

FLUID STATES – Performances of UnKnowing

by [Anna Koenigshofer](#) | May 20, 2016 | [News from PSi](#)

Psi 21 explores a distributed model of a global conference. For more information: www.fluidstates.org.

Would you like to know more about performance studies, paradigms and practices beyond your own backyard? Would you like to present your work to a global audience of artists, scholars, activists and communities? Bosnia? Ethiopia? Rarotonga? Beyond?

In 2015, Performance Studies international (PSi) presents PSi #21 Fluid States: Performances of UnKnowing, a decentralized conference which – instead of inviting participants to a single location – invites them to participate live or online in local conference, symposium and performance programs across Africa, Asia, Europe, Americas and the Pacific throughout the year

- **Panama: Isthmus/Zone/Canal**, Panama, Panama City, January 2015
- **Crossing Boundaries: East Africa Home/Security**, Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, February 2015
- **Rethinking Labour & The Creative Economy**, India, New Dehli, February 2015
- **Four Faces of Omarska**, Bosnia, Prijedor, March 2015
- **Deep Anatomy**, Bahamas, Dean's Blue Hole Long Island, April 2015
- **Aural Lighthouses**, Greece, Santorini, May 2015
- **Fluid States North**, Greenland, Nuuk; Faroe Islands, Torshavn; Denmark, Copenhagen, June 2015
- **Fluid States of Europeanness**, Romania, Cluj, July 2015
- **Moana Hurihanga: Sea Change**, Cook Islands, Rarotonga, July 2015
- **Beyond Contamination**, Japan, Tohoku, August 2015
- **Performing Turtle Island**, Canada, Montreal, September 2015
- **Trans-Montreal**, Canada, Montreal, September 2015
- **Movement forms of an Island Continent**, Australia, Melbourne, October 2015
- **Sa Tagilid na Yuta: On Tilted Earth**, Philippines, Manilla, November 2015
- **In-flux, In-stability, In-sensitivity**, Lebanon, Beirut, December 2015

The dramaturgical device that connects the locations in PSi#21 Fluid States is an oceanic metaphor. Each local cluster is an island, which creates a vessel to send an item –image, text, artefact or performance – to dock at other islands, who then engage with it as part of their own live and online activities.

An online news platform called the Log, after a ship's log or diary, will make these items, together with other provocations, papers, panels and performances from each location's events, available to PSi's worldwide community of scholars, artists, activists and students.

Artists, scholars, activists, students and community members can participate in one or more of the PSi #21 Fluid States programs as a presenter, panellist or performer, or as a correspondent presenting the outcomes of an artistic/research residency at the program locations on the Log, or as a combination of both.

Those interested in participating can visit the Log at www.fluidstates.org, where calls for presenters, panellists, performers and correspondents are now available.

Those interested in joining the Log's news list to stay up-to-date with programs, participation opportunities, publication opportunities and more can write to info@fluidstates.org.

Those wanting discuss the form their participation might take further before submitting their proposal can contact the location convenors listed on the Log, or the PSi #21 Fluid States central convenors at info@fluidstates.org.

> www.fluidstates.org

theme

The map of the world is usually perceived as an arrangement of continents, dominated by the land and defined territories, *terra firma* and borders. But what if we undertake a perceptive and conceptual reversal, and replace continents with seas, and plant oceans, such as the Pacific, in the center, instead of Europe? What if we substitute the earth with water, solid states with fluid ones? How can such a shift or turn influence our understanding and performance of knowledge, of art and identity?

Rather than defining global regions through the received cartographic flatlands of continents and nations, **Fluid States** are assembled around the more fluid and shifting oceanic grounds of the seas that separate and bind territorial margins: the Pacific, Atlantic, Indian, Arctic and Southern Oceans, as well as subsidiary bodies of water such as the Mediterranean, Caribbean, Baltic and South China Seas, and connecting bodies of water such as the Panama Canal and Saint Lawrence Seaway. **Fluid States** emphasizes the fluxes, flows and currents that circulate around and in between fixed, stratified, centralized cartographies of knowledge: deep and treacherous spaces that are in-between and in-motion and thus have the potential to problematize boundaries and remap relations and limits of un/knowning.

How do we perform what we assume we know? How do we respond to, and become responsible towards, the particularities of the local, cultural, historical, ideological, social and political conditions of others' performances, as well as of our own? In what ways does performance question and shift, or confirm and standardize the elements, structure and operational modes of the knowledge system (its signification protocols, discourse formations, transformative potentials, methodologies, institutions and distribution)? In what way is the unknown implied within the knowledge system, albeit isolated on its margins or excluded from its sights, institutions and market? Is it conditioned by difference, specificity, complexity, locality and 'liminality', or does it carry its own unknown logics, beyond the relational and potentially always colonized idea of the 'Other'?

Fluid States enact '**Performances of UnKnowing**', rather than renditions of the 'known' within dominant social and ideological paradigms, or, indeed, colonialist ideas of the 'unknown'.

