

THE WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA

Report by - Gavin Robins - 2007 Churchill Fellow

An investigation of the latest advances and technologies for animating the body on the stage and screen.

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INTRODUCTION

This fellowship enabled me to observe and participate in a wide range of projects and research at the cutting edge of my practice. The results of this fellowship have expanded my ability as a movement director in film and theatre to describe physical and visual components of performance, define character and gestural language in training, rehearsal, and performance.

This research fellowship targeted the leading movement coaches and teachers in The US, along with individuals and companies working in the fields of animation and visual effects and technology for the stage and screen.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Position/Occupation

Freelance movement director and teacher of theatre, film and television

Project Description

An investigation of the latest advances and technologies for animating the body on the stage and screen.

A Snap Shot

Los Angeles : I undertook classes with renowned movement coach and teacher for theatre, film and television, Jean- Louis Rodrigue. Jean - Louis' approach stems from the Alexander technique and is grounded in an acutely detailed anatomical understanding of the body in motion. Some of the actors he has worked with include; Hilary Swank, Keanu Reeves, Juliette Binoche, Kirsten Dunst, Josh Brolin, Jonathan Pryce, Joely Richardson, Sir Ian McKellen, and Simon Baker. I trained and observed work at the Vicon House of Moves in LA (the most sophisticated motion capture studio in the world). Brian Rausch (newly appointed Vice President) was my main contact.

New York : I observed and participated in a series of rehearsals with Brooklyn based Action Theatre Co STREB. The artistic director Elizabeth Streb and I met to discuss approaches to theatre making and the integration of technology in live theatre in the 21st century. We are planning a collaboration in 2010. I met with Steve Oakes, co founder of the largest visual effects company in NY, Curious Pictures. He gave me a tour of the company and discussed his processes and techniques for developing visual effects for advertisement, film and tv. He has invited me to run seminars in 'embodying character' for his animation team in 2009.

Lessons and outcomes for application to our craft in Australia

It was most apparent that the expansion of technology and development of visual effects software in the areas of visual performance are evolving at a faster rate than our understanding of how to apply this knowledge to the craft of story telling. This is a phenomenon that has been acknowledged and responded to as I have been invited to consult for all of the afore mentioned companies and individuals. This not only provides me with the ability to further my knowledge and understanding of this rapidly growing field of performance, it provides me with opportunities to make valuable links between our work in Australia and pioneering companies working in visual performance throughout the world. I am now in the process of setting up 3 unique research laboratories at the National Institute of Dramatic Arts, National Institute of Circus Arts and Queensland University of Technology to apply and develop my findings to emerging Australian artists and our entertainment industry in general.

PROGRAMME

My Fellowship commenced in Los Angeles, and during my 3 weeks in LA I predominately spent my time with renowned movement director and teacher Mr Jean – Louis Rodrigue. He is a professor of theatre at UCLA as well as having a prolific career as a freelance movement artist in The US and Internationally.

In LA, I visited a wonderful theatre production of 'The Rabbit Hole' which featured a cast that all attended The Beverly Hills Playhouse Acting School. I participated in a Q and A style post show forum.

I drove to Las Vegas to see the renowned production of KA by Cirque du Soleil, directed by theatre maker, Robert Le Page.

Finally I participated in research and training at The Vicon House of Moves Mr Brian Rausch (vice president of production) led me through the sophisticated motion capture studios and explained and demonstrated the latest Vicon camera system and the soft ware 'blade ' used to navigate through the 3 dimensional landscape.

I then spent the remainder of my fellowship in New York. I observed and participated in rehearsals of STREB's new work. STREB are a physical theatre company based in Brooklyn, run by artistic director Elizabeth Streb.

I held meetings with Mr Vallejo Gantner, the artistic director of Performance Space 101, based in the East Village, and saw two contemporary circus productions that he produced for the Speigle Tent.

