she speaks of a kind of rupture or disorientation that happens as a result of the performative nature of the speech act.

The speech situation is thus not a simple sort of context, one that might be defined easily by spatial and temporal boundaries. To be injured by speech is to suffer a loss of context, that is, not to know where you are. Indeed, it may be that what is unanticipated about the injurious speech act is what constitutes its injury, the sense of putting the addressee out of control. (Butler, 1977, p. 4)
It is within this analysis of language that Bakhtin and Butler’s theories begin to diverge. There is no question that both theorists are speaking of context and historicity as paramount to the agency of language but within the realm of communication their theoretical lineage begins to reveal itself. Bakhtin’s “The Problem of Speech Genres” speaks in opposition to Saussurean linguistics which is the view that language exists within an autonomous system of signs and signifiers, instead he claims language to be a ‘living dialogue’—however he speaks in terms of clearly contained instances where communication lives which as previously defined—are named ‘speech genres’. He also speaks of a clear axion where the system of language runs vertical and the utterance runs horizontal. This containment runs counter to Butler’s theory of the performative speech act. Butler speaks of the body as an instrument through which speech is played;

As an instrument of a violent rhetoricity, the body of the speaker exceeds the words that are spoken, exposing the addressed body as no longer and not ever fully in its own control
(Butler, 199, p.13)

This is echoed strongly in Fels theories of performance as an event of (dis)orientation shifting the grounds of knowing to a place where one is invited to revelation.

Forget your perfect offering

There is a crack in everything
That’s how the light gets through.
(Cohen, 1993 p. 373)

The disorientation that happens with the performative speech act constructing a sense of loss in time and place, as she says, “To be injured by speech is to suffer a loss of context, that is not to know where you are” (Butler, 1997). This is the opposite of Bakhtin’s sense of clear linkage to time and place as the significant components of his
speech genres. Butler continues to allow the performative to resonate as a movement into claiming and unclaiming the self. She speaks of language as something we “do”.

We do things to language, but language is also the thing that we do. Language is a name for our doing: both ‘what’ we do (the name for the action that we characteristically perform) and that which we effect, the act and its consequences (Butler, 1977, p. 8).

As language has the power to call one into being, it also has the power to recall someone from being. Derida (2000) speaks of this erasure resulting in two opposing trajectories that intersect in a moment of meaning. Butler’s notion of performative speech echoes this sense of motion—trajectories of utterance, which collide, intersect and repel creating meanings and consequences. What was earlier described as a complete speech situation is now ruptured in the disorientation and the breaking of context, however, Bakhtin’s speech genres despite the reverberating utterances in past and future remain individually placed in context and in fact dependant on that context to claim agency.

This is a kind of centripetal motion that exemplifies the wilfulness in Butler’s speech Act. She refers to Felman’s (1983) relation between the body and speech as scandalous implying that there is a clear incongruity and inseparability between what the body speaks and the ‘speech’. Felman (1983) explains that the speech act cannot always know what the body is saying, hence the term scandalous. Although this looks like it is only supporting the binary of body and spirit, mind and matter, it is actually looking at an odd co-dependence. Felman (1983) speaks of the body as the blind spot in language.

That which acts as excess of what is said but which also acts in and through what is said.
(Butler, 1977, p. 11)
This embodiment of language is an important aspect of Butler's performativity of Speech Act. What is the linguistic domain? First working from the Foucauldian notion that discourse is used to destabilize and disorient, Butler moves to the idea of 'naming' as Austin describes as calling one into being and finally explains that through an everyday recitation and repeatability, our bodies enter the performative and by doing so are embedded with ideologies and conventions which even though socially constructed on an artifice of temporality, these rituals become almost natural and necessary.

By enacting conventions, we do make them real to some extent (after all, our ideologies have "real" consequences for people) but that does not make them any less artificial. (Felluga, 1997, p.2)

One is not simply a body, but, in some very key sense, one does one's body and indeed, one does one's body differently from one's contemporaries and from one's embodied predecessors and successor as well. (Felluga, 1997, p.2)

Both Bakhtin and Butler travel in tandem to a certain degree in their theories of language in relation to agency but with closer examination become distinct in how they theorize the motionality of the agency of speech. Bakhtin's containment in speech genres is referred to as a centrifugal force and Butler's breaking the context through performativity is referred to as a centripetal force.

I have included two diagrams that best visualize this motion of Bakhtin's theory of speech genres and Judith Butler's performativity of speech.
Bakhtin’s Theory of Agency in Language

Butler’s Theory of Agency in Language

Table 10 Bakhtin’s speech genres

Table 11 Butler’s performative speech
How can performativity in speech play out in the classroom when using movement and storytelling as a tool for deeper understanding of text?

Butler sees the processuality of drama in education as giving teachers the opportunity to subvert this theatricality (in a way that rational argument never can) because it is able to meet the enemy on its own terms – the affective, feeling level of experience. (O'Toole, 1992, p.58)

This is my segue into a teaching experience for one year with *Hana's Suitcase* by Ann Levine, the following is an account of my research with this text in exploring the methodology of transmediation; the act of transferring from one signal to another through.

The emerging shift from transmission-to inquiry-oriented models of teaching and learning implies that students need more than words to learn. Transmediation, the act of translating meanings from one sign system to another, increases students' opportunities to engage in generative and reflective thinking because learners must invent a connection between the two sign systems (Seigal, 1995, p.458)

In my research in the few years, I have charted this process of transmediation and include a few of the charts below;
Examples of Transmediation
Elementary School Residency

Historical Perspectives ➔ Holocaust ➔ Hana's Suitcase ➔ Creative writing
Movement
Visual Art

Identity and Place

Table 12 Transmediation 1
Examples of Transmediation
Community Centre

Celebration of Cultural Diversity → Persona Cultural Heritage → Creative writing Movement Theatre

Identity and Place

Table 13 Transmediation 2

Examples of Transmediation
Lug Performance

Cultural Displacement → Exploration of Historical milestones → First Generation Chinese immigrants → Music Movement Storytelling

Identity and Place

Table 14 Transmediation 3
*Hana's Suitcase* is no different and in fact the epilogue helped to underline that by claiming that her suitcase was in fact a replica and not holding the magic embedded in authentic artefacts, allowing it to transcend the ‘object’ as ‘meaning’ and instead to be seen as a catalyst provoking profound events.

What I’m trying to do here is to shake the reader out of the conventional view of the curriculum, by using the principle of ‘ostranenie’ defined by Viktor Shklovsky as being ‘that of making strange’. We very readily cease to ‘see’ the world we live in and become anaesthetized to its distinctive features. The arts permit us ‘to reverse that process and to creatively deform the usual, the normal, and so to inculcate a new, childlike, non-jaded vision in us’.

(Heathcote, 1984, p.127)

The content of the novel, an account of a young Jewish girl who lost her life during the Holocaust, is very challenging subject matter and not easily embraced by students’ teacher or parents. The author, Ann Levine, is able to bridge to an otherwise unattractive subject matter by a brilliant literary device. The two narratives; Fumiko Ishioka’s search for the identity and story of Hana Brady and Hana’s experience of the Holocaust, run tandem to each other. I posit that in this particular case her device works similar to a homeopathic principle. We are able to absorb small portions of the horror of Hana’s narrative by gathering the emotional antibodies to eventually face the truth about her life and the realities of a horrific event in history. I chose one chapter in the novel, “The Deportation Centre”, and worked with three different target groups; seniors, elementary school children and pre-professional dancers from December 2005 until April 2006 with this material. With all the groups I was relentless with this selectivity. We have all re-read the chapter countless times with the purpose of preparation for scenes and reflections after or to simply provoke images for our own writing.
“... Participants control significant aspects of what is taking place; they simultaneously experience it and organize it; they evaluate what is happening and make connections with other experiences. These are all demanding activities, requiring the use of perception, imagination, speculation, and interpretation, as well as exercising dramatic, cognitive, and social capacities. These capacities and the energies of the group are focused on the development of a specific dramatic world arising from a particular pre-text that defines the parameters of this world.”
(O'Neil, 1982, p.1)

In retrospect I understand that what interests me in this chapter carries the potency of a suspended moment in crisis, which I believe to be the catalyst for transformation.

This is the point when Hana has been removed from all that is familiar and safe and is suspended in time before the movement to another unknown arrival. I believe this charged moment summoned a strength in Hana, which would help nourish the remainder of her life.

Each group was distinct in their embodiment of the text; there was a commonality in the imagery, which transferred to a continuity in texture of movement as well as use of time and space.

Each of these groups was able to enjoy small presentations of the work, which created revelations in their own critical thought, and a mutual sense of value and appreciation. This interfacing served as viable platform for a cross fertilization of ideas for further creative, critical work.

But de Certeau’s aphorism, “what the map cuts up, the story cuts across,” also points to transgressive travel between two different domains of knowledge: one official, objective, and abstract—“the map”; the other one practical, embodied, and popular—“the story.” This promiscuous traffic between different ways of knowing carries the most radical promise of performance studies research. Performance studies struggles to open the space between analysis and action, and to pull the pin of the binary opposition between theory and practice.
(Conquergood, 2002, p.145)
There were and still are many challenges to the work of moving from literal narrative to embodiment. The following are some of the points of challenge

1) Transforming the text from linear narrative to poetic collage.

2) Transferring from a cerebral approach to a full-bodied one.

With younger children I integrate props such as silly putty or plastercene, fragments of magazine images or toys that are fragmented or pliable to illuminate and animate the concept of abstraction, metaphor and poetic embodiment. With a more mature target group I may assign creative writing, discussion and sometimes hands on manipulations to help facilitate abstraction. This form of abstraction helps to transport text from specifics i.e. character, setting, context to personal and then to a shared platform with others inviting personal lived experiences to emerge as creative fodder.

Most significantly, these activities illuminate the processes by which human beings experience a sense of personal identity and, importantly, how these experiences are necessarily organized by remembered, currently lived, and imagined identifications and relationships. (Sumara, 2001, p. 168)

I have encouraged the participants to honour the source material but to also let it evolve in our process of transmediation.

In Hurston’s example, the white man researcher is a fool not because he values literacy, but because he valorized it to the exclusion of other media, other modes of knowing. I want to be very clear about this point: texocentrism – not texts – is the problem. (Conquergood, 2002, p.151)

We are not making this performance as an illustration or enactment of the novel nor are we showing scenes from what we perceive the Holocaust to be. My first step of abstraction was working with one chapter isolating and fragmenting the text. We next essentialized the text which is a reductive process resulting in a transformation of text from narrative to poetry stripping away excess and centralizing personal meaning.
We then manipulated these fragments applying personal style and working quickly so as to encourage instinctive impulses rather than cerebral strategies.

A poem is constructed, tableaux are created from the poem, which is then manipulated, and music is chosen influencing quality, dynamic and intention. All of these stages serve as a strategy to usurp the literary analysis and exchange it with personal interpretations – a hermeneutic approach to the subject matter. These interpretations will access or trigger personal associations which are integrated into the work, allowing for surprising material to surface.

