

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Exhibition and Exegesis

The Multifarious Identity is a series of installation works that examine the artist's identity in relation to sexuality, gender and Indigeneity. The exhibition comprises five installation works each occupying physically discrete spaces within the Watt Space Gallery¹. Each of these works will be discussed linearly in the exegesis to reflect the movement of audience² through the five spaces. The exegesis will provide a background to the research findings presented in the installations, and is intended to act as a companion to the exhibition, with a visual/audio summary included in DVD form in Appendix 4.2.

Practice-based research methodologies have been employed for the dissemination of the research findings into exhibition form. In his discussion on the role of practice-based research Mick Wilson charges that:

(r)esearchers in art and design are pursuing an enquiry through practical activity in the production of images, objects, events, networks or other practical interventions (Wilson 2005:7).

The method was chosen in part as a continuation of my arts practice into a research-focused structure; but also I will argue, because the method forms an appropriate engagement of Indigenous³-centred research practices.

¹ Watt Space Gallery is a student gallery of the University of Newcastle. A map of the gallery can be found in Appendix 1.

² The term *audience* will be used throughout the exegesis, in order to acknowledge the significance of sound and performance within the installation.

³ The capitalised term *Indigenous* is used in place of Aboriginal or Aboriginal Australian throughout the exegesis. When *Indigenous* refers to people who are not Aboriginal Australians, further naming explanation will be made.

The installation series follows circuitous principles of practice-based research that acknowledge that research findings may emerge through the process of making, and that archival research may provide a basis for the development of ideas presented in the work (Wilson 2005:6). The installation series acts in part as a form of annotated bibliography, examining and commenting on research that explores identity in relation to the reference points of sexuality, gender and Indigeneity. These broad areas are then sifted through the lens of the body and lived experience of the artist into installation works that use image, object, video, and as a primary embedded and transitive utterance, sound. These elements are used to move the audience through the space, to connect each work, to suggest points of conflation between identity markers, and to both deconstruct and unify the singular *and* multifarious identity of the artist.

The research is presented in preliminary exegesis; as an exhibited installation series; and in the secondary documentation of image and sound on DVD. A full reading of the work requires a review of either the exegesis and installation, or the exegesis and DVD, as the displayed exhibition and exegesis form a single body of work. Linda Tuhiwai Smith argues in *Decolonizing Methodologies*, that ‘Negotiating and transforming institutional practices and frameworks is as significant as the carrying out of actual research programmes’ (Tuhiwai Smith 1999:40). The use of practice-based research, while acceptable is still challenged as a rigorous tool of inquiry. I will argue that the use of exegesis and exhibition and the material contained within

provide a more dynamic and culturally appropriate engagement than could be managed in a linearly worded thesis.

1.2 Locating the Artist within the Space

An examination of markers of individual identity would be difficult without focusing on a specific individual. For this reason the body and experiences of the artist are offered not as a true record or pure exemplar of the gendered, sexualised or Indigenous body, but as a reference point for exploration of the examined areas of identity. Most of the images, sounds, and other elements are staged works, intended to provide an understanding of identity within the parameters of the examined markers. The artist as singular identity focus is not a strategy for solipsism, and I will not argue truth through individual experience, but rather provide an illustration of the connections between the artist's experience and the examined literature, suggesting pattern and a further basis for inquiry.

As a Wiradjuri woman, my ethno-cultural identity provides a significantly inextricable framing for all of my artmaking. My artwork is frequently read as non-Indigenous, and I am often asked to explain why I describe myself as an Indigenous artist, but do not use what the querist believes to be Indigenous images, methods or subjects. This ghettoization of Indigenous artists' work into forms that are ethnically readable to the wider audience is challenged within this work. A core premise that I will demonstrate through each space is that all of my art is Indigenous because I *am* Indigenous.

External commentary on identity is a key component in the dissemination of the research, and informs the choice to present the work within an exhibited, public space. I have attempted throughout the exhibition to discuss issues around space and identity management, particularly processes of observation and commentary. The Indigenous Hawaiian writer, Kerri-Ann Kealohapau'ole Hewett, discusses the role of the panoptic gaze in asserting western structures as superior and Indigenous engagement in those structures as problematic and in need of close observation and management (Hewett 1998:1).

Hewett's discourse on the management of the body and her behaviour of in the externally cast role of 'other' within an alien, imposed space, is adopted by this artist through asserting an exposed and decontextualised body part in the image of the artist's clitoris. The clitoris, which appears consistently in each space, acts as a simulacrum of the heart while clearly identifying the artist's gender in spite of, and through, the artist's own attempts to subvert the gendered body. The reddening of the image of the clitoris further connects it to heart, pulse and blood. Its many placements throughout the works further provide a space-claiming of the female Indigene, intended to destabilize the audience, and to literally centre the artist within the work. It uses a specific and intimate identity marker, that is, as a part of the whole body, essentially Indigenous.

I am also interested in the discourse on performative female sexuality as emulating masculine asseveration, demonstrated in Schneider's *The Explicit Body in Performance*. The writer tears at Freud's assertion that the clitoris and female genitalia is an inverted and unavailable penis (Schneider: 1997:82), only to pick up the point further in the text that:

Madonna's explicit grabbing of her crotch in the late 1980s and early 1990s smacked of the pop star's well known ribald autoeroticism, but it was also an obvious appropriation of the mark of male rock star virility – appropriating the masculine-marked gesture of phallic virility and applying it to female genitalia (105).

While it is possible that the performed actions were intended to emulate a masculinized body action, it is interesting that the concern that a woman would have nothing to grab, is reinforced by the writer who is otherwise, earlier disturbed by the notion of inverted genitals. In order to further examine and worry this concern, the clitoris is both isolated and made prominent in this work to become a present, available and identifying object.

The clitoris as marker also responds to the third point of inquiry in *The Multifarious Identity*: the conflation of gender and sexuality in the literature on lesbian culture. Being a lesbian is a core element of my identity, and it would seem to be a frequently interpreted marker⁴, at least in part because I am identified by others, as butch. The identities of butch women have frequently been constructed as stereotyped masculinity, using imposed, and imagined behaviours, vocalisation and outward acting mannerisms: including a list of what it is to be butch. This list

⁴ All of the soundscapes in *Space 1/Simulacra: Everyday Alone in Light, Perspex and Colour* contain diarised commentary on externally imposed markers of gendered sexuality.

becomes frequently conflated with what it means to be lesbian. There are a number of caricatures that can be found in popular and broader cultural material. As in the male counterpart, summed up in the term 'sissy', butch caricatures are often portrayed as a freak of nature, or unfortunate accidents, even within the lesbian community. I suggest that this strange simulacrum often bears little resemblance to the everyday lives of self-identifying butch lesbians, and is an enforced lesson in ordering ourselves into appropriate gender behaviours. Shane Phelan in her essay *Public Discourse and the Closeting of Butch Lesbians* discusses the difficulty of acceptance of gender variance by members of the lesbian community:

Butch lesbians are caught by the strictures of a movement that demands respectability as a price of inclusion and equality. Respectability is not simply a matter of treating oneself and others with respect and integrity. It requires careful attention and obedience to prevailing norms of dress and comportment. Unfortunately for butches, it is precisely their deviation from these norms that marks them as visible lesbians (Phelan 1998:196).

Further, a contrived masculinity has been reclaimed, revered and sometimes parodied by some members of the lesbian community through the performance of Drag King: female-performing-male cabaret. The value and meaning of this representation has become a hot topic in many lesbian and transgender communities, and is currently being discussed widely by queer theorists. In 2003 the Sydney-based lesbian-marketed monthly magazine, *Lesbians on the Loose*, had an entire issue that focused on the cultural discussions around Drag King as a performance form (Johns 2002). Much of the discussion and dissent focused on the concern that the form promotes an imposed stereotype, or distorts the lived

experience of both butch-identifying lesbians and female-to-male transgendered men.

I have worked as a performer of Drag King since the early 1990s. I will discuss the significance of this work for the installation series in greater detail in subsequent chapters. This foray into gendered performance practice, and my other performative gender investigations form the basis for some of the gender displays, particularly in relation to the question of identifiable lesbian cultural markers. Markers of sexuality, as well as markers of gender and Indigeneity are explored in the exhibition. There is, however, no intention to resolve or badge these identity or gender markers as universal or true. Rather, the work is intended to examine the body and experiences of the artist, not to provide an aberrant example of gender or sexuality boundary transgressions, but to examine these flawed boundaries that exclude multiplicitous identities and frames.

I am often called on to compartmentalise my lesbian identity from my Indigenous identity. This takes form in a number of ways, however engaging Hewett's (1998) view of the role of the panoptic gaze in managing behaviour, as it is often a self-imposed tool to mitigate concerns over loyalties to a specific group. I have been asked at lesbian events to avoid identifying myself as Indigenous, because it is irrelevant. Similarly I have been asked at Indigenous events to avoid talking about lesbian aspects of my research, as it would be difficult for the audience to follow. Typically in the literature on sexuality unless explicitly named, the ethno-cultural

identity of the imagined body is framed as a kind of spectra-nullius, with cultural markers removed to a universalising non-ethnic model. It is likely that this default position is engaged to provide a level frame of reference. It is, however, problematic in discussing the experience or concerns of individual identity/ies, and a clear intention of this work is to avoid a disambiguated framing of the markers of sexuality, gender and Indigeneity as discrete and unconnected.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH BACKGROUND

2.1 Strategising Research and Practice

In the initial stages of the research, and in order to understand my own resistances of identity, I had sought to understand how others identify their gender and (lesbian) sexuality. Although Indigeneity was an element of the framing of the work, I had not at this early stage imagined it a focus for the work, rather as the cultural placer for my representation of sexuality and gender.

The early investigation followed three initial paths of inquiry: a survey of available literature on gender and lesbian sexuality; the annotation of this work into a play later produced for an audience (Appendix 2); and extensive international field research to gauge perceptions of the significance of gender and sexuality in lesbian performance for a lesbian audience.

The play: *The [drag] King of the Sandpit* was produced at The Hangar, Ourimbah, on the Central Coast of NSW, by ImaginedARTS: a performance company of the University of Newcastle. The production was directed by Dr Jocelyn McKinnon, an experienced theatre lecturer with significant experience in the production of feminist theatre. The performance had student and staff involvement and support and was produced in the community to an audience of approximately 300. The play was constructed as a two-hander, following the accessible structure of a two-act farce. I played the role of Sandy, the Drag King, Bronwyn Hambrook (a third-year drama student), played the role of Kate/Sr Mary Frances. The form of the well-made play

was chosen in an acknowledgement that it would avoid the disruptive performance element of the work. As a farce, the intention was to be bold, big, obvious and make strong statements to the audience about subtleties of gender and sexuality.

In the play, Sandy, an unsuccessful, poor-performing Drag King moves beyond the stage to take up a position as the male manager of a golf course. Her failure on the stage is in counterpoint to her success in passing as male in 'real life'. Kate, her partner, is supportive but disbelieving of Sandy's success in passing. It is made clear as the play progresses that Sandy passes successfully only in her own mind, with the other participants carried along on the journey of this misconception.

Lucal's article from *Gender and Society*, What it Means to be Gendered Me: Life on the Boundaries of a Dichotomous Gender System, provides a backdrop for this engagement between Sandy and the disembodied characters that provide her intra-play audience. Lucal argues that it may be that when gender-misidentification is voiced on a woman entering a female restroom, the person is not always questioning gender identity. She refers to Feinberg's assertion that they may be 'policing the gender boundaries rather than believing that there really is a man in the women's restroom' (Lucal 1999:793).

The incident of Sandy being mistaken for male on the phone, and carrying the pretence through to a visible form, is one that is further explored in *The Multifarious Identity*. I have an unusually deep voice for a woman and I am frequently mistaken

for a man on the phone. I have diarised over the last three years some of the instances where my voice has acted as an inaccurate gender marker in place of an otherwise absent body. While acting out some of my experiences in both male-passing performative contexts, and some experiences in the misidentification of my gender, the play is largely intended to respond to a number of texts that examine the role of gender passing. In addition to Lucal's text, three other texts are drawn on in the investigation through playscript/ performance: Halberstam and Volcano's seminal *The Drag King Book* (1999); Halberstam's *Female Masculinity* (1998); and the various essays of Munt's *Butch/Femme* (1998).

While the play has been significant in providing a basis for further explorations, it is not deployed here as a demonstration of the final findings. Rather, it was intended as an interim means of examining the literature and testing the concerns of gender/sexuality boundaries and markers. It was also used to determine the most appropriate means of disseminating the information to an audience. The intentional conservatism of the play-form, in its structure as both well-made play and mainstream farce, informed much of the response from the audience. The choice to be subversive through content rather than form, worked to some extent. However, from audience response it was clear that much of the content was lost in the over the top representation that the form facilitated. It was, in my estimation, not very successful in examining the conflation of gender and sexuality, or in providing a strategy for creating a space for an audience to examine the notions of aberrant and normative behaviour that Halberstam discusses in *Female Masculinity* (1998).

No formal survey of the audience of *The [drag] King of the Sandpit* was undertaken, but informal discussions led to some changes being made to the final play. Some of the comments created a space of resistance in the future research and dissemination. In particular I was advised by a member of the University of Newcastle, that another senior University member, whose discipline area was neither theatre, nor the arts, felt that the scene where the character of Sandy exposed her breasts in order to show the audience the process of strapping them, went on for too long and played too much on the humour of the situation. They had also expressed a concern that this may negatively affect the University if it became known that a PhD student (and lecturer) was exposing herself in a public forum. Although I had the language and the literature support to explain that this action figuratively as well as literally exposed the bodily gender shift of the character, I understood the implicit question: did the breasts really need to be shown?

When I read Hewett's experience and application of the panopticon, I reflected on these attempts at management of my research from outside of the discipline, and understood the frustrations experienced by Hewett when she speaks of:

... my appearance, my daily activities, my assignments, even my personal life ---all were constantly monitored. The colonial panopticon functioned as a tower of trauma and harassment (Hewett 1998:1-2).