Fluid States rely on locally situated formats and strategies to encounter and convey **Performances of UnKnowing** as opposed to the sanctioned systems of knowledge, their universal claims and imperial politics.

Fluid States: Performances of UnKnowing is not envisioned as a global and all-inclusive theme but a permeable frame exposed to manifold responses and challenges. Each regional cluster, as co-organizers, has developed distinctive themes generated through the specific environmental, social, cultural and political circumstances of their locality.

PSi #21 Fluid States - Australia, Conditions of mobility: relations, dynamics and performative interventions by Jacquie Naismith

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Conditions of mobility: relations, dynamics and performative interventions by Jacquie Naismith, Australia cluster Visiting Correspondent

Performing Mobilities, the Australian response to the Fluid States- Performances of Unknowing series of dispersed conferences, unfolded in Melbourne across a seven-week passage of time and space. Theorised through a structure of three discrete but overlapping programme vehicles – Passages (journey based projects), Traces (gallery expositions) and Assembly (the symposium), Performing Mobilities was experienced as a continuum of embodied experiences, documented projects and symposium presentations and performances. Together these three vehicles mobilised the Performing Mobilities project, opening spaces for multiple kinds of connections and resonances to occur. Encompassing different relationships between time, experience, embodiment and representation, this conceptually layered programme was inclusive of a wide spectrum of critical creative practices. These were linked by a shared concern with how mobilities, significant within Australia and globalised contexts, might be performed.

Arriving in Melbourne early in the week to experience some of the Passages events before the Assembly began coincided with a moment in which the climate performed its own impromptu experience for the mobile conference attendee travelling from southern latitudes. A hot northerly wind, its heat welcoming and challenging the body, insisted on the climatic specificity of place. Different to the northerly at home, this wind displayed the weather forces of an island continent, connecting the periphery to the heat of its desert origin. This conditioning of Melbourne's urban atmosphere, an element of the 'unknown' in the conception of the performances, assertively interacted with how I experienced them.

Walking with Dee Heddon and listening to the verbatim play *Going for a Walk*, set in Bristol with self identified disabled participants with wheelchair enabled mobility, provoked insights into the spectrum of experiences and definitions of 'walking' beyond that of the dominant paradigm of the pedestrian. Experiencing the audio play while walking in inner city Melbourne relocated performer and audience in an engaging interweaving of two different sites and kinds of mobilities. Listening to performers' experiences of using wheels to negotiate terrain heightened an awareness of surfaces and transitions in the immediate environment. These reflections underscored the power of "walking with" [1] in an interdependent relationship, that as Dee Heddon's study found, enabled all kinds of bodies to enjoy walking as activity that could enhance wellbeing and resilience.

By Wednesday the hot wind was flicking into every corner releasing fresh pollen from the plane trees and dispersing it up and down Swanston Street to create hay fever conditions amongst pedestrians and tram passengers. Everywhere eyes were streaming and membranes agitated. Arriving at the University of Melbourne I was pleased to locate and enter the sheltered orderliness of the historic botanical System Garden. Eddie Paterson and Lara Steven's audio performance *True Garden* was a lyrical interpretation of this historic garden, drawing together the rigid structures of taxonomy and classification with the embodied emotional experience of the enclosed garden as articulated by Helene Cixous in *Un Ural Jardin* (1971). While a long established teaching resource for botanical science at the university, as I moved around each section of the garden listening to the performance, I observed the garden's popularity as social space. Its evocative qualities as a space set apart, with fully grown species now creating shaded habitats, were claimed by students seeking privacy within its perimeters.

Several of the Passages performances engaged with the discourses of tourism, in particular the script and performance of the tour. These included Kim Donaldson's refreshing look at a selection of Melbourne workspaces in her Technotopia Tours- Working Melbourne programme. This reflexive engagement with the discourse of the tour gave participants the opportunity to don a high visibility vest, identify as part of a tour group, and see a backstage view of urban life in Melbourne that featured working operations. I was fortunate to participate in The Recycling Tour - a tour of the Degraeves Street recycling and composting plant- an impressive small-scale localised facility processing food waste into highly fertile compost. This tour performance offered a fascinating insight into the production and consumption cycles at work behind the front-stage laneway tourist experience for which Melbourne is now so well known. Work and its labour was also a central concern of the performance by Julieanna Preston and Jen Archer Martin. Bit-u-men at Work drew attention to the physical labour of road building and repair in service of the primary infrastructure of the road. The audience observed the artist's body perform as hybrid human/machine in intense relationship with the material of asphalt bitumen, attending to the surface's relentless demand for repair. Performed over an extended period of time across dusk and into the night, the physical work of the performance magnified relationships between matter, mobility and labour. A rich programme of journey based experiences; the Passages mobile performances were repeated and interwoven throughout the Assembly programme. They traversed diverse territories and terrains, disrupting dominant discourses to open up new interpretive spaces for encountering, engaging with and coming to know Melbourne places.

