Introduction

The purpose of this case study is to reveal the directorial approach to the integration of the actor’s body with projection in a recent theatre work, *The Lost Babylon* by Takeshi Kawamura. In particular I will be examining the integration of the actor with the projection of a computer-generated city landscape originally designed as a ‘level’ in a video game.

In the light of both practitioner and theorist concerns with the potential loss of bodily presence in contemporary mediatised theatre spaces, I will argue that there are a number of different types of bodily presence that need to be considered when balancing what I call the “alive” performer with the liveness of real time video projection. In creating the production, I initially proposed four such body types; in the course of rehearsal, a fifth emerged. Through a rehearsal and performance analysis I will demonstrate a layering of these body types or presences in the interaction between the performer and technology within the *mise-en-scène* of a particular scene from the production.

**Takeshi Kawamura and The Lost Babylon**

Over the past five years I have been working on an Australian-Japanese co-production of the Japanese play *The Lost Babylon* by Takeshi Kawamura, which culminated in a production for the 2006 Adelaide Fringe Festival, which I produced and directed. *The Lost Babylon* was written and first produced in Japan in 1999 by Kawamura and his company Daisan Erotica. Set in a theme park, the play is about a live ‘shoot ‘em up’ game, wherein rich young customers play by shooting with real guns at society’s disenfranchised: refugees (known in the play as ‘illegals’), the unemployed and homeless, who are employed to die ‘realistic’ deaths. Initially the players use fake bullets but over time the blanks are replaced first by ‘heartstoppers’ that stun victims for a couple of minutes, and eventually by real bullets, that result in real deaths. Drawing on violent action cinema parody and gun fetish, the play portrays violence in terms of a simulacrum that slowly—and inevitably—becomes real. Eventually this “pursuit of reality”, as one of the theme park customer’s proclaims, backfires, as those employed to be shot at—the ‘Attackers’—rebel and start shooting back (Kawamura 1999, 47).

The play is best understood as a provocative commentary on the depressed Japanese economy of the 1990s and the resultant social hierarchy. As Peter Eckersall writes, the “meaning is clear”: the Attackers are *furosha* (literally “vagrant”), “disposable”, and, ultimately, are those “who pay for Japan’s hypercapitalist and escapist lifestyle” (2000, 104). The play also seeks to demonstrate an inability on the part of the Japanese to discern the difference between simulation and reality whereby...
to the play’s translator, Sara Jansen, the “aesthetic and grotesque violence of comics, action films and video games spill over into everyday life” (2000, 114). Indeed, in creating the script Kawamura drew upon several real events in Japan in the late 1990s. Jansen notes two in particular: first, the murder of an 11-year old schoolboy by a 13-year old friend, who proclaimed that he “saw his actions as a game and enjoyed watching people suffer” (in Jansen 2000, 135); and second, the practice of oyaji-gari—the mugging of businessmen (literally “old man hunting”) by students from a famous private Tokyo high school. The students also saw their “behaviour as a game”, while the media portrayed them as “not being able to discern reality from the video games they consumed” (in Jansen 2000, 135).

Kawamura himself comments that that “as the play shifts between virtual reality and reality with little discernible difference between the two, Japanese society has likewise only a thin line between he virtual and the real” (in Eckersall 2000, 105). Kawamura is positing a sociological critique of post-war Japanese society, a Disneyland generation which, in his own words “can’t think about complex things . . . and don’t know reality”, resulting in a moral vacuum, an emptiness then filled with dominant, non-reflexive consumerist values (in O’Brien 2001, 45). Indeed the 11-year old schoolboy murderer commented that he saw his life as “transparent”, with no meaning, and claimed that his actions were revenge for being bullied. Thus, two key themes converge in The Lost Babylon: a sociological critique of contemporary Japanese society as a thinly masked moral void and, as a corollary, society’s incapacity to distinguish fact from fantasy: a society in which discontent bubbles and periodically bursts through with a violence that begins as parody of cinema and video games, before becoming real.