I have had occasions to experience this as an Indigenous academic, but had incorrectly imagined it was ghettoised into that realm of experience in much the same way that Hewett offers. It became clear that where the boundaries of

acceptable research and practice within the academy are seen to be breached, or the centre shifted, those working to maintain the structure must act to reaffirm the hegemony (Bourdieu 1988). Private and individual displays, whether an acknowledgement of the significance of Sorry Days for Indigenous staff or a testing of the boundaries of individual expression within research paradigms, are difficult management problems for a system that seeks equality through imposed canonical structures.

As with the image of the clitoris in *The Multifarious Identity*, body parts that clearly mark gender usually require a level of private intimacy to view, thus exposition is problematic in the public forum of performance and exhibition. The decision to expose the body, my body, is not taken lightly, nor with the aim of titillation or shock, but rather as a valid research strategy. Through the exposition, I provide for the audience a permissive space of observation of individual, intimate gender identity as marked by the public external self, and the private intimate self.

2.2 Community Research

Through the development and production of the play many questions had emerged around the perception of performative gender and sexuality. I was concerned that I was making strong statements through the performance representations about the existence of lesbian markers that went beyond explicit self-identification. I was interested to read if these markers could be interpreted outside of lesbian performance practice, and if they could be, did it matter whether the performer was

or wasn't a lesbian? At first I intended to determine from the available literature if identity markers could or should be assigned to lesbians as a group. Then, using these markers, I sought to possibly match them to my own markers of sexuality, and possibly gender. In much of the research that I had read there was a resistance to acknowledging markers, and a desire to recognise the broad range within the experience of being lesbian: a marker that at an essential level is only determined by same-sex attraction. I also became interested to determine whether performers who identify as lesbian become ghettoised into only engaging in identifiable performance contexts.

From my initial review I was aware of the risk of focusing too closely on, as an example, drag work, and the potential for a conflation of gender and sexuality in the acknowledgement of gendered performance practice as a space of lesbian performance. I was also aware that much of the literature I was examining, not only focused on radical performance contexts in large cities that had identifiable and relatively safe spaces for gendered and sexualised performance to exist. For example, Halberstam and Volcano in *The Drag King Book*, speak to their focus on the clubs and 'scenes' of London, San Francisco, New York and Berlin. Halberstam suggests that

...the Drag King thrives on the varied queer nightlife of London and New York, but also in other urban areas such as San Francisco (64).

As a regionally-located artist making work in a local context, I became concerned that, in order to draw my work back to a creative identity form, I would need to look beyond the obvious large cities that attract and support gendered performance

practice. Instead, examining the spaces, performers, performances and lesbian communities outside of these major metropolitan areas, became a focus.

The focus also required an examination of the definitions of lesbian performance, including a survey of material and performance that lies beyond the parameters of butch or visibly lesbian identities. The difficulty with only focusing on the obvious lesbian performance work, for example performers who clearly articulate or demonstrate their sexuality, or work that is explicitly lesbian, is two-fold. First, it fails to recognise that someone's sexuality may not necessarily be interpreted in their public presentation, and they therefore remain invisible in the survey. And second, it could also risk excluding practitioners who have employed strategies of broad cultural obfuscation and in-cultural recognition to establish or demonstrate their sexuality. An example of this can be found in the gay cryptolect of 'Polari'. The cryptolect was explored and developed within the 1960s BBC radio series: *Round the Horne* (Cleto 1999:1) where it was deployed as an interpretable linguistic signifier of sexuality to their audience. The majority of the audience were unaware of the language use within the program, but the cryptolect having had a short history of development outside of the program, was known to many of their gay listeners and became a subtextual strategy for indicating homosexuality. In everyday contexts the cryptolect was used to protect gay men in their public discussions of sexuality at a time when homosexuality was illegal in Britain (Cleto 1999:8). Significantly this linguistically inaccessible language was hiding in plain sight within the public arena

of broadcast. These kinds of explorations need to be acknowledged in a survey that aims to go beyond looking at obvious visible lesbian performance markers.

I was aware that much of the literature had a North American focus, and I was concerned that if I responded with a review of Australian communities, that the study would be seen as too reflexive. In 2003 I began extensive field research in five communities in the United States of America, Canada and Australia to examine the significance of lesbian performance practice for lesbians living within the studied community. I was particularly interested in lesbian identity markers and their interpretation by self-identifying lesbians within the communities that I visited. Using performance as a cultural and available marker of visibility, I asked both performers and audience members in the regions that I visited, to participate in an individual semi-structured interview process. The findings of this study, it was promised, would be returned to the community in a report form at a later time, with the potential that some of the material be used in the completion of my PhD, by a process of practice-based research through public display.

In the initial plan, the findings of the interviews were to form a core element of the research focus. It was however, through the process of gathering the information and planning its dissemination to audience, that I realised that I was confabulating a great deal of information in the retelling. At the significant risk of explaining yet another process of investigation that has been abandoned in the final development of the exhibition display of this research, I realised that I had made an error in both the

processes used and the way that I wished to apply these principles. As with the play development and performance, the field research – and in particular the experiences around that research - have informed the care that I have taken in making assumptions around identity and community. It is also significant that while the findings of the field research do not appear verbatim in the exhibition, undertaking the research had a significant impact on the ways that gender, sexuality, and community have been positioned in the final outcome.

I had long held a concern over the way that Eve Ensler in her *Vagina Monologues* (Ensler 2001) had gathered and passed on the verbatim (and otherwise) utterances of the 200 contributors. *Vagina Monologues* is a well-known performance work, consisting of a series of monologues in long-play form. In this play, vaginas act as a metaphor for the engagement of female sexuality. The following exchange comes from an interview with Ensler published on the web at Women.com:

Women.com: You say that at first women were reluctant to talk, but once they got going, you couldn't stop them. Why the enthusiasm?

Ensler: Because no one's ever given them the opportunity to talk. Any time we open the door to a place where we have a lot of feelings or thoughts or stories, we react enthusiastically. The story of your vagina is the story of your life, and women want to talk about their lives (Bourland 2005:1).

By an amazing coincidence each of the communities that I visited had a version of the *Vagina Monologues* being staged at the time of my visit, and I was able to observe the way that the community organisations that took on the work adapted it for their community. In each community *Vagina Monologues* was produced either by a university women's group or a community women's group. Ensler has created

a framework of support for violence-against-women projects, through the reproduction of this work in various communities around the world. She has made her script available to local community groups and required the redirection of funds from the sale of tickets to support local groups that fight violence against women (Bourland 2005:3). Some of the people that I interviewed for my research were involved in the local version of '*Monologues*', others told me about it. The play became a prominent marker in their response to both my research and in the general discussion of lesbian performance representations in their local communities. I made it a point through the research time to ensure that I attended at least one version in each community (one community had three versions running concurrently).

In each version of *Vagina Monologues* there are some monologues that must be included and others that are optional. In each of the productions that I saw there were only two 'lesbian' stories told: *The Woman Who Loved to Make Vaginas Happy* and *The Little Coochi Snorcher That Could*. The first focuses on female-female prostitution and the second describes a thirteen year old girl's 'seduction' by a woman in her twenties that includes the line: 'Now people say it was a kind of rape.... Well, I say if it was rape, it was a good rape....' (McElroy 2000). Many of my participants told me how wonderful it was for them to see lesbian representations in their local community. I asked if they were concerned about the representations, and the overwhelming response was that any representation is better than none. It reminded me of Susie Bright in the film version of *The Celluloid*

Closet and her discussion of the desperation of lesbians to see themselves in film, that they are willing to overlook any characteristic that does not universalize it ‘...people would say, oh you have to see it. It’s a great lesbian love story. Okay, so they’re vampires...’(Epstein and Friedman 1996).

Although regional in status, the communities that I selected for the field research were by no means devoid of cultural events or performance opportunities. The communities examined were Halifax, Nova Scotia (Canada); Moscow, Idaho: Iowa City, Iowa: Tucson, Arizona (United States of America): and Newcastle, New South Wales (Australia). Each community was selected due to their size – with populations varying from 21,000 (Moscow) to approximately 520,000 (Tucson); relative rural/regional location; and a clear indication that there were at least some lesbian-identified support or community groups available. In each community I interviewed at least six performers, and a further minimum of six community members, all of whom identified as lesbian.⁵ Each participant was asked a range of questions intended to identify the significance of lesbian performance opportunities (as audience or participant) within their community, and their perception of the impact this had on their community, and on their experience as a lesbian in their community (Appendix 3).

The main reason for attempting this research project was to begin to see patterns of individual response to public representation. I asked the question: ‘Can you tell by

⁵ Further discussion on self-identification of participants as ‘lesbian’, in relation to this study, can be found in Chapter 3.

looking at a performer that they are lesbian?’ I believed that through a semi-structured interview process involving a few dozen lesbians in globally scattered towns, I might be able to glean a pattern of behaviours, a range of dress or cultural styles, or other performative actions that would clearly speak ‘lesbian’ to each of these participants. To some extent I did manage to gather a list: a kind of tick-off list of visible lesbian markers. In every single case however, the information they gave was mitigated by a comment that suggested that they could be wrong in their estimation. Some suggested that nobody should be judged by their appearance. Others claimed that rural straight women often wear the butch clothing of an inner-city lesbian, while some were downright hostile at the suggestion that any such marker could exist. I found the resistance to these markers, problematic yet heartening.

I too was concerned that stereotype informed not only the way that others saw lesbians, but also the way that we saw ourselves. There was certainly a corrective element in the information gleaned from the interviews. In some cases, I was clearly being told that it was inappropriate to ask the question, and even more inappropriate to suggest the findings could prove pattern or behaviour that would or could indicate sexuality. Moreover, although this was an important question, it was by no means the only focus of the questions, since the questions ranged from an understanding of what lesbian performance opportunities existed in their areas, to a sense of the importance of these representations in their lives.

Lesbian performers too, were asked questions around representation and identity. They were asked to describe explicit support or lack of support for lesbian performers in their local community, and of the need or desire to identify their sexuality to their audience. These formed the core questions asked of performers. It became an onerous task, and produced a document that reviewed their community, but may well have failed to speak to other like communities, because of the specifics of performance opportunities, the skillsets of the performers and all manner of other fortuitous events that occur in these varied communities.

In processing this information and representing it within my own findings, I was faced with the difficulty of how to represent this vast range of responses. The study had used a semi-structured individual interview process, and had sought anecdotal responses to a series of questions around the availability of lesbian performance role models and representations within community. The study in its finished form, will act as a review of some of that material, and in that way, as with the play that I had developed and produced, the research material will have significant value beyond my own broader research aims. I did, however, strike upon the very problem that I find with Ensler's *Vagina Monologues*. In asking a range of very different people who share one factor - in Ensler's case, a vagina – in my research - lesbian identity, I was faced with the task of sifting that material into an emergent single entity to which I claimed ownership. Like Ensler, I discovered that the participants in this study wanted to talk about their lives. They wanted to share their thoughts on the construction of lesbian identity, and how it should best be represented in

performance modalities. And they wanted to provide a snapshot review of how they had or had not experienced it in their lives and communities. But in bringing the information together, I became concerned that including any of this in an exhibition that focused on my identity, would be to manipulate and decontextualise elements of their identity as an unfortunate consequence. I became aware that in telling sections of their stories out of context I was supporting an argument that was about my identity and my experience, not theirs.

I am not arguing against the difficulty in engaging reflexivity in the investigation of a group to which I belong. Rather, I have a concern that questions around communally shared identity aimed at a group, can be easily moulded to speak to an individual experience. In establishing the guidelines and preparation for the field research, I was obliged to undertake a process of application to the ethics committee of my University (and the other Universities who supported the research). I support the rigorous ethics process engaged by universities, and applaud their attempts to protect participants from the abuse, misuse or misapplication of research findings. I understood their role from my own past engagements with projects in Indigenous communities/community groups. It was a revelation however, to see that while there was a specific means of protecting ethnic and Indigenous community groups, including seeking approval from an identifiable leader or representative within that group to engage the group as a whole, no such process was able to be applied to lesbians within a community. I became interested in how one might go about seeking approval from a group with no single process of management. Yet, if it is

thought of as a cultural group, with specific needs, but not overall management organisation – already a common feature of ethnic or cultural groups – an ethical process can be put in place to protect the group as a whole. Can this community be described as a cultural group? And if so, how then might the group be represented? In further exploring this, I have attempted to engage a re-application of Smith's (1991) markers of ethnicity. Smith frames the concept of ethnic identity using the following markers as:

1. a collective proper name
 2. a myth of common ancestry
 3. shared historical memories
 4. one or more differentiating elements of common culture
 5. an association with a specific 'homeland'
 6. a sense of solidarity for significant sectors of the population
- (Smith 1990:21)

Marker 1: A name: a series of collective identifying names under the general rubric of lesbian and including lesbian, dyke, queer among others.

Markers 2 and 3: Myths of common ancestry and shared historical memories are illustrated by lesbian literature, film and other cultural gesticulations.

Marker 4: Lesbian culture is identifiably different from other groups (and see Marker 5).

Marker 5: For the specific homeland it may be necessary to travel through Halberstam and Volcano's (1999) ghettoised landscape of the drag and lesbian clubs and bars of 'safe' areas of San Francisco, New York or London.

Marker 6: Solidarity: while some would argue solidarity is explicit in the process of grouping together in organisations and coalitions, not all members of the lesbian community participate in these forms of alliances. But Smith argues that when

considering ethnic identity, members of a group may disagree on common ground with any one marker, or imbue each with more or less significance (1990:21). And he makes it clear that what is required for this marker is "... a sense of solidarity among *at least some* of its members" (1996:6). Used in this way, lesbians can be viewed and valued as a cultural group that can be given appropriate ethical treatment as a whole.