While the performance of the Passages projects began ten days before the Assembly programme, the Traces exhibition, dispersed between the RMIT and Margaret Lawrence galleries, reached further back in time, documenting and representing projects that had been in progress across the year. These investigations of matter, space, time, mobility and subjectivity drew together a spectrum of relationships between place, subject and mobility. Works including David Thomas and Laurene Vaughan's Taking a Line for a Walk, connected the two sites both through the movement of objects between them and the cues at each site - this involved the viewer/participant in a process of piecing together the parts. Open Spatial Workshop's Fault used a sea lily fossil excavated from a local former brick works site to key into the vast timespan of the history of site, matter and place. At the opening of the Margaret Lawrence Gallery component of the Traces exhibition I was fortunate to have the opportunity to view the Origin- Transit-Destination #2 project, a video installation by Australian Performance Exchange and asylum seeking artists. This powerful and emotionally moving documentation of a sea journey experienced by asylum seekers in transit, presented the human reality of displacement. This provided another opportunity to experience specific conditions of mobility through the eyes of another's experience, opening a space for the contexts, politics and experiences of forced mobilities to be addressed at the symposium.

Assembly: symposium

Unsettling conventional forms, the Assembly programme was strategically structured by its movement from site to site, within and across the four days of the symposium. The plenary session opened on Thursday at Docklands Library where we were formally welcomed to country by Aunty Joy Murphy - connecting the conference participants to aboriginal understandings of place and inviting them to acknowledge the Kulin nation groups as aboriginal custodians of the area. This welcome and acknowledgment opened a space for discussing the immobilisation of aboriginal culture in 20th century Australia, and the local specificity of politics of mobility- here in Australia its relevance grounded and so deeply embedded in a shifting sediment of relations between indigene and settler. Bruce Pascoe followed with a presentation of research on the extent of aboriginal agriculture in the 18th century, challenging the dominant construction of the Australian aborigine as a nomadic race. Aunty Joy Murphy's discussion of the spiritual and social significance of the relationship between fresh water and salt water in aboriginal culture was to foreground the next movement of the day when conference participants were transported by boat from Docklands to the landing at Birrarung Marr. During that journey the boats crossed the site where the fresh water of the Yarra River meets the salt water of the sea. Passengers were given gum leaves and ochre for dispersal at the place where river and tidal flows merged, enabling them to participate in a performative acknowledgment of an aboriginal understanding of place, matter and water. I visualised flows and forces of fresh and salt water coming together as I watched the leaves disappear into the wake. The image of a small flotilla of boats heading up the Yarra River,

now bounded at its former estuarine edges by fingers of reclaimed land and high-rise structures, stays with me.

Unfolding in a carefully ordered daily rhythm of assembling, disassembling and re-assembling, the conference organisers' vision was evident in the detailed consideration of conference choreography, scripting in the attendees as co-producers of the event. This programmatic consistency was considered across all elements of the event including the design of the printed material and the artfully considered conference dinner performed as mobile feast. As Kim Sargent-Wishart noted in her paper on Sunday morning, *Cycles of dispersal and coherence*, in which she theorised and articulated these cycles through choreographic practice, participation in the conference was itself a movement between these processes. Shifting between sites, and moving co-participants by foot, wheels, and vessels, these sequences of relocation and regrouping tactically embedded practices of mobility into the conference script and form - always reminding us that within the mobilities paradigm, the ground is shifting.

The power of performance practices to heighten the social construction of mobility's counterpart, immobility, was also powerfully emphasised at the Assembly. Bree Hadley's paper *Performing Mobility/ Protesting Immobility*, highlighted the ways in which access structures in built environments continued to reproduce immobility for those with disabilities by their design for pedestrian mobility, rather than accommodating the capacities of different kinds of bodies. Using the example of the disabled car-parking space – a site of designated use at times disregarded by the general public, she demonstrated the power of protest performance as strategy to draw attention to the social practices that constrain mobility for differently abled bodies.

While the aesthetic and social dimensions of performing mobilities/immobilities were addressed, the rhetorical and political implications of territories, borders, enforced mobilities and subjectivities in globalised contexts were also unpacked in the Assembly programme. The power of performance design to intervene as strategy of resistance to the authority of the border structure was emphasized by Dorita Hannah in her paper *In Freedom's Name: transversal encounters on the border line*, and supported by a number of compelling examples. Sally Sussman and Annemaree Dalziel of Australian Performance Exchange outlined the potential of their model of the "mobile performance structure" [2], to provide a space for asylum seeker artists to voice their experiences, and heighten public awareness of their realities.

Unravelling processes of placing, displacing, emplacing, longing and belonging, mobility and immobility – a plethora of perspectives have shaped the space across and between performance and mobility – enworlding subjectivities and places in ways that critical creative practices do so well. This made for an extraordinary conference experience where the fertility of interdisciplinary scholarship was actively mobilised in a highly productive space of practice, theory and embodied knowing.

Endnotes:

[1] Heddon, D. (2015). *Walking Interconnections: Performing conversations of sustainability*, *Performing Mobilities Programme* (p. 23). Melbourne: RMIT.

