



# Artistic Report 2008

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## 2008 Review of Operations

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UTP undertook a wide range of activities in 2008 in the research, development and presentation of new work, including:

- *The Last Highway* – a major new work premiering at Sydney Festival 2008;
- *Stories of Love & Hate* – a new work with public seasons at Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre, and Bankstown Arts Centre's Olympic Parade Theatre;
- *Posts in the Paddock* – the research stage of a new work being developed in collaboration with the visual and performing artist cooperative My Darling Patricia;
- *The Football Diaries* – two research and development phases for a new solo work by Ahilan Ratnamohan;
- *The Fence* – two research periods for Alicia Talbot's next major work; and
- *UK Projects* – a two-week residency at Newcastle in the UK, researching a new project commissioned by Newcastle-Gateshead Initiative.

UTP began the year with a sold-out public season in January, presenting ten shows of *The Last Highway* as part of Sydney Festival 2008. Over 2,600 audience members attended UTP's most ambitious event yet, which polarised critics, while being overwhelmingly praised by audiences for its bravery and realism.

The company then attended the 8<sup>th</sup> Australian Performing Arts Market in Adelaide, and was invited to pitch *The Last Highway* to delegates as part of APAM's Searchlight program promoting new Australian performance. The company received strong interest in the work from international delegates. Unfortunately, funding was not available for a tour offered in late 2008.

Director Roslyn Oades continued to develop *Stories of Love & Hate* in 2008, including presenting an excerpt of the work as part of Sydney Writers Festival in a session dedicated to Roslyn's technique of creating theatre through an interview/oral history process. Over two years Roslyn interviewed 65 residents of the Sutherland Shire and Bankstown to create a work investigating the lives and loves of people directly affected by the Cronulla riots. *Stories of Love & Hate* was presented at Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre, and Bankstown Arts Centre's Olympic Parade Theatre. The seasons achieved over 90% attendance, and attracted critical and audience acclaim.

In 2008, UTP conducted its inaugural residency program *Intersection*. This initiative offers artists wages, venue, artistic and management support in the research and development of new performance work. Two projects were supported through *Intersection*.

*Posts in the Paddock* is a collaboration between My Darling Patricia artists Clare Britton and Halcyon Macleod with Indigenous artists Nadeena Dixon and Rhonda Grovenor-Dixon, and facilitated by cultural advisor Lily Shearer. Through visual and physical performance, the project will explore the story of Jimmy Governor, the murders he committed in 1900, and the shared ancestral links to Jimmy and his victims by participating artists. UTP committed to

supporting the artists further develop the project in 2009, looking towards production in 2010.

Ahilan Ratnamohan was also supported in the development of a solo work *The Football Diaries*. Ahil undertook two research and development phases for the project, working with Karen Therese and Lee Wilson. Lee will direct the project to a public season presented by UTP in 2009.

Artistic Director Alicia Talbot's next major work *The Fence* commenced research and development in 2008. Alicia worked in collaboration with story consultant Wayne Blair, designer Alison Page, community liaison Lina Kastoumis, and Melbourne Workers Theatre Artistic Director Maude Davey, creating an initial storyboard of the piece, fragments of dialogue and scene outlines. The company entered negotiations with Melbourne Workers Theatre (MWT) regarding a co-production of *The Fence*, however, after MWT did not have their triennial funding agreement renewed with the Australia Council for the Arts, they were unable to proceed with the partnership. UTP committed to the continued development of the work and was invited to pitch the project at the Major Festivals' Initiative development site meeting in Sydney in January 2009.

UTP continued to capitalise on the strong international relationships developed at successive APAMs and overseas tours, with a two-week residency at Newcastle Gateshead Initiative (NGI), in the north-east of England, researching a potential new work *The Scotswood-Benwell Project*. UTP will continue discussions with NGI regarding the development of this project towards a public season in 2012. In addition to the two weeks in Newcastle, UTP Artistic Director Alicia Talbot and General Manager Simon Wellington attended Dublin Theatre Festival, meeting international festival directors and inspecting potential sites for the presentation of *The Last Highway*. The company also met with venues, presenters and festivals in London to discuss touring and collaboration opportunities.

Lina Kastoumis joined the company as Artistic Associate in May 2008 to build networks within western Sydney, and support emerging and established artists through UTP initiatives and independent cultural activity. Throughout 2008, Stephanie Paton acted as UTP's Administrator while Bibi Serafim was on maternity leave. Bibi returns to the company in January 2009.

## Financial Management

In 2008 UTP returned an operating surplus of \$11,587. The company's annual turnover of \$592,548 was lower than 2007 (\$709,174), due to that year's significant international commissions, but still notably higher than previous years' averages.

While government arts grants decreased from \$471,035 in 2007 to \$459,072 in 2008, as a percentage of overall income government arts grants increased from 68.4% in 2007 to 77.4% in 2008. In 2008, a one-off increase in annual funding of \$51,544 was provided to all Australia Council Key Organisations. UTP used this additional, unexpected, support to seed the Artistic Associate and *Intersection* initiatives.

A significant income variation on previous years was in the area of box office, with UTP achieving two record-breaking public seasons. A sold out Sydney Festival season of *The Last Highway* returned the largest box office in UTP's history (\$79,074), while sold out seasons of *Stories of Love & Hate* returned the company's highest box office for a self-presented, self-ticketed work (\$10,150). The latter was made possible by a new merchant facility that enabled the company to process advance ticket sales through its office. In 2008 box office was 15% as a proportion of overall income, compared to previous triennium averages of 2%.

Performance/Commission Fees in 2008 (\$13,642) were lower than in 2007 (\$106,549) and 2006 (\$56,954) due to the year not including any major festival commission fees as in previous years. This area dropped to 2% as a proportion of total income, compared to 10.2% in the previous triennium. While this income stream is projected to increase in future years, it is worth noting that earned income through the combination of box office and performance income as a proportion of total income was still higher than average in 2008 (15%) than the previous triennium (12.2%).

Most notable expenditure variations from 2007 to 2008 were: Salaries and Fees decreasing from \$399,586 to \$379,964, reflecting the large investment in wages for the development of *The Last Highway* occurring in 2007; and Marketing Costs increasing from \$29,134 to \$48,808. Administration remained static.

Production costs rose from \$96,839 (14%) in 2007 to \$101,741 (18%) in 2008. This is largely due to a significant increase in venue costs, from \$18,933 in 2007 to \$35,381 in 2008, as a result of presenting *The Last Highway*.