Whereas knowledge was once regarded as stable and absolute, it is now seen as partial and contingent; similarly, the familiar idea that learning is a passive process of acquiring isolated skills and bits of information has given way to the idea of learning as a social process in which students actively construct understandings. (Siegal, 1995, p. 457)

These unexpected outcomes are what I believe is the magic in this process of animating text and ultimately what facilitates the essential meaning-making of literacy. This is the key to taking specific linear narrative and moving it through the personal and into a broader possibility of interpretation. I posit that without this process, a text cannot truly resonate in a shared world of imagination but rather remain self-contained within its own determined meaning. This of course cannot be achieved without many factors both practical and pedagogical and even spiritual. A critical factor is establishing a trusted space where reciprocity is key. This often takes 80% of a residency to cultivate. Teachers and or programmers must be fully ‘on board’ contributing material, augmenting lesson plans, carving pathways and catching those who may fall from such an unfamiliar process.

My final exploration of embodiment is with the methodology of Performative Inquiry and its commitment to the body as a vital receptor for discovery and
reciprocity. Lynn Fels explains the methodology as a means to new understandings through disequilibrium;

Performative Inquiry provides a momentary entrance into “other” worlds through embodied play and reflection, thereby offering students opportunities for intercultural awareness, dialogue, and understanding. Transported into an unexpected environment, the student must re-examine the familiar against the unfamiliar, and through the resulting disequilibrium recover a new balance of meeting oneself within a new environment.

(Fels, 1998, p.12)

This notion of unexpected environment creating new meanings works up against the epistemological walls that are so often constructed by the academy and continue to restrict alternate methods of research. Conquergood writes of this as epistemic violence;

What gets squeezed out by this epistemic violence is the whole realm of complex, finely nuanced meaning that is embodied, tacit, intoned, gestured, improvised, co experienced, covert—and all the more deeply meaningful because of its refusal to be spelled out. Dominant epistemologies that link knowing with seeing are not attuned to meanings that are masked, camouflaged, indirect, embedded, or hidden in context. The visual/verbal bias of Western regimes of knowledge

(Conquergood, 2002, p.146)

Fels speaks about the gift of drama allowing us to not own the stories of others but to allow a fleeting, shifting moments and to honour through the witnessing of the stories embodied. I posit that performative inquiry can move one step closer to the compassion is this act. I believe through Lugs I am honouring the stories by allowing them to be embodied with a fusion of associations and emotional conjuring from my own experiences. This moves one step from empathy to an emotional aligning, no interfacing with the storytellers. This is what Fels would consider the interstanding of a moment, the climbing in and breathing the source of the moment.

Possible space-moments of learning come into being through (re)playing the landscape of inquiry through creative action and interaction.
Learning is possible through inhabiting and investigating imaginary world(s) that are played into being.
(Fels, 1998, p. 9)

These moments of learning, these cracks that are created from earthquakes in the grounds of habit, Fels speaks of as space-moments. As a dancer this definition resonates with the spatiality in the way I conceptualize. The three dimensional implications of the definition invite breath and possibility like an athlete ready to run, jump, dive in any direction, implies a kind of charged energy in the body. In my opinion the most fertile state of being for learning for provocation and revelation. Fels refers to this as space moments:

These new possible worlds may be created through the creative actions and interactions of students in role; it is within performance, exploration happens and possible space-moments of learning may emerge.
(Fels 1998, p. 8)

As Fels draws on complexity theories to investigate further these space-moments, I come to understand their temporality:

The edge of chaos is the balancing point between order and chaos where the component of a system never quite locking to place, and yet never quite dissolve into turbulence, either...the one place where a complex system can be spontaneous active and alive.
(Fels 1998, p. 257)

These moments are transitory despite our good wishes and at times, desperate needs to recognize the signs of “learning” and most importantly sustainable learning. These signs are fleeting and work through the form we present like an express train

To perform is to work within and through form and simultaneously through the destruction of form, a precarious dance that recognizes patterns - possibilities in the wind that dances clothes on a line suspended between. It is within this space-conflict that the dramatic moment is born.
(Fels, 1998, p.3)
Barba (1995) writes of his theatre techniques, it is within the dark space that our senses dilate and I further this to say that what becomes understood as learned moments is smaller than an atom and larger than the world. It is the young boy who steps away from the wall after eight weeks of movement exploration. It is the young Chinese student who quietly (after class) brings me the Mandarin and English version of the most beautiful poem ever written and asks timidly if she did it right?

It is the flicker in the eyes of the one in the corner who doesn't speak but wants me to know he is glad I have arrived in the classroom. Initially, I have thought that a magnifying glass is what would be needed as a teacher's survival kit and perhaps it is, but to activate language, to break the barriers of texcentricity and to embody space moments of exploration is not about magnifying the signs but rather it is permitting the signs to speak.
Lug Trilogy

Synopsis
Letters
The Kiwi Green Pontiac
Working in the O Zone
Analysis
Synopsis of Lug Trilogy

Lug Trilogy is an exploration of the notion that theoretical perspectives and in this case, in education, can be explored and even challenged through a Performative Inquiry. I began writing this series having been creatively inspired to combine two new initiatives; to put words to my Lugs and to see if they could function within a spoken narrative and to interrogate perspectives in education through a poetic narrative.

Questions arose through the writing; how do I measure the outcome of learners? How do I know the appropriate amount of time to spend on learning moments? When is it the right time to move in or give space to a learner? As I began to write, I discovered that each of my three monologues illuminated important thoughts in how I reflect on public pedagogy and I was able to weave these thoughts metaphorically through a poetic landscape of character and plot development. Although they are embodied within distinct characters and locations, the perspectives live in a multiple of sites and are relevant to varying definitions of how I view education.

A single suitcase serves as a metaphor to explore issues in education. It is the vessel of ideas explored through three characters in three short one-act plays. The characters are a widow, a teenager and an artist. As the suitcase travels through each of the plays so do I as a reconfiguration and an iteration of each of these characters.

Each play explores different concepts that are key for me when looking at arts based research;

- The roles we play as artist/researcher/teacher.
- The structure we build for our theories to breathe and grow within
- The tools we use to achieve this balance or symbiosis between identities that have often been distinct in our practices
And finally all the plays question the ways in which we read information, how hermeneutics comes into conflict with or is integrated with the complexity of our personal history in regards to literacy and interpretation.

**Letters**

*Letters* is a play in the form of 5 letters to Ivy Watson a 70-year-old woman who has run a hat shop for 50 years in the same small town. Her husband constructs scaffolding and works often in London 200 miles south of his hometown. Four of the letters are from Stanley whose lifetime devotion to his wife Ivy is clearly illuminated in his writing, stolen moments on the scaffolding during lunch breaks. Big Ben is always in view no matter where the site and he is marking time until he can hold Ivy’s hand and feel the warmth of her clear blue eyes.

The fifth letter is from the firm who employs Stanley with standard condolences and regrets from the accident that claimed Stanley’s life. They are hoping to return his belongings, which are mainly an old leather suitcase full of his tools.

**The Tool Bag and the Pontiac**

The second play is in the form of M.S.N. between two teenagers. Although both teens are falling behind in school and are on route to delinquency, the main character is still struggling to fight the peer pressure of this direction. He finds the suitcase full of tools and returns it in hopes of a reward. Instead of a reward he gets the tools and many stories about Stanley’s honourable life. He takes the tools as a gift along with the tenderness of Ivy’s memories and recognizes the event as a catalyst to re examine his direction and to be more aware of the tools and opportunities that are available to him.
The Exhibition

The third play is through the journal of an artist, Peg, who believes she works with form and content integrated in a singular concept of examining construction in regards to time and place. She borrows a suitcase from Ivy and realizes that many of her sites are the same as Stanley’s construction sites. Sites that are remembered with intimacy and pride by Ivy are only increments of time and theory by the artist. A mistake in the hanging of photos in her exhibition in London illuminates this discrepancy and raises questions around image literacy. The artist experiences an epiphany whereby she understands that interpretation must embrace the heart within the reading of any image.
Lug Trilogy

Letters

First in the Lug Trilogy - the hats we wear and the scaffolding we build in education

Letter #1

Dear Ivy

These guys are laughing at the stationary you gave me!

I miss you already. I can see only splinters of London between the poles of the scaffolding.
The planks are bloody unsafe so I try to keep moving, 
My balance is not what it used to be.
It’s cold and foggy but when it’s clear I can watch the time by the Big Ben.

I miss you
I can see you sitting in your shop so beautiful.
All your life, so beautiful.
One or two customers a day and you are happy.

I am thinking about you and how still you are.
Your gentle smile waiting for people to come to you...
To buy one of your beautiful hats.

One of your 3,000.00 hats!
Darling, we should have a sale!
I have to remember that what I do is help to construct beauty as well...in the end.
All I see right now is rusty poles and cement splattered planks.

I would like to hold your hand right now.
Mine are stiff and cold.

Sending you my love

Stanley

Letter #2

Darling

I lost your stationary in the move to our new site.

An extension for a bloody huge bank!
I have a new angle on the Big Ben.

Still watching the time
Still missing you...
I am wondering if you are wearing the dress that matches the wallpaper in the shop?

If I close my eyes I can smell the shop on your dress and I can imagine holding you hand.

I should buy you a ring in the big City.....

I am so glad we never moved, even though I feel like I am moving all the time.

Well, lunch break is over, I am eating on the scaffolding and can see the time from Ben.

I will post this tonight.

My Love

Stanley

**Letter #3**

Darling

Well we are almost finished the bank and one more job to go.

The guys are getting on my nerves.

I bought this card for you—it made me think of your hats.

I was thinking today about hats and wondered if you feel different every hat you wear?

You always look beautiful but different with each hat.

Perhaps this is your way of moving around?

Funny that! Because I build scaffolding so that buildings can stand still...very still.
At least I bloody well hope they do!

Lordy! This work is giving me a philosopher’s head!

Will write soon!

Back to work!

**Letter#4**

Name
I have had it with Big Ben and all the rest of the hustle and bustle!

I want to sit in your shop and hold your hand and wait for the next customer.

I have bought you a gift!

I am exploding with excitement!

I will be home very soon!

With love and anticipation!

Stanley

Letter #5

Dear Mrs. Watson

We at Timothy Brothers Scaffolding would like to extend our heart-felt condolences for your loss.

This tragic accident was the result of an extremely unfortunate oversight from the company on site before us.

The explosion should never have happened.

Our thoughts are with you and we would like to support you in this difficult time.