Aliveness and Liveness

The playwright’s conflation of real and mediatised violence posed a key question for me as a director: how to layer video projection within the production while not overwhelming the text or the live actors. This question emerged as part of a larger research project: a creative work/dissertation Ph.D. at the University of Melbourne exploring the relationship between the live actor and the mediated image. My concern was with how to balance the presence, or ‘aliveness’ of stage actors with the ‘liveness’ of real-time video projection. Here, I was responding to the liveness/virtual debate that has ebbed and flowed in performance studies over the last decade.² From my reading of this debate, a conceptual framework emerged for the production of The Lost Babylon. In particular, I was struck by an article written in the early 1980s by Jane Feuer. Feuer theorised that television, with its emphasis on ‘live’ reportage, had colonised liveness both as an ontology and ideology (1983, 13-14). My production sought to explore both the ontological and ideological aspects of liveness, and in thinking about technological liveness in stage performance, I extrapolated from Feuer’s observations about television to include the televisual, such as real time simulation in performance.

At the same time, I use the term ‘aliveness’ to refer to the performer physically present in the same space and time as the audience. Of course, in recent years, the question of ‘the body’ and embodiment have produced a plethora of theoretical and theorised bodies. Although a thorough survey of these ideas is beyond the scope of this paper, in the course of working towards my production of The Lost Babylon, I began to work with four distinct ‘bodies’ with which to consider the presence of the ‘alive’ actor. These four bodies are:

1. The phenomenological or lived body. This is the body as physiological anchor to the world as identified by Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1974), Stanton Garner (1994) and Bert States (1985), and most recently the “[a]liveness” of the stage performer identified by Hans Thies Lehmann and which draws on the mortality of the live human being (2006, 167).
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The signified body that draws on what Meyerhold called the risunok or “outline” and which is closely related to Brecht’s gestus: the body as representative of its political and social environment.

The aesthetic body: the body of artistic training as identified by Phillip Zarilli and which includes physical training and physical performance “scores” (2004, 653).

Pierre Levy’s “hyperbody”, a globalised biotechnological body in which we all share and which I extend to the idea of the body as hyper-sign. This includes images of the body replicated by means of the tools of mediatisation—television and the internet—in which we as viewers are implicated, and for which, as consumers and therefore as the locus of demand, we ultimately share responsibility.

These four modes of embodiment guided both my work with performers as a director and my theorisation of that practice, and in this paper I will use them to describe and analyse excerpts of my production of The Lost Babylon. In effect, together, these practical and theoretical perspectives mutually inform each other, constituting a directorial praxis with which to negotiate the ontology and ideology of the post-televisual.

I began my research with a review of Bert States’ 1985 call for a “binocular” approach to performance analysis through a combination of a phenomenological and a semiotic reading of performance. This starting point in turn reflects a current trend in writing about the performing body from phenomenological perspectives, addressing the liveness debate and the shortcomings of Auslander’s argument: notwithstanding the post-Derridean suspicion of presence, the primacy of the physiological actuality of an alive performer’s body in a shared temporal and spatial location with a similarly alive audience is, in practice, a bald fact (see Krasner, David and Saltz David 2006). This is the perspective of the phenomenological body, the function of which is to foreground the experiential dimension of the theatrical moment.

In mapping out such a typology of bodies I was setting up a hypothesis to be tested on the floor or rehearsal and production. Almost immediately, as will be demonstrated, a fifth body type emerged and, in fact, became dominant, illustrating the practical value of performance research in challenging and extending theoretical models. This in turn relates to a fundamental problematic with which I was confronted as both director and researcher: how does one ensure that the actor maintains a sense of presence or aura within an increasingly mediatised stage space. As Keith Gallasch and Virginia Baxter in their 2002 overview of “Multimedia and New Media Performance Works-in-progress” in Australia commented that, for artists, “[i]t’s often about getting the mix right, smoothing out the relationship between the ‘visceral and the virtual’ not losing live presence to the seductions of the screen” (22).