The use and possible misuse of the field research findings, within the exhibition, left me with a dilemma. In spite of my best intentions, I was concerned that I could not protect a perceived amorphous group from a process of reduction that must occur in narrowing to a description of individual identity through the dissemination process of exhibition of individual identity markers.

2.3 Towards Exhibition

Having undertaken a number of different methods of examining the intersections and markers of identity, I was faced with the problem of how to creatively present these findings. Although I have a performance background, for many years I have worked as a sound and installation artist in galleries and exhibition spaces, applying performance elements through the use of sound, image and object. Sound, in particular, has often been used in my work as an agent for movement through, and conciliation of, spaces. While some of my sound work consists of non-verbal utterances, much of my work engages narrative story-telling practice that provides a supportive framework, and sometimes a counterpoint, to more tangible items. Each

space of *The Multifarious Identity* contains sound that is discrete and specific to the space, but is at the same time both isolated within a space and intended to be overheard throughout the exhibition spaces.

Through an accretion of sound in these spaces, the work forms an audio tapestry bleeding from one space into another, with the intention, in part, of imitating an overheard conversation. In Paul Carter's *Named in the Margin* (1990), a sound installation was used to recreate the margin annotations used to describe landed convicts' crimes and situations following the early days of invasion. By dramatising the material into multiply heard vocalised reference markers he was able to reconstruct the sound and cacophony of the space of Hyde Park Barracks (which both the exhibition and the original convicts inhabited), at the same time as retelling the scant documented information. The aim with *The Multifarious Identity* is to visually acknowledge the discrete markers of space, yet use overheard sound as a process of unification.

In *Named in the Margin*, voices of variously accented children, women and men, are heard. In *The Multifarious Identity* only the voice of the artist is heard, and although various incarnations are deployed appropriate to the space and content, the constant voice is intended to remind the audience of the singular yet intersecting identity/ies of the artist. In order to follow each of the mostly linear narratives, the audience is encouraged to tune out the overheard sound external to the space that they physically inhabit. This may seem to counter-indicate the aural availability of the

other spaces, however in the movement between each space, the audience is able to overhear sound pieces that then act as present reminders of the space they have just visited, subtly encouraging connections between the works.

Through markers of gender, sexuality and Indigeneity, such as the clitoral image and the disembodied voice already discussed, the audience will witness an investigation of the intersections that comprise a singular multifarious identity. In the following two chapters, the processes of exhibition will be examined, including the specific pattern, focus and intention of each installation work.

CHAPTER THREE: SEXUALITY, GENDER AND THE SPACE THAT FOLLOWS

3.1 *Simulacra: Everyday Alone in Perspex, Colour and Light*

INSTALLATION 1: *Everyday Alone in Perspex, Colour and Light*

SPACE: Loading Zone

coloured light boxes (6 x 1200 x 540x120mm), ephemera, digital prints on paper, sound installations (3), paint on floor

(Appendix 4 DVD: Simulacra)

The first installation work is the only possible gallery entry point to *The Multifarious Identity*. The work introduces the audience to the artist's experience of gender through everyday events, conflated with specific gendered performance contexts.

13th of July, 2002. 2pm. I've stopped at the Macadamia Castle, Pacific Highway. Northern NSW.

'Here you go mate.' The bloke keeps the men's restroom door open for me as I walk up to dual-door male/female entrance. No mate, I'll be going in that one, I say as I point back towards the 'ladies'. He looks embarrassed. I am busting to go, so I don't really delay to think too much on it 'til after I get out of the toilet stall. I look in the mirror and check what I look like. I have just had a haircut... it's short. I look like I've been driving for a while, my face a bit flushed. I look down to see that I am wearing a long coat that was possibly covering the curve of my breasts. There is a bit of relief in this, and I am again aware that I think of misgenderidentification like a little bit of loss.

28th September, 2002. 11am. Walking into the female restroom next to the big lecture theatre at the Ourimbah Campus.

A big, angry looking lady in there says... 'wrong toilet'. I say, 'what do you mean'? 'You've got the wrong toilet, it's across the way'. I wonder what she means. Then I realise. No matter how many times this happens I am still taken by surprise. 'No. I'm a woman'. She just grunts at me and walks past. No apology. Did I expect one? Expect, yes. Care, less than I used to. A clothing check reveals that I am wearing a bluey with a flannie over the top. My double D sized breasts are visible.

4th March, 2004. Moscow, Idaho – A restroom just downstairs from the women's centre at the University of Idaho.

A lady is there, coming out of a stall. 'Oh... um...' she says and looks worried. I move my coat open with both of my hands by plunging them into the pockets of my jeans. The lady looks both relieved and embarrassed. I am seriously considering doing a full rack-flash the next time this happens.

9th January, 2005. I'm in David Jones' Lingerie Department, Sydney.

I am waiting to have a bra fitted and the younger of the two ladies is negotiating with the older to not have to do my fitting. I can hear her. It seems at first she is unsure if I'm a woman. The older woman tells her off. I walk out rather than stay for my fitting. I buy a bra off the rack without benefit of a fitting. It doesn't fit that well, and now when I wear it, it still makes me a bit angry. With myself.

26th September, 2005. It's David Jones again, but this time it's the 'ladies' and it's in the store in Newcastle.

An older woman has given me a bit of a grunt. I have said, ' nice day today.' She has looked aghast. I have to remember that opening my mouth is not always the best way to persuade a woman that I belong in a 'ladies'. I've just come away from the make-up counter, and I've got a fair bit of makeup on.

(Excerpt, Appendix 4 DVD: *Simulacra*)

The preceding soundtext script diarises a regular process of misidentification of gender that occurs in my everyday experience. I am frequently mistaken for a man when speaking on the telephone, but to document these events would be onerous, they happen on a daily basis. Less frequently, and more surprisingly (at least to me) is the occasional misidentification of my body as male. Lucal in her descriptions of her experience of misidentification cites that she has what she interprets as visible masculine markers, and these assist in the misidentification:

I am six feet tall and large-boned. I have had short hair for most of my life. For the past several years, I have worn a crew cut or flat-top. I do not shave or otherwise remove hair from my body (e.g. no eyebrow plucking). I do not wear dresses, skirts, high heels, or makeup. My only jewelry is a class ring, a "men's" watch... two small earrings... and (occasionally) a necklace. I wear jeans or shorts, T-shirts, sweat, polo/golf shirts, button down collar shirts, and tennis shoes or boots (1999:781-797).

Lucal applies these markers as a means of discussing how the imposition of butch⁶ or male can be applied using outward acting indicators, such as dress or, later in the text, stance and behaviour (1999:795). When measured against Lucal's markers, I

⁶ Neither Lucal nor I specifically examine masculinity in terms of markers of butchness, but rather from the perspective of the female-identified masculine identity.

fall short, literally. I am 5'4", not large-boned, but large breasted and fat. I wear mostly women's clothes, do remove hair (e.g. plucking eyebrows, shaving legs), and occasionally wear makeup and high heels. I do wear clothes that may seem, though in fact are not, gender-neutral (my shape precludes me from wearing men's clothes).

I share one clear common factor with Lucal: I usually have short hair. In each of the instances diarised in the earlier *Simulacra* text, I had recently had a haircut. Whether one marker can be a sufficient indicator for the perception of gender is examined in *Simulacra: Everyday Alone in Perspex, Light and Colour*. The decision to not document the instances where my voice misrepresented my gender, is reinforced because my voice is present in the exhibition. If, for the audience it contributes to a factoring of gender, it may act as an unnamed indication, and an opportunity for discussion of a more apparent gender aberration.

In *Simulacra*, each of the six light boxes illuminate and hold both ephemera and positioned text, in the already well-lit space of The Loading Zone. They are grouped in pairs, sporting individual solid, defining gender-resonant colours that act as identifiers of their link to the wall-mounted prints. The dim lights from the boxes, are intended to create subtle luminescent emissions onto the objects and words that sit above, placed on and around clear pieces of Perspex. Each sheet of Perspex holds objects, fabric and words that resonate both with the accompanying soundscape stories and the wall-mounted images.

Illumination acts as simulacra for knowledge and focus – the important events are happening in the illuminated areas. The paper works on the wall that link to each are similarly lit to reinforce colour and draw audience focus. Perspex may be seen as simulacric of glass, a necessarily inaccurate but close representation of a copied object. It serves as an inauthentic glass, not quite holding luminescence in the way that glass would, obfuscating the colour and object, yet appearing glass-like. The sheets of Perspex covering the boxes are further diminished as they serve a second purpose of light refraction (and diffraction). Finally the Perspex is covered by sheer, coloured fabric, hiding it from view,

Jean Baudrillard argues ‘Simulation is ... the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal’ (Baudrillard 1994:1). In this way the simulacrum does not act as copy, but as a container with similar reference markers, but different methods, and possibly, outcomes. Perspex for this exhibition works more effectively than glass. It is its hyperreality that makes it appropriate to the task of holding and managing the objects. Glass can be cast as simulation of clear visibility, through coloured glass, an obfuscated but visible engagement; through clear glass, unfettered visibility. But light reflects on the surface of glass, thereby potentially reducing visibility in an exhibition that relies on the subtlety of light. Light, in turn, acts as a simulacrum of the illumination of the sun; it is controlled through the light box, and measured. Yet the space of The Loading Zone has natural light pouring in from the Gallery’s entrance. In this space, the simulacra are constantly challenged by the referent, and the referent challenged by its own markers of authenticity.

When Lucal discusses the misidentification of her gender in public restrooms, and her attempts at a resistance to gender type, she is 'dismayed' to discover that she

...might not be challenging gender after all. Because of the way in which doing gender works in our two-and-only-two system, gender displays are simply read as evidence of one of the two categories (Lucal: 1999:793).

Using this as a lens to examine the lived experience within Lucal's response of two-and-only-two, *Simulacra: Everyday Alone in Perspex, Light and Colour* provides a simulation of the lived experience that both dichotomizes gender-types and also challenges through the addition of the individualized gender markers of the artist, the categorization of 'two-and-only-two' (1999:793). The artist acts as a solitary figure in this representation, an individual, identity-focused representation that borrows not only from the markers of one or another gender, but discusses the visual landscape of the gender in-between.

Femininity, masculinity and the unnamed third gendered representation are displayed in *Simulacra*, in obvious broad strokes, through shades of pink, blue and purple, respectively. However on close examination, the other colours are present in each iteration. The femme becomes pink by immersion, but it contains blue and purple; the masculine, pink and purple. Purple, the colour adopted by the artist as her aberrant gendered identity, is a blend of purple and blue, and literally represents the colour in-between that is both, yet neither colour.

The colours and images represent perspectives on markers of gender, rather than perspectives on the lived experience of gender. The marker representations act as bold referents and are drawn from a number of markers, that have in the experience of the artist, been useful tools of gender identification. These referents are difficult to find in literary examinations of gender. Bornstein's *My Gender Workbook*, a text that challenges gender normatives, and encourages the reader to examine their gender, explores gender markers in order to deconstruct them, rather than to build a pattern of what may or may not be appropriate (Bornstein 1998). I had mentioned in Chapter Two, some of the responses from the field research I had undertaken. It was evident that respondents were concerned that gender markers not be carelessly applied to define gender types, particularly in relation to sexuality.

If texts and individuals are careful not to name gender markers, commerce and social order is clearer about creating a delineation. The space of the department store uses markers of gender in much the same way as the space of the public restroom enforces them. Both clearly mark what is male and what is female. One may only use a 'ladies' restroom if you are a woman. One may even be legally excluded from using the restroom of the other gender. One is required, in order to determine which restroom to use, to order oneself into an appropriate gender. If you are a man, you may purchase clothing for yourself from the women's clothing section of a department store, but you may find that it does not fit you (and you may need to use the men's fitting room), since the clothing is likely to be made for the opposite gender. Of course if your body does not conform to your own gender type,

you may well be faced with the same problem. In Cherry Smyth's *How Do We Look: Imaging Butch/Femme*, she dismisses the idea that butch women or women-employing-masculine identities can simply be defined by a list of clothing or accoutrements, that these markers can construct their/our identities as individuals (1998:82-89).

In *Chutney Popcorn* (Ganatra 1999), a film that shows the relationships between a group of young American lesbians, we see a group of four lesbians hanging out on the street watching and predicting whether the anonymous women walking by are lesbians. 'Dyke, Dyke', one of them says, as a number of women walk past. Another woman comes out of the bookstore they are in front of and asks them to repeat what they said. One says, 'Dyke', the second 'Dyke', in a matter-of-fact way. She responds: 'Why don't you just appropriate the culture of our oppressors'. Their response is 'Issues Dyke'. The concept of identifying, naming and proclaiming is understood in the lexicon of this film.

The difficulty of applying markers, reinforces that in exploring and displaying gender, particularly in relation to lesbian sexuality, it would have been misleading to deploy the findings of the field research to name markers and identifiers. To include them in this exhibition would be to specifically ask a range of women to explain their complex ideas of gender, and gendered behaviour, to conflate their discussion with an examination of gendered sexuality behaviours or markers, and then to apply them to myself as an individual. Instead, I demonstrate through the experience of

the public restrooms, through my Drag King work, and with stories of gender misidentification, ways that gender markers provide anecdotal support that *my* gender has a fluidity in perception and relies on the viewer to recognize and affirm it.

Elvis Presley is to Drag Kings what Liza Minelli is to Drag Queens.
(Halberstam & Volcano 1999:59)

For many years I have worked as a Drag King, largely deploying Elvis as a recognisable male performance character. My unusually deep voice allows me to vocalise, as well as bodily perform, Elvis. Few Drag King performers voice their interpretations, usually opting for a lipsynching process of performance, possibly recognising that voice, as Halberstam frames it, can act as a failed marker of masculinity (1998a:35). Mine, presumably, is a successful one. My interest in Drag King led me to my investigations of gendered performance practice, particularly in light of my initial lack of awareness that there was a particular pattern of Drag King being performed by lesbians. Performances of Drag King work in lesbian clubs has been documented for hundreds of years, and was prominently, though possibly not first, described as Drag in the nineteen-forties in San Francisco (Dickens 1982:35). My lack of awareness of this history, led me to create a framework for performance outside of sexuality-focused performance contexts. This in turn led to an interesting exchange in performing to largely straight audiences, and it was their shared lack of knowledge of this gendered performance type, that led to the following soundtext element.