We would like to arrange a time to deliver some of your husband’s belongings. Stanley transported all of his tools in an old leather suitcase and we thought you would like to have it.
The Kiwi Green Pontiac

Second in the Lug Trilogy - *addressing the tools in education*

**Stage notes**

This play is done with the same dancer as in the first play. The coat is removed to reveal jeans and a T-shirt. There is an illuminated computer screen in the background. The words of the play are done through recorded sound, a version of what is said is keyed in through M.S.N. abbreviations and icons i.e. © etc. the dancer sometimes speaks with the lines that are on tape. The movement is fast firing energetic and athletic. The suitcase becomes a partner in the dance sometimes it is the teenage friend he is speaking to. There is a sense of anger, frustration and confusion with this youthful dance that moves towards a quiet reflectivity near the end. The music is like beat box full of breath and play.

---

**Example of slide each line bar comes in independently**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 15 MSN slide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where were you man? I waited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where? Waited where?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pine and 7th Idiot! Our corner!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You're the idiot! We maybe coulda stole that car if it wasn't for the fact that we had no fucking tools. You're the one that always carries something. You know. Swiss Army pocket shit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hey Shithead! Speaking of tools while you were wasting your youth at some bait car.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hey not just any car. A Kiwi Green Pontiac Parisienne!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anyway I scored a leather suitcase. One of those old ones like somethin my granddad had. Stunk like it too!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So what's the big deal?!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His sucker was filled to the brim with tools. Heavy shit!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Where were you man? I waited.

Where? Waited where?
You're the idiot! We maybe coulda stole that car if it wasn't for the fact that we had no fucking tools...you're the one that always carries something. You know..Swiss Army pocket shit.

Hey Shithead! Speaking of tools, while you were wasting your youth at some bait car... Hey not just any car! A Kiwi Green Pontiac Parisienne!

Anyway I scored a leather suitcase. One of those old ones like somethin my granddad had. Stunk like it too.

So what's the big deal?!

This sucker was filled to the brim with tools!

Heavy shit!!

What do ya mean?

I lugged it home!

What the fuck for?!

There was a note in it from some Stanley Dude

Sooo...?

You are one dumb Fuck sometimes... He says the tools are his livelihood blah blah blah and he would offer a reward for its return.

So?......

Well I just lugged it home...I'll head out to this place tomorrow; it's way the fuck out in the burbs

It's your measly life!!!

Nice buddy. Where the fuck where you today?

Waddy mean man? I told ya?

No, No! I mean in Simmons class we had a presentation!

Oh that. I hate that shit!

Yah tell me something I don't know

But this was our project!

Ya I hate Simmons... all my classes for that matter...all we do is sit on our ass and listen to bone heads talk at us!..

This time we were doing the talking man! You Fuck! You let me down!

Ya whatever, That's life.

It doesn't have to be...it's your move man!

Yah whatever...

---

**Next Day**

Hey man are you going to come with me?

Who? What? Where?...

Stanley Dude man! You got shit for brains

Good morning to you too! No man what a waste, I'm going back to bed and then to see if the dream machine is still there.

You are goin nowhere man!

Who? What? Where?

Whatever

---

**Next Day**

So the dream machine?
Wasn’t there.
Drag
Stanley?
Not there
Drag
Not really...
Wattup?
It turns out the old man is dead
And the reward?
Not so fast: His old woman... and believe me... we are talking ancient!... she gave me the tools!
What the.....?!
Well I got to their place:
Skip the details bud...
In the bulbs... way the hell gone, she opened the door, looked at the suitcase and began to cry:
Shit...
She then asked if I was from Timothy Brother’s Scaffolding
What the....?!
I said no... obviously then she asked me in. I thought she needed to write a cheque
What?
For the reward you dumb fuck!
Oh... right...
Instead she sat me down in her little living room and made me look at all these photos of buildings
What?!!
No, No! Not buildings... but scaffolding!
It turns out the old man died in an explosion at work and...
And the suitcase?
No clue, it was out on the street corner with a bunch of garbage
Wait a minute! I think it was outside a scaffolding place... yah! yah!
She thought you were from that place delivering the bag you idiot!

Brilliant Watson!!
So I guess no reward?
Oh yah reward!
How much?
About 10 kilos
What?!
She gave me the tools you idiot! Said I was going to need them
Jesus Christ!
You know... the funny thing is how she gave them to me:
You remember when we were kids and we’d dump out our Guy Fox candy and sort it?
Yah... the point?!
Rows of Mars bars, Oh Hernys, piles of tootsie pops...
The point man?!
Well she did that with the tools
It took forever to get out of there
What the Fuck did she do that for?
I guess she wanted the suitcase...
Whacked out...

So I got this plastic bag of tools and just dumped them out on my bed.

Did ya put em in neat little rows?

Shut the fuck up man!

And the crazy thing is they kind of smell like this guy.

What guy?

Stanley, you dumb Fuck!

Ya right!

Anyway there are some extra tools here so if you want them... you might need them too man...
The Exhibition

Third in the Lug Trilogy - an exploration of image literacy

Stage notes
This one act play is done by the same dancer as in Letters and Tools. The dancer adds a jacket and hat and moves in a way that is slow and methodical with sudden impulsive changes in energy returning to a measured consistent dynamic. The screen behind shows a series of the same photo of scaffolding in various stages of dark room development, the numbers on the side indicate how long the photos were left in the chemical bath.

Unlike the character in the previous play the artist is searching for understanding where as the teenage is reacting to something. There is a pulling and a searching quality to her movement whereas in the previous play there is a sense of rebound and pushing. The music is fast moving and repetitive, electronic urban funk.

Examples of background slides
Figure 26  Scaffolding slides

September 21st
One week until exhibition opening must get organized!
Must stop taking photos!

- Buy opening outfit
- Contact gallery publicist
- Get double sided tape
- Think of titles and prices
- Borrow suitcase from Ivy
- Get centered
- Drink more water

---

**September 22nd**

Possible titles;

- Constructions of Place
- Shades of Grey
- Steel and structure
- Places in Time
- A Sequence of Place
- Increments of Construction
- Sequencing the Structure

Too tired
Go to bed!!

---

**September 23rd**

Clean house!

Why do I always have to completely clean my house even edit my junk drawers, delete saved phone messages, file old saved emails, return calls, make apologies (where they are due)

Why can’t I just go away for a while?

I should help Ivy out with her yard work now that Stan is gone.  
Cripes! What am I saying I have an insane amount to do!

Strange!... I was just about to go over to Ivy’s to see if I could borrow a suitcase when I see some creepy teenager leaving the house with a big plastic bag full of something.  She has help taking her garbage out? Maybe she can get him to take the garbage out more often....

Anyway I’ll wait a while, as I know too many visitors will push the sweet woman over the top.

I should remember to wear the hat I bought from her shop when I go over there.

Good night Ivy, you gentle sweet woman, I will come tomorrow.

If I could I would give your hand a little squeeze
September 24th

Four days until my exhibition!
I don’t know what I am doing!
I KNOW NOTHING!!!!
WHY DO I HAVE A SHOW IN ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CITIES IN THE WORLD???
OH MY GOD!!!!

As I was taking the photos out of their chemical baths today at their various increments of “non development” I really questioned what I was doing. Who would be interested in ½ developed photos of construction sites?

It’s crazy!!

Will they get it?
Will they understand process of construction in form and intention married in a single moment? Well Actually 27.5 seconds in the developer to be exact.
Oh well... whatever!!

Big Day!!
Big moment…well extended moment.
I went to Ivy’s today to talk to her about borrowing a suitcase. Like an idiot, I brought some of my work along as if she would be interested! As if she would care!!

I feel like I want to carry my work everywhere that I go with me right now, it is not something I do, it is something I am, like an appendage. I guess I am embodying my practice, hmmm would that make me a dancer? Ha! I think not! Too much tripping over my own two left feet!

Anyway, crazy as it is a few photographs come everywhere with me, even to the store for a litre of milk for my tea.

Ivy had of coursed invited me in.
She always does
I love her tea...ordinary...no herbs, no essence...just black tea. Her house is always so tidy. I always notice this, as it is so hard for me to do the tidy thing in my life. So that is why I really noticed that her sitting room was a mess. Well not really a mess, more like there were photographs scattered all over the couch.
She had a strange mixture of being apologetic and proud about the mess
Yes I would love some tea (of course). She went off to put on the kettle and I stayed.
I was asking her if I could borrow a suitcase while scanning the picture splayed out on the couch... “Oh my God!!!!”
Ivy came back into the living room as fast as she could. “These are my buildings!” Ivy looked confused and taken aback. (O.K. girl breathe and slow down…) “What I mean” I said to Ivy in a forced quietness “is that these are my sites.”
“No…” Ivy said very slowly “those are Stanley’s sites.”
The word *site* seemed odd coming out of Ivy’s mouth. It is such a new word linked to technology and concepts. Not at all in Ivy’s world. She also seemed surprised when it was reiterated through her lips.

“What I mean Ivy” I had explained “is that these photos of scaffolding are of the same location as where I work” suddenly I had objectified the site, neutered it, extracted the potency. It was no longer charged with our personal investment of meaning making or infused with our historical practice of construction of identity.

It felt like an empty statement as if I had thrown an egg at the wall and we were both silently, placidly watching it drip to the floor. Ivy took a deep breath and asked me to explain. I told her how I have an absolute passion in watching the sequence of place being constructed. I go to construction sites every day for periods of time and take photos of the site.

I then work with them in the darkroom extracting them from their developing process, arresting the progress of construction. It gives me an interesting feeling, a very excited feeling to know that I can be a kind of intervention to the construction of place by controlling the perception of this event.

I am not sure Ivy understood but in the telling I began to feel more confident about my exhibition. Indeed I do know something. I remember Ivy looking at one of the photos and shaking her head in gentle denial. These were Stanley’s sites and whatever was being built belonged to Stanley, and now her memory of him. The perception of his photo was singular, insular and belonged to the intimacy of Ivy and Stanley.

I asked if I could borrow one of the photos, as I was interested in comparing it to mine. She nodded graciously but with sadness, I imagine her to be sad most of the time now.

I thanked her for the photograph and for the suitcase which was sitting right there in the living room as if she knew I was coming for it.

Well it has been a long day.
Very good that I tried to explain my work to Ivy. I don’t think it went in but I learned that in the telling I can construct my theories and the scaffolding of my concepts. I will go to sleep tonight smiling with the word scaffolding, as it now has become another kind of metaphor. A vessel for some kind of theory around what I am doing.

Oh God! My gallery will love this!

Singing off!

---

**September 25th**
Oh my God!
So much to do!
Well at least I can check suitcase off my list!
Thank you Ivy for the suitcase and the photograph!
Must call gallery to arrange the hang and answer questions for opening.
Make sure I am happy with clothes for opening.
Take one of Ivy’s hats

September 26th

I love trains
Even though the journey is relatively short.
I love this idea of selecting what to look at in a landscape.
The band of imagery running by, a steady stream. Non-stop a ribbon of images and yet
my eyes, my mind is like a camera. I choose what to momentarily freeze and submit to
memory; the rest is discarded as a blur.
Like a film editor, the rest ends up on the editing room floor.
Is that how people look at work in a gallery? I suppose so. I have been told that the
average person looks at a piece of art for no more than 4 seconds.
How did Ivy look at my picture? Well I know how she looked at it. She only saw her
memory of Stanley but how can I be angry or hurt I only saw Stanley’s photos as
representations of my sites...hmmmmm

Need chips and beer and to stop thinking quite so much
Choices are good.
Choices are emblematic of value
I choose to buy a bottle of beer and a bag of chips now.

