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## **nava – we are here: exchange and hybridity**

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### **brief intro:**

1. hello! im from a tactical media arts group called pvi collective, we make performative interventions in public spaces and are based in perth and am really chuffed to be here.  
so, ive been asked to talk about an initiative that we set up in 2008 called cia studios, which stands for the centre for interdisciplinary arts.
2. id like to talk briefly about what our intentions were with cia, what we're up to at the moment and then go into a bit more detail about two specific projects that relate to the themes of exchange and hybridity.
3. so cia studios is based in a two storey old school building on the cusp of perth city centre. we were offered the space by the department of culture and the arts for peppercorn rent in 2007 and went back to them a year later with a two year plan to initiate cia in 2008, which they amazingly gave us seed funding for. and at the moment we have just secured state based triennial funding specifically for and an extended lease, which is pretty awesome.
4. at the moment, pvi are principle company in-residence at cia and we manage and curate the programs and the building alongside our own arts practice.

## interdisciplinarity – cia programs

5. cia provides six dedicated 12 month long r&d & residency spaces to local artists and groups whose practice sits on the edges of traditional artform definitions. so live art, interdisciplinary collaborations, experimental performance, sound and digital media based work. we have two flexible booking spaces for rehearsals, in-progress showings and for visiting artists as well as short term national residencies and a number of hq research cells in a shared office space, providing access to shared admin resources as well as the opportunity to be around like minded peers.

6. the whole philosophy around setting up cia was to try to generate a space where artists could research and develop work not in isolation. to have access to critical dialogue and peer support. to be able to exchange and skill share with each other and to generally try to initiate a spirit of collegiality whereby we could actually find ways to help and collaborate with each other, strengthening each others practices and knowledge base.

7. so at the moment our program includes:

> **local workshops** – any cia resident who has some specific skills to share can run a workshop for other residents and the local community. this year it has included arduino workshops, info sessions on crowd funding, and how to get the most out of a dslr camera, social media and some sound art experiments.

> **morning teas** – which sounds a bit trivial but are really stress-free weekly gatherings of resident artists where we talk about what we're up to and we've started to invite special guests along too who are visiting perth, which this year has included, marcus westbury, sodajerk, azusa hashimoto from the national museum of art in osaka, version 1.0, asialink, roise goan from dublin fringe and a few others.

> **mixer nights** – these are monthly events where local and national resident artists are invited to host their own mixers, which have been used as opportunities to talk about research areas, try out ideas, show current works in-progress, discuss recent adventures and host industry based forums with formal panel discussions.

> **thinkers-in-residence program.** which we are running the first year of this year thanks to the support of the digital culture fund at ozco we were awarded funds for their geeks-in-residence program which has pretty much revolutionised the way we think about how cia operates and how we can get better at what we were doing. so we have had the privilege of two amazing geeks in-residence at cia, lauren brown from melbourne and steve berrick from wa. and I'll talk more about their influence and impact in a sec.

> **international creative labs** – which happen every two /three years with us employing the tactic of poaching selected international touring artists and companies who are already coming australia and convincing them to come over to cia to run intensive workshops. three years ago we had the uk based pacitti company and this year we have belgiun hybrid arts group reckless sleepers, who are running a national creative lab called 'quiet time', in dec which aims to generate a collaborative site-based performance work in the city streets of perth.

## exchange - the pacitti model

8. so I was keen to pick up on some patterns of exchange that we noticed were happening and began to realize that we needed to pay much more attention to the longer term impact that these exchanges were having at cia.

9. I wanted to quickly show you what the geeks-in-residence have coined 'the pacitti model' which was the point for us when the penny dropped and we began to realise a need to track the aftermath of a creative lab or key event at cia.

10. so just to explain the pacitti model quickly. uk based performance group pacitti company come to australia to show work. we get robert pacitti and dicky eaton over to cia do a two week creative lab and one on one art surgeries for local artists. one of those lab participants was hydra poesis, who were a company in-residence at cia. they hit it off, keep in touch and start to mentor hydras next project remotely, then send dicky back over to cia to work directly with them on their project *prompter live studio*.

> robert also runs spill festival in london a highly acclaimed experimental performance festival. whilst he was in town in perth we introduce robert to symbiotica, a bio art group based in perth who he is so impressed with them he books them to go over to spill.

> they go over, meet the pacitti company thinker in residence, body artist kira o'reilly and invite her to undertake a residency at symbiotica, which she does.

> in the meantime wa artists tarryn gill and pilar matar dupont who also did the pacitti creative lab let robert know about a new body of work their making for the sydney biennale and they start discussions about getting them out to the uk, supported by spill.