I don't parody masculinity in my work. I find in Drag that parody alone can't sustain the performance. Cos once the joke is over, I am still left with two hours of performance. Representation too, doesn't sustain by itself. I have done two major shows over the last fifteen years, the first: Elvis(h), an Elvis tribute show. The second Neil, Neil, Neil – Neil Diamond, Neil Sadaka and Neil Young. These shows are usually performed to Elvis or lounge singing fans. Leagues Clubs and Returned Servicemans Clubs – very suburban and fairly homophobic. They are not the ghettos of lesbian bars and they aren't all that safe. One time I went on both before and after the jelly wrestling, and I wasn't the hit you might expect. But they have been the mainstay of my performance work in this field. The performance is not read as parody by these folks. Often with my Elvis act I would have older ladies come up and tell me what a nice young man I am. For them the joke, if there is one, isn't apparent. I'm just a nice. Young. Man.

(Excerpt, Appendix 4 DVD: *Simulacra*)

Volcano suggests that Drag King is 'Anyone (regardless of gender) who consciously makes a performance out of masculinity' (Halberstam & Volcano 1999: 16). I, like my *The [drag] King of the Sandpit* counterpart, have been consistently successful at performing male drag in both a conscious and less deliberate context. Consciously performing female, however, has always been a more problematic endeavour. This is explored both in *Simulacra* and in the earlier play: *The [drag] King of the Sandpit*. In the play, Sandy finally performs female, altogether unsuccessfully (Appendix 2). It is through her failure to perform this gender type that we understand her comfort and flexibility in her own adopted/adapted gender performance. Failure to perform female outside of deliberate performance contexts

is investigated in the following soundscape work that accompanies the pink light boxes of *Simulacra*. It is supported through each of the printed digital work, with images of the artists' younger self, through the observation of how gender and representations change over time.

A little while ago a man asked me if I have always been a woman. I had to admit that once a very, very long time ago, I was a little girl.

Actually he didn't really ask me, he just sorta screamed it from a passing car. I felt that he genuinely wanted an answer – but he sped off, so he didn't get one. I couldn't explain that people get me confused with a man all the time over the phone. But he sped off and I had no chance to reply. I couldn't explain to him that people get me confused for a man in real life all the time. Like the toilet thing. I walk into the toilet swishing as though I am trying to pass for female. I rarely pull it off. I have to hope that they look down. Which I always find surprising because I have quite big breasts. If I was a redneck moron in a souped up V8 and I was wanting to scream smartarse remarks I think yelling something like 'cor mate you've got big tits for a bloke', would be more appropriate. Of course what he really meant was that I shouldn't look like a man; I should look more like a woman. Perhaps I should.

(Excerpt, Appendix 4 DVD: *Simulacra*)

In the printed images of *Simulacra*, the artist wears a dress, a man's suit and, in her third manifestation, her everyday clothes. The artist discusses, through the soundscape narrative the way that others externally manage her into the butch/femme dyad. The images and soundscape suggest that she is never able to successfully create femininity, and rarely able to imitate masculinity. Her most

successful iteration is the unexaminable, un-markable gender of individual identity. The artist cannot manage the body of a man without significant intervention, but the management of the feminine is as difficult.

It is 1985 and I'm 20 years old. I am at a night club in innercity Sydney. I've had a night of dancing and getting drunk. Earlier in the evening I had been talked into really dressing up. A short black lowcut dress, fur hat, prettied hair, makeup, high heels, stockings, attitude. I felt really glamorous, really pretty. So now it is past 4am, and I am the worse for wear... and I ask a fella behind the bar where the Ladies is. 'What do you want the ladies for mate?' 'To go weewee', I say in my best little girl voice. Which clearly doesn't come out sounding either little-or-big girl. 'Mate, you can use the toilet over there, but don't let me catch you going in the ladies'. I see where he is pointing, I sober up a little bit and explain that I am in fact a woman. He looks at me and says, come on, no woman has feet that size. I want to disagree, but I remember how hard it is for me to get women's shoes that fit. My feet are big. Unusually big for my size. And now they make my gender suspect. Later when I am asleep in bed and I can think of carefully constructed comebacks, I want to say, 'but I am dressed like a woman, I'm wearing a bra like a woman, I'm wearing makeup like a woman. I am like a woman. Very... like a woman'. But even I know I have been unsuccessful in my girl drag clothing. I haven't passed.

(Excerpt, Appendix 4 DVD: *Simulacra*)

In *The Advocate's* review of the Broadway show, *On The Town*, the headline reads: 'Here's Hildy! Comic Lea DeLaria dons a dress and stands Broadway on it's ear' (Che 1998:35). The article comments on DeLaria's cross-dressing into a vastly different persona than her usual butch identity. In 1999, a reiteration of her role is

performed by DeLaria using the same text and arrangement as she had performed in the musical. Her featured song from the musical is, significantly, featured in *My Favourite Broadway: The Leading Ladies* (Cosel 1999). The change with this reformed work, is that Delaria employs clear transgendering elements. She is dressed in a tuxedo, cummerbund and bowtie, she has a buzz cut (replacing the wig worn in the original show) and dons, as Halberstam frames it, a butch swagger (Halberstam 1998a). The song, *I Can Cook Too*, in the original context of the show, lists off the attributes of a woman who can do anything (and cook too). It is a demonstrably heterosexual song, casting the singer as a 'man's ideal of a perfect meal' (Ellis 1999). The transposition of a dress with a tuxedo, one core feminine identity marker with an identity that has clear markers of masculinity, transforms the character in both song and intention, removing it to high camp, as the performer removes herself to a more recognizable performance model.

When planning for the field work interviews, and processing the selection of regional and rural areas, I had been interested in examining these areas for performance options for lesbians who were butch-acting or who self-identified as visibly lesbian. Alternative production strategies and performance models are the stock of many lesbian performance opportunities in larger cities. I wondered if, in smaller cities and towns, the opportunity to participate in mainstream productions, such as a musical at the local community theatre, would be an option. DeLaria's effort in moving the boundaries of gender in this way, may prove to answer the

question of how to imagine ourselves into mainstream contexts through bold subversion and management of dichotomous gender types.

On the floor of the The Loading Zone, and leading to each of the other installation spaces, is a stencilled image, a simulacrum of the constant exhibition image of the reddened clitoris. The image appears in each of the works of the *Simulacra* installation, it's role on the floor, however, acts as a pathway reminder of the artist's identity as a constant in each space.

3.2 Prurience: Immersion and Obfuscation

Audience members are provided with a sheet that shows a pathway through the space of the whole exhibition. They can subvert this in all but the first space. If they follow it, it will lead them from *Simulacra* into *Prurience: Immersion and Obfuscation*.

INSTALLATION 2: *Prurience: Immersion and Obfuscation*

SPACE: Locker Room

inked hessian hangs (4 x 1800x 980mm), inked hessian hangs (40 x 250 x190), sound installation, paint on floor

(Appendix 4 DVD: Prurience)

Leaving the isolated and subtle sound space of *Simulacra*, this installation work is loud, invasive, and overtly sexual. It can be heard in the earlier space and has resonant auditory interactions with the *Recidivism* space that the audience will next view. The audience is reminded again, before entry to this space, that it contains images or sounds that may be offensive. This is a reminder because the audience has received notification at the entrance to the gallery that some of the items might not be suitable to a younger audience. I don't wish to make the audience uncomfortable,

the intention is not to shock, but to inform. Accompanying the sounds are four large (1800 x 980) hessian hangings, that act as sackcloth simulacra of the digital prints in the last installation. They contain prurient elements of sexuality, and provide a reference to both the artists' discussion of her overinterest in 'all things lesbian', as well as her inability to articulate her own sexuality. Strung around the space are smaller lifesized iterations of the reddened clitoris.

If I have had difficulty in the past passing as a woman, as evidenced by *Simulacra*, I have had more difficulty passing as a straight woman. I came out as a lesbian at the age of twenty-nine, before that I would regularly have to tell people that I was straight: they assumed I was a lesbian. I was interested in the assumption, and had wondered at the time if some of the gender markers explored in *Simulacra* held an explanation for a conflation of these two markers. This connection informed some of the questions in my field research.

In order to provide a background for the field research, I gave potential participants information on my website. I hoped to give them background on my identity, and the work I have undertaken in the past. In addition to the text for *The [drag] King of the Sandpit*, a video excerpt of the work, and a number of songs from my music cd; a soundwork was presented that in part has been recast for the *Prurience* installation. The work responds to a series of questions that arose for me after 'coming-out' as a lesbian in 1995.

Then I told all my friends. None of them were surprised. Some wondered why it took me so long when they had always known. My mother was angry that I had known about it for three months before I told her. I apologised and she was fine. She thought I had an incurable disease so she was quite pleased to discover that I only fancied girls. Which is in and of itself kind of incurable.

It's been ten years since I've had sex. I came out at almost thirty and now I am almost forty. My thirties will always be remembered as my safe years. I didn't do the first adolescence very well but the second has been frightening – no stumbling into it – its all been measured like when you learn to skate and you're afraid to fall over and you hold onto the side of the rink until you are really good. So I am getting really good at it all by myself.

I have some excuses for these ten years though. Well there were the early years of fear, I was a bit scared of women... there's an excuse. Then for the next three years, I lived in the United Arab Emirates. I was working with Islamic women, teaching at a women's university there, thinking about art, making music, teaching performance and hiding my lesbian identity. Choosing the closet - and it was my choice, I started to become fascinated by anything that seemed lesbian. Actually it wasn't all that healthy. I searched the internet and I objectified women in a way that made me feel really uncomfortable. Not for the first time in my life I experienced shame at what I was. Or what I thought I was. Then... of course... the last few years. Well, maybe I have no excuse. When I first came out, I read everything. I read about the great sex, the great... [sounds of orgasm]. (Excerpt, Appendix 4 DVD: Prurience)

This work responds to what I had interpreted as the sexualization, objectification and pathologising of lesbian sexuality in some of the literature that Halberstam

lampoons when she discusses, as an example, Sheila Jeffrey's essay on the ribaldry of the butch/femme paradigm (Halberstam 1998a:129). At the time I had not intended the work to necessarily be a self-marker, as much as a descriptor of one person's experience through the coming-out process. As a spoken-word piece, however, the text does have a confessional feel to the performed re-telling. Many of the people who approached me about interviews or through the process of my field research, had read and heard this work in its original format on the website. I was surprised that a number of people asked me if I believed that I really was a lesbian, and two people told me that they were sure that I had provided evidence that I was not. Lesbians have sex with women. It was, for them, the defining point. That there is material even within this excerpt that indicates that I fantasized about women, and that the process was difficult, seemed to provide no mitigation for them. I was fascinated and indeed, began to wonder if I really was a lesbian.

Another question that arose, and defined the participation in the study by several (though certainly not all) potential participants in Halifax, Nova Scotia, was whether I would 'permit' transgendered women to participate in the study. My response was that the interview was open to any self-identifying lesbian. I was given the response that they would not participate if I opened it to include transgendered women. In spite of my attempts to make this a self-identifying process, I was faced with a decision of identification (though not on a potential participant's status as a lesbian). I explained that I would be including all women, women-born-women or women-born-men/intersex into the study, as long as they self-identified as lesbian. The

physical connection between gender and sexuality was reinforced through this questioning. What was implied in the question, I believe, was that gender must be named, defined and agreed upon prior to an investigation of sexuality.

Hessian is used as a reference to sackcloth, the religious referent of guilt, sin. This marker gives an indication to the title of *Prurience*, rather than sexuality. Prurience is a word that has only negative sexual connotations in its meaning. It is used to indicate an ‘...excessive interest in sexual matters’ (Anderson 2005:657), as though interest can be measured by appropriate lengths of time or endeavour. The hessian contains an image of a moon with two female fingers, with the title: *I am my own best date, I am my only date* and a work that explores the old lesbian joke: *linoleum or carpet*.⁷ a word play on shaved/not shaved. Both works follow another appearance of the recurring reddened (and shaved) clitoris.

Prurience explores the idea of the obfuscated prurient image of lesbian identity by immersing the audience in an audio environment that both acts as marker for that sexuality and, at the same time, discussing the concerns of oversexualization of identity. The images act as referents of the sexualization of lesbian identity, with an accompanying soundscape that seems to manage the sound of orgasm and sex, with yet another underlying text that explores the problematic nature of this engagement.

3.3 Recidivism: Mens Rea, Actus Reus

⁷ Also known as ‘floorboard and drapes’.

INSTALLATION 3: *Recidivism: Mens Rea, Actus Reus*
SPACE: The Pit and Hoist
video projection on drape, sound installation, paint on floor
(Appendix 4.2 DVD: *Recidivism*)

Recidivism and *Prurience* are the loud, duelling soundscapes of the exhibition. They have an auditory relationship to one another, with a constant reminder in the *Recidivism* soundscape to refer back to the sounds from next door: ‘listen to that’, ‘can you hear what’s happening next door’ (Excerpt, Appendix 4 DVD: *Recidivism*) *Recidivism* re-engages the panoptic gaze, encouraging an investigation into the accompanying exhibition, and all of the elements of identity.

‘Mens rea’, from the Latin: ‘guilty mind’ (Anderson 2005:503), and ‘actus reus’, also from the Latin, ‘guilty deed’ (Anderson 2005:8), are better known as points of law. They are deployed here to examine the concept of recidivism, as a re-engagement of past heterosexual acts or thoughts, a process of what it is to lose sight of being lesbian in the midst of heterosexuality.