September 27th

OK here I am at the O Zone (gallery space) trying to calm myself down by writing.

The director has gone to lunch and they have not finished painting the walls so I have
what they so inappropriately titled “free time”. I am sitting in the gallery space. It
smells of paint. I can hear the wet repetitive sound of paint being applied. I have the
suitcase between my knees. I feel insular.

Everyone here is so gregarious
Squandered energy.
I am present but in this very tiny kinesphere I suddenly thought of Ivy and the way she
perceived my photos, intimate and insular.

I am looking at the suitcase and for the first time I see a small worn out tag with
Stanley’s name on it.
Oh my God!!! My kinesphere explodes and I begin to cry. No more intimacy, no more
insularity.
Stanley’s suitcase! I remember that most of his work was done here in London.

OK girl calm down take a deep breath. The director is back from lunch and I can hear
he is even more gregarious after food or shall I say liquid?
**September 28th 4:00 A.M.**

Well the show is hung!
Thank God!
I have 4 hours to sleep and then back again to arrange all signage and prepare for the opening.
Everything started so late today!
God Damn Paint!
People finally stopped being so gregarious at 2:00 A.M.

Signing off!
Big day tomorrow!

---

**Big Day**
Constructions of Place opens today!
Very excited! Very nervous!
Outfit is laid out on hotel bed
Everything is packed for day.
Will return briefly later to become confident/beautiful ARTIST!

---

**September 29th**

Exhibition opened with many hitches.
Tons of people came.
Sold over ½ of the work with many interested buyers left
I looked great! (Although the shoes were wrong!)
Gallery owner happy for the profits but probably won’t ask me back.

I had to do it for Stanley, for Ivy and for me.
It was just a little messy and dangerous (especially in the shoes) Ha!
Now people will think I am a performance artist!

They have asked at the gallery if they can have a new banner made but I was adamant that it echoed the living nature of my work, the suspended moment in the trajectory of sequencing. Just like the photos extracted from the chemical bath just like the images out the train window. Even though they were looking at me similar to how Ivy looked at me when explaining my theory, it was in the telling...
It is in the telling that we breathe life into our work not just in the doing....

Telling is an action unto itself I must remember that.

I must also remember to thank Ivy for Stanley’s photo. If it wasn’t for that loan it wouldn’t have been accidentally hung with the others.
The possible end of a sequence.
And that man, who thought he was innocently attending an opening, would not have challenged my concept at a point of absolute vulnerability.
The moment I noticed Stanley’s photo amidst all of mine!

It was too late to do anything about it!
Hundreds of well-dressed people with wine glasses perched, in not so small kinespheres floating and colliding through the space. It was in this moment when my concept hinged on formal construction in incremental placements in time, exploded into the warmth of Stanley’s steel structure, the wet sad eyes of his life long partner and the smell of his well worn suitcase.

It isn’t just about time and place and perception, it is also about the heart.

It was at this precise moment of revelation that I found a ladder and spray paint, quite quickly considering the crowd and the pristine environment of the gallery.
And without help (amazing what adrenalin can do!) I radically altered the exhibition banner.

I will look forward to returning the suitcase to Ivy with the story that her husband’s work is now in a show in one of the most important city’s in the world with a small not for sale sign under it.
An exhibition now titled ....
Places of the Heart.

Convergence of Lugs

As the coat and hat from Lug 1, the T-shirt from Lug 2 and the jacket from Lug 3 get discarded they have been placed on hooks on the floor.

When Lug 3 is complete a collage of music and images and voices begins as the various pieces of clothing get lifted and suspended into the space. The dancer moves between them as if in a forest of memories. The remnants of each journey are literally suspended, as do the resonances in our minds. Ivy is now on the couch amidst Stanley’s photos reading a postcard from her neighbour and smiling. The teenager is leaning up against the Pontiac relaxed and thinking of the tools from Stanley and his life of work, and the artist is smiling as she is taking the remnants of the spray paint off of her shoes.
Some of these images are either up on the screen in images or words.

The dancer is echoing the movement vocabulary of all three characters ending with a simple centering and stillness.
I always find it fascinating how remnants are actually recursive guests in our lives. (Invited or not).

There are moments when I look at my life as if from the kitchen table of my childhood, glancing at my mother scrape a half eaten dinner into the garbage below the kitchen sink – stooped with disappointment and the sadness of one born out of the depression. Such waste! “..starving children in China...” about to escape the tightened lips....again. I look at some of my experiences and designate them to the receptacles of ‘cutting ones losses’ or ‘two steps forward one step back’ or ‘closing the barn door after the horses have escaped’. But again these unexpected guests return sometimes in the most clever of disguises.

My teaching in Derby, England this last year resulted in my own fascination with two people. A retired scaffolder and a milliner.

I needed a hat for a performance and ended up intersecting with a wonderful human being for far too short a time, although long enough to buy several expensive hats and four pairs of gloves. Through a variety of turning circumstances, I stayed with a colleague’s father who was happy to speak with me about his scaffolding work and the tragic event, which precipitated his early retirement (as long as his wife kept the rum and cokes flowing).

With both of them I was walking the fine line between encouragement and even provocation and settling silently to receive what was offered. The gift of storytelling where the teller owns the right of selectivity, not the listener. They were both lovely people, but I wondered why the fascination and determination to know their stories?
There was a faith that the experience would become one of my recursive guests and indeed it was. These interviews became a very valuable probe into pedagogic theory in the most unexpected way. An ignition to my research questions and in fact as Lug Trilogy began to take shape I soon realised the experience was pivotal in knowing how my work with Lug related to pedagogic and curriculum issues.

There is a displacement of time in the first play *Letters* that suggests that our learning is not always direct and immediate. Iris plays with the ring (a gift from her husband) while reading a well worn letter as a widow and recalling the first time she read the letter – no ring then (it was recovered with his remains, an intended gift) - now the emblem of his love for her. His absence is fondled by her fingers in the most intimate of recall.

As a teacher, I am reminded endlessly of how the pedagogic thread weaves its gossamer strands through infinite possibilities and variables in learning. There is no logic, no chronology despite our best intentions of time lines, graphic organizers and detailed lesson plans. The learning transpires on a suspended ethereal plain that seems beyond our reach and so on those very bad teaching days I employ good faith that it does transpire perhaps not – just – now.

Stanley writes that he has to remember his work is about building beauty just as his wife’s hat making. Can we honour the scaffolding we create for learning as an outcome unto itself? Why are we so pressured to achieve the performance when the rehearsal is where transformations occur? Why when we encourage reflection is it misunderstood as indulgence? Stanley writes very fondly about Iris’s capability of waiting for customers, not complacent but at peace with herself and peace with the faith that customers will come, the learning will take place perhaps, not- just- now.
A re-occurring thematic focus in the letters is the hands and when this piece is accompanied with performance the hands are a central focus in the dance. Usually dancing for me is an engagement of the core as an initiator of movement and this resonates action in various directed and undirected ways through the body. In this case the movement is centred on the hands and the letters, this symbiosis results in a tension that moves through the body both emotionally and physically. We watch Iris finger through the letters with familiarity and yet not losing the sense of ritual. We hear that Stanley has written about holding her hands. There is an ongoing longing for tangibility. To contain, withhold, not so unlike how we often view the learning process to contain, transmit, assess. Iris drops the letters and holds her hands to them as if feeling the heat from the fire. The resonations to surface the reflectivity that informs the next space, the next opening, an invitation to learning.

The Kiwi Green Pontiac

The second play explores the notion of tools for learning and how they are often missed or misunderstood. The two teen-age boys are seduced by escape from the education system and recognize clearly the tools to facilitate this. However the tools within the educations system are easily overlooked – space and time. The moment that the teenage boys are given the opportunity to take the space and time for their own cognitive learning process it is bypassed (boy A missed the presentation and let boy B down). The more these (mis)understandings accumulate the need to escape exponentially increases.

Iris’s ability to move within open space and suspended time provokes boy A to ponder the tools she offers. He questions and perhaps shifts his position on leaving while leaning up against habits (the green Pontiac) and peer pressures. Within the
pressures of meeting prescribed curriculum requirements, how do we provide time and space for learning, for reflectivity, for constructions of forums where personal voice can be exercise with implicit trust and respect? Daloz explains the importance of cultivating this space:

Encourages teachers to think about their teaching less in terms of instrumental learning or developing competencies and more in terms of guiding their personal development of reflective meaning – making capacities (Daloz, 1986, p. 167)

The Exhibition

The third play began with looking at literacy. This was provoked by a personal project involving weeks of late night work at the computer creating a power point for my parents sixtieth wedding anniversary: the following is a kind of journal entry to this process

1946 – 2006 (60th anniversary)

When working on this power point I was reminded of the complexity of image literacy. I collected images from my parent’s photo albums then wrote a 60th anniversary speech and fragmented it and then treated the personal photographs and created a power point with fragments of the speech embedded within.

My father, who rarely openly cries, shed tears throughout the images whereas my mother quickly got up and finished the dishes. 40 hours of meticulous work later I had not only a power point but also a query.

I have examined these two as they revisited images of their lives. I started to ask questions like;

Where was that picture taken?

Who took the picture?
What happened just before or just after the picture?

What memories and associations does the picture provoke?

I am still wondering about this and understand that my choices are so much more than dictated by aesthetics and practicality but also by implication and resonance.

Looking at image literacy provoked a set of questions regarding the lens through which we read meaning.

Both Iris and the artist begin the play with a notion of ownership, a connection between the image and the individual interpretation as insular/exclusive. Just as my mother’s reaction to the power point and particularly the image of her in the wheat field.

![Figure 27 Mom in wheat field](image)

Subject – Ann Richert
Photographer – Unknown

There is a historicity that cultivates this insular belongingness. There was no room for me, for my read on the image. With Iris, there was no room for Peg, the artist’s read of *Place in Construction*. They were Stanley’s buildings and the resonations of those building belonged to her. This is why the teenage visitor had nothing to say about the
pictures, there was no room for him either. Moving out of Iris’ and Peg’s circle of intimacy with the images we view the gallery goer and the museum’s role in facilitating that hermeneutic experience. It is what Cheryl Meszaros (2007), former public programmer of The Vancouver Art Gallery would call the ‘whatever’ syndrome. Where a museum or gallery absolves responsibility to a directed understanding of the art they present.

