

# An analysis of digital storytelling as a documentation tool for research in the creative and performing arts.

## Abstract

This paper examines the capacity of digital storytelling to document research activity in the creative and performing arts. In particular, it seeks to identify the thought processes and methods that underpin this research and to capture them using the digital storytelling medium. Interest in this issue was prompted by the author's work with the creative and performing artists from the Queensland Conservatorium and the Queensland College of Art as part of the Federal government's Research Quality Framework (RQF) in 2007. The RQF compelled artists to address what it means to undertake research in their disciplines, to describe this, measure it and quantify it; for many practitioners this represents a significant challenge. These issues continue to be pertinent in the context of the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) initiative.

This research is significant because it seeks to identify, in layman's terms, the research methods and thought processes used by artists in their research practice. It seeks to do so free of the encumbrances of the professional doctorate policies, the higher education research quality frameworks, and the dense philosophical debates that have to-date dominated discussions of this issue. The research involves qualitative data collection methods including a detailed literature review, interviews with key practitioners and academics involved in the creative and performing arts, and three case studies. The literature review focuses on publications that explore issues of research practice and method in the creative and performing arts. The case studies involve three Queensland-based artists. Digital stories will be developed (and presented) with Marcus and Mafe using their visual materials and drawing on the issues identified in the literature review and interviews. Emmerson's DVD provided a point of comparison with the digital stories. (Brief bios are attached)

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## Introduction

This paper examines the capacity of digital storytelling to document research activity in the creative and performing arts. Relying primarily on three case studies and a broad literature review, the paper seeks to identify the thought processes and methods that underpins this research and to capture them using the digital storytelling medium. Interest in this issue was prompted by the author's work with the creative and performing artists from the Queensland Conservatorium and the Queensland College of Art as part of the Federal government's Research Quality Framework (RQF) in 2007. The RQF compelled artists to address what it means to undertake research in their disciplines, to describe this, measure it and quantify it; for many practitioners this represents a significant challenge.

By trialling digital storytelling as a medium for capturing artists' research processes, the author hopes to provide practitioners engaged in research with their own medium for describing their work; rather than relying on formulas taken from the natural or social sciences. Digital storytelling is a concise medium ideally suited to this test, with its emphasis on personal narrative, visual materials, and honest tone. It is this combination of honest narrative combined with visual materials that the researcher feels will enable artists to articulate the thought processes embedded in their work.

## Case Study Participants

The three participants were selected on the basis of their detailed knowledge and depth of experience in their artistic disciplines.<sup>1</sup> Donna Marcus is a visual artist who has worked with discarded aluminium homeware since 1996. The discussions with Donna focused on a survey view of her works, rather than one particular piece or exhibition.<sup>2</sup> Vanessa Mafe is a dancer whose career has extended over 30 years and who has recently moved into the area of choreography. The discussions with Mafe focussed on her current work with *Expressions Dance Company*; specifically the preparation for the

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<sup>1</sup> Biographical details are attached in Appendix 1 and reveal that each artist has had extensive international experience and has published (exhibited and performed) in a variety of recognised peer-reviewed contexts.

<sup>2</sup> Originally, the researcher had requested to work on her piece *Steam*, Brisbane Square (2006); however, this work had already been documented and the artist requested that we broaden the scope of her case study to include a survey approach to her research and methods.

piece *Skin Graft*.<sup>3</sup> Stephen Emmerson is a classically trained pianist who undertook a detailed study of the research involved in the preparation of a performance for Mozart's Rondo in A minor (K.511). The findings were published as a DVD set *Around a Rondo* (2006) and formed the basis of the interviews. Both the DVD set and the interviews serve as a point of comparison with the Digital Stories developed with Mafe and Marcus.