The queer writer, Catherine Lord claims that she and her then partner Millie Wilson ‘...spent a great deal of time in Santa Fe, New Mexico, looking for lesbians’ (Lord 2000:297) for her study, an endeavour I understood all too well. Lord explains that:

Wilson being primarily a visual artist and I primarily a writer and curator of “Public art” and ‘queer theory’ were having intercourse around and through our lesbian bodies (2000:297).

I loved the descriptor of the confabulation that occurs around the endeavour of finding what is 'lesbian' in a place. I was faced, during my field research with the problem of finding lesbian performance places, without the benefit of intercourse. More problematically I was concerned with finding spaces of lesbian interest, without engaging ideas of stereotype or making assumptions that would necessarily affect the outcome. What are lesbians interested in? How are lesbian spaces defined, if not explicitly through name or advertisement? I was reminded, as I struggled to 'find' lesbians, of the difficulty of identifying lesbians who cannot be easily found. What is a lesbian, and what defines a lesbian continues to be an issue in the marking out of identity, for me as an individual, as well as for many of my participants. I had asked them to self-identify, and obviously required no proof of their lesbian credentials.

Combined with the question of gender, identified in the preceding chapter, I had a number of participants and potential participants ask if I would consider interviewing a woman who wasn't a lesbian, but had female partners. Throughout the process of undertaking the interviews, I shifted from a hard answer that indicated that they would have to define themselves as 'lesbian' in order to participate, to suggesting that lesbian could be used as an adjective, to describe, as an example, 'lesbian relationships' rather than only using lesbian as a noun descriptor. This shift, without question, gave me the greatest pause I have had through the entire process, with *Recidivism* acting as a responsorial engagement of

the issues surrounding naming and defining of sexuality and gender within my own sense of identity.

Having some years earlier claimed my rightful status as lesbian, and being visibly recognisable as a lesbian, I came to experience what could only be described as recidivist tendencies.

I have completed a very unscientific estimation. If, in my 39 years, I've experienced displays of heterosexuality: kissing, cuddling, having sex, in the media... let's say, conservatively, 100 times a week. Then I have witnessed more than 200,000 acts of blatant heterosexuality. I was 18 before I even knew that lesbians existed, 200,000... is it any wonder I've still got it on my mind?

I had a really odd dream about Joe the other night. We were doing it, yes I know, not good, anyway we were doing it and he suddenly started talking about lesbians. I said, shut up about lesbians Joe, stop reminding me. But the moment was gone, he had reminded me, or...well I suppose I'd reminded myself. I seem to be keeping myself in check. Now I just have to work out how to get Joe to grow tits in the next dream. Yeah, that'd fix it.

(Excerpt, Appendix 4 DVD: *Recidivism*)

In Heather Findlay's essay, 'Losing Sue' (Findlay 133-145:1998) we read her diarised changing relationship with longtime lesbian partner, Sue. As Sue transgenders and becomes John, the fallout of this transformation for Findlay affects an aspect of her life that seems to be entirely outside of the realm of change in a personal relationship. Findlay is, at the time of writing the essay, the Editor in Chief of *Girlfriends* magazine, an influential and internationally known lesbian

publication. If she maintains her relationship with John, she wonders if she will still be a lesbian, or will she lose her lesbian credentials or her job? Will she maintain status in her community? Does she want to be in a relationship with a man? These are questions that are both internally and externally managed by the gaze that shifts from the default heterosexual society back to the appropriation of Smith's ethnic markers (1991:21). In the shift from ethnicity to their role in becoming markers of lesbian culture, they manage our belonging and define the parameters of how we may participate, impossibly turning the panoptic gaze inward.

I would play this music, slightly out of step, slightly out of time. I could control these moments within moments, get it that fine that you would hear the temporal changes, but it would be almost impossible to duplicate them. I could control my actions, be responsible. Know that I was railing against order and category, a wrong musical composition
(Excerpt, Appendix 4 DVD:Recidivism)

The music is an intricate, but pedestrian piece, that the artist has composed and recorded for the soundscape. As the soundscape suggests, the music seems to have begun an appropriate temporal movement, but it falters and is willingly out of step with an exact metronomic pattern. The failure is intentional, aiming to disrupt the sound and pattern of the contrived work. The soundscape acts as simulacra for the desire to fall in step with a defined sexuality that is named and managed by its definition. The image of the clitoris pulses on the draped material, to the music, in time, out of time, along with the music of the artist.

CHAPTER FOUR: IDENTITIES, CONNECTIONS AND HOME

4.1 Confabulation: Multifarious Identity

INSTALLATION 4: *Confabulation: The Multifarious Identity*

SPACE: The Long Room

**video projection on drape, sound installation, archival images,
paint on floor**

(Appendix 4 DVD: Confabulation)

The naming of the exhibition as a whole, and this work as a part of that whole, deploys the word ‘multifarious’. Multifarious is chosen over multiplicitous, a more accessible word, when either would have served to explain the concepts of diversity, versatility and variety. It is the simulacric relationship of multifarious to nefarious, though neither having any connection through a root word, the latter indicating wickedness (Anderson 2005) that attracted me. I was similarly interested that confabulation has two meanings, both of which bear a strong resonance to the dual meanings of ‘yarning’. To spin a yarn is either to tell a story or to tell a lie. In the science of psychology to confabulate is to ‘...fill in the gaps in one’s memory with fabrications that one believes to be facts’ (Anderson 2005:164). In common language, confabulation – which comes ‘...from the Latin confabulari, to talk together’ – is to have a conversation (Anderson 164:2005). These near words, and words that have dual meanings are engaged here to describe the process of confabulation that exists around identity.

Identity requires descriptions, and we are asked to employ them, define them and commit to them constantly. When Linda Tuhiwai Smith speaks of the need to identify Indigeneity within the academy in order to centre ourselves and mark out our place, she does so to remind us of the risk of others poorly managing Indigenous peoples, stories and futures (1999:129-131). In order to be considered Indigenous in an Australian context and according to some Australian points of law⁸, we must have certification of Indigeneity issued by an Australian Federal Government recognised office, registered under the Aboriginal Corporations Act. This certification relies on a combination of paperwork, trust, family/ies, yarning as points of connection and certification, and networks of knowledge and history. Through this certification our status may be self-defined, but we are gifted self-identification by people who largely exist outside of our group. The potential for the panoptic gaze to turn in on itself is limitless in the management of this requirement. When Bob Morgan speaks of the ‘guest paradigm’ (2004), he challenges the way that we engage and participate in an ongoing and insistent role as guests, who are permitted to partake in the colonial meal.

One quarter, one quarter, one quarter. I am one quarter.
(Excerpt, Appendix 4 DVD: *Confabulation*)

It is my intention with *The Multifarious Identity* to challenge the concept that identity must be managed as discrete elements to be listed, itemised or separately filed. Identity is amorphous and the naming and framing of identity markers change

⁸ Land claims, identity claims and access to some government programs require certificates of Aboriginality/Indigeneity as a matter of law.

according to the shifting confabulation of interactions and requirements. I have occasionally heard concern expressed when I draw connections between *my* experience of Indigeneity with *my* experience of being a butch lesbian. Shane Phelan posits that:

Butch lesbians are caught by the strictures of a movement that demands respectability as the price of inclusion and equality. Respectability is not simply a matter of treating oneself and others with respect and integrity. It requires careful attention and obedience to prevailing norms of dress and comportment. Unfortunately for butches, it is precisely their deviation from these norms that marks them as visible lesbians. A movement that demands assimilation as the price of 'equality' fails to fully grasp the oppression of lesbians, an oppression that is rooted in gender norms as much as in proscriptions on sexuality. (Phelan 1998:196).

As an academic, I have been instructed to put aside my Indigenous identity and issues, and act in the interests of the academy. I am asked, as Hewitt suggests to accept and respond to the colonial gaze of appropriate behaviour. This gaze and management *feels* the same as the gaze I feel as a butch lesbian, ensuring my behaviour does not belie an allegiance to a culture that falls outside of the panopticon, the visible landscape of appropriate default identity.

As with other Indigenous people I face an interesting but difficult resistance to ethnically identifying solely according to my Indigeneity. This is, at least in part, because of my other ethnic identity markers. My mother, Marie-Claire, is an English woman, whose ethno-cultural identity is both Irish and Jewish, but who identifies ethnically as English. Her authentic or inauthentic Englishness, has imprinted literally on my body.

In the month of September, I made an appointment to have an indelible, intrinsically Australian image marked on my skin. I wanted to be marked as Australian, have it understood. Plus I'd been told. All lesbians have tattoos. I'd spent a lot of years bitching and moaning about Indigenous images on bodies of whitefellas, appropriating cultural images was something I thought was terrible. I'd also been really concerned with the way that some Indigenous artists use symbols and markings from other Aboriginal countries, imagining that we are all as one, that we share a common and consistent heritage no matter where we come from. I'm Wiradjuri and if I was going to use an image that connected me to country I might pick my rivers, or my moths, or even my yam daisies. I know lots of it is about commodification but if I want to commodify my body, I'm gonna do it with a real Australian symbol... look over there... can you see it on my arm, the Holden special sign, from the car, you know? Uniquely Australian. And Special. So not an Indigenous image. Instead, the image will be drawn by an English man, Miles Better, who will mark the Indigenous body. An Indigenous body already modified and imprinted by my English mother. It will become an Indigenous image. Special. (Excerpt, Appendix 4: Confabulation)

My Certificate of Indigeneity does not describe my other ethnic markers, nor allow me to describe any other element of my identity. Through archival and contemporary images of my body, *Confabulation* explores the use of language and image to describe multiplicitous, multifarious, and at times nefarious constructs of identity in the coagulated body of the artist.

4.2 Good and Fair: Lift Up Thy Prayer for the Remnant that is Left

INSTALLATION 5: *Good and Fair: Lift Up Thy Prayer for the Remnant that is Left.*

SPACE: Media Room

computer installation (hypertext), sound installation, paint on floor
(Appendix 4 DVD: Good and Fair)

I know about coming-out, I've been doing it for a really long time.

(Excerpt, Appendix 4 DVD: *Good and Fair*)

The intimacy of the space is reinforced with a small-voiced a cappella version of the hymn: *Before The Throne of God Above* (Bancroft and Bradbury). An image from a plate in the text, *Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions* (Loos 1988:106), frames a hypertextualised computer installation. The plate shows a photograph of St. Alban's Church, Yarrabah at the end of the nineteenth century. A banner reads: LIFT UP THY PRAYER FOR THE REMNANT THAT IS LEFT, with a recessed banner that reads ALL NATIONS SHALL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE THEE (106). There is no definitive proof, but it is likely due to its placement in an Aboriginal Mission, that the fore banner refers to the remnant Indigenous peoples. The quotes on both banners are from the King James Bible.

The hymn acts as a vocal reminder of the framing while the images in the foreground tell the story of *Good and Fair*. The work examines the adult journey of the artist, drawing parallels with her childhood self. *Good and Fair*, in part, explores the relationship between the artist and her Indigenous father. In 2004 the artist

developed a series of soundtext works for the Indigenous Reflections women's collective. The audio cd, *Re-Searching*, shared stories of belonging and identity, and examined the role of researching and disseminating individual Indigenous stories to a wider audience. Included was an audio work (O'Sullivan 2004) that demonstrated a clear undertone of internalised racism. The work is embedded in the soundscape of *Good and Fair* as a referent to the process of remembering and cultural reflection within the work, acting as both documentation and penance.

The further religious framing of the work, represented by the visual and auditory embedding of icon and hymn in *Good and Fair*, acts as a reminder of the panoptic gaze of management and order, with the present clitoral image intruding, yet remaining a vigilant reminder of the adult presence of the artist.

There are things that were never important to me about Dad when he was alive, that have become so important since his death. A while ago I went to this website, The Casualty List, a Vietnam Veterans List on who was injured and how. I looked up Dad's name. I'd only really heard about the nature of his wounding at his funeral, when the bloke from the RSL got up to talk about him. The Casualty List has him listed as the only Australian to have had an 'attempted assassination'. What did that mean? I read the report, contacted the guy who wrote it. Things I would never have done when he was alive (Excerpt, Appendix 4 DVD: Good and Fair).

The remnants of the colonial meal are reshaped in *Good and Fair* to provide the audience with a summation of identity, through a connection back through the past of the artist. The texts from the other spaces can be heard in *Good and Fair*, they are

not sonically excluded from the space. The smallness of the space, and the focusing in on the computer screen, acts as a final moment of quiet reflection.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND PATHS RETRACED

The linear pathway within the exhibition dictates patterns of both separation and reunion of the elements of the artist's identity. The paths are managed, and the audience is given information to follow so that they may sequentially examine the experience of gender, then sexuality, confusion, Indigeneity and finally, home. The audience, however, determines the length of time that they engage the work, entering a space in the middle of a story told, or spending more time in one space than another. Any individual viewing of the work necessarily challenges the possibility of a timed linear engagement. In taking this control over the examined markers of identity, the audience acquires their own composite of the multifarious identity/ies of the artist.

The recurrent image of the clitoris acts as a constant representation of the artist. It is present, yet replaced within each work as other elements of the body of the artist become available to the audience. In *Simulacra*, *Confabulation* and *Good and Fair*, this presence is reformed as a whole body, shown across representations of gender, ethnicity, age and visual identity/ies. In *Recidivism* and *Prurience*, the artist's presence is reinforced through verbal and non-verbal utterances, the image of the clitoris being used to focus the viewer into the core of the artist.

Sound acts as a binding agent, with a pathway from final space to first space containing referent sounds that remind the audience of each discrete element, unified in the din of multiple soundscapes. When the performance artist, Karen Finley, developed a work in *The Constant State of Desire*, that demonstrated emotion through chant, rigorous reiterations, and non-realistic speech patterns, she did so to avoid '...realist narrative delivery...' (Schneider: 1997:101), and in doing so, ensured that it was '...different from acting' (101). Her concern was that the power of the emotion would lose value if it were simply re-told and not emotively

indicated to the audience (101-102). The use of naturalistic speech patterns and language in all areas of *The Multifarious Identity* risks being heard simply as isolated performative works that form and reform the artist's ownership and engagement of discrete identity markers. That reading is challenged as each individual sound work is recast in a secondary role as overheard and overlaid marker of identity, building value as subliminal markers of a broader, multifarious identity.