[2] Sussman, S., & Dalziel A. (2015). *Forced Mobility with a Mobile Performance Structure: Australian Performance Exchange's Origin-Transit-Destination*, *Performing Mobilities Programme* (p. 60). Melbourne: RMIT.

Reference:

Naismith, J.J. (2016) "Fluid States Melbourne Report #3", *Conditions of mobility: relations, dynamics and performative interventions*, PSi #21 *Fluid States: Performances of UnKnowing LOG*, ed. Marin Blazevic, Bree Hadley and Nina Gojic, *Performance Studies international (PSi)*, 1 January 2015-31 December 2015, available <http://fluidstates.org/article.php?id=208>

PSi #21 Fluid States - Philippines, Living on Tilted Earth, in the ring of fire and raging storms Dealing with disaster, via performance - by Susan Claire Agbayani

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SOMEWHERE in Baclayon, Bohol lies buried the remains of a blue whale. Where did the blue whale come from? And why did it end up on the shores of Baclayon, Bohol? Twenty years after it was buried, its bones will be displayed by townsfolk above the spot where it lies underneath. This Dr. Catherine Diamond of Soochow University of Taiwan found out one afternoon while taking a stroll at the beach across our quarters at Homestay de Bai Bed and Breakfast. It made us think about history -- time passing, and how we mark it -- as well as the connections people make with their environment.

Last year, a group of artist-scholars journeyed to and through 51 towns and cities in the archipelago: on foot, and via tricycle/ sidecar, jeepney, van, bus and boat – “rolling on and rolling off” from one site to the next -- to investigate resilience as a response to disaster via performance. We went to the Visayas in March, Luzon in April, then finally Mindanao in July in a span of eight weeks, spread over four months. Thus, the voyage name of “Fluid States: RoRo Journeys.”

Performance Studies International (PSi) -- the worldwide professional association of artists, scholars and audiences interested in performing arts, culture and creativity -- throughout last year held PSi#21: Fluid States: Performances of UnKnowing, a festival of conferences, symposia and performances across Europe, Africa, America, Asia, Australasia and the Pacific.

The Philippine Cluster of this global project was PSi#21 Philippines: Performance, Disaster, and Resilience in Archipelagic Space, which was co-organized in the Philippines with the Committee on Dramatic Arts (CDA) of the National Commission for the Culture and the Arts (NCCA) and De La Salle University (DLSU). The journeys included interactions and workshops with disaster-affected communities and theater groups, and performances and conferences in key sites.

Visayas

The RoRo Journeys kicked off via its Visayan leg in March, covering Leyte, Samar, Cebu, Bohol, Negros and Panay islands; ending on April 15. Our first stop was Leyte, with a program organized by Joycie Dorado Alegre and UP Visayas Tacloban. Our team visited survivors of Typhoon Yolanda on Ground Zero in Tacloban, Leyte and the historic site Balangiga, Samar; interacted with members of Sirang Theater Ensemble of Leyte Normal University in Tacloban City, the Palo Culture and Arts Organization (PCAO) of Palo, Leyte and members of the Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA) working with PCAO on a post-disaster project. We also immersed with women weavers of Basey, Samar.

In Bohol, we listened to Gardy Labad, one of the prime movers of the arts/culture scene in Bohol, local historian Marianito Luspo and Bohol Local Development Foundation president Nestor Pestelos. In Bacolod, we learned about sugar, the plight of the sugar workers, the role of the church, and the work of Negros artists from Roque Hofilena, Cecille Nava, and Bishop Alminaza. We spoke with Mayor Viscuso de Lira of Balangiga, Samar, Mayor Chris Escario of Bantayan, Cebu, and Gov. Alfredo Maranon, Jr. of Negros Occidental. The Capiz Tourism Office hosted us during their Capiz-tahan.

The team watched a community theater show in Santa Fe, Bantayan Island, performances by UP Ideopraxist in UP Visayas Tacloban, Kasing Sining in Baclayon, Bohol, Jao Mobile Theater/ Visayan Mission Confraternity in Jao Island, Bohol, Youth Advocates Through Theater Arts (YATTA) in Dumaguete, Negros Oriental, and Dagway Sigmahanon in Roxas City, Capiz.

In Negros Occidental, we watched performances of and interacted with members of Teatro

Obrero in Escalante, Christian Community Theater in Silay City, Kanlaon Theater Guild of Colegio San Agustin, Kalingaw Ang Teatro Hiligaynon, and Maskara Theater Ensemble of University of St. La Salle (USLS) in Bacolod City and Little Theater of the University of San Agustin in Iloilo City.

We observed Holy Week processions in Bantayan Island, Cebu and Catholic Easter practices “hugos” and “salubong” in Baclayon, Bohol. We visited a Spanish fort in Madrardejos, Bantayan Island; the cockpit-turned-theater Teatro Porvenir in Bohol; the Church of the Angry Christ in Victorias City; the Gaston Mansion, Museo Negrense, Balay Negros Museum, and Gallery Orange in Bacolod City, Casa Mariquit in Iloilo City and the Basura Garden in Balete, Aklan; then attended conferences at UP Visayas Tacloban, Museo Negrense of USLS in Bacolod City.