The company has returned another moderate surplus of \$11,587 in 2008, increasing Accumulated Reserves by 10% to \$127,476, further securing the company's financial position. Based on revised budget projections for 2009, the Reserve Asset Ratio is now equivalent to the Australia Council for the Arts benchmark of 20%.

During 2008, UTP successfully applied to renew its three-year funding agreement with the Theatre Board of the Australia Council for the Arts. The Australia Council increased its annual investment in UTP from \$180,000 to \$250,000, commencing from 2009.

## Directors in 2008

The names of the directors in office at any time during or since the end of the financial year are; Jenny Bisset, Tim Carroll, Raquel Carvajal (resigned 8 March 2008) Terese Casu (resigned 9 September 2008), Claudia Chidiac, Devleena Ghosh, Bill Harris, Andrew Ma (resigned 8 April 2008), Alicia Talbot and Simon Wellington.

# The Last Highway

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## Artistic Team

Director / Original Concept	Alicia Talbot
Performers / Devisors	Suzannah Bayes-Morton, Kathy Cogill, Adam Hatzimanolis, George Kanaan, Rajan Thangavelu, Yana Taylor and Ahilan Ratnamohan
Development Co-devisors	Felino Dolloso & Tammie Jarrett
Set Design	Mirabelle Wouters
Lighting Design	Mirabelle Wouters & Neil Simpson
Performance Consultant	Lee Wilson
Dramaturg	Deborah Pollard
Sound Artist	Carl Polke
Community Liaison	Lina Kastoumis
Production Manager	Tristan Taylor
Stage Manager	Alexander Dick

## Consultants

Lawrence Burgess, Mohammad Codmani, Craig Cooper, Sione Crawford, Tiffany Evans, Jacqueline Fennell, Melinda Fenton, Ghassan Hage, Kha Hien Huynh, Hamid Khan, Sajjad Khan, Lindsay McCormack, Sarah McLennan, Larissa Marr, Sal Mauro, Wendy Parsons, Sallie Pinwill, Suzanne Robinson, Bill Tsakonas, Rachel Wotton.

## Timeline

Creative Development	6 – 31 August 2007
Rehearsal	29 October – 14 December 2007
Community Showings	6 & 7 December 2007
Re-rehearsal	7 – 14 January 2008
Premiere Season	15 – 26 January 2008

## Venue

Creative Development	Carriageworks, Bay 21
Rehearsals & Season	Warehouse, Rosedale Avenue, Greenacre

## Partners

Sydney Festival, Bankstown City Council, Bankstown Sports Club, Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation, South West Sydney Area Health and HARP (HIV and Related Programs), Sex Workers Outreach Program (SWOP), NSW Users and Aids Association (NUAA), and Repidu (Canterbury Hospital Drug Unit).

## Project Description

*Outstanding... a committed company of creators-performers and Alicia Talbot's directorial nous make for a grimly riveting experience.*

The Sun Herald

At a 24-hour service station on the edge of the road in a remote industrial part of the city, the paths of six night-workers intersect.

Late at night, when the normal rites and rituals of everyday life are made topsy-turvy, these provocative encounters take unexpected turns. The beliefs and philosophies that sustain these sex-workers, taxi drivers and shift workers are prodded and tested against the ever shifting-landscape of the night-time highway.

*The Last Highway* is a gritty and hypnotic performance work exploring glimpses of people who are positioned at the edges of our society, who by circumstances and choice live in the recesses of the night. Just as day becomes night in the work, the lives of many people are increasingly pushed away from our gaze and also our compassion.

*The night unfolds with hints of human warmth that fade swiftly in the face of a grim series of events. Bleak doesn't even begin to describe The Last Highway.*

The Daily Telegraph

The work maps the comings and goings of six people who are seemingly caught in the stasis of the night. Individual transactions and everyday actions are intensified by the oppressiveness of waiting and heightened by the surrealism of night. In one sense, nothing much happens – shifts change, a taxi breaks down, girls start one job and finish another, temporary alliances are formed and dissolved, and traffic passes. But as real time actions and images unfold in multiple layers throughout the space, the isolation, fragility and disconnectedness of each of the characters is exposed.

*...a confronting piece of urban theatre based squarely on what is really out there in the community. It is a disturbing yet beautifully presented piece.*

Canberra Times

The work traces an ongoing cycle of trauma and repair and offers an insight to the dreaming and despair of individuals. Inspired by the writer and philosopher Ghassan Hage, this work also deals with the premise that good people can act in ugly ways and that small acts of kindness can transcend vocabularies of difference and cultural isolation. Through its intercultural cast, *The Last Highway* explores some of the cultural stereotypes associated with late night work and looks at some of the complex issues embedded within notions of territory, dispossession and belonging.

*The Last Highway* was created working in-residence in Sydney's western suburbs. It was presented in a large warehouse that opens on to a road in an industrial estate in Greenacre. The service station is a constructed façade and designed so that the real time action of the road is a constant presence throughout the piece. Designed by Mirabelle Wouters with lighting by Neil

Simpson, the strong visual imagery of *The Last Highway* is reminiscent of a Callum Morton installation or Edward Hopper painting.

*The Last Highway* premiered at Sydney Festival 2008.

## Inspiration for the work

Alicia Talbot first developed the idea for *The Last Highway* in 1999 when she was working as an artist-in-residence at a homeless service for young people in western Sydney. There was a new conservative government and, due to policy changes in health and welfare, there was a tangible increase in people's poverty. In preparation for the Olympics the clean up of Sydney had also started. In western Sydney, women who were working along the Great Western Highway and Canterbury Rd were moved from the relative safety and visibility of the major roads and pushed further into industrial estates, increasing their risk of personal danger.

Over the years these ideas kept developing and following the violence at Cronulla in 2005, three key questions emerged: How do individuals navigate danger? What gets us through the night? Who has the right to be on this land?

These were the departure points for researching and generating material that shaped the creative investigation throughout making this work.

A key factor of *The Last Highway's* success was its lengthy development period: an initial research and development phase, followed by a four-week creative development, a seven-week rehearsal period and community showing, followed by a final production stage in which the work was staged as part of Sydney Festival 2008. This development period greatly contributed to the work's dramaturgical sophistication and cohesion of form.

The team of assembled artists came from diverse artistic and cultural backgrounds, and often the team would be working with different sets of performance languages. Due to the nature of the site, spoken text became almost impossible, which led to a predominantly visual and physical investigation. Alicia, designer Mirabelle Wouters, performance consultant Lee Wilson and dramaturg Deborah Pollard had many discussions regarding the hyper-real nature of the piece and the way it intersected with the surreal and the abstract. During the process we also discussed the temporal nature of the work and the way the scale of the site and set demanded a sense of the epic and large scale.