The dissection of identity into examinable sectors is both reinforced and challenged in the work. The audience may be able to move from a space that discusses gender to a space that examines Indigeneity, but they are unable to remove either the constant of the artist's presence, or the untidy merging of sound, image and identity markers that bleed across each space to form an amorphous multifarious identity.

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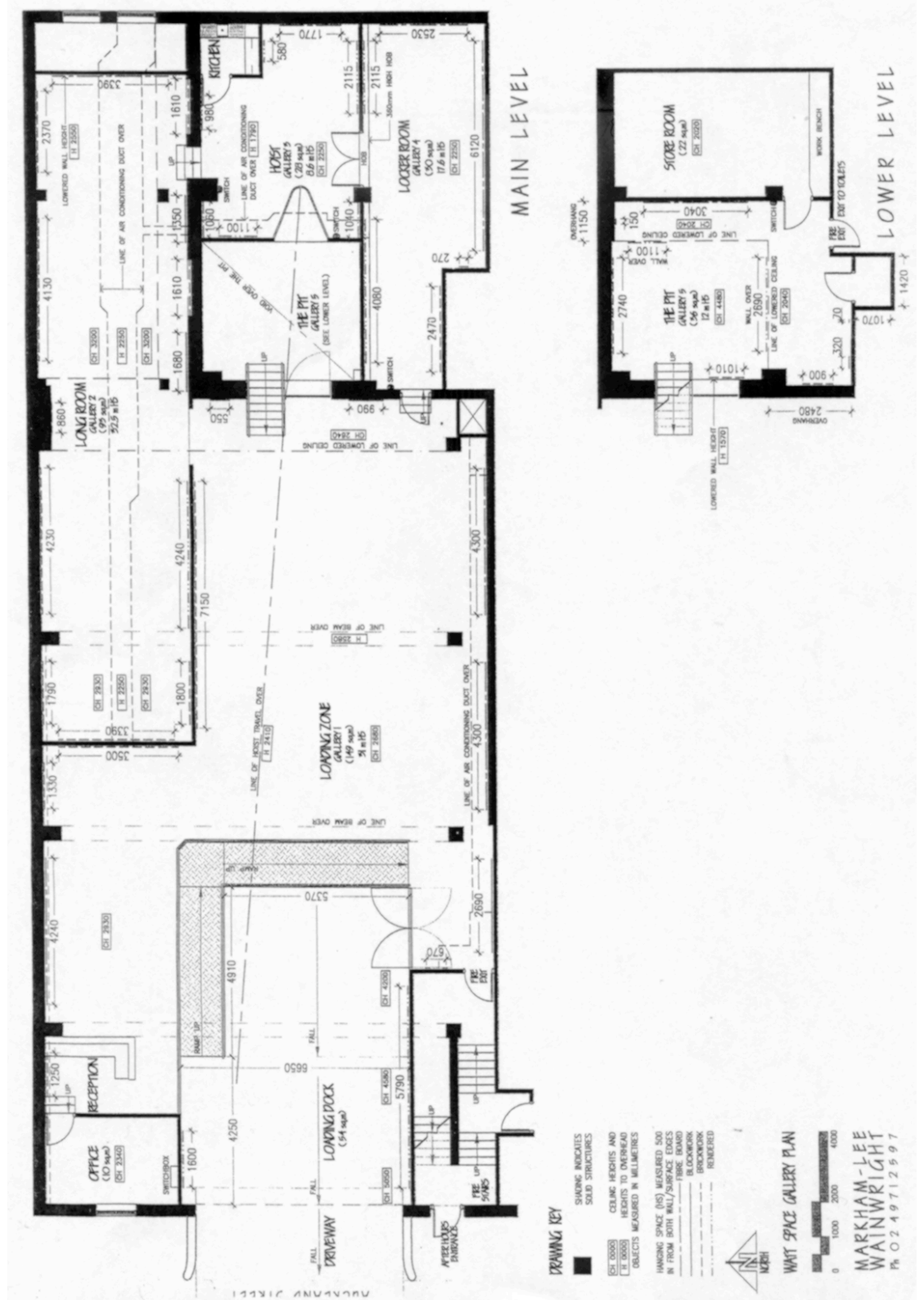
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Appendix 1: Watt Space Plan





The [drag] King of the Sandpit

by Sandy O'Sullivan

Directed by Dr Jocelyn McKinnon

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The [drag] King of the Sandpit

This play was performed for the first time in Sept 2002 by ImaginedARTS, the drama centre at Ourimbah, University of Newcastle.

SANDY, Drag King. Partner of Kate

KATE, Executive Assistant. Partner of Sandy

Sr MARY FRANCES, Religious Sister in charge of St Helena's School for Girls and their investment in The Sandpit Golf Course and Resort

[OFFSTAGE RECORDED VOICES]

WOMAN IN BAR, drunken dyke in a bar

MR BARROWS, on the Management Board of The Sandpit

SANDY'S MUM, 30 years ago

KATE'S MUM, 30 years ago

KATE'S DAD, 30 years ago

RADIO JOCK, male or female

CAR HOON, male

LOCATIONS/STAGING

Location and staging information is minimal, and is only included where it is impossible to understand the dialog and play without clarification or description. Underlining is used for location, within the stage directions parentheses. Some of the staging suggestions are to accommodate tight costume changes. Take license to discard any, or all staging notes. LX and SND notes have been discarded, but are available.

The locations listed are: Nightclub, Sandy's Room, Kate's Room, various locations in and outside of The Sandpit. Mirrors are discussed in Sandy's room. The intention is a (false) mirror facing the audience and a real mirror off to the side.

OTHER NOTES

Four songs are listed. Permission to use these songs and any payments will need to be made through the appropriate channels (in Australia, APRA). It is suggested that Karaoke tracks are used for two-three of the four songs (one of the songs is played live). The fourth song is the director's choice.

Extensive director's notes or stage directions by the writer are available on request.

ACT 1

SCENE 1 [*A Nightclub. SANDY dressed as the Crocodile Hunter, creeping up on something under a piece of black material U/S, as LX comes up. KATE is facing the stage D/S sitting at a table, drink in hand etc*]

SANDY: Crikey!!!! We're lucky today, look at this lovely big fella. Aw you have to love

Aussie wildlife [SANDY reveals a blow up penguin]

KATE: Is that a penguin?

SANDY: [*wrestling the penguin*] Yeah I couldn't get a crocodile. I looked everywhere.

I've been through three of these buggers already from jumping on them. [*to audience*] Now once you have your penguin in a chokehold, you need to kick out with your legs, cos a ...um.... a pride of penguins can do some real damage to a bloke's tackle, if you know what I mean.

KATE: Assuming that a bloke has any tackle in the first place.

SANDY: Ah isn't it like the ladies to insult a bloke's manhood?

KATE: If the Croc Hunter was hassling a penguin, wouldn't he be a bit cold in that gear?

[*addressing the audience, as SANDY continues to wrestle in the background*]

She does Elvis and Dean Martin, James Dean, all these manly men. I think they used to call them male impersonators. Actually I think they used to lock em up. Now it's Drag King – it sounds very formal and professional. But, the problem is... that she isn't very good. All talk, no action. Or sometimes too much action. She never rehearses, she goes onstage in front of a bunch of horny lesbians, and thinks it'll just work. But it doesn't always.

[VO] WOMAN IN BAR: Sing a song or get off the stage.

SANDY: No worries little lady.

[*SANDY picks up a microphone.*]

KATE: Since when does the Crocodile Hunter sing?

SANDY: Croc Hunter goes Karaoke. This is for all you lovely ladies out there.

KATE: This is an alltime low... even for you.

[SANDY starts to sing]

[Like A Virgin

I made it through the wilderness

Somehow I made it through

Didn't know how lost I was until I found you

I was beat, incomplete, I'd been had I was sad and blue

But you made me feel, yeah you made me feel

Shiny and New

Like a virgin. Touched for the very first time.

Like a vir....gin, when your heart beats next to mine.]

[After these first few lines, KATE walks out. SANDY goes after her]

SANDY: Hey, Kate. Come on, don't be pissed off. It's my job.

KATE: Sandy, it's not a job.

SCENE 2 [Kate's Room.]

SANDY: I understand your paranoia about us living together, but I'm getting a bit tired of this single bed stuff.

KATE: You've got your own room – you could get a double bed... if you could afford one. And I'm not paranoid. I'm careful. No-one needs to know about my sexuality. What I do in my private life is my own business.

SANDY: Not that he is ever likely to see it, but I don't think your boss is gonna know you're a lesbian just because you have a double bed. Straight people have double beds. Most adults have double beds.

KATE: And if I want one, then I'll get one. Listen speaking of getting things. You know how we talked about you getting a job.

SANDY: I've got a job at the club.

KATE: Crossdressing once a week, and acting like an idiot onstage is not a job.

SANDY: No, it's a vocation.

KATE: No, it's a weird hobby. You need to get a job. You need to pay your share of the rent.

SANDY: Yeah... money. I have this great idea for making some cash. I'm going to learn how to juggle, and then go and do some street theatre. What do ya think?

KATE: Brilliant idea. While you're building up your circus skills, what about getting a real job? [KATE hands SANDY a newspaper, SANDY starts reading]. My boss told me the other day that he'd support my promotion.

SANDY: Great.

KATE: And that he was really interested in helping me get ahead in the company.

SANDY: Yep.

KATE: He said he'd like me to go with him on a trip to Canberra. It'll be several nights away.

SANDY: Yep.

KATE: We'll be working really closely together.

SANDY: Oh gross...

KATE: What?

SANDY: They've got jobs going at the abattoir – must be willing... to kill... regularly

KATE: So you have no problem with me going to Canberra with my boss, and staying overnight in a hotel?

SANDY: Why would I care?

KATE: Yeah why would you? Other women would be worried or jealous.

SANDY: Why would I be jealous, it's not like you'd want to root him. He's a bloke.

KATE: Yeah... but... oh forget it. I'm off to work, in my real job, with my real boss.

SCENE 3 [*Sandy's Room.*]

DIRECTOR'S NOTE: John Wayne Quotes as Sandy is acting out The Duke.

SCENE 4 [*A follow-on scene. Same location.*]

SANDY Do you want to hear about my job interview?

KATE: You have an interview?

SANDY: Well no, not yet, but I will do as soon as I ring up about it.

KATE: What kind of a job?

SANDY: The best kind, a well-paid one. Salary package commensurate with experience in the vicinity of 120,000 dollars.

KATE: 120,000 dollars. What kind of experience are they expecting you to have?

SANDY: Ah it's some kind of a management job.

KATE: What the hell do you know about management?

SANDY: Look management is easy, it's just organising stuff. I'm always organising stuff. I have to organise my costumes, remember to feed the dog. Plus management jobs pay well, if I have to do a job I don't want to do, I might as well get paid a lot for it.

KATE: And what would you be managing?

SANDY: Ah... [*reads further down the sheet*] ... sporting experience.... senior marketing profile... landscaping knowledge, Ah, a golf club.

KATE: Sandy, you can't be serious. Nobody is going to give you a job managing a golf club, that's a really skilled area and lots of people want jobs like that. You can't just walk in off the street and... wait... you've never even played golf. Remember that time that I asked you to go with me and you told me it was stupid hitting a little ball around a big patch of grass.

SANDY: It's a resort too, and entertainment is my field. There's only one thing you need to get a job.

KATE: Yep, experience.

SANDY: No, confidence.

KATE: Good luck.

SANDY: Thanks darl. I'll go and give em a ring.

[KATE is observing the following phone call]

SANDY: Hi, can I speak with Mr Barrows?

Mr Barrows. Sandy's my name. I'd like to come down there and talk to you about the management job. How does 2 p.m. tomorrow sound for you? Good... good, see you then. Married? Not really, why do you ask? *[listens to the answer]* No problem, see you tomorrow.

KATE: You just told him when he was seeing you.

SANDY: Yep.

KATE: What's wrong?

SANDY: I'm pretty sure he thought I was a bloke. When he asked if I was married and I asked him why - he said the major investor, an order of nuns apparently, have 'trust issues' with single men.

KATE: I wonder how their church feels about married lesbians? Sandy, you'll be turning up to an interview with no experience in anything for a senior position in management. I think being a woman and a lesbian is the least of your problems. Don't bother Sandy, we'll manage with the rent until you can find a job that's more appropriate.

SANDY: Nah that's alright. I have an idea. Besides, I'd like to make a lot of money, it sounds like it might even be fun.

SCENE 5 [*Sandy's Room. Transition to job interview at The Sandpit.*]

[Dressing for the job interview, selecting items etc – the intention is some resonance with the John Wayne scene– walking over and sitting down on a seat facing the audience]

SANDY: I'm a self-made man. I find out what is needed and I go out and get it. I think you've got an image problem here. I couldn't care less about golf, and you need to get people like me coming in here. You know... your average bloke. You

need to get us interested in taking up the game and sticking around afterwards to enjoy the resort, and spend some money. We need to target the people who aren't coming here yet. I've gotten a lot of insight into this kind of problem at a club I've been working at downtown. Since I started working there the numbers have... doubled. Yeah... doubled. We got there because we targeted the right market, women who wanted a certain something. I just have to find out what that something is that this club has to offer. I mean besides golf. Let's face it, that hasn't exactly been cutting it so far. Mr Barrows, I'm good at what I do, I'm enthusiastic and competent. I might not have a lot of experience on paper, or qualifications, but I can improve your numbers and make your company a whole lot of money. Oh and I have a great deal of respect for religion. And I can be tactful. But I'm sure that the Sisters expect a good return on their investment. Giving them one. That's my job. We need to look at the club, the entertainment, see what's missing. What's possible. How to head towards a successful future. I'm sure the Sisters will support me.