Luzon

The Luzon journey took us to Baguio, Bontoc, Sagada, Banaue, Tarlac, Pampanga, Bulacan, Manila, Laguna, Batangas, and Naga and Legazpi from April 20-May 12. We interacted with local artists, visited arts and performance hubs, museums and galleries in Baguio. We listened to Art Tibaldo, Luchie Maranan, and Padma Perez talk about lessons from the 1990 earthquake. We watched a performance by the Tanghalang SLU of St. Louis University, met with Dap-ayan ti Kultura iti Kordilyera (DKK) and Obon di Malayad groups in Bontoc, participated in the Macliing Dulag Memorial activities in Bauko, Mountain Province and got acquainted with TADEK and the Dulaang UP Baguio. And we witnessed the Lang-ay Festival of Mountain Province and the Imbahay Festival in Banaue. Going down to Tarlac, we had a workshop with children of the Abelling community in San Jose and learned about their Anito Festival.

We visited the site of the Lenten crucifixion rituals in Cutud, and a church half-buried in ash in Bacolor, Pampanga; met with Barasoain Kalinangan Foundation, Inc. and visited the Barasoain church and its history museum. On our way south we participated in the Labor Day march and rally in Manila, and interacted with ARTIST, Inc. in Laguna. Letran Calamba hosted our forum on flood stories and resilience around the lake. In Naga City we joined the launching event of the Susog Salog advocacy for the Naga River and in Legazpi we immersed in the community theater activities of Sining Banwa.

Mindanao

In Mindanao, we visited Sama-Badjao relocation sites through the Ateneo de Zamboanga Center for Culture and the Arts. We traveled to Buug where Bai Labi Sonita Ryde taught us dances of the Subanen; and in Pagadian the St. Columban College offered us performances of their theater group and choir. With local partners we visited the Cotta pilgrimage site in Ozamiz, the Dapit Alim Meditation Center in Lanao del Norte, Padian Market in Marawi, the Xavier Ecoville resettlement for typhoon Sendong survivors in Cagayan de Oro, the T’Boli School of Living Traditions in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato, and the Museo Davaoeno in Davao City.

We watched performances by Teatro Guindegan of La Salle University Ozamiz City; the Integrated Performing Arts Guild in Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology, Sining Kambayoka at MSU-Marawi, Xavier Stage and other groups of the Xavier Culture and Arts Center, Sining Kabpapagriya Ensemble of MSU-General Santos, and Teatro Humanidades of Ateneo de Davao. Also in Davao we had a forum at the Dominican Mission house with Kublai Millan and other artists based there.

In many of these places, we met with Yakan, Sama, Subanen, T’Boli, Talaandig, and B’laan communities and the Badjao village in Matina, Davao. We went to the Palamadani First Moro Arts Festival at General Santos City and witnessed part of the first B’laan Day, all courtesy of the Kalimudan Arts Center. At the “theater and spirituality” conference of La Salle University-Ozamiz, we learned about the work of Fr. Larry Helar, Fr. Dong Galenzoga, and Br. Karl Gaspar. And at Cagayan de Oro, we participated in the conference of the MINDULANI Theater Network coming to grips with the challenges of theater work in Mindanao.

Recurring themes: Water, Bells

Clearly, one of the recurring themes during our voyage was “water” – something that gives and sustains life, but also – depending on the form it takes – causes death and so much destruction and grief at its wake. Water in all its power and might destroyed so much of Tacloban, Leyte, which we saw first hand when we interacted with residents of Payapay – or Ground Zero -- a no-

build zone where houses were beginning to sprout anew.

At the grotto on a hill called Bukid Fatima, we had a bird's eye view of the city ravaged by the disastrous storm -- beautifully set in a landscape dominated by water on all sides -- ethereal in the morning mist. But getting down to the coastal villages, we came upon the wreckage of ships flung inland by the mighty waves and the locals' effort to plant mangroves as buffers against future storm surges.

In Capiz, it was heartwarming for us to see the abundance of mangroves by the shores of the progressive and bustling Roxas City.

Another recurring theme was of bells: bells that have signalled major events in the lives of the islanders – bells in Dumaguete that warned residents of approaching pirates who would “dagit” or snatch the women; the bells of Balangiga that signalled the attack on the American forces in their plaza in 1901; and the bells of Pan-ay, among them allegedly the biggest bell in Asia; and most of all, bells that called the “faithful” to mass and gathered them within the visitas and pueblos of the Spanish reduccion, to live bajos de las campanas and thus under the control of the colonial masters.

One of the most touching performances the group watched was that of the reenactment of the then 29-year-old Escalante massacre in the “agit-prop” tradition by Teatro Obrero of Escalante City, Negros Occidental. The travelers interacted with the youth actors of the group, with a lot of earnest knowledge-sharing among the travellers and performers.