“whatever is enmeshed in larger, more generalized cultural phenomena that have to do with interpretive authority: who has it, and how is it established, justifies, turned into truth or regarded as worthy. (Meszaros, 2007, p. 16)

This notion of ownership in perspectives beyond self is one of the three points I will be analysing in The Exhibition that are echoed in the daily practice of teaching;

1) In the blur of the continuum how do we recognize what Fels (1998) calls the space-moments of teaching?

2) It is not enough in the doing but must also be in the telling

3) The impossibility of controlling perception.

We understand the artist Peg cultivates exhilaration through the notion of cutting through a continuum that is taken for granted. We watch a building going up and can only complain about the dust and noise. We are not necessarily aware of the increments of progress. Peg cuts through this anaesthetised state of ‘recognizing’ daily events and creates a dilation whereby she imposes a new perception she calls interventions.

It gives me an interesting feeling, a very excited feeling to know that I can be a kind of intervention to the construction of place by controlling the perception of this event.
(Ricketts, 2007, Extract from Exhibition)

She believes that there is a truth in the increments of space/time and epistemological representation of the sequencing of events. She even goes as far as believing that she has authorship on the virtue of these events. She is shocked to discover that Iris feels
ownership on the same imagery on an entirely different level and the teenager is completely exempt from this conflict as the images do not intersect with the reality of his life perceptions and so do not concern him, however I can’t help but speculate what would transpire of the three characters, Ivy, Peg and the teenager, were in the same room and he produced a picture of the kiwi green Pontiac. This leads me to question of interpretation and how much of the image literacy is linked to the history and context of the image and how much is linked to our own history and values that tint our lens.

Berger writes the cultivated past and future of an image;

An instant photographed can only acquire meaning in so far as the viewer can read into it a duration extending beyond itself. When we find a photograph meaningful, we are lending it a past and a future. (Berger, 1980, p. 89)

Meszaros writes about this hermeneutic experience up against an epistemological “backdrop”;

While the epistemological backdrop for ‘whatever’ was the experiential knowledge that resulted from and in individuals encounter with one object, the backdrop for ‘whatever was the experiential knowledge that resulted from and individual’s encounter with one object, the backdrop for relationally has to do with recognizing and naming the forces in culture that shape the opinions, thoughts, and feelings we call our own. (Meszaros, 2007, p. 18)

Professional photographer Freeman claims his the act of taking photographs as identity in construction;

I have to accept and deal with this fact-the reality that my images are as much a documentation and interpretation of myself as of the subject matter I choose. (Patterson, 1977, p.1)

But whether I'm moving or resting, the medium always mirrors my inner self. So accurate is the reflection, that photographs often reveal the subtle beginnings of emotional transitions that I can recognize consciously only in other ways much later on. (Patterson, 1977, p.1)

Susanne Langer writes about this mirroring of the world in her term of sentience;
The most elementary sort of consciousness - is probably an aspect of organic process. Perhaps the first feeling is of the free flow or interruption of vital rhythms in the creature itself, as the whole organism interacts with the surrounding world. With the higher phases of functional development, more specialized sentience develops, too - sensations, distinct emotions rather than total, undifferentiated excitements, desires in place of bodily discomfort, directed drives and complex instincts and wit every complication of activity a richer subjective immediacy (Langer, 1957, p. 46)

Recently I was drawn to a book called *Out of Sight* (Seymour, 2000), claiming that “there are worlds all around us that are smaller, faster, and farther than the eye can see.” (Seymour, 2000 p.49) I then chose a few images creating a game. The images were everyday materials such as the paths of sub atomic particles magnified by so many counts that they became an abstraction of themselves. They lost their identity, as we would know it. I laminated the images and presented them separately from their revealing descriptions. My interest was in the interpretation of images that would have no apparent history or context and theory isolating one of the key factors in this paradigm of self-expression.

![Figure 28 Out of sight 1](Photographer – Seymour Simon)
These beautiful circles and squiggles are the paths of subatomic particles millions of times smaller than the period at the end of this sentence. These high-energy particles are released by radioactive substances, such as uranium or plutonium. The particles are much too tiny and travel too quickly to be seen by even an electron microscope, so scientists use what's called a bubble chamber to "see" the paths the particles make as they move. This photograph was made in CERN, the European particle physics laboratory at Geneva, Switzerland.

A bubble chamber contains a pure liquid material that is under pressure and heated beyond its boiling point. As a subatomic particle moves through the liquid, it leaves tiny bubbles in its wake, forming a visible line. The bubble paths are photographed and the subatomic particles that made them can be analyzed to find their electrical charge, energy, and how they interact with one another.

Figure 29 Out of sight 2
Photographer – Seymour Simon

Figure 30 Out of sight 3
Photographer – Seymour Simon
The important question regarding ownership of perception is one that plays out in the classrooms as we enter with the best of intentions to navigate our way through the white water rapids of diversity and resistance hoping to steer to a common outcome. We cannot own the 'perception' of any space-moment of learning on behalf of any one beyond ourselves. The question then is how do we account for, recognize, and strategize from recognized moments of learning? It is in the last line of the play that we understand that that our knowing comes from the heart and all the illogic, complexity and temporality that lives within these four pumping chambers.

"Butler sees the processuality of drama in education as giving teachers the opportunity to 'subvert this theatricality (in a way that rational argument never can) because it is able to meet the enemy on its own terms – the affective, feeling level of experience'.
(O'Toole, 1992, p.58)
Peg also comes to realize that it is not enough to do but also to tell and this is an act of revelation and integration in the doing. I don’t know how many times I have had to answer in varying contexts, what my work has become now that I am committed to the academy. I have had to custom design my answers to the slow and measured types, the attention deficit disordered adults and those who simply need to know how theory is measured out on a monitory level. In all cases I have learned by struggling for words and pushing them into space, and have now taken the challenge of integrating that telling with the doing. To meet the paradigm of researcher practitioner head on with the belief that it is possible to dissolve the binary.

“But de Certeau’s aphorism, “what the map cuts up, the story cuts across,” also points to transgressive travel between two different domains of knowledge: one official, objective, and abstract—“the map”; the other one practical, embodied, and popular—“the story.” This promiscuous traffic between different ways of knowing carries the most radical promise of performance studies research. Performance studies struggles to open the space between analysis and action, and to pull the pin of the binary opposition between theory and practice.” (Conquergood, 2002, p.145)

Peg is discovering something new by both explaining to Ivy then to the man at the gallery who points to Stanley’s photograph and finally to the gallery owners who want to “clean up” the banner. Perhaps also in her journal as he diligently records her daily thoughts it is possible to combine the camera and the rigor and intensity of the hunt to capture the moment with the words that articulate all that is resonated from this practice.

It is in the telling that we breathe life into our work not just in the doing....
Telling is an action unto itself I must remember that. (Ricketts, 2007, p. 83)
I posit that it is impossible to separate the telling and the doing and the only way to dissolve this binary is to live our practice within the theory and the theory within the practice.
Teaching Stories

Introduction
The warm countries we are able to teach in (New Vic)
Stormy Weather
Introduction to Teaching Stories

I am including two reflections on teaching residencies in the last year as I feel they embrace many of the aspects of Lugs in their pivotal moments of reciprocity and receptivity, and have become important to my research as ways to integrate public pedagogy with my practice. It is residencies like New Vic and Windsor High School which remind me how important my work is as teacher combined with researcher and artist. And it is in this location of integration of these multiple roles that I have fully embraced A/r/tography as a valuable methodology, recognizing as it does my multiple roles and responsibilities as a dancer, educator and researcher.

The invitation to integrate knowing, doing and making through aesthetics is a wonderful relief after so many years of separating both the doing but also the understanding and meaning making of my work as combined artist and teacher. And in my reflection of this work there is an encouragement to allow new inquiries to surface rather than fix understandings through the conveyance of facts. This platform allows me to situate my work in what Irwin refers to as place of multiple borders where “metissage blurs and situates acts of similarity and differences as well as metaphor and metonym.” (Irwin, 2000, p.31)

There are spaces between and spaces between the in-between. There are multiple borders diffused again and again. (Irwin, 2004, p.31)

This way of perceiving my work allows for active imaginative and innovative ways of integrating my theory with practice. It allows me to engage in these residencies with the curiosity and passion I would bring to the stage and in turn to embrace the thoughtfulness and responsibility I employ in the classroom and to my sites of performance. Irwin invites us to “creatively engage with self and others as we re
imagine our life histories in and through time” (Irwin, 2004). T. S. Eliot echoes this beautifully in his Four Quartets;

Time past and time future
Allow but a little consciousness.
To be conscious is not to be in time
But only in time can the moment in the rose-garden,
The moment in the arbour where the rain beat,
The moment I the draughty church as smokefall
Be remembered; involved with past and future.
Only through time time is conquered.
(Eliot, 1935)

As an A/r/tographer I feel that in the telling of stories of self and place I both coalesce and consolidate my history and at the same time experience and allow it to dissolve as I re invent myself through this praxis.

A/r/tography is about each of us living a life of deep meaning enhanced through perpetual practices that reveal what was once hidden, create what has never been known, and imagine what we hope to achieve.
(Irwin, 2004, p.36)

The two stories I have chosen are both current and represent the value of silence and the listening that I am learning to bring to my students. In both residencies the students have brought me to a place of reciprocity whereby activity emerged through a respectful discourse. This discourse sometimes comes out of silence and stillness. I am learning to cultivate both the patience and trust to take the silence and begin the listening as a welcoming into our shared moments together.
The warm countries we are lucky enough to work in.

A residency report from New Vic College, East London

This report covers a two-week residency with a group of young adults upgrading their academic standards for entry level to university.

This was undoubtedly a marginalized group with challenging circumstances; violence at home, low economic status and substance abuse. Despite these socio-economic challenges they were able to come to school every day although sometimes two hours late after a host of complication beyond my imagination. My primary objective was to work from their issues not what I may project to be their issues. When conducting an introductory circle, they all replied that they were not interested in dance and after a few personal offerings I could discern that their notion of blame would be an excellent theme. I responded to their introductions by saying I was honoured to be working with them and that I would probably change their minds about dance.

They were pleased with the theme but sceptical of dance. We began our warm up with loud music, rigorous movement mixed with ‘bratty banter’ (it seemed like the route to go). They came along with me accepting the challenge and enjoying the atmosphere, which was being carefully cultivated. No one could tell or could care less that I was scared to death. This was by far the most challenging group I had worked with to date.

Everyday I continued to build their stamina, develop physical skills i.e. fluidity, dynamics, musicality, strength and agility with broad sweeping movements, exploring
level changes, three dimensionality, rhythmic shifts and jump phrases, of course accompanied with loud raucous music. I was able to make them move, sweat, hoot and holler despite their scepticism. Occasionally they were combusting with newfound energy taking moments to jump up against walls and skid across the floor and other times they returned to the familiarity of lethargy. Always complaining about the repetitions, the rigor, the duration. I believed that there was a secrecy to the endorphins shifting their body and they were embarrassed and unsure how public they wanted to be revealing these welcomed shifts in their physical being.

