

In-Habit.

**Talk given by Jude Anderson – Artistic Director – In-Habit.
#1 In-Habit meeting July 23rd 2008 – Bishop’s Parlour, Abbotsford
Convent.**

1. What’s the reason for In – Habit? It matters
2. To what end? The spirit of context and the project

1. Because the possibility was there and too many people (artists metro and regional and international, public) had told me that they were wanting a cultural adventure that takes them from a state of indifference to a state of difference. It’s something that suddenly seemed to matter – a lot. I felt here with Maggie, her team, mine with Punctum and through my connections with the ACCR and other international networks we could “make” that difference. Creativity is often about action and belief in things. The time feels right to act and we’ve been lead to believe it’s very necessary.

2. To what end? To build a long term model for cultural exchange residency in research and development that embraces a site, a situation, a place, and its time.

To build the possibility of “being with” difference.

After today, and the next October meeting where we’ll focus on artistic mission, I’ll propose a model I call In-Habit that artists associated with Punctum will trial – will live, and we’ll evaluate that with Martin and Pia and that will form the basis of the proposition we put together for the ACCR for prospective membership.

The model could potentially incorporate 4 locations under the umbrella of In-Habit – Abbotsford Convent (the core) and Castlemaine where Punctum’s based, and Natimuk in the Wimmera near Horsham and Nowa Nowa near the South Gippsland lakes - 3 regional communities that have a strong sense of place and have embraced cultural exchange and being with contemporary arts.

Like a cultural constellation

So let’s look at this place:

James Joyce in his preface to *Ulysses* wrote: ‘Places remember events’ memory = people the events remembered give a notion of time Physical scars, traces, and the growth and decay of events are inscribed in the materiality of this place but what about time.

Wurundgeri land – time is a constant. Hello but not goodbye – meeting place, part of a dreaming. As the french say “je reviens” I’ll be back. Time of continual return, time of dreaming. Abitare – to inhabit means to return. You inhabit a place through returning to it

Farming land from 1838 to 1860 but part of it remains farming land – Collingwood Children's farm. Time of a farm is intimately linked to nature. Time of seasons.

Sisters of the Good Shepherd – time of contemplation, spiritual enlightenment, caring, labour, and education. Time of spirit

Latrobe Uni – time of guided thought, understanding and exploring ideas, education. A time of learning.

ACF – Community coming together and fighting an extraordinary battle to save the site. A time of community.

All these times are carried by this place so exchange in this place – greeting, meeting, sharing, giving, negotiating, dialogue – all that generosity is not only through “being with” the walls and the site – but being with its time or temporality – lived by those through the events of its past.

It's time that I reckon feels special here and exchange is special, and needs to embrace the time of the place in which it's situated.

As well the best way to see a place is when you're involved in it. It's this involvement that's really the content or produces the content. Content's not just what's programmed in a place it's also that thing of being transported from a state of indifference to difference. It's experiencing that movement from one to another that makes “being with” a plural thing – a gathering, where people are brought together to have singular experiences.

Exchange is where you make it matter that others are part of a context. The feeling of being part of something that matters is extremely valuable for productivity and research and development.

So we're not generating rules for how people can be happy in a collective environment. We're building a context that matters to people, in which people want to be part and in this way at the same time, we're in many ways building content.

Above all we're building a context where correspondences, dialogue and negotiation thrive, where the future is produced (like a science lab or an arts school) where there's a frame of reference, and not a formalisation of creativity, a place where engagement and participation is the project.

People hang out where there's good coffee, or good food or good people. At AC there's all of that and a quality of time/place that is unique in the world. And Maggie and I, from all our travels, experiences and research reckon here's worth sharing and exchange worth reinventing for it.