Learning, Sharing, Organizing

The travelers were a “fluid” group of artists, academics, and cultural workers led by organizer and project director and head of NCCA-CDA Jazmin Llana. The group constantly changed from site to site, increasing or decreasing as they were joined by locals, or as members left to go back to their regular work. Most of the core travelers were Execon members of the NCDA, joined by international/ visiting scholars from the PSi global network and theater leaders in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

Individual aims differed but a common desire was to learn and to share.

Fresh from her three-year training in theater at the Intercultural Theatre Institute (ITI) Singapore, Denise Mordeno Aguilar performed the 40-minute play “Hope Floats” at the repurposed cockpit-turned-performance space Teatro Porvenir in Baclayon, Bohol, thanks to Gardy Labad. She had previously performed the play at the Manila Fringe Festival.

“I wanted to share whatever I had learned at ITI, and live up to its mission that artists-graduates ought to go back to their communities and help contribute significantly to theater-making processes and development,” Ms. Aguilar said.

UP Professor Belen Calingacion, with Rosalie Zerrudo of NCCA-CDA and other artists, eventually returned to Jao Island in Talibon, Bohol to train teachers in the arts.

The young performers of the YATTA in Dumaguete, Negros Oriental conducted a workshop with their slightly younger peers of Teatro Obrero, while the theater leaders of Teatrokon, MINDULANI, and the Lusong Network continued to conduct training sessions in acting, directing, playwriting and to organize network-building conventions and workshops.

Learning “modules” were in fact embedded -- sometimes impromptu -- in the “RoRo” activities with Paul Rae of the University of Melbourne at one point talking about performance studies and his own practice as an artist and academic. Evening reflection sessions became productive exchanges between Luzon travelers Lindsay Goss of New York University Abu Dhabi and Mary Carling and Matty Camfili of DKK, or between Visayas travelers Catherine Diamond of Soochow University and Rudy Reveche and Charles Kevin Tan of Kanlaon Theater Guild.

Dessa Quesada-Palm, Artistic Director of YATTA, sums up her “RoRo” experience in a nutshell: “Traveling with the RoRo team in the Visayas allowed me to appreciate the invisible thread that connects our contemporary theater praxis with our rich histories, the hard work of our elders, an ever-morphing sense of local and national identity, and the stubborn, untiring passion of artists to

reflect, to imagine, and to create. Shortly after our journey, I reconnected with some of these kindred spirits in a meeting that was to be the precursor of Tabok (Bisaya for "hopping from one island to another"), a network of theater groups newly organized in the Central Visayas region." For Ella Parry-Davies, PhD student at King's College London and the National University of Singapore and visiting scholar in the Mindanao "RoRo" the journey calls out for a response that she makes initially with a set of "postcards."

"The name of the RoRo project uses the phrase 'On Tilted Earth' to suggest the precarious condition of life in the Philippines: Sa Tagilid na Yuta. But in the stressed third syllables of sa tagilid na yutā, the rhythmic rocking sound of the phrase (at least for the [non-Visayan/]non-Tagalog speaker) contains the memory and motion of the sea even as it speaks of the land. The language of water seemed to permeate the ways in which we felt and spoke about our experiences.... Our journey through Mindanao placed us in syncopated rhythms with [...] archipelagic lives, so that there became something especially relevant about the fact of travelling as a method of research, or as a way of thinking through the movement of the space. Memories of places we had left resurfaced as we heard similar stories of conflict and displacement again and again, and as our own transitions brushed against the migrations of the islanders.... In responding to the RoRo journey with a set of seven 'postcards,' I have attempted to engage with [disparate economies of mobility] via a form which I hope maintains some kind of fidelity to the experience of movement and displacement," Parry-Davies said.

One of the strongest images we encountered at the tailend of the Visayan journey was that of an Aeta woman carrying a baby, her gaze transfixed on a fire dancer at one of the restaurants in Boracay. She seemed mesmerized by the moving flame, as we were -- standing just outside of the restaurant's strip of space on the beach -- outsiders looking in. She was probably an original resident of the island, we mused, but now she was merely a spectator.

PSi#21 Philippines was co-organized by Performance Studies Philippines, the Literature Department of the College of Liberal Arts of DLSU-Manila, the Committee on Dramatic Arts of NCCA, the College of Arts and Letters of the University of the Philippines, PETA, Teatrokon West Visayas Theater Network, MINDULANI, the Leyte-Samar Heritage Society, Back to Square One, YATTA, and various universities, culture and arts institutions and groups. The Lusong Luzon Arts and Culture Network, Inc. managed the project. Check out www.fluidstates.org.

SIDEBAR:

Performance scholars, artists and cultural workers converge in MLA for International Performance Studies Conference

Performance scholars, artists, and cultural workers gathered for PSi#21 Philippines: On Tilted Earth: Performance, Disaster, Resilience in Archipelagic Space," the international conference of Performance Studies International (PSi) at DLSU-Manila and University of the Philippines Diliman from November 5-8, 2015 for panel and roundtable discussions, keynote talks, performances and exhibitions.