In order to test this typology, my research has involved two methods: first, I have employed a rehearsal analysis of my own process, drawing upon the anthropological model of participant/observer: stepping in to direct rehearsal and stepping out to comment on the process, through a rehearsal diary that I kept. In order to give something of a ‘polyphonic’ reading, I have also conducted interviews with actors, the lighting designer and the software operator from the production. Second, I will place

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these ethnographic observations against a production analysis of the product of those rehearsals, using still images and drawing on comments from reviewers. For the purposes of this paper, I will limit my analysis to the realisation of one scene from the play.

**Building the ‘Video Game’ Sequence in The Lost Babylon**

The description for Act II Scene 3 of *The Lost Babylon* is deceptively simple. The directions read:

The desert. The Soldier, Man A, Man B and the Young Woman are in a convertible. The Soldier drives while the others stand and fire revolvers and automatic rifles. Before long, Man A gets hit in the chest. His shirt is stained with blood.

Man A: I’ve been hit! Someone made mistake. Was it him? That black foreigner. (Shoots) It serves you right! (To the Soldier). They should miss when shooting at customers. I’ll forward my cleaning bill (Kawamura 1999, 51).

Some context: the Soldier is an employee of the theme park and the others (Man A, Man B and the Young Woman) are customers whose parents are friends of the park’s owner park: The Boss. They have been invited to try out the park as a part of an unofficial trial. Further, the characters, as theatre scholar and editor of the translation, Carol Martin notes, are types, rather than fully-developed: for Martin, the play’s “virtual dystopia” is perhaps best characterised by the stock identity of the characters . . . [who] are everyone and no one. They have a video game reality, which makes us indifferent to their individual actions. But the confusion the play generates is ours (Martin 2006, n.p.).

At this point in the play the Attackers have begun to fight back—a prelude of the full scale revolt to follow—and the bullets are changing from blanks to ‘heartstoppers’. The scene, characterised by a subsequent growing sense of confusion, is a major turning point in the play.

In the original Japanese production the scene was like a staged video game, with specific reference to the movement patterns of games from the 1990s. For example, Man A walked on from the side of the stage and turned upstage to shoot at emerging targets, while Man B walked in a staccato fashion, emulating the jerky movements of video games of the period. The scene culminated in a prolonged ‘Spandau ballet’ sequence (as we referred to it), at the conclusion of which one of the Attackers fires back, illuminated by a multitude of bright coloured lights emulating the gaudy colours of video games. Actor Seiji Aitoh, who played the original Man A and performed the Soldier role for the Australian production, commented that the Japanese cast had immersed themselves in video games prior to the production in order to get the appropriate feel.

The major point of difference in this scene for the 2006 Australian production was the incorporation of video projection. In the playtext, the theme park is always an imagined offstage space. Most of the action takes place in an office within the park, with incremental intrusions from the surrounding park that steadily erode the reality of the office world, displacing it in favour of the theme park world. In my production, I would attempt to bring the imagined offstage world onto the stage: the actors would perform with a real-time ‘virtual’ sequence, screened up-stage, which was to draw upon a recently developed software package, called *The Undiscovered City*. The directorial challenge was to develop a mise-en-scène that would take advantage of the opportunities presented by state-of-the-art technology, and allow us to stamp our production with its own aesthetic.

I first came across a software prototype the *Undiscovered City* at ‘The Yet Unseen: Rendering Stories’
conference at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (R.M.I.T.) in Melbourne in 2004. In response to the boundaries usually associated with video gaming software designer Stefan Greuter introduced the idea of real time “computer-generated, three-dimensional, near infinite virtual worlds” (Greuter 2004). This is a 3D space or ‘game level’ that continuously forms around the computer mouse as the mouse moves through this virtual world. The Undiscovered City prototype is a contemporary western city landscape with uniform streets and buildings (see Greuter 2007).