It was a dance in itself navigating the student’s erratic landscapes of engagement – some in the room, some out. I remembered teaching a group of heroin addicts in Denmark where in the middle of class; a nurse would arrive to administer methadone to some of the students. They would disappear for a few moments and then return to class. We would carry on with the class as if it was only a sip of water needed. My New Vic students would come later after looking after their two-year-old sister (their mother, too drunk to get out of bed). Moving through narrow spaces of tension and violence finding solace with the puppy like love in the room. Sitting on laps braiding hair, pen tattoos carefully drawn then over to punching, kicking, pushing, insulting just enough to have an edge yet soft enough to return to the cuddles.
We were all alchemists mixing regret with anger and longing but most importantly with a belief that compassion can be the underbelly of everything. Slowly through the days I felt the atmosphere cohere, we were creating an ecosystem. I was ‘Kaffrin from Canadaw’ and together we were creating a structure where exposure was allowed, invited. A poem, a song and a few very great moves, then refining, re-writing, repeating...

The group began to dress for the class, some with special hats, others with chain medallions and others with very tight dance pants and mid torso ‘tanks’. I was honoured; they were inviting me in and celebrating this transition.

As the show drew nearer the tensions and heat of production descended our ‘camp’, songs needed music, stories needed to be memorized, and movement needed counts. This contrivance of structures brought an unwelcome challenge to the space and threatened my newly formed relationship with the students. Repetition and rigor were necessary. I needed to take the leap of faith that respect for me would prevail but friendship may dissolve, as I demanded punctuality, clarity, endurance and consistency. Somewhere I am sure they understood that I demanded it only because I knew they
were capable of it. They came every day, they complained constantly, resisted belligerently and yet, they came every day. Their clothes seemed cleaner, aftershave began to linger in the room, and they stayed during breaks. I was again honoured and very grateful that I was able to take the signals and hold them close as I grinded through the physical/practical challenges.

The last day of rehearsal was the most difficult; transitions, cues, entrances and exits, all the ‘stuff’ that is considered hugely insignificant in their lives that seem to work in broad sweeping sketches; the Jackson Pollocks of East London splashing energy with reckless random impulses. The rehearsal was ending with a final task, to record the stories that would be used in the performance. The time was right, the environment was ripe with trust and charged with the excitement of a pending show. A necessity of limited budget and resources, forced me to record their voices in a broad sweep around the circle overlapping voices not by editing with expensive digital equipment but instead, I moved slowly with my recording device cueing with my hands when to speak and when to stop. The students were exhausted and with their lounging, cuddling postures they listened to the instructions; “talk about blame – start talking when my hand goes up – stop when the hand goes down. The stories flowed with ease. The week had been fantastic, it was indeed a very warm country we were in, the time zone was our pumping hearts, the wires of communication were wide-open eyes beaming support and respect across the circle.
Their stories, emblems of their scars and their pride, flowed readily, with ease and generosity. Got it! I press stop record and whisked it off to an on site technician from the college who would mix it with our music overnight.

**The day of performance**

Technical rehearsal was scheduled at 8:00 A.M. an hour of the day they rarely witness conscious. They were all there, complaining, resisting, insulting, but they were all there.

Moving onto the stage for rehearsal harkened two important memories; one a film from 1996 and the other a dance rehearsal with my company in Egypt.

**Memory 1**

This memory is from the film “Best Shot” which was changed from the more politically mischievous name “Hoosiers”. The movie is centred on a high school basketball team, which against all odds made it to some kind of championships. Outrageously nervous the team stands shivering on the official court, their gaze scanning the seating capacity with wide eyes, they are deer caught in a conceptual headlight. The coach throws a measuring tape at the team captain and tells him to measure the distance of the hoop to
the floor, then emphasizes the distance is the same as their cozy home town gym, “let's get to work”

**Memory 2**

My company is performing in an international festival in Cairo. We have arrived at the Royal theatre and the dancers are standing like the basketball players, deer on the stage feeling the headlights. I am 50 rows back. A local tea merchant makes his way over to me, he has bare feet and is wearing a long white gown, an ornate silver canteen is strapped to his back with a hose that winds around to the front of his neck. A tray with small empty glasses is extending from one hand. I assume he is asking me if I would like some tea. I am about to scream in absolute overwhelming joy and fear combined – what exoticism, what luck! Instead I shake my head and tell my dancers to use the second velvet wing to enter and to take six extra steps to compensate for the large stage. I have made the measurement from hoop to floor and it is identical to the integrity and commitment we have at home. I ground them and myself with details of our work - it is the passport to my safety as a foreigner, anywhere....anytime.

I relay the basketball story to the students deciding that this is a better choice of the two. They get through the technical rehearsal but not without the cultivation of some nagging doubts. Will they meet the performing space with the reverence it deserves? Will they feel the headlights?

**The Performance**

The students take the stage with a quiet grace, honesty emulates from every pore. They suddenly seem soft and yet there is strength from the core as they move from scene to scene flawlessly. I am watching but my pounding heart is masking my experience. I am careful to call sound and light cues and to disguise the tight throat and shallow breath, sweaty palms and restless weight shifts. They have finished on a single
pin point light illuminating the face of an angel (who is normally cursing and swearing throughout rehearsals) singing her story while the rest of the students extend their hands to touch hers (a quiet high five). Electric charges of faith and empowerment are transmitted between them on stage but we know what it is. The light fades with her lingering last note and the audience jumps to their feet. It is so clear when performance becomes so much more than the accumulated efforts of creation, rehearsal and presentation and yet the only thing an audience can do is to exude piercing silence during and to stand up howling and slamming hands together when it is over.

As creators and performers, we have to accept this limitation with a certain amount of grace. There is so much more to be said and if we are lucky and can catch that as audience filters out, then we can excuse this limitation even more.

On that night, I had that chance, one of the students came over to me and said “Well Kaffrin from Canadaw, you did change our minds!”
Stormy Weather

Reflections on teacher/student relationships from the perspective of an arts based residency

"The teacher brings lesson plans, learning methods, personal experience, and academic knowledge to class but negotiates the curriculum with the students and begins with their language, themes and understandings" (Shor, 1996, p. 5)

I am currently a guest artist in residence at a high school collaborating with an exceptional drama teacher and an extraordinary grade 11 class. This residency locates me as both artist and teacher and allows me to both experience and witness relationships with students in the creative process. I am navigating the white water rapids of resistance and diversity. It has been a gift to be working with such a progressive and sensitive teacher who is working to shift the grounds of conservatism in education. The honesty and humility I feel from her teaching practice matched with an outstanding rigor and vigour inspires me to come earlier and stay longer on the days that I teach. For months we have been on a journey with Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night and as is customary with my teaching, I am sure I must be the biggest learner in the room. Twelfth Night begins with a massive storm at sea resulting in the main characters Viola and Sebastian struggling to survive as they are cast from the ship to the angry sea. My identity as a choreographer/dancer/teacher was to locate the theme in which I would animate (kinesthetically) parts of the play - develop skills, research material, construct sequences and prepare for production. The ship, the storm and the sea became vital in my prosaic quest as I began to write about the intricate relationships between the teacher, the learner, the environment and the curriculum. Feeling lost within the white water rapids of some of education’s hegemonic constructs is, I am sure, quite common. I commend the teachers who are able to sustain their standards and vision
despite the walls that sometimes move closer. How can all crew members feel secure on board the ships that heel and bay in extreme conditions of class sizes, diversity of student needs, diminishing resources, emotional, administrative and financial. In the case of my current residency, I am inspired and reassured that there are teachers that do insure the safety of integrity within the storms present in their working environments. And as Viola and Sebastian, loving siblings are ripped apart in the claws of a violent sea, how are we to account for losses in a teaching environment how do we link faith and trust when there may be critical events or negligence beyond this environment?

Sumara writes about these merged borders between life and the learning environment;

... the Commonplace Book activities, as described in the reading experiences presented earlier, show that the common-sense understanding of what constitutes self/other, mind/body, personal/collective, fiction/non-fiction, literary/non-literary do not exist as tidy demarcated categories but, instead, exist ambiguously and fluidly in relation to one another. Most significantly, these activities illuminate the processes by which human beings experiences are necessarily organized by remembered, currently lived, and imagined identifications and relationships.
(Sumara, 2002, p. 168,)

As usual with Shakespeare the lyricism of his complex shifting of identities, intention, perception and meaning inevitably filters down to a central location – Love. And as we shift in our relationships in the classrooms we move through the ties that are tightened and slackened off, as we would adjust the sails in unpredictable winds to achieve optimum motion forward. I have watched sailors curse and stomp when just as the adjustments are made to shift course, strategizing a new tact to capture the wind- it shifts. Navigating is duelling with forces that are unknown. When the best we can do in controlling our environment is to recognize patterning and deduce a predictability but all of this is to no avail as we come to the storm of hormones that gusts and blisters within a teenage body as he/she navigates their own path with equally strong forces. Nothing is predictable.
Dover

The sea is calm to-night.
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits;--on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.
(Matthew Arnold, 1999)

How are teacher student relationships built strong enough to weather rough conditions
but with the lightness to release? - To understand and embrace the temporality and

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unpredictability of its own conditions? A student who may have become the centre of a teacher’s world, usurping almost all emotional resources one year is met unrepentantly with a remembered compassion, which, like a fog that lifts, reignites the care and conscientiousness that will always be there despite the cost. With others there is an imposed anonymity, a kind of anaesthetizing for the sake of emotional sustainability.

The fulcrum shifts. The ropes are loosened my work with the students started with the initial stages of introducing the notion and possibility of embodiment and orienting them to my language, style, personality and most importantly, my code of ethics with the working environment of the theatre. To begin with, although much of the accountability to our work is determined by very formal and informal assessment which shapes many teacher’s style of familiarity, generosity and compliance. This is a dog and tail situation in most teaching environments where standards are sometimes eroded from exhaustion or for the sake of securing ease in classroom culture and climate.