I met with Steve Oakes the co founder of Curious Pictures, New York's largest visual effects and animation studio. I was introduced to the processes and technologies being implemented at this impressive studio.

The Fellowship and Lessons Learnt

Jean- Louis Rodrigue

One of the most exciting aspects of my research was the training I undertook with renowned movement coach and teacher for theatre, film and television, Jean- Louis Rodrigue. Jean Louis is based in LA and many of the actors who come to him also do acting class with the well-known Larry Moss. It was great to see how many actors in LA are continually training for roles in theatre and film. Jean - Louis' approach stems from the Alexander technique and is grounded in an acutely detailed anatomical understanding of the body in motion. He has been creating work and coaching an impressive stable of actors for film and theatre for the past 35 years. His work covers a broad spectrum of movement disciplines ranging from period manner, protocol and court dances to creature and animal movement

http://www.alexandertechworks.com/jeanlouisrodrigue_bio.php

Gavin and I focused our training sessions on the movement work I use while coaching major actors on film sets and in theater productions. I am known for the character work I do using the principles of the Alexander Technique in order to embody the character more truthfully and effectively. I also specialize in period movement of the 17th and 18th centuries in Italy, France, and England. We also worked on animal studies and movement, a method I often use to create creature movement for animation and CGI. I work across the U.S. and internationally. Clients have included Hilary Swank, Keanu Reeves, Juliette Binoche, Kirsten Dunst, Josh Brolin, Jonathan Pryce, Joely Richardson, Sir Ian McKellen, and Simon Baker.

My most recent work includes preparing Academy Award nominee Josh Brolin for his role as George W. Bush in Oliver Stone's "W". I helped Josh map out the aging process of the character from his 20's to his 60's. Also we worked on embodying the physical movement and presence of the character in a realistic way. This past fall I assisted Juliette Binoche deal with the demands of her new theater/dance project "In-I" at the National Theatre in London. Juliette has never danced before professionally. In order to deal with the stress and demands of her dance/ play, we worked with the Alexander Technique to balance and improve the use of herself in performance. Finally, I am in the process of developing and directing a new play based on Bernhard Schlink's

award winning novel "The Reader". The play will be produced at a major regional theater in the U.S. in late 2009. Since our work together last fall, Gavin and I plan to work together with the movement aspects of this play. Jean-Louis Rodrigue (Nov 08)

It was great to meet him and observe his wonderfully encouraging and precise ways of working with actors. I am already planning to bring him out to Australia so we can run a series of master classes together. Jean-Louis believes that we share the same ideologies in how to promote a more embodied character in performance, and the range of physical skills and expertise we have are complimentary to one another. He has proposed that we form a movement consulting company together that will enable us to work on projects internationally with one another. This is a very exciting opportunity for me as there is a lot more scope to work as a movement director in visual/physical performance in the northern hemisphere, yet there is a real quality and potential growth of work in theatre, film and animation in the southern hemisphere, with major companies like WETA studio in NZ, Animal Logic and DR D animation studios in Sydney becoming more established.

The training Jean-Louis gave me has empowered me with new approaches to develop signature gestures for character, a detailed knowledge of period movement and manner, principles and application of Alexander technique, analysis of animal behaviour and image work. I was encouraged to see Jean-Louis working in a studio setting at his home with on average, 6 actors /day. Actors come to him for a range of reasons, eg general maintenance of physique and training, preparation for auditions and rehearsal, preparation for performing on stage or screen. Many of the actors he helps to prepare go directly from his studio onto set in order to apply their sense of 'readiness and embodiment' directly the work. Such a model is a great reference for me and I will endeavor to apply this approach to our industry as it evolves.

