

Research Directions

University of
Western Sydney



Office of Research Services



What Moves Australian Contemporary Dance?

Associate Professor Kate Stevens from the School of Psychology and MARCS Auditory Laboratories is leading collaborative research to investigate Australian contemporary dance. This Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage project brings together UWS researchers, the Australia Council for the Arts, the Australian Choreographic Centre, the Australian Dance Council – Ausdance, and the ACT Cultural Facilities Corporation, in order to explore the little known processes that underpin the creation and performance of communicative dance works. The processes and stylistic traditions that are characteristic of Australian dance forms will also be examined.

'Contemporary dance is one of the major vehicles through which Australian stories and cultural diversity are communicated' explained Professor Stevens. 'We will investigate the processes of thought and movement involved in creating, refining and performing a number of significant dance works'.

Professor Stevens will examine the psychological mechanisms that make up the non-verbal communication of contemporary dance. The team will examine the understanding and expression employed in the work of elite choreographers and experienced as well as emerging dancers. New methods and techniques available in the Music and Movement Laboratory of MARCS Auditory Laboratories will be utilised as the labs provide the means to investigate the creative, communicative and memory processes involved that have never been available to researchers before.

The outcome of the research will provide a model for creative arts-social science collaboration from the combination of experimental and empirical methods used to investigate memory and language and their development in dance. Australia will lead a new field of the cognitive science of dance at an international symposium "The Body in Mind" to be held as part of the project in Australia in 2007.

Funding has been set at \$300,000 over three years.

Team Members: Dr Josephine Milne-Home, UWS MARCS Auditory Laboratories, Mr Robin Grove, University of Melbourne, Dr Kim Vincs, Deakin University and Dr Emery Schubert, University of New South Wales.

Project Title: Intention and Serendipity: Investigating Improvisation, Symbolism and Memory in Creating Australian Contemporary Dance.

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Web Site

<http://www.uws.edu.au/about/acadorg/caess/sp>

For more information about Dance in Australia
<http://www.australiadancing.org/>

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