### Conceptual Framework

Eisner's *Art and the Creation of Mind* provides a conceptual framework for research into the methods and thought processes of creative artists.<sup>4</sup> The value of Eisner's work to this study is that, through his detailed analysis, he aims 'to dispel the idea that the arts are somehow intellectually undemanding, emotive rather than reflective' (Eisner, 2002: xi). In defending this position, Eisner dissects in detail the role of key cognitive processes that are involved in the creation of works of art: inscription, editing, communicating; the formation and structure of representation; and the role of perception and imagination in creating new works of art; in short, Eisner positions unapologetically the arts as possessing specific and unique cognitive attributes that are central to the human condition and to the ways in which we learn to think. These form the basis of the characteristics of the research process in the creative and performing arts. For a project such as this, with the diversity of artists, outputs, and approaches contained in the case studies, the significance of Eisner's work also rests in its apparent simplicity. For Eisner, the creative process can be summarised as: a) an initial phase centring on idea development: conceptualisation of the work, and the various ways of discovering it; b) a developmental phase including

<sup>3</sup> A commissioned work involving four dancers: Ryan Males, Zachary Chant, Richard Causer, and Riannon McLean that was performed as part of a suite of dances titled *Core Borders* at the Judith Wright Performance Centre, 2-10 May 2008.

<sup>4</sup> There are, of course, many other models for research activity in the creative and performing arts; of particular and recent relevance is Haseman's (2007) notion of the five credibility tests: 1. There is a clearly established problem which drives the study, usually made clear through a 'research question' or 'an enthusiasm of practice' (pp.4-5); 2. The process of research will be scrutinised. It is necessary for the study to articulate its methodology convincingly and so make it available for scrutiny (p.5); 3. The research undertaken is located within its field of enquiry and associated conceptual terrain (pp.5-6); 4. The knowledge claims made from the study must be reported to others and demonstrate the benefit of the study in social, cultural, environmental or economic terms (p.6); and 5. What becomes known is made available for sustained and verifiable peer review (p.7).

ways of stabilising the ideas in their material forms; c) a period of reflection and revision follow which focuses on editing the work; and finally d) the publication and sharing of the work (Eisner, 2002: 8).<sup>5</sup>

### Why digital storytelling?

Stories are a powerful medium for capturing events, information, knowledge, context, and emotions (Pink, 2005: 101). They are ideally suited to capturing the key facts and attributes of our lives, work, and experiences and how they came into being. Recent discussion in the business and medical professions has found that stories are increasingly being included in corporate papers and curricula, as a means of supplementing the standard practices and forms of reporting.<sup>6</sup> The emergence of storytelling in this context signifies that analytical thinking can no longer be solely relied upon for professional success. Of equal importance are the emotional decisions, the context, and the knowledge that is embedded in the decisions that people made; all of these can be shared most effectively through stories (Pink, 2005: 106).

In her article, *Relating process: accounts of influence in the life history interview*, Sandino (2007) analyses the recent use of oral history techniques to capture the life stories of artists. Although primarily interested in biographical details, the research highlights the emergence of the use of personal stories as a means of capturing the kinds of data that is typically left untouched in more scholarly or structural approaches.<sup>7</sup> As Sandino's article reveals, the approach which she champions draws on the fact that we are our stories: our experiences, thoughts, and emotions can all be conveyed through

<sup>5</sup> Recent works, such as Barbara Stafford's *Echo objects: the cognitive work of images* (2007), represent a sophisticated advancement of the themes outlined here, in which detailed neurological analysis is married to a discussion of the cognitive implications of this for image-making in the human brain. Similar intersection informed the ARC-funded study into dance: "These sciences must themselves increasingly deal with culture and cognition all at once: questions about pleasure in movement, habit and skill, and in aesthetic memory, for example, require neuro scientific, physiological, psychological, sociological, and anthropological investigation simultaneously (John Sutton (chapter 4 Moving and thinking Together in Dance) in Grove, Stevens, and McKechnie, 2005: 50).

<sup>6</sup> See Pink, 2005: The Story Business (105-107) and The Story of Healing (109-112).