Acting is primarily a physical art. A body that is bound and overly controlled is unable to connect to others and to the nature of the character. Gavin and I have the skills to help actors transform their bodies into expressive communicators. I know that Gavin and I will continue to use our passion and resources to developing talents in actors and creative projects around the world. Jean -Louis Rodrigue (Nov 08)

KA directed by Robert Le Page

I visited Las Vegas to see the most expensive theatre production ever made, *KA* by Cirque du Soleil, directed by Robert Le Page. This was a testimony to incredible theatrical engineering, acrobatic skill and flying effects, not to mention some fine character acting and theatrical imagery. A real inspiration in terms of what is possible in the world of visual and physical performance. Witnessing this production inspired me even more, to apply my skills and vision to visual theatre laboratories in Australia. In Montreal, Cirque have 3 labs, one purely focused on the research and development of aerial apparatus and hydraulic machinery as used in *KA*. A lab for acting and character development and another lab devoted to the development of acrobatic and physical skills. The secret of this company's success, I believe, is their commitment to not using the results of the labs until the effects are fully realized. Cirque try to allow a full year of lab development before findings are applied to a rehearsal process. This model of development has informed a major application to the Australia Council that I submitted in November. (Application is attached)

The Beverly Hills Play House

Whilst in Los Feliz, LA, I attended an award winning production of *The Rabbit Hole*, winner of the 2007 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, written by David LINDSAY-ABAIRE. The production was well directed, by Allen Barton brilliantly performed and incredibly emotive. The play dealt with the confronting issue of a couple learning to cope with the recent death of their 3 year old son. The piece cleverly layered this potentially turgid and heavy content with unexpected and truthful humour, which made the production palatable, human and more pertinent. I stayed for the post show forum, which revealed some interesting details about the production and the cast. Most of the cast was doubled, meaning that 2 different actors played each role and the cast would play with different combination of actors on different nights. The entire cast attended all rehearsals so they were all in on the process and co authored the work. In fact watching each other would often open up new choices and insights to performing the work. This doubling was made possible by the fact that all the actors attended the same training school and shared a methodology and language specific to their process. The veteran actors who had been performing in theatre, film and tv for over 40 years were performing along side young graduates. At this school the philosophy is; the training never stops. As one of the more mature actors said " I've been going for new roles all my life and as my age changes so too does my casting and I need to prepare new characters for this'.

Because of the sheer volume of work in LA, this ongoing training, whether it be a weekend masterclass for the experienced professional, or a year part time course for the novice, the actors championed the notion of continuous training and developing a shared language and approach to rehearsal. The other practical benefits of the double casting for this co op production was, the season could run longer as the actors had greater flexibility to freelance and do other work. The doubled cast increased family, friends and industry connections that tend to makeup a lot of the initial audience base in co-op or small theatre productions. This production and the associated school and training provided me with a useful model and reference for our industry.

Vicon House of Moves

I was fortunate enough to meet with leading movement coaches and performers in the field of motion capture, mainly at the Vicon House of Moves in LA (the most sophisticated motion capture studio in the world). I helped to develop approaches to character , based on the biomechanics training I have been conducting in Australia with our actors. I wore the latest mo cap suit and tested the real time VICON cameras which have just been released and am in discussion with the House of Moves about doing some consulting work for them for up and coming special effects projects.

This experience prompted me to develop a training and development module for animators in Australia and abroad. I have developed a strategic approach to applying aspects of my movement training to a document to assist animators and innovators visual technology with the integration of performance / dramatic principles.

Since my return to Australia I have been involved in discussions with 2 leading Australian animation and visual effects studios, Dr D Studios (led by esteemed Australian film director George Miller, *Mad Max*, *Babe*, *Happy Feet*) and Animal Logic (who have done visual effects for productions such as *Matrix*, *Moulin Rouge*, *Happy Feet*, *300* and *Australia*)

As my proposal outlines, (see proposal to Curious Pictures NY), I intend to act as vital link between the development of technology in this rapidly growing industry and the application of these advances to the craft of sophisticated and affecting story telling.