## Performance Style

*There on the cement I see the dispossession of all non-Indigenous Australians performing disconnected rituals on foreign soil, a displacement of soul which resonated... this is a powerful and truthful piece, as good as it gets in Sydney, the night before Australia Day.*

*Artshub.com.au*

*The Last Highway* draws on a performance style and process of creative investigation that emphasizes reality. It is an investigation of waiting and isolation, blending real-time actions within a surreal and dreamlike

environment. The work employs a number of performance languages drawn from text, movement, live art and popular and traditional cultural forms.

As a director, Alicia Talbot favours work that lends itself to reality. Where the trappings of a performance- or theatre-space are disguised or discarded and the sound and set design, lights and performance elements are utilised to broker a performance territory that asks questions of the real and the artificial. For example, what elements of a real service station are necessary to evoke a sense of reality and what could sit as an abstraction or absence? How do the use of real cars affect the footprint of the design and the scale of the set? During the construction of the set, the bare bones metal facade had a quality resonant with the feature film *Dogville*, and this influenced the nature of the material the ensemble was creating, both aesthetically and formally.

This exploration of realness is an ongoing investigation by the director and is driven by the desire to engage the audience on an emotional level. As the subject material and theatrical presentation draws heavily on reality the audience are positioned in the role of the witness. Through the act of watching, spectators become complicit and somehow ethically implicated in the action. This placement of audience often provokes strong responses and engages the audience on a emotional and visceral level.

*Hard to watch some of the scenes – You want to look but you don't want to look, it's sad, but that's life.*

*Raw, gritty and realistic – no frills, no crap.*

Audience Members, Community Showings

## Community Consultation Process

*The Last Highway* employed a unique process and devising method that Alicia Talbot has developed through previous works, where community consultants are positioned as experts within the devising process. This consultative process involves community consultants and industry professionals attending rehearsals on a weekly basis, and responding to material and scenes generated through extensive discussions and long-running improvisations. The consultants' critical and dramaturgical feedback greatly impacts on the believability of the work and brokers a relationship between opinions and observations of real, lived experience and artistic enquiry.

Consultants are not asked to disclose their personal stories to then be characterised on stage by actors, but rather invited to share their opinions and observations about the world as they see it. The consultants are paid a fee for their contribution. While this sounds like a small gesture, for individuals and communities who often have the experience of being ignored, stereotyped or vilified, the ability to participate in a process where their words and opinions have the power to change the direction of a scene, or seed the idea for a new scene, is a very powerful experience.

*After the first session I felt really positive, like there was a sense at last, our little voices would be out there – maybe people would look at us in a different light.*

*I like how it's not cheesy or sensationalistic. I am proud of it – there's a piece of me, a piece of all of us in it.*

On a broader community level, this process engenders community ownership through the way the work is developed, its subject, its choices of art forms and through word of mouth. For members of communities who are not often used to seeing their world presented or referred to on stage, there is a strong identification with the subject material and this provokes discussions, and a sense of pride about the community itself. Community consultants are drawn from a diversity of expertise bound by location and circumstance.

Community Liaison Consultant Lina Kastoumis facilitated this process. Lina has a strong understanding of the complexity of relationships and issues within the communities being engaged. In addition to community consultants, Lina involved health professionals and cultural thinkers on a regular basis. Overall she was responsible for developing and maintaining relationships with individuals, community and service organisations in the area.

Lina and Alicia developed a number of key relationships with health professionals from South West Sydney Area Health Service and HARP (HIV and Related Programs) and two peer-based service organisations, Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP) and NSW Users and Aids Association (NUAA). These organisations provided introductions to a number of individuals who became involved in the project.

For example, Lina and Alicia accompanied NUAA and SWOP workers in their outreach work to street-based sex workers on Canterbury Rd and developed relationships with a number of workers who formed the core group for weekly consultations. In addition to the women, Lina continued to develop relationships with male shift workers including taxi-drivers, petrol station attendants, an ex-police officer, and drug and sexual health educators.

*I think that this is an amazing process that brings marginalised groups into a normally elite art form, gets people together who might be normally be in conflict with each other, breaks down barriers and increases understanding amongst community members. I think it adds to community strength and well-being.*

*I overheard some audience members saying how they had a much better understanding of sex workers lives and the next time they saw girls working on the street they would feel much more empathy.*

*I witnessed some of the sex worker consultants saying how much being involved in The Last Highway has really added to their lives: they said how much they enjoyed the community consultations, that it was good to do something different to sex work, and it inspired them to want to do some writing. I believe this process has hugely benefited these workers' mental health (which is often challenged on a daily basis by work conditions –which I have witnessed/been told about and recent research which has shown high levels of post traumatic stress syndrome in Sydney street-based sex workers).*

Wendy Parsons  
Womens Metro Team, Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP)

## Statistics - Stage 1 Creative Development

Over the four-week creative development at Carriageworks:

- There were 5 primary consultation days – on the 1st, 8th, 16th, 22nd & 29th August 2007.
- A total of 28 paid consultants participated in the Stage 1 consultation process, including Bankstown area street-based sex workers, ex-policemen, service station attendants, taxi drivers and drug educators.
- Of these consultants 90% were repeat attendees.
- A total of 4 industry service workers observed the consultation process. The workers came from the services SWOP (Sex Workers Outreach Project), NUAA and Repidu (Canterbury Hospital Drug Unit).
- A total of 12 consultants were currently sex working on Canterbury Road.
- A total of 3 consultants had previously worked on Canterbury Road as sex workers.
- A total of 3 consultants were doing night-time shift work on Canterbury Road – service station attendant and taxi drivers.
- A total of 4 were from CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) backgrounds.
- A total of 31 people attended the informal creative development showing on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> of August 2007.

#### Statistics - Stage 2 Rehearsal Process

- There were 4 primary consultation days – on the 9th, 15th, 22<sup>nd</sup> of November and the 4<sup>th</sup> December.
- A total of 29 paid consultants participated in the Stage 2 rehearsal process, including Bankstown area street-based sex workers, former sex workers, ex-policemen, service station attendants, local food vendors, Arab-Australian community members, taxi drivers and drug educators.
- Of these consultants, 85% were repeat attendees.
- A total of 8 industry service workers observed the consultation process. The workers came from the services SWOP (Sex Workers Outreach Project), NUAA and South West Sydney Area Health Service
- A total of 8 female consultants were currently sex working on Canterbury Road.
- A total of 8 female consultants had previously worked on Canterbury Road as sex workers.
- A total of 4 consultants were doing night-time shift work on Canterbury Road – service station attendant and taxi drivers.
- A total of 9 were from CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) backgrounds.
- A total of 150 people attended the two nights of community showings on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> December & Friday 7<sup>th</sup> December.