SCENE 6 [*Kate's room. KATE is pedaling fast on an exercise bike*]

SANDY: What ya doing?

KATE: Exercising.

SANDY: Healthy girl.

KATE: My boss suggested that I need to be a bit fitter in order to do my job better. Yeah, you know, lose a bit of weight?

SANDY: Yeah? Did you tell him to get fucked?

KATE: No, he's probably right. I do feel tired sometimes after work.

SANDY: That's because he makes you do his work as well as your own. He's exploiting you.

KATE: Well I tell you what, when you get off your arse and get a job, let's have this discussion again. In the meantime...

SANDY: Oh I forgot to tell you, I got the job.

KATE: What job?

SANDY: I am the new Executive Manager of The Sandpit Golf Club and Resort. You know they have an image problem. They need a whole new revamp, and I am just the man to do it.

KATE: You can't do the job Sandy, you don't have any experience. They gave you the job? [*Finally looks and sees SANDY dressed in a suit*] Just the man? Just the man Sandy? Wait, you went dressed like that? They think you're a man?

SANDY: Yeah, it'll be good training for my drag show, help me get the swish outta my hips.

KATE: But, you're talking about living this. Being a man isn't the same thing as being a drag king, Sandy. You have to be convincing as a man. There is no revelation.

SANDY: It's the ultimate in passing.

KATE: Its not going to happen. A bunch of drunken dykes on a Friday night seeing you from fifty feet away isn't the same thing as being convincing day in day out. No-one is going to believe that you're a man. You have too much faith in yourself.

SANDY: Or just enough.

SCENE 7 [*Sandy's Room. SANDY binds her breasts*]

KATE: This isn't how I'd imagined you preparing for your first day of work.

SANDY: Gee I never thought I'd be so thankful for saggy tits.

KATE: This can't be good for you.

SANDY: Are you going to complain or are you going to help me. Look... sorry... I really need your help.

KATE: Hands on the bedpost Scarlett.

SANDY: You could go tighter.

KATE: You won't be able to speak.

SANDY: No no, I'm fine. Thanks

KATE: You're welcome. So tell me, what's the grand plan?

SANDY: No grand plan. Good, honest hard work. Getting out there meeting the staff, listening to their concerns, getting to know everyone, and then developing a plan of action.

KATE: Sounds like you have this all figured out.

SANDY: Yep, I read the Idiot's Guide to Senior Management. I thought I should have some research under my belt before I went in today. I think it's all going to work out fine.

KATE: You look...

SANDY: If I was afraid of doing or sounding or looking stupid to some bugger, I couldn't wake up every morning. Look in the mirror [*the mirror that faces the audience*] feel the way I feel. How do I look?

KATE: Great.

SCENE 8 [*A transitional scene. Location not positioned.*]

SANDY: There isn't that much to being a man. I'm not even sure there's that much to being a woman. It's how you show, that's how it works. When I do drag for the women down at the club, they know I'm a woman. They know it because they look for the little signs, the way my hips move, or my height, the size of my hands or my feet. The shape of my body. My breasts. I used to like my breasts a lot, but they're a hassle with this. The clothes, are they real or are they over the top? They're waiting for a mistake. Perhaps they want me to fail, to show myself. Then there's the voice, which is easy. Like before, when Barrows thought I was a fella on the phone. I often fantasised that this is how it would start. I don't mean that I dreamed about becoming a man. But acting it out, playing around with it. Not a sexual fantasy, In a way that's just too easy, what you do behind closed doors... big deal, everyone has their own perversities. It's the public stuff, it's the performance. The transformation, but not the revelation. But the performance isn't fulfilling, they always know, or they find out. It's having a man not see me as a threat or a worry, or a mistake... but a friend. It's having a woman see me as a

strange curiosity that she doesn't quite understand. Unfathomable. Intriguing. It's knowing who I am, no matter what I'm wearing or concealing.

SCENE 9 [*The Sandpit*. Sr MARY FRANCES is sitting in the same table and chair, in the same configuration as KATE in act 1, scene 1. SANDY is addressing both SrMF and the audience]

SANDY: In summing up, I'd like to affirm my commitment to making this a significant and successful golf club and resort. We have a goldmine here Sisters, ... oh and a great opportunity to have a positive influence in the lives of your church's parishioners in our community.

SrMF: That was truly inspiring Mr O'Sullivan.

SANDY: Thankyou Sr Mary Frances, its great to see such a fine turnout from the Sisters.

SrMF: This is very important for the School. The financial side of things, not just the community aspect. We need to increase our funds.

SANDY: Sister, I'd think the Golf Course is a good investment for the church.

SrMF: We need to make money out of this investment. This could be a goldmine, but it isn't yet. Can I be frank?

SANDY: Sure.

SrMF: We run the risk of going out of business if we can't earn more revenue from our investment in this club.

SANDY: Nuns can go out of business?

SrMF: We could be relocated if the church thinks we aren't needed anymore. The numbers at the school have dropped, this area isn't exactly booming. But what we do is important.

SANDY: I'm sure it is Sister.

SrMF: We really need your expertise.

SANDY: Righto.

SCENE 10 [*To audience – This scene is transitional from The Sandpit to Sandy's Room]*

SANDY: I should be really excited about this. It's like an old movie. All I have to do is raise a lot of money and I can save the sisters, their school, and their good work. Save them from rack and ruin. Instead, I'm a bit worried. It's not that I don't think I can do it, but what if something goes wrong? I'm responsible for the whole lot, their success, the golf club, the resort, all those people's jobs, and the convent. [SANDY enters her room] I'm gonna have to have a great idea.

KATE: Great ideas aren't easy to come by. That's why they're great.

SANDY: I have great ideas every day.

KATE: Making them work can be even harder.

SANDY: Geeze, work with me here Kate.

KATE: Tell me an idea. A really great idea. A great workable idea.

SANDY: Ok... you're a woman who's familiar with road rage?

KATE: Yeas.

SANDY: When some fuckwit cuts you off at the traffic lights, whatdya feel like doing?

KATE: Mmm.

SANDY: Come on, play along, what do you feel like doing?

KATE: Yelling. Swearing.

SANDY: Yelling. Swearing. Yeah.

KATE: So I'm gonna make a million dollars by yelling at someone?

SANDY: No, by marketing a display unit for the front and rear of every car that flashes up phrases like 'fuck you', or 'learn to drive', or even 'thank you'. You'd make a million dollars. Everyone needs one. It's a great idea isn't it? Simple. Required. Effective. You're trying to find something wrong with it, aren't you? It's perfect.

KATE: I wonder how perfect you'd think it was after the first slew of litigation came through from roadragers taken to a newly heightened state. It'd cause murder and mayhem. It's not a great idea. It's the idea of a sociopath.

SANDY: Hey! Bill Gates is a sociopath. I'm a businessman... woman. You know Kate, not everything has to have a downside. Not even us.

KATE: I love you. I'm just worried about this. Nuns... you know you're probably headed for hell.

SANDY: Okay.

SCENE 11 [*Kate's Room.*]

[KATE comes in and SANDY is already sitting down on the bed fiddling with the guitar]

SANDY: Hey, how was your day? Mine was fantastic, I never realised that running a golf club could be this much fun. I had to organise the cleaning schedule, and do a presentation of my ideas to the board. They seem to like them all. It's terrific. And those nuns are great, really inspiring. I think I might be good at this job. So... I am celebrating by kicking back, playing some guitar, waiting for you to arrive, hey you didn't bring any beer did you?

[SANDY starts to sing and play 'Can't Help Falling in Love', a bit Elvisy sounding low in the background over KATE's speech below]

KATE: I went to university because I had to. My parents told me I should get a good education so I could be financially secure, and... happy. I hated Uni, but I worked bloody hard. Accounting isn't what I wanted to do with my life. But I knew it was practical, I knew that doing something more interesting would just give me a short-term fix. I had to think about my future. It's not like anyone was likely to come along and sweep me off my feet and look after me. I'm not pathetic, I didn't want that anyway. I wanted to be self sufficient, successful, secure. Not be an assistant my whole life. I got the sack.

SANDY: Eh?

KATE: My boss fired me today.

SANDY: Why?

KATE: Officially? Because he could. But the real reason is because I wouldn't have sex with him.

SANDY: What?

KATE: He's been hassling me for a while now.

SANDY: Why didn't you tell me?

KATE: You've been preoccupied.

SANDY: What happened Kate?

KATE: It started just before the trip to Canberra. He was charming at first and really seemed to want to help me. But I started to suspect something was up when he starting leaning in on me and just, you know, something changed. I was starting to get more nervous around him. He thought... I think he thought it was chemistry.

SANDY: Did you talk to his boss?

KATE: That isn't how it works. I work in a real place that has real ramifications for stepping outside of your roles. Not like *The Sandpit*, where anyone can be anything that they want to be.

SANDY: I don't think that's *The Sandpit* Katie, I think that's the world. Fight him.

KATE: I don't want to fight. I want a beer.

[SANDY plays a little more Can't Help Falling In Love]

SCENE 12 *[Sandy's Room.]*

SANDY: *[SANDY starts taking off her work clothes – KATE enters]*. I am over this binding. Bloody hell I thought bras were a hassle, this is painful. Still its nice to walk around and have people treat me differently, like I'm important, which of course I am. So... how's the job hunting going.

KATE: I went for an interview today. I was so nervous just before I needed to go to the toilet. I was in a hurry and I brushed past a woman who said to me, 'I think you have the wrong restroom, this is the ladies'. I didn't know what she meant at first. Then I realised. I said - 'I'm a woman'. She looked me up and down and she was embarrassed and so was I. After I went into the stall, I heard her and another woman laughing. All through the interview it was all I could think of. I just feel like crap. I don't want to hear about bloody Drag, Sandy.

SANDY: They'd have to be idiots to think you're a man. You're not even bound.

KATE: Why did I think you'd understand? I just want to be normal.

SANDY: Kate, you're about the normallest person I know. Excuse me sir. No worries mate. Mister, do you know the way to... Any woman with short hair, wearing jeans has had it at one time in their lives. It's no big deal. It's a reflection on them, it's their idea of what a woman is, what a man is. It doesn't mean anything.

KATE: It means something to me... It doesn't worry you at all does it?

SANDY: No.

KATE: Why not?

SANDY: I choose it.

KATE: I wish you didn't. The other night I dreamt it would all fall apart, everything you're doing.

SANDY: You should think about why you want me to fail. What's in it for you Katie?

KATE: Maybe I get you back.

SANDY: And maybe you don't. I love this job, I'm good at it. I love you and you look like a bloody woman. *[KATE exits the stage]*

SANDY: *[to audience]* I had a dream the other night too. In my dream I was the creator of a new world. But it wasn't an idealistic world where we got everything that we wanted. We had to fight, for everything – for food, our existence, our acceptance. I made the world and I still couldn't get rid of this stuff that binds her.

SCENE 13

[The Sandpit. SANDY putt-ing away]

Sr MF: Hello Mr O'Sullivan

SANDY: Hello Sister, always lovely to see you. How can I help?

Sr MF: I wonder if I could have a word about something very important to our investment in The Sandpit.

SANDY: Certainly Sister, have a seat. Do you like the plans we've suggested so far, theme nights, golfing events, family days?

Sr MF: Lesbians. How do you feel about lesbians?

SANDY: I never gave much thought to lesbians.

Sr MF: I haven't been sure of how to bring this up, but if you could hear me out.

SANDY: Of course. I think I know what you're going to say, and I'd like to explain everything. You see I needed to...

Sr MF: Did you know that golfing is the number one sport of lesbians?

SANDY: Um...no, I had no idea.

Sr MF: Yes I bought this... um... research material.

SANDY: Ah CURVE... oh yes a lesbian magazine is it?

Sr MF: Yes, there's an article on lesbians and golfing. I think we need to look at what we can do to appeal to this section of our community.

SANDY: Our community.

SrMF: Our spiritual community.

SANDY: Sister, correct me if I'm wrong, but doesn't your church have a problem with homosexuality?

Sr MF: Love the sinner, hate the sin, and while they are golfing they can't be fornicating, or whatever it is that they do... behind... closed doors. *[Clearly opening the magazine that SANDY has handed back and having a peek]*

SANDY: Yes sister, I'm still not sure how you think we might target the lesbian audience.

SrMF: Do you know what the number two sport is? Dancing.

SANDY: Well, not to be devil's... advocate, but... well, wouldn't that lead to fornication though Sister?

SrMF: We can't be responsible for the legal activities that grown adults get up to. Am I my brother's keeper?

SANDY: Aren't you? I just wondered if it might lead to...

SrMF: Well Mr O'Sullivan, I was thinking it might lead to us making a little more money at the bar. From my preliminary research, there is only one very shady club

in town that has lesbian nights, and I'm led to believe we have a great deal of lesbians in our town.

SANDY: I'll look into the matter. The church has no concerns.

SrMF: The church always has concerns. If we hadn't listened to the church Our primary concern with this investment... my primary concern is to make money. If we provide a safe place for the fallen in our community, how can it be wrong?

Act 2

SCENE 1 [*This scene is set 30 years ago, when SANDY and KATE were little girls – Location is not fixed, however the scene ends with a common dance area*]

KATE'S DAD: Oh... doesn't she look lovely

KATE'S MUM: Oh Darl, she just doesn't look good in a dress. She has those funny knees, like your mum. Katie, darling, off you go and put your slacks and jumper back on, there's a good girl. We'll tell them at the dance that I couldn't get to the dry cleaners before it shut.

[*transition to SANDY*]

SANDY'S MUM: Sandy what's taking you so long darling. We were meant to be at the party half an hour ago.

[*SANDY walks onstage dressed as a fairy*]

SANDY: Mum I can't go like this.

SANDY'S MUM: Oh darling, you look lovely.

SANDY: But I look like a fairy.

SANDY'S MUM: You are a fairy, you're my lovely fairy princess. Come on, do the dance.