STREB New York

I sat in on the rehearsal process of a new theatre and technology work being created by leading physical theatre co STREB , based in Brooklyn. (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sN1-17oXq5c>) This company is working with large revolving wheels, similar to the Russian wheel of death if you are familiar with it, but a wilder and less symmetrical version invented by 5th generation Spanish circus artists . The artistic director Elizabeth Streb is exploring with her talented cast of 8 performers (a mixture of acrobats, dancers and actors) the dynamics and interplay of flight, falling, impact, dodging and riding this gravity machine. The other new gizmo is a super fast double revolve with an inner wheel and outer wheel that spins the actor in opposing directions as they walk across the stage. This company is exploring the dynamics of bodies as they interact with ground breaking mechanical apparatus and live feed projection. I have been asked by STREB to consult on the use of aerial technology and projection of film and animation for a work they are creating in 2010 in New York. Elizabeth Streb wrote this about our meetings in support of future collaboration.

I am Elizabeth Streb a choreographer who is based in New York City, USA, (www.streb.org). I would like to enthusiastically recommend Gavin Robins for a Australia Council Fellowship Grant. We have met here at my Extreme Action Studio called: SLAM (STREB Lab for Action Mechanics) and participated in amazing talks about our future collaborations. We think along the same lines regarding how we are investigating the presentation and invention of Action, Movement and Dance and questioning how the audience will perceive live time events in this the twentyfirst Century.

I am extremely impressed with Gavins' work and believe that his work spans certain mediums such as projections, human enhancement devices, and action. His work embraces new ways to re-consider the forms we refer to as 'theater'. I look forward to having my vision enhanced by Gavins ideas, the mixture of our two ideologies could create a brand new Alchemy.

Please contact me at 718-384-6491 if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Streb

Director: S.L.A.M. (STREB Lab for Action Mechanics)

www.streb.org

Performance Space 101 New York

I visited the theatre of PS101 in the East Village and met with the artistic director Vallejo Gantner. It was a great opportunity to hear about the off Broadway theatre culture and the amount of innovative underground artists who are implementing live feed video projection and animation based effects into live theatre. I was able to see two edgy cabaret style contemporary circus productions that Vallejo co produced, *Absinthe* and *La Vie*. These works were not particularly ground breaking but reinforced my belief that now matter how astonishing the trick or visual effect, unless it has a context or world established to justify it, the skill loses it potency very quickly.

Curious Pictures New York

Upon recommendation of Vallejo, I made contact with co founder and director of animation company Curious Pictures, Steve Oakes. Steve generously took time out to tour me through his company's impressive studio and proceeded to guide me through the processes and technologies he incorporates in relation to motion capture and the use of related 3D software such as, motion builder and maya.

I was interested to discover that for many of his projects Steve collaborates with a very talented puppeteer and physical performer to achieve the detail and specificity of special effects. This led us to talk in detail about my work in Australia and the type of training I am developing.

My meeting with Steve Oakes from Curious inspired this response.

I had the pleasure of meeting Gavin during his recent tour of America and was very impressed with his credentials. His particular interest in physical performance is an unusual specialty and is key to high quality character animation. With all the advances in the technology of computer animation, too often artists resort to preset menus when determining the motion of characters. Gavin's study and consultations focus on the humanity that drives communicating with body language. His valuable insights and knack for demonstrating such principals are very much needed in the field of animation. We take pride in the attention we give to the details and nuance of performance (you can see samples of our work at www.curiouspictures.com)

but it is important to always watch and study what makes good acting work. To that end I hope you can support Gavin's work. We at Curious are trying to make arrangements for Gavin to do some training with our staff and would support any effort to help facilitate his travel.

Thank you,

Steve Oakes

My meeting with Steve further fuelled my passion to develop strategies to act as an adviser and critical player in the way visual technology can embrace and be finessed by the craft of physical performance.