*I felt proud to see that the input and effort from the consultants was being used and evidenced on stage. Relieved that it came together so well and was received really well. Being in the audience enabled me to also see it as an audience member and feel all the intensity, humour, sadness and emotions as though seeing it for the first time.*

*It is such an interesting and engaging process. Trying to get at the 'heart' and rawness of the issues and stories. So therefore what you see is what is really happening on the streets and with people's lives. It is a very inclusive, creative process that allows people who would not normally be involved in theatre an opportunity to be involved.*

There was an overwhelming response to UTP's invitations to each of the two free community showings held on 6 & 7 December 2007. Both showings played to capacity. Specifically targeted audiences included Bankstown local community health workers and professionals, particularly those working in rehabilitation and sexual health, a large number of sex worker peers and advocates from the extended SWOP and Scarlet Alliance networks, NUAA staff and extended affiliates, consultants' colleagues, friends and families, Sydney Festival staff and members of South West Sydney's multicultural arts community.

Lina Kastoumis and service organization representatives collected feedback and comments from community showing attendees on both nights.

*The wog stuff is good because everyone is there – it's not just one guy or one ethnic.*

*It was like eavesdropping on a moment.*

*Respectful of characters but not tokenistic.*

*It really brought home the reality and vulnerability of the street-based sex workers.*

*I loved constantly panning across to catch the action. It's good. There was either something or nothing going on.*

*Different to T.V – It's the first time I've seen theatre.*

## Sydney Festival Season

*The Last Highway* sold out several weeks in advance of the season. At ten performances over two weeks, 2,547 audience members attended the show.

This is represented as:

	Total Capacity	Attendance	Total %	Paid %	Comp %
Bankstown	2600	2547	98	83	17

Audience members travelled to a meeting point near UTP's office in Bankstown's Old Town Plaza, where they boarded buses and travelled a 15-minute journey to the performance venue located in a warehouse and road in an industrial area of Greenacre.

For the bus journey, lina Kastoumis prepared an audio track made in collaboration with street-based sex workers, who are based at a street off Canterbury Rd. The interviews revealed anecdotes and information that related to the bus route.

To support the logistical complexities of the project a substantial front-of-house team assisted patrons to and from the venue. A small non-alcohol and

snack bar was set up at the venue. Security in the Plaza, on buses and at the venue was engaged, including additional support from Bankstown Sports Club, who provided security in the Plaza before and after the show.

## Audience Survey

On the return bus trip, audience members were invited to complete a survey form to gauge their response to the work and demographic information.

Based on a significantly high response rate to the survey (**65%**), we can say that overall spectators enjoyed their experience of *TLH*. Indeed, an overwhelming majority of spectators rated the show positively (**72%** responded “loved” or “liked”), with a low negative response rate (**9%**).

Almost a fifth (**18%**) of spectators had seen a UTP show prior to *TLH*.

Spectators cited the location and the venue as what they liked most about their experience of *TLH*. This was closely followed by another three top answers:

- actors and their acting skills;
- level of realism, authenticity and honesty of the show; and
- set design.

Of great significance to spectators were also the subject matter, the production values, the bus ride and the level of challenge or confrontation written into the performance.

A majority (**57%**) of spectators heard about the show through the Sydney Festival Guide. Interestingly, almost a third (**31%**) heard about the show through word of mouth, a point that highlights UTP’s reputation and standing in the Australian theatre sector. Spectators were mostly attracted to the show for three main reasons:

1. The show had been recommended to them by someone (**28%**);
2. The subject matter dealt with and production values (**24%**) espoused; and
3. The company’s reputation (**19%**).

Based on the survey responses, we can also say that, generally speaking, the median spectator attracted to *TLH* was female, Australian-born, educated, wealthy, in their thirties and a regular theatre-goer.

Though a non-negligible quarter (**27%**) of the audience was from the western suburbs of Sydney, the majority of spectators resided in other suburbs of Sydney (City, Inner west and eastern suburbs **63%**). There was also a small proportion of spectators from overseas (**2%**), most of whom were from the USA (**40%**).

Almost three quarters (**73%**) of spectators were Australia-born, but very few from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent (**1%**). Of the non-Australia-born the majority were from another English-speaking country (**17%**) (from the UK, **44%**).

These findings matched the findings that a great majority of spectators spoke English at home (**82%**). It is worth noting though that of those who spoke a

language other than English (**13%**), there was a higher proportion of people speaking Greek (**10%**) and Arabic (**9%**).

Finally, it is worth noting that nearly one third of spectators (**31%**) had never been to Bankstown prior to that evening, and that half (**50%**) of spectators had a pre-show drink and/or dinner in Bankstown.

## Stories of Love & Hate

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*A funny, fun, insightful and important work that won't lose you for a second.*

FBI RADIO  
(FBI-voted top theatre show of 2008)

### Artistic Team

Director/Original Performers	Roslyn Oades Mohammed Ahmad, Roderick Byrnes, Janie Gibson & Katia Molino
Sound artist	Bob Scott
Designer	Clare Britton
Lighting Designer	Neil Simpson
Script Consultants	Andrew Ma & Alicia Talbot
Artistic Consultant	Deborah Pollard
Community Consultant	Tim Carroll
Production Management	Neil Simpson

### Interviewees

Mohammed Ahmad, Ousama Ali, Luke Anderson, Greg Attwells, Moner (Morris) Bazzi, Tommy Bazzi, Alexander Bruszt, Craig & Jacqui Campbell, George Capsis, Iman Charkawi, Jaclyn Cowen, Zaynab Dahbeche, Funda Damyah, Mohammed Dannoun, Ben Darby, Dick Evans, Craig Greenhill, Tim Guild, Carol-Lee & Max Hardcastle, Paul "Fishman" Hayes, Rory Hood, Nada Howcher, Nouridine (Noah) Issa, Kirk Jenkins, Samantha Jones, Nadia Lakkis, Robert Larkin, Louise (Lou) McKerihan, Rima Mazloun, Jaqueline Mikhail, Todd Mingramm, Eden Moore, Stuart Murray, Bruce Nelson, Emily Nicol, Rova Hussein Omar, Sen Ozkan, Noelene Redman, James Rendell, Alison Sherman, Dean Simpson, Inspector Mal Smith, Mark Sorensen, Matt Sorensen, Ellyse Sulway, Anthony Tini, Natahnee Veitch, Phil Veitch, Patrick Ward, Luke Weinert, Courtney Wilson, Dane Wilson, and those who prefer to remain anonymous.