<sup>7</sup> Sandino is referring to the "relational and referral qualities, the relational dimensions with objects and with other artists" that are central to artistic practice (Sandino, 2007: 195).

narratives. Digital storytelling has the capacity to capture all of these elements, which are enhanced by the use of visual materials.<sup>8</sup>

Digital Storytelling is a narrative form in which 3-4 minute stories are created using scripts of around 250 words that are then recorded as voiceovers, against a dozen images which are typically brought from home or personal archives (Burgess, 2006: 207).<sup>9</sup> The stories can be developed in a workshop in which participants create their own short 'films' that can be streamed on the Web. The personal and concise nature of the stories and images used is a key feature of this medium. The strength of Digital Storytelling rests in the personal nature of the stories, told simply and presented in a highly accessible format they typically have a 'warmth of resonance and authenticity' (Burgess, 2006: 207) that contrasts sharply with other forms of digitally-conceived expression, such as computer games.<sup>10</sup>

Although Digital Storytelling has its roots in community-based, oral history tradition, recent research on the medium highlights its capacity to reduce cultural difference (Burgess, 2006: 206-207) and this is reflected in the numerous projects that have successfully used the medium.<sup>11</sup> This study seeks to exploit this aspect of Digital Storytelling allowing artists to develop

<sup>8</sup> In these ways, stories are significant for the creative and performing arts, as they represent pathways to understanding that do not run through the left side of the brain (Pink, 2005: 113).

<sup>9</sup> The Digital Stories created as part of this study utilise the established mechanisms of Digital Storytelling:

- channelling the personal element through participants' professional experiences and values;
- telling of a personal story using multimedia tools; and
- combining the audio visual resources of their personal archives (photographs, video footage, text, music and sound) to produce a 3-4 minute personal story which they then narrate (Australian Centre for the Moving Image).

<sup>10</sup> Digital storytelling also contrasts with forms such as YouTube or Flickr, which rely on autonomous participation and peer-to-peer learning rather than 'top-down' training that characterises digital storytelling (Klaebe, 2007: 4).

<sup>11</sup> For example, the Kelvin Grove Urban Village Project (KGUV) explores issues of community engagement in the context of the historical changes to Kelvin Grove, particularly around the redevelopment of the Creative Industries precinct, Queensland University of Technology (QUT). Similarly, issues of cross-cultural professional development and linguistic competence in a foreign professional setting are addressed in the workshops developed in May-June 2007, Kelvin Grove Campus for a group of Thai medical fellows sponsored by the World Health Organisation and hosted by QUT's Faculty of Health.

a story around their personal journey of arts practice and how their research acquires material form.

In this way, the outcomes of this study have the potential to contribute to the break down of the cultural divide between traditional academics and creative and performing artists working in universities.<sup>12</sup> It will achieve this by raising awareness of the status of creative practice as research and facilitating discussions within the university on how such practice can be conceptualised.

### Key factors in artistic practice as research

The case studies reveal that the artists negotiate a range of elements, both emotionally and intellectually, when developing their ideas through their particular materials. These include their context (personal and professional); the materials used (aesthetics and technical considerations); and the cognitive processes (forming the idea, stabilising the idea in its material form, editing/revising it, and sharing it/publishing it).

### Context

For each artist their personal and professional environment plays a significant role in their artistic practice. For Emmerson, his performance of Mozart's A minor Rondo as a twenty year old left a lingering memory of dissatisfaction, not because he played it badly, but because his performance, in his opinion, left so much unanswered and unexplored. The recollection of this experience is one of the starting points for his research into the 2004 performance of the Rondo and forms one of the opening statements in the DVD publication of this process. For Marcus, her initial work with domestic aluminium objects (jelly moulds) involved forming small sculptural pieces. Although her original intention had been to draw them, due to the time constraints imposed by a young family, Marcus began to experiment with their formal qualities through blue-tacking them together; a latent love of collecting objects, a fascination with the cultural significance of these objects, and a love of their aesthetic qualities emerged and developed into a

<sup>12</sup> In the longer-term, it is hoped that this work will achieve this by raising awareness of the status of creative practice as research and facilitating discussions within the university on how such practice can be conceptualised.

decade of successful artistic practice as research.<sup>13</sup> Mafe's current work with *Expressions Dance Company* is the result of an exchange that Mafe had with the Managing Director, Maggie Sietsma, many years ago when Mafe was herself a student of classical ballet.

