

VCA Drama - *ID*
POSTGRADUATE SEASON
Tuesday 16 to Saturday 20 October 2007

A performance response to Roland Barthes' book *Camera Lucida* ~ Directed by Leisa Shelton

A contemplation on the themes of presence and absence, the relationship between presentation and representation, photography and theatre.

Devised by Gary Abrahams, Bronwyn Batten, Claudia Escobar, Christiane Hille, Bridgid Jackson, Emmaline Macartney, Georgie Read, Maria Sirpis, Adena Jacobs, Suzanne Smith and Matt Scott (production manager) and Kelly Ryall (sound designer).

"...one November evening shortly after my mother's death. I was going through some photographs. I had no hope of 'finding' her – I wanted again to 'feel' her, 'know' her."

Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*

From Tuesday 16 October, students from VCA Drama's 2007 Graduate Diploma in Animateuring and Direction will present ***ID***.

This collaborative project has been developed by postgraduate students in response to material provided by director **Leisa Shelton**. Throughout 2007 she has worked closely with emerging VCA animateuring students, all distinct theatremakers. *ID* is the culmination of the year's training. Shelton's role on *ID* is conceptual / curatorial.

Roland Barthes was a French literary critic. His book *Camera Lucida* (1980) was both an inquiry into the nature and essence of photography and a tribute to the author's late mother. At its core the work questions the notion and meaning of photography. Specifically the place photography plays in the observer's relationship to the person in the image. Along with Susan Sontag's *On Photography*, *Camera Lucida* was considered one of the most important early academic books of criticism and theorization on photography.

Leisa Shelton is one of Australia's most respected and exciting movement director/teachers and currently runs VCA Drama's Graduate Diploma in Animateuring course. Of particular interest to Shelton is the loss of identity and diminishment of photographic *ID* through 'identifiers' such as the barcode. Her interest in Barthes' *Camera Lucida* was sparked in her early 20's. The questions raised about photography paralleled her fascination with theatre and film – in particular the image and projection of "self". Her exploration of *Camera Lucida* is an ongoing, open and evolving project having first introduced the material to emerging actors from Australian Theatre for Young People and TTRP in Singapore.

VCA Drama's **Graduate Diploma in Animateuring** program nurtures and develops arts practitioners who will contribute through leadership, research, performance development and/or pedagogy to Australian culture in the arts, in particular those aspects of culture and society that lie outside the dominant paradigms.

Animateuring involves the creation of new performances through the mobilisation of expressive, artistic and imaginative faculties in a variety of artistic and community contexts, the ability to work individually or in small groups, the capacity to work within and across art forms, community ownership of process and performance outcomes and collaboration within communities interested in developing and realising various forms of artistic performance. The animateur is a skilled performance artist with a central commitment to artistic leadership. He or she may be involved in various ways with the processes of creation, direction, facilitation, and performance. The role played is a pivotal one, with the success measured not only in artistic terms, but also by other indicators such as level of community support, participation, ownership and achievement of social and political goals.

Graduates of Animateuring include Vanessa Pigrum, Andrea James, Mary Sitarenos, Karen Therese, Elizabeth Walsh, Ronaldo Morelos and Anna Tregloan.

Dates/Times: Tuesday 16 to Friday 19 October at 6pm, Saturday 20 October at 1pm and 6pm
Venue: Studio 45, VCA Drama, 45 Sturt Street, Southbank
Cost: \$15 Full / \$10 Concession
Bookings: www.vca.unimelb.edu.au/dramabookings or drama-info@unimelb.edu.au
Information: 03 9685 9234

Media Information, Interviews: Lisa Montague: 03 9685 9371 / 0412 002 544 or montague@unimelb.edu.au