

## Artists Talk: The International Perspective

Friday December 12, 2008, North Melbourne Town Hall

CDM members and supporters gathered on a rainy Friday afternoon for the annual end of year forum 'Artists Talk: The International Perspective'. This year, speakers were especially varied, encompassing arts management, community dance, puppetry and cultural consultation. Speakers inspired many would be international travelling arts workers with exciting stories, from giant puppet monkeys to Mongolian riots, to near misses with sea lions.



Marcus Schutenko kicked off the afternoon, talking about his time as an AsiaLink Resident at the Arts Council of Mongolia, a highly sophisticated non-governmental body ([www.artscouncil.mn](http://www.artscouncil.mn)). He was involved with the inaugural Cultural Naadam Festival ([www.culturenaadam.com](http://www.culturenaadam.com)),

instigated a major mapping project of the Mongolian arts sector, with a website to be launched mid- 2009, and has worked to establish ongoing ties between Australia and Mongolia.

Katrina Rank discussed her time as a Caroline Plummer Community Dance Fellow at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand

([www.otago.ac.nz/otagofellows/plummer.html](http://www.otago.ac.nz/otagofellows/plummer.html)) – and was interesting inspired to

apply after attending a previous CDN International Perspective forum and speaking with Petra Koppers, who had just completed this fellowship. Katrina

shared a video of her beach based community dance piece and spoke about the process of involving around 60 members of the Dunedin community, most of whom had no prior dance experience, as well as visual artists and the gallery community in the development of the piece.



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Freda Shafi, who had extended her visit to Australia in order to speak at this forum, showcased her work with the School of Informatics, Centre for Community Engagement, University of Bradford (UK). Freda's work assists with the representation of under-represented minorities in the Bradford area through community engagement projects. Freda showcased several interesting

projects, including a community animation project targeting youth who had fallen out of the education system (Utube Link?). Freda also spoke about the advocacy and research work of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation ([www.jrf.org.uk](http://www.jrf.org.uk)), a social policy research and development charity in the UK that Freda consults for, which disperses an impressive £1.4 billion annually.



Ian Pidd, a well know face to Melbourne artists and arts workers, was last but not least on our line up of speakers, inspiring many to investigate opportunities in Indonesia by talking passionately about the Snuff Puppet's ongoing PPP projects (Peoples Puppetry Projects) he's been involved with over the last 5 years in

Yogyakarta, Indonesia. By re-imagining local stories, working with as many people as possible to make puppets, write music and perform, and performing to as large an audience as possible all within a few weeks of arriving, the PPPs work to engage the whole community, and Ian and his team have been returning twice a year to Yogyakarta, building up long term working relationships and providing ongoing opportunities for artists and members of the community, while also prompting communities to rethink and rework their stories.

The afternoon concluded with afternoon tea and end of year drinks, allowing attendees to talk with speakers and meet up with peers.

Feedback from audience members indicated that they found the event worthwhile, with all those who provided feedback commenting that speakers were 'very good' or 'excellent' and that the session was 'very' or 'extremely relevant' to them. Comments included:  
*'Interesting mix of very different presentation styles that worked well'*  
*'Enjoyed the variety of areas covered and different styles of speakers'.*

Presented by the  
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