These anecdotes reveal that creative practice and the research embedded often relies on ideas and networks that extend deep into the artists' personal backgrounds and experiences.<sup>14</sup>

Aesthetic and technical dimensions of their materials also play a central role in the artists' processes. Emmerson's text and interviews in *Around a Rondo* describe in detail the research involved in analysing and understanding the intricacies of the text – the dynamic markings, the slurs, and phrases.<sup>15</sup> These are understood in terms of the technical demands of the modern Steinway piano and the eighteenth century fortepiano,<sup>16</sup> and as an aesthetic issue in which the quality of sound not only reflects the emotional intensity of the music, but also does justice to the instruments that he is working with.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> This family connection/personal context continues as an important thread in Marcus's practice, and one that she specifically wished to have documented in her digital story, in the form of her husband's support, particularly when he was undertaking carer's leave for their small children, as erstwhile project manager for some of her more major projects and also providing technical assistance on occasions.

<sup>14</sup> This is supported in the literature. For example Carter talks about the "resulting work as an offspring of different social and professional relations (Carter, 2004: 13); and equally Sandino discusses artist's life stories as playing a key role in the "transformative stories to be told about the relational dimension with objects (or surfaces) as well as with other artists" (Sandino, 2007: 195).

<sup>15</sup> A detailed and in Emmerson's terms 'exhaustive' research process was undertaken in his consideration of these material issues – considering a variety of editions of the text, listening to dozens of recordings of the A minor Rondo, reading scholarly works (analyses) of the work, and finally taking a series of professional lessons with the early keyboard expert Geoffrey Lancaster.

<sup>16</sup> Emmerson performs the Rondo on both instruments.

<sup>17</sup> A series of lessons with Lancaster, assisted Emmerson in realising that his posture and preconceptions of what the sound should be were impeding him here; rather than trying to impose his preconceived notions of what the 'correct' sound should be, he listened to the forte piano without preconceived ideas, and allowed the instrument to 'find its own level and voice'.

## The creative process

### Discovery – forming the idea

The point of discovery, when new ideas are formed, was for all three artists embedded in the context of their artistic experience and personal journey through this.

All three artists discussed the development of their ideas in terms of a 'journey' in which the performances and exhibitions represented 'commas, rather than full stops' (Marcus, 26 March 2008); they were points for reflection and a review of their ideas and the forms that they had taken.<sup>18</sup> As Emmerson summarised:

To the extent that you are ever happy with a work is always problematic. You think, "It could have gone worse, but I didn't do this or that quite as well as I wanted, and that bit worked really well". One never actually attains what one is aiming for; there's a sense in which if you play something perfectly now, there's no point playing it again. There's a continual dissatisfaction that one needs to do better (Emmerson, 26 March 2008).

Ideas then do not develop in isolation; they are invariably linked to concepts formulated in previous works or performances. For these artists their practice is the starting point for the formation of new works; it forms a point of departure for future explorations (Nelson, 2006: 5). In this way, their process differs significantly from those found in qualitative and quantitative research practices, where a key ingredient is the clear statement of the research problem.<sup>19</sup>

Stories are intrinsically suited to capturing context and interpretation and so, despite the abstract nature of this aspect of the process, digital storytelling captures its key elements effectively. The text, supported by the various

<sup>18</sup> In a similar vein Marcus talks about the exhibition as an opportunity to "sit back and evaluate your work ... you instantly see the gaps and areas yet to be developed" (26 March 2008).

<sup>19</sup> Nelson and Haseman both highlight this difference. Nelson refers to the fact that for artists, "statements of intention can easily foreclose on intuitive processes. It is easy to imagine that statements of intention can prematurely commit an artist to a kind of inflexibility which is inimical to creative work" (Nelson, 2006: 3). Instead their starting point is an experiential starting point, based in an 'enthusiasm of practice' (Haseman, 2006: 3).

images of the ideas as they are developed, conveys the contextual nature of idea formation.

