

# *In-Habit.*

## AUGUST 3<sup>RD</sup> GATHERING: THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

**Present:** Katie, Krista, Jude, Emilie, Mandy, Carl, berni, Emma, Freya

**Apologies:** Katerina, Chi, Jason, Ernesto

**Mandy** - 3D sculptures in sandstone blocks with a photographic component. Dance performance. Final exhibition will be here.

*Murrenda yurrong wandamba (alive, go on, proceed, renew)*

Collect images from City of Yarra but also from around Healesville (where Mandy is from).

Focus will be on Wurundjeri children – get them to participate in workshops with Mandy and with elders to teach them what traditional paint up, ceremony and dance is all about.

To create a Wurundjeri children's dance. There has never been a dance of this specific nature and meaning created before.

Photographs = scar trees, other significant trees and objects.

Focus of carving is to honour the old ways.

Recent project in Collingwood revealed a multi-cultural community but little awareness of indigenous cultures.

Wants the project to promote and raise awareness of aboriginal communities and culture throughout Victoria (not just Wurundjeri).

Present exhibition in a circle shape to represent renewal/no beginning/no end.

Exhibition to take place in the Wurundjeri office space.

Audience will also leave a mark/something of theirs by traveling through the exhibition – so they also become part of the process.

Question from Jude – why the choice of sandstone?

Easier to work with than harder materials, but also from the earth. A contemporary twist to traditional styles (wood more traditional material).

Jude – asked about Wurundjeri office space, set up and construct of exhibition and dance space. Where is the meaning located for the children, for the audience? What moves it from being a 'nice' performance into a meaningful cultural exchange? How will audience 'know' or make meaning from what is going on?

Explanation brochures will be present. Mandy will consult with elders and also an elder may speak at the exhibition/performance.

Jude – interested particularly in the fact that no children’s dances have yet been created and that this may be a key focus for the project and the audience connection with the project.

A revolution of sorts happening. Dances, paint up and celebration have always been the domain of elders. Change is happening with this generation – taking more ownership of creating meaning, along with events, dances etc ...

Jude – will non Wurundjeri and non-indigenous children be involved in the process of creating the dance?

Something to consider – perhaps tapping into the Steiner School on site here at the Convent or a local state primary school.

A question to raise with elders.

Jude – Do you need a place to explore and build the work?

Probably do it at Wurundjeri space here at the convent.

Some discussion of link between photography, sculpture, dance, audience participation etc ...

Set up, lighting, technical questions – ideally performance will take place at night with a full moon (that is when ceremonies take place).

Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> Feb 2010 is full moon, so fits well with end of In Habit week of presentation and theme of renewal.

berni – spoke of powerful metaphor of scar tree, renewal, dance as healing

Jude – how many sites around city of yarra? Spoke of importance of adhering to project rules of working within the geographical boundaries of City of Yarra. And then invite key people from other municipalities (City of Melbourne, Yarra Ranges etc) so they can see the project as a potential model.

Many sites – scar trees, ceremonial trees etc ...

Jude – raised question of ‘sorry’ and forgiveness, presumption of assuming that ‘sorry’ is accepted, without researching its acceptance (or not) within aboriginal communities. Metaphoric scar of treatment of indigenous people by white Australia.

Is there a place we can visit today? Probably not.

Question – re best photographer to work with? Photography will be required for sculpture research but also to document creation of dance and exhibition itself. Tara is a possibility.

Emma taped mid-point evaluation questions with Mandy.

**Carl** – City of Voices. Take in a cross section of inhabitants of this city, using voice as the only sound.

Trained and untrained singers.

Bringing people into different spaces sonically and atmospherically. Deaf artist will be part of the project to respond to spaces energetically.

The nature of identity through sound and voice.

Emotional nature of intervals.

Emotional 'intelligence' through understanding sound.

Participants (during exhibition week) will be invited to take part in an experience but will not be compelled to do so.

Interested in exploring what happens when you take obvious cultural signifiers out of sound (e.g. taking the essence of a Celine Dion song that has Strong pop culture references, strip away words and melody – what would the effect be of the sounds that are left?)