Please see proposal below



Proposal to Curious Pictures

Gavin Robins 28/10/08

This is a proposal designed to meet the needs of the increasingly visual world we live in. So much time, money and general resources in the entertainment and advertising industries are channelled into technology and the styling of a product. Advancements such as motion capture and related animation soft ware programs are continuing to evolve. It seems however, that little time and energy is focused on developing the craft of performance, the ways to embody

character and extend the language and skills of animators as 'virtual actors'.

My work at The Sydney Theatre Company (under the artistic direction of Cate Blanchette and the National Institute of Dramatic Art (Australia's leading acting academy) with actors, singers, directors, choreographers and animators is devoted to extending the craft of the visual performer. The considerable research I have undertaken abroad for my Masters Degree investigates the notion of "What constitutes holistic training for the contemporary performer?"

I have drawn on some principles of acting and physical performance that I think will empower and liberate the way your animators will analyse, describe movement and ultimately create character, emotion and story telling. I urge you to invest in the evolution of this aspect of our industry's work in order to keep all components of the equation alive and as vital as each other.

Aims and Philosophy underpinning my consultation

**My aim for the training and ongoing consultation/coaching at
Curious Pictures**

**to assist the animation team to find logical and revealing physical
choices that will effectively articulate and convey the character,
story and overarching vision of specific projects**

Nature x Exaggeration = Animation Style

I believe I could play a valuable role in helping to refine the way that the movements of 'nature' are synthesised into gesture, action and ultimately characterisation. I could facilitate in the way in which the physicality can be exaggerated yet grounded in the emotional and

psychological world of the characters and the story as it unfolds.

Proposed Content

Introduction to the Principles of the Archetype

These archetypes, are taught not as stereotypes, but as complex, multi layered characters that seem to appear throughout history in mythology and reappear in the contemporary narratives we continue to create.

There are many archetypes, but the ones I've selected below are taught to encourage a physical and vocal 'experience'. My approach will encourage participants to 'feel' the way in which these physical and emotional centres affect, the posture, stance, rhythm or musicality of the body. One aspect often overlooked by actors and animators in their portrayal of a role is the characters use of breath, how it then impinges on the placement of voice and the development of signature gestures or traits and physical character nuance. Encouraging the animators to 'get inside' the bodies of the archetypes is a challenging yet liberating thing as they experience a kinaesthetic response to character development, as opposed to an intellectual or technologically based approach. This 'embodied' information inevitably generates new impressions and approaches to how characters may think, feel and ultimately illustrate their human impulses.

The Archetypes

WHAT THEY ARE	LEAD WITH or (physical centres)	THEY SAY
CHILD	FOREHEAD	OK
VIRGIN	CHEEKS	<i>I'M FREE</i>
HUNTER/RESS	FEET	<i>I SURVIVE</i>
WARRIOR	CHEST	<i>I CONQUER</i>
MOTHER	HANDS	<i>I UNDERSTAND</i>
TRICKSTER	HIPS	<i>I FOOL YOU</i>
FATMAN/ LADY	TUMMY	<i>I WANT MORE</i>
CRONE	ELBOWS	<i>IS THAT MINE</i>
ARIEL	SHOULDER BLADES	<i>GREETING</i>
DEVIL	EYES	<i>I DO WHAT I WANT</i>

Introduction to the Principles of Bio Mechanics and the Composition of Gesture

It is empowering to discover a shared language for describing physicality and the composition of gesture. The analysis of movement and details of anatomical and gestural life can be broken into more meaningful layers when specific language can frame key ideas and concepts. Ultimately a short hand for describing complex ideas is created, which saves time, yet increases the precision of our work. I have devoted much of my time in the theatre and film world to finding a practical language to help frame and describe gesture in order to liberate the performers ability to embody character and realise the vision of the director. As you are aware, physical language can often be an arbitrary and inexplicable phenomenon as the

human form and choices of expression are endless, which is a part of the mystery and joy of our work.