The Undiscovered City offered a compelling realisation of the virtual world imagined by the playwright. The virtual city’s flatness on one hand, and the liquid architectural simulation on the other hand, certainly appealed as a solution to staging the scene. Its brilliance and luminescence afforded qualities of light, colour and shape that initially stunned both the actors in rehearsal and later audiences and reviewers in performance, with one critic writing of the “stunning” virtual landscape (Harris 2006, 10), and another of the “fascination [of the] never-ending city (McGinley 2006). However, the challenge in rehearsal was how to integrate the actors with the software, and specifically, how to ensure that those actors were not ‘lost’ against the impact of the virtual city.

Discovering a fifth and unexpected body: the Kinetic Body
The process of integrating this technology with the actors began by exploring what exactly the software could do, and then integrating the actor’s bodies correspondingly. My approach, as I noted in my diary, was to “see what the technology can do, in all its wonders, without fear of where it might lead us, and then endeavour to adjust the actor’s body accordingly” (2006). Vision switcher Dwayne Blee’s extended experimentation with the software determined that “the camera [the audience’s point of view] could be moved through the city as well as up and down and below the streets.”

The aesthetically enthralling, affective and kinetic fluidity of movement through the city demanded that we match bodily movement to the capabilities of software, co-coordinating physical movement to the movement of the image. Initially this included a basic physical repertoire of spinning, turning, running, walking and stopping. However, as Blee pointed out, the software worked, as it were, in denial of physics, as the point of view jumped buildings, and took the audience (and characters) into flight (see fig. 1). This demanded an extended range of bodily practice on the part of the actors: a kinetic staging was attempted, more usually associated with dance and its integration of technology in a “technography” of scenic construction (Birringer 1998, 377). Initially the actors simply played with the projected city and improvised movements that might integrate with the moving city. However as one of the actor’s Chrissie Page noted, it soon became evident that the performers’ movements would have to be “choreographed” in order to kinetically meld with the projected city. The actors’ bodies were subsequently moulded into the architecture of the virtual city, or, in actor Page’s words, “morphed with the image” and became one of her “favourite” scenes as she “enjoyed the dance and flow of it as we became more fluid as a group.”

Such kinetic staging, then, can be seen as a dynamic interaction between the moving body and moving scenographic elements. Ideally, kinetic actions on stage combine with projections to create a “unified field” between the real and the virtual: a synthesis between physiological activity and virtual environment, where each complements and highlights the other (Causey 1999, 389).

Kinetic staging finds a parallel in video game software programming, and in particular research directed towards developing kinetic involvement for gamers that utilises greater action from the body of the player. Beyond pushing buttons, recent game consoles include hardware and software that integrates the physical actions of the player, from early arcade-based dancing games, to new home-entertainment consoles that allow, for example, a player to execute a golf swing or cross-court back
hand in real/virtual space. Contemporary approaches to interactivity with virtual gaming are centring on the body as anchor and the participant’s own real gestures that grounds their contact with virtual worlds and “enhance(s) immersion” (Hill 2006, 4). According to media theorists Geoff King and Tanya Krzywinska, for the video game player

a sense of presence can be defined in terms of “inhabiting” or exploring a digitally produced landscape . . . [where the ] possibility of seeming to move “inside” the fictional world on screen is sometimes seen as a defining characteristic of games. (2000, 4).

Similarly, Margit Grieb comments that

[m]ovement for players in video games is almost always synonymous with interactivity (in King and Krzywinska 2000, 166).