### Timeline

Research and Development	December 2007 (2 weeks)
Interview collection period	October 2006 – August 2008
Sound workshop	April 2008 (5 days with sound artist)
Sydney Writer's Festival Presentation	25 May 2008

Creative Development	June 2008 (3 days with performers & sound)
Script revisions	July – September 2008
Rehearsals	20 October – 16 November 2008
Performance Season	
Sutherland	18 – 22 November 2008
Bankstown	25 – 29 November 2008
UNSW Symposium Presentation	28 November 2008

## Venues

Research & Development and Creative Development	UTP Rehearsal Room at Hackett House
Rehearsals	UTP Rehearsal Room & Olympic Parade Theatre, Bankstown
Season - Sutherland	Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Art Centre, Gynea (Sutherland Shire)
Bankstown	Olympic Parade Theatre, Bankstown

## Introduction

*Stories of Love & Hate* was produced by Urban Theatre Projects (UTP) in association with Bankstown Youth Development Service (BYDS). Based on a two-year interview process with residents from Bankstown City and the Sutherland Shire, this project culminated with a one-week performance season in both regions.

*Stories of Love & Hate* explores great loves, broken hearts and an infamous riot. At times funny, bizarre and confronting, cultures and ideologies collide in this intimate exploration of love and loss.

Drawing on a local incident that attracted national and international attention, *Stories of Love & Hate* moves beyond an historic event to provide a broader social commentary on contemporary Australian culture, notions of belonging and the complexities of human relations.

*In repeating these stories of love and hate with such sensitivity and artistry, the performance provides us with an opportunity to re-hear our fellow citizens and to rehearse new modes of local, cultural, and national belonging.*

REALTIME #89

*Stories of Love & Hate* looks at the lives and loves of people directly affected by the 2005 Cronulla riots. Sidestepping the media hype and social outrage surrounding the event, the source material for this unique verbatim theatre show comes from an extensive interview process with the people who were there.

Over a two-year period, director Roslyn Oades interviewed 65 residents, aged between 14 and 79, from Bankstown and the Sutherland Shire on the subject of love. The result is a collection of heart-breakingly tender and personal stories. Stories as diverse as the storytellers themselves, which include a group of pro surfers, a carload of Lebanese 'bass heads', elderly ocean swimmers, a

philosophical father, Muslim schoolgirls, a newspaper photographer and a baton-wielding cop.

*Stories of Love & Hate* explores the idea of hate as a consequence of feeling the things we love are under threat. In doing so, it aims to provide genuine empathy and access to the hearts of the people directly affected by the riots, while also offering a candid dialogue between some of the conflicting emotional and cultural issues that shape our national psyche. Issues that have continued to erupt in a number of Australian communities.

## Performance Style

*"... (a) resolutely truthful and non-actorly work, with a beautifully accurate rendering of the cadences, timing and slippages of real speech as opposed to the well-crafted phoniness of actors reciting lines."*

The Sydney Morning Herald

This production utilises a unique performance technique. Rather than reciting memorised lines, the four actors wear headphones and speak along to a sequence of carefully edited audio interviews word for word. By confining the actors to the discipline of accompanying a recording with absolute precision – including every intonation, breath and stumble – a curious, hyper-real performance style is established. While the actors often adopt characters with an accent, background, age or gender obviously not their own, the technique also allows the many quirks and imperfections of human speech to be acknowledged with fidelity, often to humorous, bizarre or uncomfortable effect.

*Through its distinctive performance mode *Stories of Love & Hate* succeeds in shifting the emphasis from speaking to listening. In doing so the work shifts the language of multiculturalism itself...*

REALTIME

This technique's commitment to reproducing the way people speak also sets it apart from more traditional verbatim theatre forms, which often use writer and actor interpretation. *Stories of Love & Hate* includes the use of four-way interviews and simultaneous conversation – fragmented conversations bump up against, feed into, contradict and overlap each other in the culmination of a shared story.

Additional found audio material such as popular love songs and radio are also interspersed within a surround-sound audio design to embed the characters, and audiences, in a variety of environments.

*Much blame for inciting the "incident" which took place at Cronulla is levelled at talk back radio. Oades in her gentle way directs us to this argument by showing us not a depiction of that hateful voice but its absence. In its place is the late night soothing radio voice that listens to callers who request love songs so that distant lovers may feel held.*

Arts Hub

## Research and Development

Over three weeks in November and December 2006, Roslyn Oades and Tim Carroll met with a range of organisations and individuals within the Bankstown and Sutherland Shire local government areas to discuss the project and seek support and networks to continue developing the work. They held a number of information sessions about the project for community groups and interested individuals.

Drawing on these networks Roslyn commenced interviews with people from a diverse range of ages and backgrounds in both regions, which continued during 2007. The interviews were recorded and conducted by Roslyn and provide the source material of the first draft audio script.

In August 2007, Roslyn worked with dramaturg/writer Andrew Ma for one week discussing the dramaturgical through-line of the work and compiling the recorded material into a 30-minute rehearsal draft. Roslyn then worked with four actors over three days at the end of August 2007, testing the material and workshopping potential staging strategies for the work.

## Creative Development

In early 2008 Roslyn Oades spent time editing audio material, and collecting additional targeted interviews. In June, Roslyn spent a week testing audio ideas with sound designer Bob Scott that was followed by a three-day workshop with the cast of four actors. Although the workshop had an audio design focus, the most significant discovery during this process, was a weakness in the edited texts' structure. And in the following four months, Roslyn revised her approach to the structure, content and intention of the work.

The four-week rehearsal period was an effective collaborative process – with all artists actively involved in challenging and advancing the work. During this process the audio-script was further refined and physically realised. Dramaturgical consultant Deborah Pollard and community consultant Tim Carroll contributed to this process in a drop-in, outside-eye capacity.

## Creating the audio script

*Stories of Love & Hate* relied solely on interview material gathered and edited by Roslyn, as its prime source of dialogue. A new development in form for Roslyn was the use of tying all the material to a single moment in time and the use of an inter-linking narrative, as opposed to a sequence of independent interweaving stories. On editing, in order to construct the audio script, Roslyn adopted a collage-like form, whereby fragmented conversations bump up against, feed into, contradict and overlap each other to culminate in a plural story.

Roslyn chose to introduce the characters through a compilation of 'love stories' before moving towards the advent of the riots in order to conclude with the revelation of each character's involvement and/or response to that event. Extracts from the radio program *Love Song Dedications* were also utilised as chapter markers at various stages within the overall audio script to intimately punctuate the narrative arc.