Theatre Research International Senior Editor Dr. Paul Rae of the University of Melbourne opened the conference with a talk on "Publishing Internationally: The View from Theatre and Performance Studies."

Conference delegates were welcomed by PSi President Maaïke Bleeker and DLSU Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation Dr. Raymond Girard Tan and College of Liberal Arts Dean Julio Teehankee, and were joined by Performatura Festival Director Victor Emmanuel Carmelo D. Nadera Jr, and DLSU Department of Literature OIC Chair Genevieve Asenjo. Talaandig artist Waway Saway rendered a special performance at the welcome program.

The keynote speakers at DLSU were Datu Migketay Victorine Saway on "Land, Culture, and Security of the Indigenous People: The Talaandig Experience;" University of Wollongong Australia professor Dr. Merlinda Bobis "Sa Tagilid na Daga | On Tilted Earth: A Fluid Balance;" University of Melbourne professor Dr. Paul Rae on "Performing Islands: RoRo from the Visayas to Vanuatu;" PSi President and Utrecht University, Netherlands professor Maaïke Bleeker on "Enacting a

Sense of These Things that Happened: Performance as Thought-Apparatus.”

Day 2 opened with a plenary session on “Fluid States Philippines’ RoRo Journeys: Archipelagic Encounters” -- a report on journeys from March to July 2015 covering 51 sites in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao -- which UPD professor Dr. Elena Mirano responded to.

Throughout Day 2, there were parallel panels on disaster, memory, media, and research, theater advocacies for resilience, performance as response to large scale trauma, displacement, encounter, and response, environmental protection in the Philippines, meditations on disaster and resilience, cultural heritage protection in times of crisis, and spiritual ecology.

DLSU’s Dr. Jeremy De Chavez moderated the plenary roundtable session on “Cultures of Disaster.” The speakers were DLSU’s Antonio Contreras and poet Marjorie Evasco, UPD’s Flaudette May Datuin, playwrights Bonifacio Ilagan and Rody Vera, and PETA’s Beng Santos Cabangon.

On Day 3, delegates had “RoRo Journeys in the City” with visits to the Golden Mosque in Quiapo, and Bahay Nakpil-Bautista, and the Lumad Manilakbayan. Bobbi Santos Viola and Nicki Legaspi gave talks on the Bahay Nakpil-Bautista and on Quiapo. At the mosque, Ateneo de Manila professor Jose Jewel Canuday gave a talk about how the Muslim section of Quiapo and the mosque came about and, at the Manilakbayan, the group listened to a sharing on the situation of the Lumads by Kakay Tolentino of KATRIBU. The day was capped with a performance of *Himagsik ng Huling Heneral*, a play on the life of Miguel Malvar written and directed by Edward Perez and performed at the Bahay Nakpil-Bautista by the Korido Theatre Ensemble of ARTIST Inc. and Kalantog. Xiao Chua of DLSU gave a prefatory talk before the show.

The conference moved to UP Diliman on Day 4 where the delegates were welcomed at Abelardo Hall by UPD Chancellor Michael Tan, College of Arts and Letters (CAL) Dean Amihan Bonifacio-Remolete, and conference organizers Eileen Legaspi-Ramirez and Belen Calingacion, with performances by Kontra-Gapi and the UP Singing Ambassadors.

Adelina Amparo III Umali moderated the Keynote Panel featuring Kinnari Ecological Theatre’s and Soochow University, Taiwan’s Catherine Diamond on “Tilting Thailand: Ro-rowing over Land and Water;” UPD’s Basilio Esteban S. Villaruz on “A Score, Voice and Force: Notating Dance and the Art of Tilting”; and where the audience watched a video sent over by PSi#21 Project Director and University of Zagreb’s Marin Blazević.

There were parallel panels on “The Archipelago and Beyond,” “Public Space Performance and the Art of Protest,” and “Performance in an Ecology of Contexts.”

UPD’s Flaudette May Datuin moderated the Closing Roundtable Discussion on “Performance Studies: Encounters, Engagements, Encumbrances.” Speakers were Felipe Cervera of the National University of Singapore, Mick Douglas of RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia, Sir Anril Tiatco of UPD, Sunita Mukhi of De La Salle-College of St. Benilde, and Hayato Kosuge of Keio University, Japan. At the Abelardo Hall, various artists performed at the closing program on “Performing Resilience, Remembering Yolanda” on the second anniversary of Typhoon Haiyan/ Yolanda.

Teddy Co moderated screenings of films *Shifts* on typhoon Sendong from Cagayan de Oro and *Nick and Chai* on typhoon Yolanda in Leyte for the session “Filming Disaster and its Aftermath.”

Mick Douglas, performance artist from RMIT University, Australia, performed “Salt Body” at high tide throughout the conference, evoking specific local human connections to global ecologies through the medium of salt from around the world. Nights were capped by events of “Performatura: Performing Literatures Festival” of CCP’s Intertextual Division.