This scene in The Lost Babylon replicated the ‘psychological presence’ of a video game with the alive performer miming moving through a digital landscape, creating a kinetic presence. This in turn, created for the audience, a sense of interactivity and immersion in the digital landscape. The actors became, in effect, the audience’s avatar. This kinetic presence, or kinetic body, was not one of the four proposed body types, but emerged as the initial key type that integrated the performer with technology. The kinetic presence provided a solid basis of integration upon which the four remaining types of presence could subsequently be layered.
Developing the Aesthetic Body
The limited rehearsal time presented a significant challenge in terms of training actors to mime running. Therefore, I began working on stylising the run through the virtual city. In order to achieve this, I drew upon my training with Jacques Lecoq and in particular his “action mime” for skating (2002, 77), involving a transfer of weight sideways and forward, creating both a greater sense control for the actors and an appealing aesthetic (see fig. 2); turning corners was realised by turning on one foot and holding a momentary still point, another important principle of Lecoq’s teachings (see fig. 3), and his action mime for flying provided the physical basis for the actors to mime flying over the virtual city (2002, 77). A physical score was thus created using the aesthetic body of the actor to give the illusion of skating through and flying over the virtual city. Phillip Zarilli refers to the “aesthetic outer body” as the body that is focussed on the outer form of performance scores and “appearance” (2004, 657 and 661); it was this body type that enabled the aesthetic integration of the actors with the moving projected city. While the kinetic body had been the primary tool for integrating the performer with the digital image, this integration was in turn enhanced by training the actor to aesthetically meld into the image.

Fig. 2. Act 2 Scene 3 of The Lost Babylon. (left to right) The Young Woman (Wendy Bos), the Soldier (Seiji Aitoh), Man B (Nathaniel Davison) and Man A (Dave Bailiht) mime skating after Attackers through the Undiscovered City. Software by Stefan Greuter. (Photo © Nic Mollison).

Finding the kinaesthetic body
The actor’s body was also important in creating live acoustic sounds that existed in both the architecture of the theatre and in the world of the staged video game. This grounding reinforced the phenomenological notion of the body as anchorage. Sounds included the actors miming landing on the stage as the point of view of the city descended from the sky (at the the beginning of the scene), and physically...
colliding with the cyclorama as they skated into a virtual wall from the city projected onto the cyclorama. These actions acted kinaesthetically, highlighting the double presence of the actor’s bodies in real and virtual worlds. While the kinetic and aesthetic bodies drew the actor into the virtual world, the lived body was a reminder to audiences of the mortal actor engaged in live actions in front of them.

**Gestic Scenography**

As rehearsals of this scene progressed, a certain cycle of chase, shot and being shot back at was played out using the virtual city, which complemented the script. The scenographic structure of the scene initially had the Customers chasing the Attackers upstage, with the virtual city flowing towards the audience. In video game terms, this is a classic first-person person shooter point of view. When, however, the Attackers rebel and begin to shoot back, the scene is reversed and the hunters become the hunted. The staging literally reflected this, with both the virtual city and music now played backwards to effect a scenographic reversal, a gestic scenography (see fig. 4). This is an extension of Brecht’s notion of *gestus*: a showing of the underlying hierarchy between characters to what Christopher Baugh terms a “scenographic gest”, where body and theatre machine combine in a “performance act of practical dramaturgy” (2005, 76). In this instance the reversal of the movement of the virtual city from towards to away from the audience was able to highlight the reversal of the hitherto existing power relations between the park’s customers and targets as the latter started shooting back.
Fig. 3. Act 2, Scene 3 of *The Lost Babylon*. (left to right) The Young Woman (Wendy Bos), the Soldier (Seiji Aitoh), Man B (Nathaniel Davison), Man A (Dave Bailiht) and Attackers mime turning a corner in the Undiscovered City. Software by Stefan Greuter. (Photo © Nic Mollison).

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The Gestic Body and Hypersign
According to Nic Mollison, the lighting designer on the production,

"[i]t was important for lighting levels for this sequence to be very low. Almost just silhouette in backlight in order to balance the live performer with the projected image. The light reflected from upstage from the projected image doing most of the work.

The increasing intensity of light afforded by contemporary projection affords the possibility of rendering the body as a pure silhouette. I was able to work with this convention by foregrounding what Meyerhold called *risunok*: “the actor’s attitude or pose and even his consciousness of his attitude or pose and which, like gestus conveys political status” (Hoover 1974, 83). For example, in the first part of the video game scene the customers, after shooting the Attackers, turn towards the audience and ‘vogue’ into comic book ‘heroic’ stances and poses echoing the freeze-frames of manga comic books (see fig. 5).