Meyerhold

The Russian theatre director, Vsevolod Emilevich Meyerhold (1874– 1940) developed a brilliant system of training the body for performance. His contemporary Konstantin Stanislavski, is well known in the west as the father of modern acting and his principles have been adopted by most actor training institutions in the world. Little is known about the revolutionary work of Meyerhold, however, as much of his work was destroyed when he was assassinated by the KGB for being viewed as a mystic. Meyerhold's work was a reaction against naturalistic acting methods that focused purely on the psychology of performance, instead he was driven by exploring and understanding, not just what the actor thinks and feels, but importantly, what the body looks like in performance. He believed the actor must become the ultimate illustrator with their entire physicality if an audience is to be moved. I have been taught by the principal Meyerhold teacher and foremost authority of this work, Mr Gennardi Bogdanov, who has trained Biomechanics at the Moscow Academy of Arts in Russia for the past 30 years.

Brief overview of Principles and Terminology to be taught

Composition of Gesture (each gesture has 3 components)

Otkaz: refusal to move (preparation)

'great choreography and great acting have the same thing in common ,moments of suspension, we see how the body gathers its energies in preparation to propel itself in a new direction'

Cate Blanchette 2006

Posyl: trajectory of an action (journey)

Toichka: arrival or end point (full stop)

Rakus: point of view

Grouparovka: centre

Turmos: breaks in action (drink your break fluid)

The believability of animation is often founded in the ability to portray a sense of appropriate distribution of weight. Weight, time and use of space are closely linked to resistance. A fine athlete seems always to have more to give or a sense of their breaks on in action, (think Usain Bolt for 100 meter final) whilst someone less physically adept seems to lack control or the ability to embody appropriate 'turmos in their action. This is a revelatory way to deconstruct a characters movement.

Moving as a Chorus

This particular exploration of the dynamics of movement will focus on the 3 areas

- 1) The principles of ensemble or mass movement.
- 2) Flocking like birds and shoaling as fish.
- 3) The dynamics of crowd and mass behaviour.

Meeting the Future Demands

I believe as the advances in technology and science continue to evolve, so too must our sense of visual sophistication and ability to create new and complete characterisation. The above content will help your company to keep moving forward on all levels of research and development.

I would be happy to tailor this type of training to suit the needs of your team for up and coming projects so a 'shared language' is developed for the way movement and character is described and incorporated with the technology.

I look forward to hearing form you.

Kind Regards

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CONCLUSIONS

The findings and outcomes of my fellowship have far surpassed my expectations. I am truly grateful for the opportunity that has been given to me. I have been able to share my work and vision for my craft with leaders in my field abroad and as a consequence feel more supported and encouraged to make a difference and assist others in our vibrant industry in Australia.

As a direct result of the Churchill Fellowship I have recently applied for a major 2 year Australia Council Fellowship, which will allow me the time and resources to further investigate work in the US and apply the results to innovations in Australia.

Below is an overview of my fellowship proposal to the Australia Council, which clearly outlines a projected 2 year program complete with initiatives to further apply my findings to many levels of the Australian entertainment industry.

Since the lodgement of this application I have begun exciting discussions with Mark Radvan at the Queensland University of Technology. We are planning to establish links between professional performers and companies in QLD with emerging artists working with the integration of film/animation and live performance.

I have also held further meetings with George Miller and his new animation house DR D, discussing the outcomes of my Churchill and ways to apply my ideas to his many exciting projects in the future.

The resonances of my time abroad are being channelled into many avenues and I whole-heartedly thank you for the Churchill Foundation's support.

Australia Council Fellowship Overview

This fellowship will enable me to observe and participate in a wide range of projects and research at the cutting edge of my practice. I am in a transition phase seeking to journey from a movement specialist for other directors, to becoming the primary artist driving my own vision and creative approach for new Australian theatre work.