As a guest, I have the advantage of demanding a particular code of behaviour in my class, which is adhered to during the ‘honeymoon’ stage of the residency. Then it becomes lost in the next stage of the residency. I have a window of opportunity before this happens where I can introduce the healthiest challenges. I take the students through a rigorous warm up that introduces another kind of heart in the body – not the heat of peer pressure induced humiliation, not the heat of new found sexuality but the heat of simple physical exertion. A rare state of the body for many digitally driven teenagers. There are complaints, groans and haphazard resistance but when we decide to combine some of the exercises with music I introduce the performative aspect to their work and a silent engagement permeates the room. We then begin working in partners with the notion of counter balance. This is a device for partnering where embodied fulcrum is
the key component. The partners either push into each other or pull away creating an integrated standing structure whereby co-dependence is established. The fulcrum is established silently and it shifts surreptitiously as one student moves an elbow one centimetre to the right or shifts a foot closer to the other. There is a tentativeness in the room for many reasons; most importantly they are touching where as relationships are primarily established and maintained by derogatory, debasing banter and not only are they *touching* but that they are ‘saving’ their partners from falling. I teach the students how to fall before this counter point skill is learned “what is the worse that can happen?” I ask the fall is one meter down? I realize that it is the existential notion of failing that builds the fear. The investment of trust, the promise that can and often is broken this is paralleled in the teacher/student relationship where both of the parties are wary of the possibility of the shifting fulcrum, the letting go and the falling. A test is stolen; a misplaced comment appears on a blog, this is the falling;

Similar to what Pineau (2002) calls the ‘ideological body’, in using drama to engage in literary interpretation, the participants bring the whole person—language, mind, body and culture—to the creation of the drama world.
(Carmen Medina, 2004, p. 146)

To continue the metaphor I return to the ship and am always amazed and in awe of sailors who can lithely move about on a deck that seems to mischievously shift forcing the centre point of balance to be as fluid as the ocean below (hence the possibility of sea sickness). On the other hand one of the saddest and most desperate images for me is that of the rigging coming undone and the sheets left flapping aimlessly in the wind. These are the moments when the anchoring of a relationship, even if it is just momentary, had been lost and the centre must be recovered.

I am currently at the stage with the students where time, both duration and frequency have worked in my favour, thanks to a generous grant from funding partners
that recognize the importance of depth as a result of time. They have learned skills in embodiment they felt the rigor of working for concentrated periods managing the ebb and flow of their energy and avoiding what Egenio Barba (1995) would call “squandered” energy and they continue to navigate the surges of intensity that come with a production. The sometimes unpredictable winds that change course and remind us that all of this work is not necessarily about *The Twelfth Night* but rather what Medina refers to as the edges of the text; a place where we are encouraged to look beyond the literal confines of narrative to a re-imagined space of personal interpretation, a space where multi modal explorations allow for a breadth and depth in understanding.

The time we have spent together resonates far beyond the stage and getting it done for opening night but rather we are setting presidencies now charting our course for the inevitability of storms ahead and establish the faith that weathering the turbulence is a choice worth taking.

If music be the food of love, play on;
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die.
That strain again! it had a dying fall:
O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound,
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour! Enough; no more:
'Tis not so sweet now as it was before.
O spirit of love! how quick and fresh art thou,
That, notwithstanding thy capacity
Receiveth as the sea, nought enters there,
Of what validity and pitch soe'er,
But falls into abatement and low price,
Even in a minute: so full of shapes is fancy.
*(Shakespeare, Twelfth Night, Act 1, Scene 1)*
Program notes

Just as the characters in this play had to survive the storm at sea, as well as the storms in their hearts, we have survived the storm of this production!

There were both sunny rehearsals and rehearsals laden with cold wet wind and we all learned to navigate our way with grace and openness. I have enjoyed every minute of this creative period knowing that I was in excellent company with both the students and teacher/director. This process was new for most in the production, demanding courage, diligence and humour and just as a good sailor finds his way on a keeling, slippery deck these students have found the balance to make this journey the best it can be. The memories of this time together will resonate long after the dimming lights of the final scene. Thank you for this time!

Kathryn Ricketts
Summary

Home to Voice
Currently we are experiencing a global identity shift as hybrid cultures are rapidly constructed. With our sense of virtual place we are shifting notions of geography-territory-customs-homeland and identity. With this shift, I observe and experience loss of definition. Definition of self. Multi-culturalism constructs plurality, multiplicity and a complexity but also results in a diffusion, a levelling of identities. Ruth Prawer Jhabula refers to this as disinheritance saying that that she is “like a cuckoo forever insinuating herself into others’ nests.” (Robinson, 1994). This assimilating process on a geographic/cultural level is reflected by Giroux as he writes about the big melting pot;

Can you imagine living in a country that welcomes you into it with open arms, there’s only one rule. You have to forget who you were/are. A country that would rather have you forget your roots and pick up their agenda as if your past never existed. America was supposed to be a great big melting pot. People from all over the world could come to America and melt together. C’mon everybody jump right on in to the United States great big melting pot. We melted all right, melted our heritage right off. We were boiled until we dissolved into one giant heap of nothingness. We became, Americanized (Giroux, 1996, p. 57)

Displacement on an emotional level results in the same giant heap of nothingness. As I wrote earlier in this thesis;

There is not necessarily a train station, a country, a passport or perhaps there are but entirely on a metaphoric plane; self, heart, values. There is no chronology, no E.T.A. it is a metaphoric trail I am blazing. The invitation to expression triggers the excavating process, “the digging into the bedrock of truth” (Ricketts, 2007, p.119)

A fluidity of borders both geographic and personal, result in a new set of parameters in identity. MetroTown’s major advertising campaign illustrates this confusing the reading of identity with a neutralized automaton mannequin adding colour to the otherwise pale and bland consumer who constructs identity (colour) by material acquisition. A 12 year
old girl from Korea answers now only to the name Donna. “It is easier that way.” This cultural silencing is a bi-product of what we celebrate as “multi” culturalism. Is it possible to become accustomed without losing one customs? To maintain cultural heritage with a presence to here and now? Is it necessary to de-construct in order to construct? Is it possible to embrace Wenger’s (1998) social learning theory whereby education is actually identity development? As Garoain (1999) asks: “In what way could the subject matter of art play a part transforming the hegemony of education into an emancipatory practice?” (Garoain, 1999, p.159)

I have brought these questions to my inquiry with Lugs as I have explored notions of self and place through these kinaesthetic journeys. My research has brought me to understand more clearly what is entailed as an artist, teacher and researcher in the embodiment of personal stories and how they become invitations to possible evocations of others. Through Performative Inquiry I have come to understand the value in creating ‘space moments’ for realizing and recognizing of learning, my own and that of my students and audience members and it is in these moments of inquiry my work rests within the framework of education. Through A/r/tography, I have been invited to embrace the integration of artist, researcher and teacher and to feel confident that my work and identity within it, is constantly in process of becoming. This shifts my focus from fixed definitions to a contiguous journey of becoming and therefore a constant re-inventing of self in relation to place and time.

I have discovered new ways of observing and experiencing my interest in transmediating my work from both image and text to movement/theatre. This exploration has ignited a process of chart making and mapping my process, which has now become an integrated part of my practice. Thirty five Lug performances, several artist in residencies and many conference presentations have provided me with
bountiful experiences and reflections which have been carefully coalesced into this opportunity to conceptualize and articulate my practice through the writing of this thesis.

"I believe that a body in movement unlocks and unfolds stories, secrets, lost thoughts and treasured images. Increased blood flow, heart rate and rapid breath provoke an availability to our imaginations and further to creative exploration of self." This was written in the early stages of my research where I was suspecting the what but no yet the how. I now understand how my body unlocks and unfolds these secrets. I speak of availability and a decided body as key to the foundation that has been created through my exploration of Lugs. Although my initial diagram with Lugs altered slightly as I continued my research, the implications were significant.

Table 16 Departures/arrivals 2
reading of my work has become and continues to be critical to the evolution of my practice and is the lifeblood that keeps my practice evolving and re-inventing itself.

Hermeneutics might be best understood as the project of trying to make sense of the relation between experiences of being human and practices of making and using knowledge. Hermeneutic inquiry seeks to illuminate the conditions that make particular experiences and interpretations of those experiences possible. Understood as such, hermeneutic inquiry is not merely a report of how things work, or and inquiry into the socio-political architecture of these events, but rather it is the activity of engaging in creative interpretations that become useful to the interpreter and possibly, to others.

(Sumara, 2001, p.171)

The addition beyond the multiple ruptures in the chart is the second arc, which moves from the rupture to possible new locations. This inevitability was not anticipated in my original diagram nor in my conceptual framework. I now understand that a new unexpected direction will merge in each Lug if I begin with the presence of the moment as it unfolds. The work and challenge for me as a dancer/researcher/learner is to remain with the energy of Sats and to be available for The Stop moment allowing all that I know to suspend and then shift.

Time past and time future
What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present.


Although as outlined in The Ancestry of My Practice, identity and place as well as improvisation have been key parts of my practice for many years, I can risk the simplicity of my definition of the then and now to say that I had been working from the outside in and now my work is generated from the inside out. My choreographic work had been constructed by a set of parameters that primarily answered to the aesthetic dictating the creative process. Dances were “constructed”, “presented” and “viewed” according to this paradigm prescribing aesthetic pleasure. My work has now shifted radically as the dances are generated from stories (and very often, these stories are not
beautiful or easy to hear) they are embodied through and within my lived experiences and then realized through a complex framework of improvisation where absolute astute and immediate connection must be made with the environment and those who witness. This has brought me to realize that my work is deeply rooted to an instinctive base that generates through an integrity to the moment and then weaves through the environment and back to the immediacy of my decision making process. I realize now that my work does not necessarily generate from inside out as that would imply a fixed location of inspiration but rather the impulse is contiguous in its circularity acknowledging that receptivity and reciprocity are key.

Walls and Scaffolding

I have constructed a scaffolding whereby Performative Inquiry and A/r/tography function as methodologies to my continued practice and I feel confident that within this paradigm of inquiry I will have both the structure and the space to explore the unexpected and beyond. I continue the metaphor of walls and space, signifying structure/methodology and the space left open for possibilities that await in the unknown;

Never fear. We may let the scaffolds fall
Confident that we have built our wall.
Heaney

Not walls of cement, but...
the melodies of your temperature.
Barba

Through this kind of exploratory process, I believe that identity and place are intrinsically linked to values of our own historicity, intimacy and immediacy of home and community. Using dance as a physically rigorous, emotionally evocative and personally liberating vehicle, a transformative inquiry can occur by calling a relational self into definition and in turn creating a healthier immediate and global community.

Listen carefully the dance is whispering...


Fels, Lynn. (1998). *In the wind clothes dance on a line performative inquiry – a (re) search methodology (doctoral dissertation), University of British Columbia.*


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Patterson, Michael. (2003). *Strategies of political theatre, post war british playwrights*. Cambridge, UK: University Press,


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Manolo Gonzales
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Appendix

Power Points
Photos
This power point is addressing the inevitable ethnographic aspect of research and practice. I have alternated treated images of a family photo/my mother’s favourite portrait with various Lugs. The text is based on the relentless questions asked from the backseat of a long car journey with my family i.e. Are we there yet?

It ends with the course numbers I was currently enrolled in.

I am addressing through this power point, the tension between what others perceive of one’s specific life journey. Now as I enter the graduate program others ask me the same questions I asked from the back seat Are you there yet? When will you finish?
Hana's Suitcase Project was a one-year residence working with intermediate elementary classrooms, a pre professional dance class of adults and a group of seniors. We worked with Hana's suitcase written by Ann Levine about a little girl who lost her life in the Holocaust. The material was explored through creative writing, discussions, movement and theatre exercises and culminated in a series of performances. The power point charts this creative process including an interview the Torontonian dramaturge who was simultaneously opening a play based on the story.
the edge of the text
transmediation from words to movement
kathryn ricketts

performance studies struggles to open the space between analysis and action, and to pull the pin of the binary opposition between theory and practice
dwight conquergood

hana's suitcase as source text

target groups
- maindance
- elsie roy elementary school
- seniors from the roundhouse
- kathryn ricketts through lug

the text....