In the original Japanese production, the Attackers were dressed as Second World War American soldiers, a commentary upon reactionary sentiment within Japan towards the War. My decision to dress the Attackers as Guantanamo Bay inmates—the Attackers were faceless, covered in balaclavas and orange overalls, their individual identity obliterated—evoked an idea of ‘illegals’ or ‘terrorists’ and firmly placed the work in a post 9/11 context. The facelessness of these so-called illegals drew upon the manner in which the then-Australian Government and media have consistently de-humanised..."
refugees and terrorist suspects such as David Hicks, rarely allowing their faces to appear before the public, “disappearing” them and turning them into, literally, virtual bodies (Wake 2007). The orange overalls are evocative of dangerous criminality, better kept out of sight: the orange uniform takes on the qualities of a ‘hyper’ sign, replicated by government and media and representative or a hyper body or bodies that we all share in. They become collective virtual bodies; by choice or otherwise, we are all implicated as part of a collective responsibility, as we consume them like other products of a hyper-capitalist society.

The poses and costumes of the Players and Attackers were gestic in that they reveal the body as socially constructed object, inscribed with the politics of power: the ‘good guys’ and the ‘bad guys’, reflective of a ‘you’re either with us or you’re against us’ mentality. These characterisations are interchangeable between video game reality and official versions of good and evil in the so-called War on Terror. I also intended them to suggest a deeper undercurrent of blind Nationalism that manifests as racist and violent behaviour towards the Muslim ‘other’, which I was able to infer by drawing upon recent events in Australia.

At the end of the video game scene, for example, after Man A has been shot for the first time by an Attacker, he proclaims “I bet it was that illegal” (Kawamura 1999, 51). He turns on the Attacker, pumping him full of lead, knowing that some of the bullets he is using are ‘heartstoppers’. I directed Dave Bailiht, the actor playing this character, to then remove his jacket to display an Australian flag.
t-shirt, while he laughed hysterically. This was a direct reference to the violent 2005 race riots at Cronulla Beach in Sydney, when white Australians wrapped in Australian flags bashed Australians of Middle-Eastern origin. For Bailiht it was “disturbing” to play such an “intense” and “angry” character whose “need for power” and desire to “humiliate” others was driven by “fear of difference” and insecurity. The gestic staging of this scene was ultimately intended to show how easily xenophobia can transfer from video game, to the border and to the beach, within the logics of fear and suspicion generated by the War on Terror.

Conclusion
This paper set out to answer the broad question how to balance the presence of the performer’s body with projection within the context of staging a video game. I originally posited four key types of the performing body to be tested within the rehearsal and performance process. In integrating the actor’s body with video software the following five bodies were identified:

1. The kinetic body—the body that moves and interacts with projected software. A body that is kinetically linked to the moving image.
2. The aesthetic body—the body of artistic training in this instance an action mime score
3. The kinaesthetic body—a body whose actual sounds remind audiences of a real presence within a virtual environment.
4. The gestic body—the body that though it’s costume, stance and actions reveals its political status.
5. The hyper body—the body replicated by media, in this instance the disappeared body of the refugee and terrorist suspect, symbolised by the orange uniform of Guantanamo Bay.

One of the main discoveries in staging the scene was the notion of the kinetic body, a body that could physically integrate with projection through movement. This was not a body proposed in preliminary research but emerged as key to staging the scene. The kinaesthetic and gestic bodies can be seen to be part of the phenomenological and signified bodies, respectively which were outlined at the beginning of the paper. The hyperbody, replicated ad nauseam by television and the internet, when staged, emerges as a hypersign and an extension of the gestic body. These five bodies contribute to what I call the alive performer: the performer physically present in the same space and time as the audience. The bodies help to define the aliveness of the performer as they interact with the liveness of real time simulation through projected software. They contribute to a unified scenography between body and new media in theatre.