*Obtaining a successful compromise between organic and imposed solutions to weaknesses in the script's structure was ultimately the most demanding, time-consuming and crucial aspect of my creative process on Stories...*

*The role of writer/community facilitator brought additional challenges. As a writer responding to sensitive subject matter within a community-based form, I felt pressured to deliver a fair representation of both sides – which I then needed to negotiate as an artist. The harshest criticism I had from a community member (in Bankstown) was that the Lebanese 'car boys' were stereotypes. I had hoped the work would take the audience behind these perceived stereotypes. Perhaps the amount of characters represented in Stories limited how far I was able to delve into dispelling this concern. Besides that, the overwhelming feedback from community members was very positive, with many impressed by the non-judgemental nature of the work – which was a personal triumph...*

Roslyn Oades, Director

Thus, the final audio script has evolved from its development stages, beginning with Roslyn and Andrew Ma initially working to decide on and extract a narrative line of pursuit from over 75 hours of recorded interviews. Later, in creative development and the eventual rehearsal stage with a full cast of actors, Roslyn continued editing and adjusting the audio script so it better served the physical performance developments.

## Design

Offering strong physical support to the actors and their multiple characters was Clare Britton's set design. The sparse set consisted of a large set of tiered bleachers. This evoked a sense of shared outdoor public space, without committing to a specific location. The solid, familiar appearance drew several audience members to claim the bleachers were based on a place they knew, with responses varying from a suburban swimming pool in Melbourne, to beachside Wollongong. The simple, clear design worked well physically and successfully eliminated any confusion over character definition – as well as responding efficiently to the long narrow performance spaces that the show was staged in.

*Responding to the bleachers design, we developed a physical language that situated the actors when they were not 'wearing' a character. During these intervals the actors returned to a state of relaxation in the sun – a place where they were doing nothing in particular, maybe sun-baking, taking a lunch break or waiting for a friend. They were still present. They were aware of the conversations taking place, but not engaged in them – like a passenger sitting behind a pair of lovers on a bus... We researched iconic images of Australian beaches, paying particular attention to the work of photographer Max Dupain and painter Jeffery Smart's stark urban landscapes, while composing these tableaux.*

Roslyn Oades

## Show Us Your Love: *Stories of Love & Hate* Photography Exhibition

*Show Us Your Love* was an exhibition of photographs accompanying the production *Stories of Love & Hate*. The photographers, two young artists from Bankstown and Sutherland Shire, photographed people from their communities. Each was asked to choose a person, place or thing that they loved, to be included in their portrait. Some chose cars, girlfriends, their place

of work, or treasured collections. The variety and individuality of the portraits was extended when the public was invited to submit photographs to the UTP website.

Helen Thai, from Sefton High School in the Bankstown area, and Courtney Wilson, from Sutherland Shire, took up the challenge of approaching both people they knew, and other in their communities, to gather the most engaging and varied range of portraits possible. The large format photos made it possible for viewers to enter and share in the individual worlds they recorded. Helen said it was “a lot of fun to photograph people she had often seen on the street, but hadn’t met. I really liked taking those photos and getting to know them.” Courtney commented that “I love taking portraits—it’s the kind of photography I do. This was a good opportunity to do another kind of portrait, and have it seen and enjoyed by the public.”

Some of the school groups who attended *Stories of Love and Hate* reacted strongly to the photographic exhibition during their visits. They enjoyed identifying people they recognised from their neighbourhoods, and commented that it underscored the feeling that the production had a real relevance to them, the people they knew, and the communities in which they lived.

Although a strong concept, the concurrent photographic exhibition did not reach its full potential. Feedback Roslyn Oades received from one of the photographers indicated a sense of disconnection from the process and discontent with the final product. In hindsight, she felt a need for more time and resources to adequately support the young artists or to situate this project within the stylistic framework of the production.

## Attendance & Box Office

### Public Season

In it’s premiere season, *Stories of Love & Hate* performed for one week in Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre’s theatrette, followed by one week in a studio theatre in Bankstown. Total attendance for the public season was 727, at 90% capacity, comprising 57% paid attendance and a box office of \$10,150.

By venue, this is represented as:

	Total Capacity*	Attendance	Total %	Paid %	Comp %
Hazelhurst	325	234	72	52	48
Bankstown	480	493	103	60	40

\*The Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre theatrette capacity is 65 seats; Bankstown’s Olympic Parade Theatre capacity is 96 fixed seats.

This was UTP’s most successful self-presented, self-ticketed theatre work. While larger, festival works are usually sold through a ticketing service provider, other UTP works have always relied on reservations taken through the company’s office with patrons paying on the night. This has led to many no-shows – in some cases when shows have booked out the company has told

people not to travel to the venue only to be left with a large number of unexpected empty seats. This has obviously had a negative effect on attendance and box office income.

In 2008, UTP established a credit card merchant facility, along with designing a bookings database so that the office could process bookings and sales immediately. With the company's growing reputation and audience base, this has ensured attendance and income is maximised. For *Stories of Love & Hate* many shows were sold out and fully paid for in advance.

### Schools Performances

At both venues, 310 students from seven schools attended five special matinee schools performances.

### Audience Survey

UTP's audience survey received a 25% response rate (46% from Hazelhurst, 15% from Bankstown).

Sixty four percent (65%) of respondents were attending a UTP performance for the first time by seeing SOL&H. For 15% of respondents this was the second. This was broken down into 57% of first-timers and 19% of second-timers for respondents from the Bankstown performances and 69% and 11% for Hazelhurst.

A little over a fifth (21%) were attending a UTP performance for 3 or more times. These respondents represent UTP's more established audience base (people who have attended UTP's performances more than twice). Not surprisingly, this amounted to 23% in Bankstown – UTP's 'hometown' – and 19% in Hazelhurst. Though the difference of 5 points between the two venues is slight we might still be able to conclude that UTP's established audience base chose to go to Bankstown more than Hazelhurst.

### Audience Rating

A great majority of respondents loved or liked the show: 76% of respondents loved the show (78% Bankstown, 74% Hazelhurst) and 23% of respondents liked the show (19% Bankstown, 25% Hazelhurst). Only 1% of respondents were ambivalent about the show (1 person in each location) and Less than 1% disliked the show (1 person from Bankstown).

### Reason for Attending

The most stated reason (28%) given for attending the show was because someone had recommended it. This percentage was the same for Bankstown and Hazelhurst audiences. The second most stated reason was the subject matter at 24% (16% for Bankstown and 28% for Hazelhurst). This was followed by the company reputation with 20% of respondents selecting this option (no difference between Bankstown and Hazelhurst). Nineteen percent (19%) of respondents stated attending the show because they knew someone in it (31% for Bankstown and 10% for Hazelhurst. Minor reasons for attending the show included: 4% other reasons (invitation, work, etc. this was more often stated at Hazelhurst (5%) than at Bankstown (1%)), 3% review and 1% because of an advertisement (all from Hazelhurst).