I have rare opportunities to further my professional development by working along side individuals and companies in the US who are leading the way with technology and practices in animating the body for performance. Inspired for many years by the work of Le Page, I am looking to bring the use of film and related visual/physical technologies to the stage to enrich the art and power of our story telling. The results of this fellowship will further my ability to describe movement, define character and gestural language in training, rehearsal, and performance, as I work along side the most established and prolific movement director for theatre and film, in The States, Jean-Louis Rodrigue. I will be able to train my skills in a new practice by studying and working with the latest animation and CGI software at the worlds leading animation and mo cap studios. I will then apply this visual and physical information to 'laboratory' training and research hubs in Australia as well as contributing my skills to 2 major Australian theatre productions. Ultimately my newly acquired findings will culminate in me initiating a new work where I will gather a team of artists, drive a freshly acquired vision and process towards the development of a contemporary Australian theatre work.

I have been fortunate enough to remain employed as a physical performer and movement director/coach for the past 15 years. I have worked for a range of companies and productions across the genres of theatre, film and television. This broad experience has revealed to me how essential it is that I am informed with contemporary technological developments within these modes of visual and physical entertainment. I believe I have reached a point where I need to look outside my world of practice in Australia and further expose myself to new skills, models of creative development and ways of generating technically sophisticated, and integrated visual theatre.

The Actor Moving New Visual Technologies

My rationale for this investigation is to meet the needs of the increasingly visual world we live in. Advancements such as motion capture and related animation soft ware programs are continuing to evolve, however, it appears that little time and energy is focused on developing the craft of

performance within this technology and applying it to contemporary theatre practice.

My recent work and research in the US as a result of a Churchill Fellowship, afforded me the time and opportunity to create some invaluable links and initial investigation with some of the worlds leading movement practitioners for the stage and screen. I am committed to understanding how the craft of the actor and physical performer exists at the interface of new technological advancements. **Motion capture** is a technology of particular interest to me as the raw data and information for this technology is fed by the nuances and physical skills of the actor. My recent visit to the **House of Moves**(refer to my reel in **Support Material**) was testimony to the huge improvement and potential of this technology. The actor exists in a 3D matrix and the latest program 'blade' allows the **Point of View** of the spectator to roam and view the actor from almost any angle within the matrix. A virtual skeleton is created and can be fleshed out to create an interactive character that can journey in a myriad of environments. Motion capture can now be projected real time, like a live feed video of an actor on stage. Because the **PoV** of the actor in the theatre is usually limited to where you are seated in the house, I am interested in the interplay of a live actor being filmed whilst hooked into the projected 3D world of **mo cap**. It is as if another self could exist simultaneously in another realm, memory or imaginative landscape. It is this layering of live and pre-recorded language and the interaction between them and the temporal body that I believe can result in a new theatrical dynamic.

Proposed Timing and Details of the Fellowship

01 April - 01 May 2009 Training and observation with leading movement director **Jean- Louis Rodrigue**(<http://www.alexandertechworks.com>). I will observe **J-L** direct a major creative development for 'The Reader' which will expose me to a senior artist with a similar career background to me who is applying his movement based approach to the staging and direction of a new major theatre work. This example echoes in many ways the desired outcome of my grant.

J-L has already undertaken two creative workshops with actors in LA to explore the relationship of the spoken and physical text. His approach to the character breakdown and the editing of the spoken text has been influenced by the decision to stage 3 actors playing the lead role simultaneously. The shifts in perspective, nuance of gesture and interaction of the one character split into three, has layered new form and meaning to the work.

Whilst in LA I will further my research and training at the Vicon **House Of Moves**.