[*This transitions to a common dance area – both little SANDY and little KATE are there - SANDY dances around the stage to some kind of ballet or bad dance music, this goes on for a few minutes, she is quite bad and is really enjoying herself – KATE notices her*]

SCENE 2 [*To Audience. A transitional scene – location not fixed.*]

SANDY: Jackie from the club called today. She asked me to do two more nights a week. An Elvis show and hosting Karaoke. I told her I was too busy with my new job. She asked me about it and I lied... told her I was working telephone sales. She said she'd heard a rumour I was starting up a rival club. I lied again. By the third time I lied, I found myself telling her that I wasn't sure I could even manage my weekly shows down there, that I was just too tired with the new job. That Kate

didn't approve. I blamed Kate. I've been worried someone will recognise me, make the connection, realise who and what I am. And now I'm inviting, encouraging lesbians into The Sandpit. It's not like I'm doing a drag show there, though that certainly would make a lot of money. But it's too big a risk. It's definitely a risk. With Kate not working, we need the money. I couldn't take a risk like this, it'd be wrong.

SCENE 3 [*Kate's Room*]

SANDY: Work was NOT good. It's really bloody hard.

KATE: Welcome to the real world.

SANDY: Everybody hates everybody else. I have never seen so many people complain about such petty stuff. One of the chefs actually complained because they didn't get a break every three hours.

KATE: I think that's a legal requirement Sandy.

SANDY: And everyone hates me right now.

KATE: Sounds like every workplace I've ever been in. Nobody likes the boss.

SANDY: But the boss is me. I'm likeable. Everyone likes me.

KATE: You're the bad guy, you're the one who tells everyone what to do, and stops them from doing their jobs.

SANDY: I encourage, I plan, I support, I nurture, I... had a meeting with Sr Mary Frances from the School last week. She has an idea for increasing our numbers at the Club. Actually I wish I could claim it as my great idea. It really could work.

KATE: Fantastic. What is it?

SANDY: She thinks we should be increasing our lesbian membership.

KATE: Lesbian? She said that? Wait, this isn't some idea of yours for turning The Sandpit into a Drag King venue is it?

SANDY: It was the Sister's idea. She wants to make money. At all costs.

KATE: So she'd lower herself to having sub-humans come into the club, as long as she gets our money.

SANDY: Yeah. It's a great idea isn't it?

KATE: Golfing? You know I read an article in CURVE that said that golfing was...

SANDY: Yes, number one sport of lesbians, yeah Sr Mary Frances read the same article. Apparently marketing is based on generalisations, when you make them in real life people call you prejudiced, but I get to make them all the time in this job and they are just called 'key assumptions'.

KATE: So... just golfing? A tournament, or a special women's event. It sounds great.

SANDY: Actually there is a bit more to it. Sr Mary Frances seems to think that we'd make more money if we practiced the second most popular sport of lesbians. Before you say it, I thought it was cunnilingus too, but apparently it's... dancing.

KATE: A lesbian dance?

SANDY: Or perhaps a drag show. Well we know they're popular - Jackie's club is turning women away. And the dance nights never draw a crowd.

KATE: Who'll do the drag?

SANDY: I'll find someone.

KATE: Not you.

SANDY: Of course not. Despite the crap today, I actually like my job.

SCENE 4 [Radio Jingle can set the scene. Radio Station. To audience as JOCK]

SANDY: Thanks for asking me into the studio today. I've come here to talk about The Sandpit Golf Club and Resort. Despite having a terrific golf course, a great program and lots of fun events, we are having trouble reaching some sectors of our community. So we are organising theme events, starting with a Women Only Event including a Drag King Show at our lovely family bistro. Let me tell you a little about Drag King, its amazing how many people haven't heard about it. There's one school of thought that Drag is little more than fashion accessorizing, you know dildos and harnesses notwithstanding, basically it's just girls dressed as boys putting on a show for girls. But it's also good, wholesome entertainment. So come on along, tonight is the first of many wonderful events at The Sandpit.

RADIO JOCK: Thanks Mr O'Sullivan, perhaps we should take one of the calls that are lighting up our switchboard.

SCENE 5 [*The Sandpit.*]

Sr MF: Mr O'Sullivan, I just heard the radio show.

SANDY: Yes, to be honest I'm a little worried about the response I got... not quite what I expected... I...

Sr MF: I've got a bigger problem. The other sisters heard tonight is a 'Women Only' event and have asked to switch their regular luncheon to tonight's show.

SANDY: They can't come to the show. 'Women Only' means lesbian. What do they think it means?

Sr MF: A night where women get together and dance. I'm not sure. I haven't been entirely honest with them about this marketing plan of ours.

SANDY: Why do they think women want to dance together? [*It needs to be around this point that Sr MF starts to notice something about SANDY*]

Sr MF: I don't know... Mr O'Sullivan, what's going to happen tonight?

SANDY: It's not debauchery sister, it's just a nightclub. They'll just be women.

Sr MF: But you won't be there.

SANDY: Of course, right on the door.

Sr MF: But it's women only.

SANDY: Yes... but... of course it is. Quite right. I know someone, a woman, who has experience in event's management. She'll bring it together. She'll sort it out. She can MC it, manage the night.

SrMF: I'll leave you to it.

SANDY: Everything's going to be alright Sister.

SrMF: Thanks Sandy. [*exits stage, SANDY picks up the phone*]

SANDY: Hello. I need to book a costume for tonight, actually a few.

SCENE 6 [*Kate's Room.*]

SANDY: I had it all organised, but it's all coming apart.

KATE: What's wrong?

SANDY: The show... tonight... the show is... the Sisters are coming to the show.

KATE: Sisters? The nuns? Oh dear.

SANDY: Yeah they were meant to, apparently they like the idea of a women only night.

KATE: I thought Sr Mary Frances was in on it. She knows what the show is, doesn't she?

SANDY: Maybe the nuns won't realise. They'll just think all the girls are just really really good friends, a girl's night out.

KATE: Really good friends with tongues down each other's throats, and a peppering of butches and femmes...

SANDY: Lesbians and Nuns, at the same time. This is like bad hetero porno. I can't do it. I can't do drag in front of nuns, not these nuns. I think it'd be wrong.

KATE: You said it yourself. Sr Mary Frances needs you. Do you think she's going to care if you're really a lesbian? You're just going to have to go through with it?

SANDY: No no, my life is already like a twisted version of Victor/Victoria... oh Julie Andrews... nuns... The Sound of Music. I think I'm hyperventilating. No, I'm not doing it. Wait, are you talking me into it?

KATE: Sandy, I think it's really important that you do this.

SANDY: You don't think I'll go to hell?

KATE: You are trying to help the nuns, and the club to be successful, how could it be wrong?

SANDY: Ok then. What I really need is a drag character that those nuns are just gonna love. Who do nuns really really love?

KATE: No, no you can't do Jesus.

SANDY: Yeah, it's a bit hard to hide my tits while I'm wearing a loincloth, its part of the reason I never did Gandhi. Wait. I think I've got it.

KATE: You'll be great.

SANDY: Thanks. Really, thanks.

KATE: Do you need a hand?

SANDY: Oh yeah. Oh yeah, I have an idea.

KATE: I'll call the club and tell them I'm helping you out?

SANDY: Great. Thanks. [SANDY exits stage – she doesn't hear the phone conversation]

KATE: Hello Sr Mary Frances, I'm Sandy's partner, Kate. Sandy asked me to ring to let you know that I'd be helping her out. I look forward to meeting you too.

SCENE 7 [*The Sandpit*. SANDY is dressed as Bing Crosby in golfing gear]

KATE: Who is this then?

[SANDY strikes a pose: pipe, then golfing and prancing around]

SANDY: Boobooboobooboom

KATE: No idea.

SANDY: Bing Crosby.

KATE: Aren't you a bit fat? And short?

SANDY: Well I had to find someone else that nuns would love. All nuns love Bing Crosby, it's a well-documented fact. He won an academy award playing a priest, and nuns love priests... and Bing Crosby. Plus, the golf connection. Get it?

Sandy sings *Don't Fence Me In*

SCENE 8 [*The Sandpit*.]

KATE: Sandy, you are going to have to get over there and do something about those bloody nuns. They are really putting a downer on the night. They keep handing out 'literature', one of the girls thought they were guys in drag and started pulling on their 'chains' if you know what I mean. [KATE performs the rest of the dialog in the scene behind a screen]

SANDY: Actually I don't, and I don't think I want to know. I'm trying to keep clear of the nuns, in case they recognise me.

KATE: Sandy, even I barely recognise you.

SANDY: Do I look like a guy in drag? Do you think I look convincing?

KATE: Ok this is fresh, you're worried about whether you pass as a woman? Yeah... you look like a woman.

SANDY: Hi Ladies and Sisters, thanks for coming this evening. Hasn't the night been wonderful so far? I'd like to welcome you to The Sandpit, to the first of many fabulous evenings. Don't forget, we have a bondage and discipline tent over near the putting range, in case you feel the need to show a little restraint on your way to the carpark. Let's continue with our star performer - the very spunky... oh no introduction required.

[KATE comes onstage dressed in drag and begins to sing]

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I will survive. Drag Scene with Kate in boydrag.

SCENE 9 [*Outside The Sandpit.*]

SANDY: So... is this a happy ending?

KATE: I finally have you in a dress.

SANDY: This dress is fleeting. Tomorrow I am back to wearing a suit. I expect to have this job for at least until the close of business tomorrow, and I'll be wearing a suit the entire time. Though I might give binding a miss.

KATE: So you don't mind losing your job?

SANDY: Nah, I can always find another one. And so can you.

KATE: It needs a bit of work, but you could always take up juggling.

SANDY: Really?

KATE: No. I still think street theatre isn't a real job. Let me put you out of your misery. Sister Mary Frances told me that she wasn't going to do you in to Barrows. You can keep your job. She really is a good woman, she comes across like it's all about the money, but I think she has the best of intentions.

SANDY: I don't know if I could live a lie like this forever. Pretending to be a man, worrying about being found out, always looking over my shoulder.

KATE: Yeah right. Put your suit on tomorrow, go to work, and if the subject comes up... deny everything. It's my new approach.

SANDY: Wouldn't that be dishonest? Wrong?

Kate and Sandy kiss

[Doom Doom Car Noise and voice yelled out from the passing car

[VO] CAR HOON: Ya fucken poofers

KATE: Yeah... close.

APPENDIX 3: Field Research Interview Schedule A and B

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT SCHEDULE A

The process for conducting the interviews include:

The process for conducting the interviews include:

- i. Introduction of the Researcher
- ii. Providing participants with details about the interview process including:
 - o Confidentiality and Anonymity
 - o Place to conduct the interview
 - o Conditions and terms of the research including avenues for complaints
 - o Transcribing and editing the interviews
 - o Reflecting on the research process
 - o Their option to withdraw at any stage of the research process
- iii. Discussion with participants following a semi-structured interview process, using the identified questions listed below;

MEDIA

- 1) Do you go to the theatre here in?
- 1a) What kind of theatre do you see locally?
- 2) Do you listen to live music?
- 2a) What kind of music would you go out to hear?
- 3) Do you go out to see other kinds of performances locally, alternative performances for example?
- 4) Do you watch regional television or listen to regional radio?

REPRESENTATION/VISIBILITY

- 5) Do you feel that lesbians are represented in theatre productions that you see locally?
- 5a) If so, how?
- 5b) If not, do you feel that there are ways that they might be represented?
- 6) Will you go to see a lesbian musician or performer when they play here?
- 6a) What makes you want to see them?
- 7) Do you feel that lesbians are represented on regional television and radio?
- 7a) If so, how?

- 7b) If not, do you feel that there are ways that they might be represented?
- 8) Do you think that a performer who is a lesbian has a responsibility to identify their sexuality to their audience?

LESBIAN PERFORMERS

- 9) If a female performer does not identify herself as a lesbian, do you feel able to determine her sexuality?
- 9a) Do you think there are indicators?
- 10) Do you feel that there is a difference in visibility between performers who are being themselves (e.g, a musician), and performers who are playing a role (e.g., an actor)?
- 11) Can you suggest any local lesbian performers?
- 12) Can you suggest any national or international lesbian performers?

IDENTITY

- 13) How do you self identify in terms of your sexuality?
- 14) Would you like to comment on how others respond to your identity, if at all?
- 15) Have you ever been interested in performing?
- 15a) Has your lesbian identity, had an impact on this decision?

iv. The Researcher will thank each community member for agreeing to participate.

PERFORMER PARTICIPANT SCHEDULE B

The process for conducting the interviews include:

- i. Introduction of the Researcher
- ii. Providing participants with details about the interview process including:
 - o Confidentiality and Anonymity
 - o Place to conduct the interview
 - o Conditions and terms of the research including avenues for complaints
 - o Transcribing and editing the interviews
 - o Reflecting on the research process
 - o Their option to withdraw at any stage of the research process
- iii. Discussion with participants following a semi-structured interview process, using the identified questions listed below;

IDENTITY

- 1) How would you describe your performance work?
- 2) Do you usually play another character or yourself in your work?
- 3) Do you identify as a lesbian performer?
- 3a) What does this mean to you?
- 4) Are you 'out' as a lesbian to your audience?
- 4a) How does this manifest in performance?

VISIBILITY

- 5) How do you believe your audience responds to your lesbian identity, if at all?
- 6) Do you believe that an audience would be able to determine your sexuality through your performance work?
- 6a) If so, how?
- 7) Do you believe that there is any significance in revealing your lesbian identity to your audience?
- 8) Do you believe that being a lesbian had an effect on the performance work you undertake?
- 9) Do you believe that being a lesbian has had an effect on the performance work you are offered?

LESBIAN COMMUNITY

- 10) Do you believe that you are particularly supported by the lesbian community in the development of your performance work?

11) Do you believe that the lesbian community has placed any expectations on your performance work?

12) Have you worked with/alongside other local lesbian performers?

OPEN STATEMENT

13) Would you like to make a statement in response to any of these questions?

iv. The Researcher will thank each performer for agreeing to participate.