## What was liked most

Responding to what was liked most, almost half (46%) the comments gathered about the show pertained to the content (message, dialogue, subject matter, authenticity, etc.) of the show and more specifically about the level of authenticity and relevance of the show as well as the way in which it captured and represented the complexity of the situation and diversity of voices and points of view. Of these comments 58% were from Hazelhurst. This first category of comments was followed by over a third (36%) of comments pertaining to the form (acting, set, direction, etc) of the show, which 62% were from Hazelhurst. The third category of comments were about the concept (pre-show tour, process, interviews, etc.) of the show (16%) and the impact (all from Hazelhurst) (challenging, etc.) (3%).

## Audience Comments

Some of the comments made by audience members included:

- “Beautifully crafted, integrity & heart” (Bankstown audience member)
- “Local show that had a local flavour” (Bankstown audience member)
- “A new concept of live theatre” (Hazelhurst audience member)
- “The immediacy of the material, the vibrancy and professionalism of the performance. The courageousness of this undertaking. Congratulations It was excellent.” (Hazelhurst audience member)
- “I hope this goes to more places than just the Shire and Bankstown.” (Hazelhurst audience member)
- “Venue was ideal, an intimate theatre, reminded me of Phillip St Theatre days!” (Hazelhurst audience member)
- “One of the most excellent pieces of theatre I have ever seen. Beautifully crafted, wonderful humane engrossing charming warm sad piece of art expertly performed.” (Bankstown audience member)

## Venues

Most respondents (75%, overall, 97% to the Bankstown venue and 60% to the Hazelhurst venue) hadn't been to the venue before. It should be noted that there was 3% of no answer to this question.

The percentage of respondents who had gone to pre-show dinner or drinks was more or less evenly divided. A little over than half (55%) of respondents stated that they hadn't been to pre-show dinner or drinks (51% Bankstown and 59% Hazelhurst) as opposed to 45% who had (49% Bankstown and 43% Hazelhurst).

## Demographics

Women were highly represented in the audience sample surveyed (73% overall, 67% Bankstown and 75% for Hazelhurst). Men represented just a quarter of the respondents (27% overall, 33% Bankstown, 23% Hazelhurst). Almost a third of the women (30%) and the men (30%) belonged to the 25-34 age group.

The great majority of respondents were in their twenties and thirties. Indeed, almost a third (31%) of respondents were between 25-34 year-olds, evenly represented in both venues. The next largest group of respondents belonged to

the 35-44 year-olds (20% overall, 27% Bankstown, 15% Hazelhurst). This was followed by, in order to importance:

- 14% 45-54 year-olds (11% Bankstown, 16% Hazelhurst)
- 14% 55-64 year-olds (8% Bankstown, 18% Hazelhurst)
- 12% 18-24 year-olds (21% Bankstown, 7% Hazelhurst)
- 6% 65+ year-olds (1% Bankstown, 9% Hazelhurst)
- 2% 15-17 year-olds (all from Hazelhurst representing 4% of the respondents)

Over a third of the overall respondents were from Sutherland Shire and southern-coastal Sydney suburbs. Another third was from Sydney and close / inner suburbs. Only a fifth was from Bankstown and other western suburbs.

Respondents were divided geographically as follows:

- 34% Sutherland shire (2224-2234) (2% at Bankstown, 51% at Hazelhurst)
- 31% from Sydney, northshore, eastern and inner west suburbs (2000-2088) (44% at Bankstown, 26% at Hazelhurst)
- 12% western Sydney (2100s not Bankstown or Sutherland area) (all from Bankstown, representing 25% of the audience there)
- 8% Bankstown local govt area (2200-2213) (13% at Bankstown, 5% at Hazelhurst)
- 6% Rest of NSW (3% Bankstown, 9% Hazelhurst)
- 4% Southcoast (1% at Bankstown, 6% at Hazelhurst)
- 2% Vic (4% at Bankstown, 1% at Hazelhurst)
- 1% SA (all from Hazelhurst, representing 2% of the respondents there)
- Less than 1% Qld (all from Bankstown, representing 1% of the respondents there)
- Less than 1% Central Coast (2256) (Hazelhurst)
- Less than 1% from overseas (Bankstown)

## Posts in the Paddock

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*Posts in the Paddock* is a new work with visual performance company My Darling Patricia (MDP) that was selected for research and development as part of the Intersection program. Harnessing My Darling Patricia's poetically savage visual imagery and delicate performance making, *Posts in the Paddock* is a collaboration with indigenous artists and non-indigenous artists, with a direct family connection to the story of Jimmy Governor. Through the oral histories of two families, the work investigates broader questions around shared grief and shame and contemporary dialogues of reconciliation. The research and development for this work took place in September 2008 and is scheduled to undergo creative development in 2009, premiering in 2010.

### Artistic Team

My Darling Patricia	Clare Britton & Halcyon Macleod
Collaborating artists	Nadeena Dixon, Rhonda Dixon Grovenor & Katy Britton
Cultural advisor	Lily Shearer



## Future Plans

During the next phase of creative development, *Posts in the Paddock* artists will travel to regional NSW, including Merriwa where the O'Brien murders took place and along the approximate path that Jimmy travelled until his capture. The artistic team will then work in residence at Casula Powerhouse to generate performance material, sound scapes and storyboard visual imagery. In addition to the creative team and consultants, MDP will work with a senior indigenous image and story consultant to ensure ongoing discussion and sensitivity regarding representation and protocol.

*Posts in the Paddock* will be realised in three stages.

- Stage 1 Research and Development: August 2-15 2008
- Stage 2 Creative Development: 2-26 June 2009
- Stage 3 Rehearsal and Production: early 2010

## The Football Diaries

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*The Football Diaries* is a new cross-disciplinary solo performance that was selected for research and development as part of the inaugural Intersection program. The work combines narrative with dance and video installation to explore the social phenomena of art and sport. *The Football Diaries* is scheduled to premiere in April 2009.

### Artistic Team

Performer/Devisor	Ahilian Ratnamohan
Artistic Collaborator	Karen Therese
Sound	Lux Ratnamohan
Movement Consultant	Lee Wilson

### Timeline

Creative Development	18 - 31 August
Stage 2	8 - 19 August

### Venue

UTP Rehearsal Room Hackett House

### Project Background

At the age of 18, while studying arts at university, Ahil realised and admitted for the first time that he wanted to play football professionally. In 2006, after years of lingering between his two passions, art and sport, Ahil set aside art and journeyed to Europe to play in a professional soccer league. Now back in Australia on football hiatus, Ahil still yearns for some resolution.