Where does meaning, emotion, response lie?

Interested in both the experience of hearing this but also the experience of doing this.

Music and composition will come from this exploration but the exploration is the focus of the project.

Jude – if I were a member of Vietnamese community choir, what is required of me to be part of the project?

Presence will be valuable for physiological, cultural, lingual background and individuality. How do you make sounds? How do you make sense of sounds?

Initial idea was to present installation in one space with partitions, but now idea is more to have separate spaces so different sounds and experiences can maintain their integrity.

Jude – how is what I give to the experience going to be used? What can I take back to my choir? Why would I want to be involved?

berni – what will you ask of me? What do you want me to do?

Give a sound, it might as simple as one sound, or it might be a melody. It might be a song and then a song repeated without words and then it might be the first four lines of another song.

These pieces of sound will be then taken into the spaces.

Two strangers come into a space and exchange sounds (one way might be with a curtain between so it is anonymous ...)

It's a set of experiments about different ways to exchange and gather sounds.

Perhaps some further thought is required as to what is given back in exchange for the offer of sound/voice.

Would hope that people take away a sense of experience and awareness (how are you feeling this, how are you sensing this, how are you experiencing this?). A new way of being aware of yourself as a singer, as a choir member, as a person.

A greater sense of self in relation to other.

Jude – so what you are asking is people to offer how they use their voices and bodies to make sound. In return you are offering them: What? (this is what needs to be defined).

Emma – the most intriguing thing is Carl's knowledge of sound and voice and the human body. How that can add to my knowledge and increase my awareness, my skills, our choir's skills etc ...

Krista – what you are giving to people is a different way of listening, singing and experiencing music. That what is meaningful to you will have different meanings to other people.

Open up a new way of experiencing sound – both the making of it and the listening to it.

Emilie – an exchange of skills. People bring you their voices and sounds, you give them a set of skills for how to make sense of these.

Emma – confidence in vocal ability, making sounds when you live in a culture and don't speak the dominant language of that culture.

What do you take away from this experience that you can share with your choir, with other people and with an audience?

How to use different sounds  
How to work with different voices

Potential question: Who are we when we sing as a choir?

May be worthwhile focusing on choirs rather than individuals to help frame this question of exchange more specifically.

Vietnamese community and choir  
Greek community  
Clifton Hill choir

Jude – different cultures have different names for emotions and emotional states. You could ask participants where emotions are located in their voices, sounds, songs, language.

Some further questions:

How many groups?  
How many individuals?  
When and where do sessions take place?  
What timeline and schedule is required to reach presentation point in February 2010?

Work backwards from presentation and identify what is required, when, how, by whom etc ..

How will you contextualize each space for project and for participants?

How big is the final choir going to be?

Where does the final work get presented?

## ROSINA TOUR AND LUNCH

**berni** – mini project update

Still refining the brief for inviting responses and participation.

Wanting to research the people and groups here at the Convent and other local areas. Given how far project has moved away from original idea (sited here, researching stories of people who lived and worked here), would be good to return to this site as a research and investigative hub.

Who is 'sited' here now?

Original provocations: vow of silence, the 'leek' (strange vegetable being introduced and speaking of another language), Mary Barberi (her stories, memories).

How to reconnect where project has now travelled with these?

Is there a possibility of inviting past residents back to speak of their stories, their 'tongue' – those people who are linked to this place.

Also – need to find and timeline 'tongue' experts (linguist, speech therapist, singer etc ...)

What is timeline of presentation? Jude suggested 2 x performances each day over 3 days.

Would like to try some things out before February – what will 'happen' at the Tongue-atorium?

Invite people to lunch, cook tongue, play with ideas/stories/possibilities etc ...

Questions:

How big is the table?

How many people around the table?

How many 'experts'?

How many other participants?

How long is the sitting?

What happens?

## SOME DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

Fri 4<sup>th</sup> September

Jude giving talk at Regenerations Conference at RMIT:

'Passages of Encounter' (will confirm time)

A good date to have your project refined into its 'poetic simplicity' (up to 5 minutes)

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