The conference was organized by Performance Studies Philippines based at DLSU’s Department of Literature, with the help of the DLSU Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation,

CLA Office of Research and Advanced Studies, and the Bienvenido N. Santos Creative Writing Center; the Office of the Chancellor of UPD, CAL, Department of Arts Studies and Department of Speech Communication and Theater Arts, College of Music, and College of Mass Communication; the Lusong Luzon Arts and Culture Network, Inc; Back to Square One; and NCCA.

The Manila conference is the Philippine cluster of *PSi#21 Fluid States: Performances of unknowing*, a distributed conference program with events in the Asia Pacific, Africa, Europe, and the Americas throughout 2015 (www.fluidstates.org). Manila was its last stop.

PSi #21 Fluid States - Japan, Osorezan cultural visit correspondence by Helen Moore Published: 10/02/2016 Osorezan Cultural Visit by Helen Moore

We journey to Mt.Osorezan (Mount Fear) in the far north edge of Honshu, the deep north. Travelling through an area described as an axe shape, passing islands along the coast and winding through tall forests to a place considered 'otherworldly'. The temple site, founded in the 19th century in this remote place, can be snow bound for several months of the year.

Crossing the volcanic rock-strewn landscape is walking on the terrain of the imagination: visualising the mandala of the lotus flower with surrounding mountains as its eight petals and Lake Usori as its heart. Standing down at the lake with its stretch of white sand and gazing out to Mount Osorezan, becomes a conversation. Some will later say, 'I felt the mountain looking back at me'.

A smell of sulphur in the air indicates the presence of underground thermal activity. There are hot pools here that have a long history of pilgrims seeking benefits from their medicinal and healing properties. We also bathe in these waters.

Many offerings, including dolls, have been brought to this site by families, often remembering children who have passed away. Spinning pinwheels are placed like flowers on personalised rock piles. Empathy and acceptance can be sensed at the Temple for those that come with a need to express grief, in a way that other ceremonies or rituals may not have satisfied. Contamination and decontamination.

PSi #21 Fluid States - Canada, Post Cards from Performing Turtle Island, by Anne Smith, Canada Correspondent Published: 24/10/2015

Post Cards:
Performing Turtle Island
by Anne Smith
1 October 2015
PSi#21 Fluid States – Canada: Performing Turtle Island

The Performing Turtle Island Conference was held September 17, 18, 19, 2015, conjointly at the University of Regina and the First Nations University of Canada, on adjoining campuses in Regina, Canada, located on Treaty Four land, of the Starblanket First Nation. The name, "Turtle Island", referring to North America, comes from the Iroquois Creation Story; Sky Woman falls to the ocean and the animals work together to make a place for her on the back of Turtle. This story is shared by many Aboriginal peoples from the east coast woodlands of North America. It is now a commonly used term by Aboriginal peoples across North America.

The conference has brought together Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists and researchers who are exploring how indigeneity has been performed over the past four or so decades, how indigenous artists are expressing themselves now, at the beginning of the 21st Century, and how indigeneity will be performed in the coming decades.

Where does Indigenous identity and community fit in to the construction of the country's identity? Indeed, what do we mean by Indigenous identity, and, given the proliferation of newcomers, what do we mean by Canadian identity? In the face of growing international mobility and a radically changing Canadian demographic, it is important to take another look at how identity is constructed on Turtle Island within the ideational borders that designate Canada.

While we are concerned with traditional performance, we aim our focus more on contemporary forms that express Indigenous identities across diverse cultural and social contexts. In this way, we hope to engage Indigenous theatre and performing arts through a multidisciplinary perspective that helps promote Indigenous cultures as valuable sources of knowledge and identity inclusiveness. Performing Turtle Island Website

The art forms brought to the conference focus on theatre and written arts, visual and performance art, music, dance, film and video. Indigenous performance is very often interdisciplinary and mixes traditional forms with contemporary forms. Video footage of the many live presentations and links to the films and videos will be made available to the Fluid States website.

Earlier this year, two theatre artists who have had a great influence in the Aboriginal community in Saskatchewan and Alberta, were tragically killed in a car accident. The conference was dedicated to Michelle Sereda and Lacy Morin-Desjarlais. Throughout the conference, many references to these women were made by local artists and the university community.

The collaborative nature of the conference, in its conception and realization, made for a rich tapestry of provocation from and for the artists and researchers who presented. There is an awareness of the history of indigenous art and performance in Canada and that its progress has been a long struggle both for support in the Aboriginal community from its political leadership and within the larger arts community in terms of funding, access, and visibility. The practice of all art forms may be seen as "medicine" in bringing forth the creative spirit and healing from the legacy of the residential schools. The removal of Aboriginal children from their families and incarceration in institutions – schools and TB hospitals - sometimes over four generations has had enormous impact on individuals, families and communities. There is also a tension between the colonial practice of elevating art and the Aboriginal practice of rooting art in community. The strength of Aboriginal artists comes from their connection to the land and to their peoples. As local correspondent, I am sending postcards of the events of the conference, with photos and short video excerpts.

Annie Smith
Theatre Artist and Researcher