

A View From the Bridge: A Dialogic Practice

A View From the Bridge is a multi-modal conversation between Ade Suharto and Justine Shih Pearson, two artists who are continuing their investigation into what it means for them to be second generation Asian-Australians, living today in Australia with diasporic connections to other lands to the north. Through the development of *A View From the Bridge*, the two artists are examining how this connection to an ancestral homeland does or does not shape their identities, and to what extent it may be a choice to be Asian, to be Australian, or to be both.

Ade and Justine completed the first development stage of this work (funded by the Australia Council) in September 2008 and Ade's presentation will share their findings so far, together with background on their work leading up to this collaboration. Ade will present a live demonstration and mediated documentation of the movement material developed, and discuss dramaturgical concerns that have arisen, and contextualize the project within current research on the body/embodiment and intercultural performance.

One of the most interesting priorities of the project is to develop a hybridized movement vocabulary that reflects Ade's training in traditional Javanese and Western contemporary dance. Ade is developing a movement practice working from the fundamentals of classical Javanese dance (*beksan*) through a series of combined movements named *rantaya* and sections of the female-style dance *Gambyong Pareanom*. Several preliminary sequences of *tao yin tai chi* together with released - based contemporary dance exercises are incorporated to help investigate body placement and flow of energy within the body.

Ade has known Justine for nearly ten years and in that time they have shared ideas and supported each other's developing interest in creating intercultural performance. In 2003 they worked together on a dance-documentary *Ade Dancing: Golek Manis* and in 2005 Justine undertook the research project *Hybrid Bodies, Hybrid Performances*, for which she conducted in-depth interviews with Ade about her bicultural life experiences and experiences of making her first solo-work. They are each well acquainted with the artistic practice of the other, and have had many formal and informal conversations about our individual work over the years.

Their conversation operates on several different levels, dialoging between theory and practice, between Asia and Australia, between the traditional and the contemporary, between Ade and Justine. Although Ade and Justine are co - creators of *A View From the Bridge*, they bring different creative practices to the project just as they engage with different formal and aesthetic forms to create something that is in-between these categories, born uniquely out of the conversation.

Ade Suharto
Choreographer/ Performer

22 September 2008