### Stabilising the ideas

During this stage the ideas assume their initial material form. It is an experimental phase, with the artists frequently referring to ‘playing with ideas’ through their materials.<sup>20</sup> All three participants stressed that although one captures these initial thoughts through notes, photos, video clips and that the process is organic and fluid nature. At this stage, ideas and forms will change; perhaps disappear, while new things will emerge.<sup>21</sup> This is not a straight forward task:

In all probability, you cannot quite ‘see’ the works that you are about to produce. You have to begin to produce them and ‘see’ by doing. You become conscious of an ‘about-to-happen’ in which the ideas are still not formulated in advance but are in fact advanced by the doing process.... It is also reflecting on what you have just done, especially in relation to what other people have done (Nelson, 2006: 3-4).

For the artists this aspect of the process can be best described as a dialogue between themselves, their materials and their past experience. The initial workings, the drawing, phrasing, and movements are deeply embedded in the artists’ understanding of the material forms, what other players/artists have done, other ideas in these areas, forming what Haseman calls a “web of connections and links around their practice (Haseman, 2007: 6). As Eisner points out, these early attempts at representing ideas are significant because by stabilising the idea, “one makes possible a dialogue with it; having fixed it in some material form, one can begin to refine and edit it” (Eisner: 6).

<sup>20</sup> In the case of Marcus this involves laying and stacking the various pieces of aluminium until the forms and her ideas meld into a coherent piece or an assemblage of pieces. Emmerson discusses this phase in terms of the detailed research involved in reading, listening to recordings, and painstakingly working through the score at the keyboard. For Emmerson these initial ideas are captured in notes on the score and notes based on his wider reading and listening. For Mafe it involved experimenting with a variety of movements inspired by different images and props, dancing, and then recording these processes on paper and video.

<sup>21</sup> As Eisner points out, “there is nothing quite so slippery as an idea” (Eisner, 2002: 6).

Due to the fact that the ideas are captured either in video, paper or semi-formed structures, this is an aspect of the thought process that is easy to capture on the digital story. Digital storytelling captures this complexity by allowing multiple images of the various stages of development.

The detail provided by Emmerson in his DVD is also ideally suited here.

### Editing the work

For Eisner, editing is, above all else, the “process of making the work, work”:

Editing is the process of working on inscriptions so they achieve the quality, the precision, and the power their creator desires. It involves paying attention to relationships and attending to details (Eisner, 2002: 6).

The concept of work - physical hard work - is central to this function where ideas are refined through working repeatedly over sections of music, dance movements, and visual patterns and structures. All three participants made the point that to outsiders, the repetition of practice, rehearsal, and ‘playing with forms’, often appears as a mechanical activity in which the perfection of technique is of paramount importance.<sup>22</sup> The artists stressed that technical competence is assumed at their level and that the repetition which characterises this aspect of the process is about the refinement of their ideas, testing and re-testing them through their materials.<sup>23</sup>

Each of the artists edits their work in specific and methodical ways. Due to the ‘stackable’ nature of her materials, Marcus refines her ideas of form and colour through arranging and re-arranging the various components of her

<sup>22</sup> Mafe summarises this routine aspect the most effectively for all three artists when she said that “it never feels the same; it’s a funny mindset in some ways it’s quite minimal because you are working on the same thing all the time, so you’re finding your variation in how you approach things and then in a way there are so many possibilities that it’s not minimal at all; it’s quite elaborate (Mafe 28 March 2008).

<sup>23</sup> All three artists stressed that audiences would not always discern the positive effects of the detailed work that goes into this phase. In this context, Haseman’s notion of experts auditing performances or exhibitions as a valid means of assessment (as opposed to standard peer review systems for written forms of publication) gains weight for future debates on this topic (Haseman, 2006: 8).

sculptures.<sup>24</sup> For both Emmerson and Mafe, pencil and paper play a crucial role. Emmerson's DVD *The Art of Interpretation: Around a Rondo: Preparing Mozart's rondo in A minor, K.511 for performance on fortepiano* (2006) illustrates extensive notes and annotations on the scores, which capture his thoughts on execution and interpretation.<sup>25</sup> Mafe's video footage from rehearsals are re-played at home, allowing her to view the work, print off interesting sections, and make notes or diagrams that reflect the desired changes. These are taken to the studio the next day for discussion with the dancers. Significantly, this process occupied the lion's share of the interviews and provides most of the material for the digital stories.

