

Sally Sussmann is Artistic Director of Australian Performance Exchange (APE), a company devoted to creating intercultural performance projects, which respond to issues of identity, politics and social justice, with artists internationally and locally. She trained at The Central Academy of Drama in Beijing, Shanghai Conservatorium of Music and Drama Studio, Sydney and is a graduate of Sydney University, majoring in Chinese. Since 1992 she has been creating performance work with Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists from Australia as well as from China, Indonesia, Vietnam, India, Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan at venues like the Studio, Sydney Opera House as well as sites around western Sydney, Newcastle and Shanghai. Sally has taught at a number of training institutes for performers in Australia and lectured on Chinese theatre and intercultural performance at University of Western Sydney and University of Sydney.



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PERFORMATIVE MIGRATION STUDIES:

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF AUSTRALIAN
PERFORMANCE EXCHANGE'S 2015
MOBILE PERFORMANCE PIECE, ORIGIN-
TRANSIT-DESTINATION (O-T-D) AS A
COUNTERPOINT TO CONTEMPORARY
AUSTRALIAN POLICY AND DISCOURSE
ON ASYLUM-SEEKERS**

**SALLY SUSSMANN,
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF AUSTRALIAN
PERFORMANCE EXCHANGE (APE)
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PERFORMATIVE

MIGRATION

STUDIES



SALLY SUSSMANN, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF AUSTRALIAN PERFORMANCE EXCHANGE

(APE)

THE DEVELOPMENT OF AUSTRALIAN PERFORMANCE EXCHANGE'S 2015 MOBILE PERFORMANCE PIECE, ORIGIN-TRANSIT-DESTINATION (O-T-D) AS A COUNTERPOINT TO CONTEMPORARY AUSTRALIAN POLICY AND DISCOURSE ON ASYLUM-SEEKERS.

This paper charts the development and presentation of the mobile performance piece, Origin-Transit-Destination (O-T-D) in the context of Australia's shifting policies towards asylum-seekers. O-T-D responded to the rapidly deteriorating public discourse that rendered the asylum-seeker invisible, untouchable and in stasis. O-T-D counters the immobility of this discourse with a flexible, mobile structure which is a key medium for the transmission of stories of forced mobility and a possible fulcrum for identification with religious, cultural and political others.

This mobile structure marked a critical point in the ever-evolving conceptual framework of the work, from its beginning in Indonesia as a commentary on the third-person depiction of

the asylum seeker through the prism of the Indo-Australian relationship, to its present form privileging "real people" as agents of their own representation. This was accompanied by a deliberate focus on young adult students in Western Sydney as audience/community/voters/co-travelers

It examines how the 25-seater buses operated as capsules for an intimate encounter between audience and asylum-seeker-artists and of engendering a sense of a shared journey. It examines how the mobile performance can reference the asylum-seeker state of forced mobility, of perpetual motion, of shape-shifting, of transit after transit, of crossing borders: geographical, cultural and psychological. Similarly, how the audience's relationship to the artists and the work moves throughout the performance: from witness and confidante, to fellow-traveller, participant and activist.