*The Football Diaries* reveals secrets from within the football dressing room and the psyche of the Western-Sydney male. Through a mix of biographical narratives, video journal-blogs and cross-cultural dance Ahil's personal take on the relationship between art and sport is examined.

Prior to research and development at UTP, Ahil undertook a Two Feet First residency with Legs on The Walls that enabled him to train regularly and extend his choreographic vocabulary.

Ahil also worked with Artistic Associate Lina Kastoumis during the three months leading up to his Intersection Residency. Lina and Ahil focused on refining some of the conceptual and philosophical ideas that would underpin the work.

## Research and Development

During the research and development phase Karen Therese and Ahilian Ratnamohan focused on exploring the Ahil's experiences overseas through real and fictional video and journal entries. They explored the space as an apartment in which the audience were invited into Ahil's idiosyncratic world of football training and dreams. Ahil also explored his obsession with Dutch football legend Johan Cruyff and the Total Football philosophy that developed through the 60s in Amsterdam. This stage culminated in an invited showing.

This development raised a number of questions were about the piece and Ahil's experience in devising and performing a solo work. The company supported Ahil to undertake a week's further development. Lee Wilson also collaborated with Ahil during this time and at the end of the week, Ahil presented a lecture style showing in which he outlined his ideas and how they may develop in future stages.

*The company's confidence in me was re-assuring. The freedom that was given to me, and the trust placed in me, to then spend time on my own personal development was very refreshing. More so was the emphasis that was placed on the outcomes of this development...In the actual creative process, the performance has been very challenging, however in a good way. All of the senior artists I worked with tested me, but supported me very well. Conceptually the piece is like solving a jigsaw puzzle - which, again, thanks to so many confronting questions from peers - I feel I am slowly solving.*

Ahilian Ratnamohan

## The Fence

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*The Fence* is a new work devised by a team of artists working in consultation with older indigenous and non-indigenous community members who have experienced growing up in homes and institutions.

### Artistic Team

Director	Alicia Talbot
Story Consultant	Wayne Blair
Contributing artists	Lina Kastoumis & Maude Davey
Designer	Alison Page
Consultant	Leonie Sheedy (CLAN)

### Timeline

Stage 1	24 & 25 July
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Stage 2

30 September & 1 October

Venue

UTP Rehearsal Room, Hackett House

## Project Description

*Looking into the back of an old house. It's a bit run down, but well loved. Walls are covered with photos and certificates, and a bookshelf crowded with old trophies. Four friends are at the tail end of dinner. Mel and Thommo are on the couch, trying catch the footy score. Joy's in the kitchen opening a tin of fruit salad, laughing with her best mate Jen. The voice of Charlie Pride drifts through the fading light of the evening as a lone figure enters the back yard, sits on an old banana lounge and drops her duffle bag. She stares into the house and takes out her mobile. Her brother Mel answers the phone. She's been gone a long time, only now she has nowhere else to go...*

*The Fence* is a new performance work that looks at the entanglement of family relationships and long-time friendships. Centred on the home and marriage of Mel and Joy, we witness the story of five middle-aged Australians – four of whom grew up in care as part of the stolen generations and the 'Forgotten Australians'. During the course of a night this complex set of relationships begin to unravel and re-form as we glimpse how each has navigated different paths as a result of their upbringing.

Often these indigenous and non-indigenous stories are explored in isolation, or in relation to a particular home or institution. *The Fence* focuses on the present and how a small group of friends and family members have searched to reconcile and make sense of their need for home and belonging. It is an emotional story that reflects on how people with shared lived experiences often find each other, and the wisdom that comes with age and experience.

## Research and Development

During two short periods of research and development the artistic team responded to provocations and exercises provided by Alicia. In stage one, these tasks centred on developing character outlines, fragments of dialogue and possible scenes or images that could take place during the course of the night. Many of these tasks were created in response to music offered by the collaborating artists. Leonie Sheedy, co-founder of CLAN, attended one afternoon and described some of the experiences of children growing up in care and CLAN's current advocacy role.

In Stage 2, the artistic team was joined by designer Alison Page. Alicia again provided a series of provocations based on material generated in the first stage. The team further developed and consolidated character profiles, narrative fragments and the overall arc of the night. Throughout the next stages of creative development and rehearsal, material will be created with through orchestrated improvisations in which text, physical blocking and emotional states are created simultaneously. This material will then be distilled and refined until there is a physical and emotional score, and a tightly crafted script. Wayne Blair will continue to work with the project contributing to overall the narrative structure, character through lines and dialogue. Lina

Kastoumis will also continue her involvement in the project through the role of community liaison.

## UK Projects

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A two-week research and development for the Scotswood-Benwell project in Newcastle upon Tyne, site research for *The Last Highway* and meeting with venues, presenters and festivals to discuss touring and exchange opportunities.

### Artistic Team

Alicia Talbot & Simon Wellington

### Project Outline

In October 2008, following an initial 3-day visit in 2006, UTP worked in residence with Newcastle-Gateshead Initiative (NGI) to create the new work, *The Scotswood-Benwell Project*.

The two-week residency involved intensive social, cultural and political research, as well as meetings with a diverse range of artists, academics, public servants and industry experts. This intensive phase of research enabled us to test and further develop the conceptual framework for *The Scotswood-Benwell Project* and map the physical and human resources available to deliver the project.

*The Scotswood/Benwell Project* will examine some of the complex issues surrounding urban regeneration, contested territory and belonging. Through the microcosm of two families the performance will parallel the fragility of individual and family life with that of community identity. An initial creative response to devising a work in residence in the area is to stage the work in two existing terrace houses, each with the back wall removed. Audiences will be seated in seating banks located in the streets of Scotswood.

During the residency in Newcastle-Gateshead, Alicia and Simon became excited by the potential of investigating a range of residency models that do not necessarily rely on multiple stages for the delivery of a final project outcome. We are interested in collaborating with local artists and experts to present discrete events that reveal the complexity of information revealed during a residency. These may take the form of public showings, dialogues or installations in public spaces, and engage in a range of art forms.

During the UK visit Simon and Alicia also conducted site research for a proposed tour of *The Last Highway* to Dublin Theatre Festival. During the Dublin Theatre Festival and a subsequent week in London, we meet with a number of arts presenters, organisations and producers to continue a dialogue established throughout successive APAM's about the company's range of touring work and residency models.