The interviews reveal that there is a rhythm to their work: the intense activity outlined above is frequently balanced with quieter 'down times' during which the artists' reflect on their work.<sup>26</sup>

For the three participants, the creation of new works or performances is a multi-faceted experience. The descriptions above of the analytical and technical processes represent an important, but incomplete picture. There is a strong emotional element to this revisionist phase. For example, each artist alludes to the sense of boredom that creeps into the practice as they work over the details. The artists also talk about the sense of frustration during this phase: with the quality of the forms, the speed of their progress, and the quality of the preliminary outcomes.<sup>27</sup> Although it is difficult for images to convey a sense of frustration or boredom (with the possible exception of

<sup>24</sup> Marcus talks about "playing with the forms, leaving things lying around and coming back to them" as part of this function (26 March 2008). In deed the extensive array of photographs taken by Marcus indicates that the photos were taken as an aid memoire and assisted her in developing the final design and form.

<sup>25</sup> Emmerson's intention here was to capture the complexity of the 'work' involved here and to show its evolutionary nature. This is a typical practice for professional musicians. Indeed, as part of his research, Emmerson referred to notes made on his score of the A minor Rondo from his student days. These notes were colour coded to reflect their context – different times, and different inputs – personal reflections, instructions, advice from other performers, private tuition.

<sup>26</sup> As Emmerson pointed out in his second interview, this aspect of the artistic practice has obvious and strong links to the action-research paradigm; and is one that is frequently used as one of the models for his research higher degree candidates enrolled in the Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) at the Queensland Conservatorium, South Bank, Brisbane.

<sup>27</sup> Each of the artists talked about a sense of frustration here, coupled with determination: although one gets frustrated, one has to keep going; this is an accepted part of the final stages or preparation and development (Emmerson 26 March, Mafe 20 March, Marcus 26 March 2008).

photos of facial expressions) the narrative carries these points in the digital stories.

### Sharing the idea

This has a well-recognised form for all participants – the concert, performance, or exhibition. Significantly, all three participants felt that these public showings of their work constitute a part of the continuum in the development of their practice and evolution of their ideas.<sup>28</sup> They acknowledge that it is a high point that has its own demands, but is also a point/ opportunity for reflection – what could I have done better was a question raised by all three participants? How will I continue to work on this idea or form? The Digital Stories all include images and references to the exhibitions and performance that enable the artists to share their work with the public.<sup>29</sup>

### Conclusion

The research demonstrates that, within a defined scope, digital storytelling has the capacity to capture the key elements of the research methods and thought processes for practitioners in the creative and performing arts who are involved in performative research. Adopting the model of conceptual development – idea formation, stabilising the idea, editing the idea, and sharing it through publication – the medium conveys the basic evolution of an artist's ideas through their material form. It is ideally suited to the use of static images, such as those used in documenting the evolution of sculpture or painted works. Its effectiveness is diminished in capturing artforms such as dance, where the expression of movement is the essence of the art form. In such cases, the medium could be modified to include video clips to create a more compelling story. In terms of musical forms, both performance and composition, the highly abstract nature of this artform is less compatible with the visual emphasis that the digital stories showcase. In such instances the

<sup>28</sup> Emmerson stresses that as a performer he is never entirely satisfied with his performances, but that this inspires him to continue to learn and grow as part of this experience (Emmerson 26 March 2008); Marcus also considers the exhibition as a point in the continuum of her development (Marcus 26 March 2008); Mafe also talks about elements of the rehearsals being embedded in the performance, highlighting the close relationship between the two (Mafe 28 March 2008).

<sup>29</sup> Emmerson's DVD also includes a full-length performance of the A minor Rondo.

kind of DVD or similar web-based model developed by Emmerson (2006) is ideally suited to the musical form because it conveys in more detail the complexity of the tasks at hand.