04 May – 09 May 2009 Visit **Curious Pictures** in New York, both **HOM** and **CP** are the most sophisticated studios in the world for motion capture

performance and related animation software such as maya, motion builder, key frame animation. and blue screen effects. 'Gavin's study and consultations focus on the humanity that drives communicating with body language. His valuable insights and knack for demonstrating such principals are very much needed in the field of animation. We at Curious www.curiouspictures.com are trying to make arrangements for Gavin to do some training with our staff and would support any effort to help facilitate his travel.' (refer to **SM**)

I am interested in understanding the way an actors' craft exists at the interface of this technology so I can incorporate the language of film and animation into live performance. During this week I will also continue my meetings with **STREB** physical theatre based in Brooklyn NY. 'I am Elizabeth Streb a choreographer who is based in New York City, USA, (www.streb.org) Gavin and I think along the same lines regarding how we are investigating the presentation and invention of Action, Movement and Dance and questioning how the audience will perceive live time events in this the 21st Century. I am extremely impressed with Gavin's work and believe that his work spans certain mediums such as projections, human enhancement devices, and action. His work embraces new ways to re-consider the forms we refer to as 'theater'. I look forward to having my vision enhanced by Gavin's ideas, the mixture of our two ideologies could create a brand new Alchemy. (please refer to **SM** for full letter) We will continue discussions to plan for a collaboration in 2010

18 May- 26 June 2009 movement direction for (Bell Shakespeare, Pericles) new aerial ideas incorporated into a co production with Taikoz.

01 July – 31 August 2009 Establish Research **Laboratories** at **NIDA** and **NICA**

Practitioners such as Cirque, Robert Le Page and Robert Wilson, have all managed to combine a high level of technology with the art of theatre making. These artists have made a conscious choice to allow time and percolation of ideas and skills so the work is not under baked but brilliantly integrated. The labs at NIDA and NICA have these institutions whole-hearted support (Please refer SM) I believe this fellowship would provide me with a chance to allow a complex selection of visual theatre elements to be layered into a new theatrical form.

The **labs** at **NIDA** and **NICA** are underpinned by the following objectives

- ◆ to feed back my research, findings and new approaches to making work into a well resourced centre of emerging artists who will be become empowered for future theatre making themselves
- ◆ allow time to develop complex interaction of visual performance elements
- ◆ to show case a series of short performances to an audience that will provide a live 'response' and 'feed back' for next stages of the lab work

- ◆ establish at NIDA, a strong character based approach to the integration of story telling with film, animation and aerial skills
- ◆ establish at NICA, a way of utilising the existing skills of the performers in a new theatrical landscape that will be generated by a collaboration of sound design and projection of film and animation
- ◆ **from the showings both at NIDA and NICA, spend time looking back at the work to find a dramatic thread , theme , approach to linking the isolated material into a cohesive and meaningful language for a visual theatre work**

01 Sept- 30 Sept 2009 Assist Nigel Jamieson in a major Opera project for Opera Australia, where I will integrate live feed video effects and movement direction to the work. This project will be remounted and refined in 2010 and 2011.

01 Oct – 30 Nov 2009 phase 2 of **Labs**, which will culminate in a showing
 01 Dec – 31 Jan 2010 **Time to reflect on year, document my findings write and research for next lab phase, STREB and a new work grant application**

01 Feb – 31 March 2010 **Collaboration on new physical theatre work with STREB in New York, potentially for a production to be mounted in Las Vegas.**

01 April – 14 April 2010 **Visit J-L in LA to conduct a series of actor training workshops that we will both teach. This master class series will then tour from**

19 April – 30 April 2010 **to Australia at a host of theatres and institutions**

01 May – 25 May 2010 **remount and rehearse Opera with Nigel Jamieson**

01 June – 31 Aug 2010 **final phase of Labs at NIDA and NICA, which will culminate in an integrated showing, ultimately we will be able to incorporate elements of NIDA lab with NICA lab and visa versa**

01 Sept – 15 Nov 2010 **findings and outcomes of lab work and my other work (STREB, J-L, Nigel, Animation research) to inform a concept and rehearsal methodology that will bring together an artistic team for the application of an Australia Council new work grant**

BREAK TILL

01 Jan - 31 March 2011

Begin research and creative development on new theatre work