"in hurston's example, the white man researcher is good not because he values literacy, but because he valorized it to the exclusion of other media, other modes of knowing. i want to be very clear about this point: textocentrism—not texts—is the problem."

dwight conquergood
"...do not exist as tidy demarcated categories but, instead, exist ambiguously and fluidly in relation to one another..."

commonalities:

- essentializing text
- creating tableaus
- personalizing imagery
- transformation to production

"the common-sense understanding of what constitutes self/other, mind/body, personal/collective, fiction/non-fiction, literary/non-literary."

"most significantly, these activities illuminate the processes by which human beings' experiences are necessarily organized by remembered, currently lived, and imagined identifications and relationships."

"meet the enemy on its own terms — the affective, feeling level of experience."
poor straight soldier marched  
little lines alone  
threatening brilliant form  
sharp eyes barked  
single file  
single file  
April Russell

"What the map cuts up, the story  
cuts across,"

de Certeau

free writes = get words on paper fast

"most significantly, these activities  
iluminate the processes by which human  
beings experiences are necessarily  
organized by remembered, currently lived  
and imagined identifications and  
relationships."
i have to make choices, i can't take everything...

i would keep something small perhaps sad and possibly broken but precious and beautiful full of memories and longing.

i don't know what the future will bring but I do know...

in the here and now a crossfire of small aggravations. whining like mosquitoes. makes me doubt where i am

"through improvisations the reader-performers positioned themselves in a new context using and borrowing from the pretext what they felt was necessary to develop the framework and transform the drama structures into new ones."

Carmen Medina

3 line poem from pre text hana's suitcase.

line 1 = place
line 2 = action
line 3 = emotion

dark night
fear, struck me down
so hard, so tight
air, froze me
i can't breathe......

"ostranenie defined by viktor shklovsky as being that of making strange.

We very readily cease to see the world we live in and become anaesthetized to its distinctive features. The arts permit us to reverse the process and to creatively deform the usual, the normal, and so to inculcate a new, childlike, non aided vision in us.

heatnote

theatre for young people perform hana's suitcase

more than a vessel for keepakes, the story of hana's suitcase traverses years and borders, to teach a valuable lesson in a touching way.

the joshua tribune, march 15, 2006

At a time when a Canadian book about Palestinian children may be banned from school libraries, hana's suitcase is a timely look into the ugliness that adults can commit against children and other adults by destroying their power to choose. It's a strong testament to the forces that bring people together: imagination, curiosity and hope.

toronto star, March 16, 2006

hana's suitcase is not so much a story about the holocaust story as it is a story of memorial.

the globe and mail, march 11, 2006
Hana's suitcase needs more moments that link past and present generations so that a poignant contemporary tale is allowed to co-exist dramatically with a massive historical tragedy.

Dialogue with Stephen Collela

Dramaturg for Lorraine Hansa Theatre for Young People

"The paper mentioned a scene where the little wings could empathize with Hana and the repression she felt.

The review wrote very positively about the bridging of political issues over time. Did this happen again in the play and how?"

Stephen Collela's response

Stephen Collela's response - Dramaturg for Lorraine Hansa Theatre for Young People

"I think that Maiko is fairly constant in her empathy with Hana, though it isn't quite as blatant as the outrage of that scene. I know there was a push by the reviewers to further expand on the modern children, but that also seemed a fairly prescriptive way to approach the piece. The modern children in the play are very much like the audience.

If we spent too much time creating the parallels and demonstrating how the modern children felt, we would be detailing for the audience how they should be interpreting and emotionally relating to the play via the modern children's reaction to Hana's story.

So while I agree that that instance is a positive bridge, I don't believe it should have been repeated or exploited."

Teacher's involvement

Teacher's involvement

• Reading articles
• Researching history
• Writing poetry
• Matching concepts to imagery
• Writing stories

The pretext does not function as a script for a literal representation of the selected text;

Rather it functions as a way to compose improvised encounters around or...
'at the edges of the text'
This power point was part of one of my first Lugs performed for a methods class.

I was exploring the notion of the 3rd space - the space between the horizon and the sky. Between our sense of self and other.

The images I have been working with throughout the course have been manipulations of a series of prairie skies with a storm moments away. “Pending” is the work that comes with these images. I notice the value of space when storm clouds are pressed against or advancing aggressively towards the horizon. I search for the space between. I find myself falling into that space in search of some kind of respite within the extremely charged environment. I cropped that part of the images and played with the notion of considering it tangible. The text is part of the first piece of writing I did in this course. It was our first day and I was nervous, we were asked to write briefly around the theme of Luggage. I wrote, kept it, and have used it in many ways since. I honour that I wrote it in an intense context and because of this I have resisted refining the text. I have honoured that his is a process, which echoes a moment in our lives and should remain pure/true to that context. I extracted parts of that text and placed it into the manipulated images. The images were made similar to how Bacon refers to as “accidental”

The accident occurs in his painting when he makes involuntary marks upon the canvas. His instinct then finds in these marks a way of developing the image. A developed image is one that is both factual and suggestive to the nervous system.

Isn’t it that one wants a thing to be as factual as possible and yet at the same time as deeply suggestive or deeply unlocking of areas of sensation other than simple illustrating of the object that you set out to do?

Isn’t that what art is all about?
(Bacon, 1980, p 112)

These apparent binary options bear a liminal relation to each other. They are held together with the sheer, glancing force with which the surface of a sheet of air intersects the line of the sea’s horizon, the elements splice, stapled together in Slanted slash of a white sail that stands the pressures of wind and water, just precariously out of balance – tense textile, holding the void, withstanding the vessel

He speaks of a palpable moment where material and nonmaterial touch.
(Bhabha, 1998,p. 19)
self and place dissolve in a short breath
This power point uses the methods of bricolage pulling together images of London, (a teaching/research trip which has greatly informed my thesis), with various Lugs in performance, combined with quotes from scholars who have had great impact on my work.
Writing the City of London

With LUGS

Knowing is doing is being

Not walls of cement but... the melodies of your temperature

afraid

a path of structural change of a lineage concurant with its environmental changes or Natural Debt

Panopticon House
To be sure, a gentle breeze or our touch in passing provide opportunity for the chimes, but that sounding is determined (caused) by the structure or design of the chimes itself.

It is in the meeting places between we become
Here and here, something happens.

*Lyric Field and Lyric McIver*

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Performativity inquiry explores and maps unfolding landscapes that twist in sudden gusts of recognition-like clothes on a line.

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As within performance, exploration happens and possible space-moments of learning may emerge.

*Lyric Field and Lyric McIver*

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Listen carefully
The dance is whispering...
By Kathryn Ricketts
This trilogy of monologues is delivered by one performer. The text comes through three different forms - letters, M.S.N. and a journal. Each of the plays is accompanied with full screen images. Letters, the first play, has six images of the two main characters environments: scaffolding and a hat shop. The second play has images of M.S.N. bars highlighting subject A in blue and subject B in darker blue. The third play shows an image of scaffolding with varying levels of exposure highlighting the artist’s (main character) process of art making.
Letters

Never fear. We may let the scaffolds fall
Confident that we have built our wall.
(Heaney, 1995)
Where were you man? I waited
Where? Waited where?
Pine and 7th idiot... our corner!

You're the idiot! We maybe coulda stole that car if it wasn't for the fact that we had no fucking tools... you're the one that always carries something. You know, Swiss Army pocket shit.

Hey Shithead! Speaking of tools, while you were wasting your youth at some bait car...

Hey not just any car! A Kiwi Green Pontiac Pansienne!

Anyway I scored a leather suitcase. One of those old ones like somethin' my granddad had. Stunk like it too!

So what's the big deal?!

This sucker was filled to the brim with tools! Heavy shit!!
The tensions in practice and theory was the inspiration for this power point which was created for a course I was co-teaching called Writing the City. Text and images are from "Urban Forest" by David Paul Bayles and exemplifies the tensions between what is animate and inanimate. A binary arts based researchers continually problematize is the tension between theory and practice and this power point is a simple illumination of this tension.
The tensions between what we build and what we grow.
David Paul Bayles

Beyond their aesthetic and utilitarian importance, urban trees seem to fill a deeper human need.
David Paul Bayles
Perhaps they are reminders of the inexorable cycles of the natural world.

David Paul Bayles
Perhaps they serve as eddies and rills of slowness and sureness within the frantic rush of our urban environment.

David Paul Bayles
With one eye towards the simplicity of linear geometry and the other fascinated by the narrative potential of juxtaposition, Bayle's images compel us to reevaluate the manufactured naturalism of our daily environment.

Glenn Williamson, Director, Graduate Program in Museums Studies, College of Fine Arts, University of Florida
...they are also a reminder that no matter how many trees we destroy, often for trivial purposes, no matter how much we fool ourselves about our own delegated destruction of them, we can't live without trees.

David Paul Bayles
...to reveal the boundaries where the live and the inert intersect

David Paul Bayles
Figure 42 Elsie Roy 1
Performers – Students from Elsie Roy School
Photographer – Kathryn Ricketts

Figure 43 Elsie Roy 2
Performers – Students from Elsie Roy School
Photographer – Kathryn Ricketts
Figure 44 Digital Lug
Dancer – Kathryn Ricketts
Photographer – Claire Newall

Figure 45 Barefoot Lug
Dancer – Kathryn Ricketts
Photographer – Claire Newall
Figure 46  Fuse lug
Dancer – Kathryn Ricketts
Photographer Katie Harris-McLeod
Artist - Keith Martin
Figure 47 Lug 2
Dancer – Kathryn Ricketts
Photographer – Jenny Arntzen

Figure 48 Lug 3
Dancer – Kathryn Ricketts
Photographer – Jenny Arntzen
Figure 40 Yaletwon 4
Dancer – Kathryn Ricketts
Photographer – Chris Randle

Figure 50 Yaletwon 5
Dancer – Kathryn Ricketts
Photographer – Chris Randle
Figure 51 Open Suitcase 1  
Dancer – Kathryn Ricketts  
Photographer – Katie Harris-McLeod

Figure 52 Open Suitcase 2  
Dancer – Kathryn Ricketts  
Photographer – Katie Harris-McLeod
Figure 53 Mary’s story
Dancer – Mary Stewart
Photographer – Chris Randle

Figure 54 Ray’s story
Dancer – Ray Goodfriend
Photographer – Chris Randle
Figure 55  white lug
Dancer – Julia Carr
Photographer – Katie Harris-McLeod

Figure 56  Singing lug
Dancer – Kathryn Ricketts
Singer – Laurel Murphy
Photographer – Katie Harris-McLeod