The simplicity of the digital story format ensures a flexibility that can be adapted in many different contexts. For example, a more structured set of questions covering the key areas developed by Haseman (2008) would establish a more robust outcome in terms of research activity; stories that focus on past publications and commissions could be usefully used to accompany grant applications, including competitive commissions for artists. In this sense, the research undertaken here represents an initial step in what is potentially an exciting new stage in documenting research activity in the creative and performing arts.

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## Appendix 1: Case Study biographies

**STEPHEN EMMERSON** studied piano with Pamela Page at University of Queensland. Among other prizes and awards, he won the Commonwealth final of what was then the Australian Broadcasting Commission's Instrumental and Vocal Competition in 1980. He was awarded a Commonwealth Scholarship to study at New College, Oxford in 1981 and graduated with a Master of Philosophy in Music in 1983 and a Doctor of Philosophy in 1989. While in England he studied piano with Peter Wallfisch, receiving an ARCM in performance in 1986. He has been on staff at the Queensland Conservatorium since 1987 where he teaches courses in music literature and music research as well as piano, chamber music, and performance practice. He performs regularly both as soloist and with chamber ensembles, most notably within the Griffith Trio, an Ensemble in Residence at the Queensland Conservatorium, Dean–Emmerson–Dean, and the Endeavour Trio. Recordings of his playing have been released by ABC Classics, Move Records, The Anthology of Australian Music on Disc, CPO, Continuum, Tall Poppies, and Contact. He is also a member of the Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre and convenes the Doctor of Musical Arts program, a professional doctorate promoting the documentation of practice-based research.

**VANESSA MAFE** trained at Stuttgart Ballet School and began her career with The Queensland Ballet under the direction of Harold Collins, becoming a feature artist in 1985. In 1987 Mafe moved to Geneva where she became a soloist with Le Ballet du Grand Theatre and was promoted to soloist working with major choreographers Oscar Araiz, Rudi van Dantzig and Jiri Kylian, among others. In 1991, Mafe joined dance-theatre group Vertical Danse Compagnie Noemi Lapzeson and was a founding member of a collaborative performance group, Co M-S-K. Returning to Brisbane in 1996, her projects include *Lines of Site* (1998), *Durchblick/(Entre)voir/Land(e)scape* (2001) as well as video-installations, *Listening to People Move* (2002) and performance-installation *Arc of the Question* (2004). In 2006, Mafe created *Separating Shadows* for the Brisbane Festival, *Relocation* for Expressions Dance Company and performed in Clare Dyson's, Churchill's Black Dog and Absence(s). Vanessa also choreographed *paper tears, paper tears* (2007) for QUT's third year students and *Skin Graft* (2008) for Expressions Dance Company Core Borders season. In 2002 Mafe completed her MFA at QUT. She currently teaches dance and movement related subjects at QUT Dance, Griffith University Gold Coast, and at 2Ballerinas.

**DONNA MARCUS** completed a BVA at the Tasmanian School of Art, University of Tasmania, a MA (Visual Arts) at City Art Institute (UNSW) and a PhD from Monash University, 2006. She is currently senior lecturer at the Queensland College of Art, Griffith University and is represented by Dianne Tanzer Gallery, Melbourne.

Marcus has exhibited nationally as well as in Europe and Asia, including several major surveys of Australian sculpture. Her work is represented in public and private collections in Australia and Germany and she has been selected (for the second time) for the Helen Lempriere National Sculpture Award 2007. A monograph on her work, *Donna Marcus: 99% pure aluminium*, was published by the Institute of Modern Art in Brisbane in 2003. She completed a major public art work, *Steam*, in Brisbane in 2006. In 2008 her work will be featured in 'Second Lives: Remixing the Ordinary' at the Museum of Art and Design, New York.

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*Rosemary Marson completed a Master of Creative Industries in Arts Management and Creative Enterprises, at QUT in 2008. Rosemary has previously studied fine arts and art history at the University of Queensland and in London at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Professionally, Rosemary blends this experience with the research practice of senior artists within the higher education sector where she works closely with them to develop effective and innovative ways of documenting their research-arts practice. The attached article documents three case studies, covering the visual and performing arts, that explores these issues through the medium of Digital Storytelling*