> hydra poesis have this year also secured uk based performers to work on a remote element of their work *prompter live studio* thru dickys contacts.

> dicky who is also an associate member of blast theory reconnects pvi with matt & ju from blast theory who offer to mentor us on our work *transumer* for the biennale, which was amazing.

so from that one event we saw this lovely spiral of artist initiated activity emerge and I know this is what happens all the time, but it made us think how can we map this to allow cia to begin to engineer situations that will enable more and more of this networking to happen?

and this was pretty much one of the main provocations we threw down to our geeks-in-residence, lauren and steve to help us problem solve whilst they are with us for the year.

and two of the projects that have emerged as a result of that challenge are, project socrates and project langley. socrates looks at the bigger picture of how we collaborate and who is connected to who and Langley is much more geared towards improving cia's capacity for internal collaboration and skill sharing.

## **connectivity – project langley**

11. project langley which we have just secured funding for and will be up and running by nov this year is a new 'central intelligence' application that will allow for the streaming of live creative content from within cia studios through residents online networks.

the interface is a large lcd screen which will be mounted in the hub space at cia with the intention of sharing visual information as it is being created inside each of the studios. the idea is to tap into artists processes and provide a way for critiquing of works-in-progress and developing new forms of collaboration.

12. so the langley screen will trawl tagged content from facebook, twitter, vimeo, flickr, instagram and artists blogs to stimulate critical dialogue. and will be displayed on the screen as a multi platform slide show style application, where you can either sit and watch the live stream or actively navigate to an artist or studio and get a sense of what is being made and how that work is being developed. we are really looking at it as

a platform for practitioners inside cia to share and test ideas, give presentations, video conference with peers and find ways to make more transparent the process of making work.

## **networks – project socrates**

11. then we have project socrates, which is named after [the real] cia's one of their covert operations under the reagan administration that looked at intelligence gathering tactics.

so as part of the geeks in residence program we are in the middle of building an interdisciplinary arts wiki at cia, and so far its been a really fascinating process

14. so how we started was to try to identify various clusters of artist led activities and track how they went on to forge new collaborations and connections, so just like the pacitti model but on a much larger scale. so we began by drawing connection points on the wall in the cia foyer and quickly realised it was going to be bigger than ben hur and we needed to apply some frameworks to stop us from getting too overwhelmed.

15. we started by focussing mainly on artist initiated activities, interdisciplinary / live art projects and practitioners and for it not to be coming from a singular voice but to be open enough for any artist who came in the building to pick up a pen and start mapping theirs or others journeys. which is what is happening. so this map is still very much in-progress and will probably stretch up into the ceiling and all four walls of the foyer.

16. we used the map to inform the architecture of the wiki and began to use the content that was being generated from here by the artists in the building. which looks like this.

[show mindnode map] as you can see its split into two clear sections, cia and the sector. initially we were thinking we would just focus on cia, but we thought that really defeated the prupose of this collective voice and artists relationships with orgs / festivals and how they may have inspired / spawned more colaborations and opportunities.

17. so we thought it better to situate the wiki within some kind of underlying philosophy that sits behind it which directly addressed that earlier provocation of how we can map, track and activate connections being made between interdisciplinary artists in Australia. so steve and lauren came up with '**building / each other / the world**'. which I love! because it sounds very aspirational but is actually very simple.

18. its really asking how do we connect within the building, how to we connect with eachother as a sector and also the outside world. so the wiki which is still in early development is really trying to harness that thinking with the ultimate aim of providing some kind of resource for artists within cia, peers within australia and practitioners further afield, providing not just an archive of activities, events and works but also a means to continue to build and strengthen networks, access critical research and keep eachother informed. and I think the key point for us is for it to be done from the inside out, so the sense of agency remains firmly with the practitioners, and isn't coming from the top down.

19. essentially it wont work without the generosity and enthusiasm of the artists contributing, but we really feel that there is a lot of generosity and enthusiasm within this sector, so hopefully we can tap into some of that in order to push it fwd.

20. so even though we're not quite sure where its headed and has been a v intuitive process so far, and we are by no means trying to manoeuvre ourselves to being a voice of authority. for us the wiki is really about acknowledging that as interdisciplinary practitioners we rely v. heavily on the ability to connect, engage and collaborate with eachother and that as a community there is an awful lot of knowledge and skills that can be tapped into if you know where to look. so for us maybe the wiki can be a little window into that.

**[show wiki?]**

and now shut up kelli  
thankyou