Notes
1. Takeshi Kawamura burst onto the Japanese theatre scene in the 1980s with his company Daisan Erotica (The Third Erotica) with his signature work Nippon Wars. In this work Kawamura established a socio-political perspective within a science fiction genre. Nippon Wars was inspired by the 1982 science fiction film Blade Runner (1982), and involves an army of androids who decide to revolt against their leadership, only to discover that revolution was part of their programming—a nihilist dystopic view of the uniformity of Japanese society. In a similar vein, The Lost Babylon, with its emphasis on theme park killing as simulacra can be traced directly to an earlier science fiction film, Westworld (1974). Kawamura is established as a major figure, having won the..
Prestigious Kishida Kuniuo Award for playwriting, and has toured his works worldwide. The premiere season of *The Lost Babylon* was performed in Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya in late 1999. Most recently Kawamura has created a production company, T-Factory, to extend his commercial work possibilities and toured his productions of Yukio Mishima’s *Modern Noh Plays* to New York in 2007.

2. A focus on balancing the stage actor with the projected image mirror concerns raised recently by theorists such as Steve Dixon (2007, 115-134), Phillip Auslander (1999, passim), Peggy Phelan (1999, 146-152), and Matthew Causey (1999, 383-394). Arguably, the debate stretches indeed back to Walter Benjamin’s consideration of the—for him, positive—potential for film to shatter the ‘aura’ of the actor’s live presence (1969 [1934]).

3. All quotes from artists who worked on *The Lost Babylon* are from interviews conducted by the author after the production in 2006.

4. Matthew Causey gives the example of the Desperate Optimist’s production of Synge’s *Playboy of the Western World* wherein the actors fired guns from projected “video which had ‘real’ stage effects of exploding blood bags on the [stage] actors creat[ing] a unified field of the televisual and the stage” (1999, 389).

5. The collisions into the virtual wall projected onto the cyclorama regularly provoked laughter from audiences, as they recognised the play on virtual and real worlds. Unfortunately the collision wall had to be curtailed after an opening night, when an over-enthusiastic actor punched a hole in the cyclorama.

6. The increasing power of projectors, and particularly L.E.D. (light emitting diode) screens often means that the actors’ body becomes silhouetted against intense and large scale projections. Some examples include recent North American works such as *The End of Cinematics* at the Mondavi Center at the University of California at Davis (dir. Mikel Rouse 2005) and New York group The Builder’s Association’s *SuperVision* (dir. Marianne Weems 2005) Such works immerse the alive body and the body is read as silhouette and in some cases dissolves into the virtual ether of “dataspace”. The body is revealed here as a prothesis of technology that ultimately consumes it (see Hurwitz 2006 and Lamper-Greaux 2006). Johannes Birringer similarly notes that in dance “screen projections ...tend to hide, sculpt or silhouette the human figure dancing in their illumination” (1998, 137).

7. Australian theatre scholar Caroline Wake comments that in Australia “refugees and asylum seekers have been made to disappear in several ways over the past few years (2007, 2). Wake describes how they have disappeared linguistically with bureaucratic neologisms such as ‘boat people’, ‘these people’ and ‘queue jumpers’, through their lack of representation in the media, and literally, through their displacement to remote locations—desert camps and small Pacific islands. I would argue, similarly, that Guantanamo Bay inmates have been ‘linguistically disappeared’ behind terms such as ‘detainess’ and ‘enemy combatant’, while, again, their physical presence is absent from media representation.

References


Russell Fewster has directed theatre for the past 25 years, including work with professional actors, acting students and young people. He studied at École Jacques Lecoq in Paris in the early 1980s, where his theatrical journey effectively began. In 2000 he completed a Masters by Research—a study of decision-making in rehearsal—at the (then) Centre for Performance Studies at the University of Sydney. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Theatre Studies at the University of Melbourne, examining the use of video in performance, and is a Lecturer in Drama at the Magill campus of the University of South Australia.