



**“No escape from Life’s questions. Rough Fiction push the boundaries of text and performance”**  
The Scotsman

## 1. Starting

Jump in with us and experience a modern story, classically well told whilst using physical storytelling to bring the story alive. Blending these two key dramatic forms is at the heart of Rough Fiction’s practice, and this pack offers an overview of how we approached it...

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**Starting is always hard, interesting, fun and complicated. Why? Where? Who with? What on earth are we trying to say? About what?**

Most drama students at some point have used photographs, music, paintings, magazine articles, books, films and overheard conversations to create drama and at some point during this process we’ve used all of these. We just have the advantage of being able to do it over a far longer time frame, more intensely and with people we choose to work with. The biggest thing we want to point out though is that we’ve got things wrong, repeatedly, throughout the process and continually we’ve assessed those mistakes and hopefully grown as a result. Scripted plays aren’t written, they’re re-written as a colleague quite rightly pointed out and as an extension devised plays are probably more accurately continually re-devised. So this play, part written and part devised is a conglomeration of re-imaginings. The Last of the Lake in this respect represents a mish-mash of time, ideas, people and mistakes eventually forming a piece of theatre that we’re all proud to be sharing with you.

## 2. Early Process - Stimuli

Travelling has been a massive source of inspiration to me and images I've taken from my trips featured heavily in early discussions with Simon. Uyuni, the dry salt lake in Bolivia turned out to be the salt lake near the village for example. The feel of the place is very sparse but also full of multi-colour wonder like India can be. Someone in an early showing of the work was upset the play was so clearly set in America yet we hadn't said precisely where. It wasn't and has never been set there but it doesn't matter. Like a fairy story place is somewhere irrelevant, what is relevant about it is that we transport you to the place in the story and nothing else. This is why the start contains

a monologue asking you to suspend your disbelief and jump in. Also there are many inter-textual references in the piece where we've seen other things we like and respect and have re-referenced them. For example the moment in Lawrence of Arabia where Omar Sharif enters through a heat haze (the best entrance in film history?) became the Bedouin's entrance. All these things have been referenced or have aided the development of the script. A magpie to experience a writer filters and reassembles those things they've seen in new patterns to reveal new stories and ask new questions.

PK.

## 3. Early Process - Genre



Leah Muller and Tessa Parr  
as Mentira and Verity.  
Image © Ben Ward 2012

This idea is somewhat “nerdier” than the one above but alongside the more traditional use of stimuli to kick-start work we also spent a great deal of time researching the genre of magic realism. To some extent it can explain a lot of theatre, whether companies call their work magical realism or not, but in a literary sense it definitely has its own conventions. Often seen as a South American genre, with landmark writers like Gabriel García Márquez, the genre encompasses Indian writer Salman Rushdie and can be traced from the “New Objectivity” art movement in Germany. Why is all this useful? Because there are rules within the genre to follow. In the same way a rom-com needs the couple to continually be kept apart by happy and unhappy accident throughout the film, only uniting truly at the end, or that Shakespearian tragedy ends in death, magical realism can see anything happen within certain constraints.

The fact that every day in the village is a Sunday flags up early on that the normal boundaries of time and space are contestable for instance. The fact that every day becomes Sunday is then fixed, like the weft and warp of this bizarre and magical world is stitched just beneath, or on top of, our own world and the characters just have to accept its reality. This genre research also allowed me to steal and borrow from existing fiction. So, in *The Last of the Lake*, like the start of the breathtaking novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* the characters have travelled a long time through the country to found their own civilization. This is something that happened in South America but that Márquez himself stole and re-imagined in his epic tale. Although working to such rules may sound constrictive they also provide excellent boundaries to test ourselves against. Robert Frost complained that writing free verse was like playing tennis with the net down, writing within a genre then puts the net back up. PK.

## 4. References and Inspirations

Over the last year or so we have drawn inspiration and associations from a range of stimuli. Sometimes the relationship to the starting points are apparent, sometimes discarded, sometimes they become a little part of the process of understanding what the piece is, and what it could be.

Here is a collection of stimuli that have helped us along on the journey...

- The genre of Magical Realism - non-plot content, new objectivity, disproportion and Brechtian effects
- Film: *The Little Mermaid* - coming of age on 15th Birthday (Mentira and Verity)
- David Greig's introduction in *San Diego* - the authorial voice
- Novel: *100 Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez
- Novel: *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushtie
- Film: *Up*
- Music: *Pray For Rain* by Massive Attack
- Music: The Album *Ceremonies* and the track *Seven Devils* by Florence and The Machine; Phil had it on repeat whilst writing the opening world of the priest
- Music: *God Moving Over the Water* by Moby
- The Art of Francesca Woodman
- The Austrian settlement that set up in South America
- Film: *Laurence of Arabia*
- Film: *Walkabout*
- Film: *Pans Labyrinth*
- Film: *The Wizard of Oz* - when it travels into Technicolor
- Novel: *Dirt Music* by Tim Winton - for the wilderness and its portrayal of our relationship to water
- Travel and documentation of Travel in Bolivia
- Western Australian Culture and Landscape
- The Bible
- The Philosophy of Derrida and *Sou Rautres*
- Documentary: *Salt*
- *National Geographic*
- Book: *Take Me to The Source: In Search of Water* by Rupert Wright

William Donaldson and Leah Muller in Rehearsals



Design Research Images





## 5. Research



**“Water is life. It’s the briny broth of our origins, the pounding circulatory system of the world. We stake our civilizations on the coasts and mighty rivers. Our deepest dread is the threat of having too little – or too much”**  
Barbara Kingsolver

***“In distant desert villages where water is sparse young girls can either accept what fate has given them or fight against it. She turned into a mermaid”.***

Image © James Marshall 2010: Research & Development at Brighton Corn Exchange

**The process this play went through has been really different from plays I’ve been involved with before.** One year was spent getting the play ready for a research and development (R&D) showing at The Point in Eastleigh where we were associate artists. This allowed us to test ideas and showcase them to gain further Arts Council funding. Without the generous assistance of the Arts Council the work could not go ahead and therefore both creatively and financially this was an essential step towards touring the show. The best thing about this was people able to work with actors in Brighton Dome trailing early ideas en route to Eastleigh and then getting into the creation space at The Point. The Dome space and

support was incredible and letting rip with possibilities was wonderfully freeing. The creation space in Eastleigh is a wonderful resource too, featuring living accommodation for actors above the space allowing you to have people on hand to discuss and work through ideas. In reality this can create a very pressured environment and it’s key to allow people their own space and privacy when as the people driving the work you’d be happy spending every waking minute of every day creating.

**You can read more about some of the physical exercises and rehearsal processes we used in ‘Getting Physical’ later in this pack.**

## 6. Student Questions



Tessa Parr in front of animation by James Jone’s Morris.  
Image: Ben Ward.

At Rough Fiction we’ve always been incredibly keen to work with young people and the questions below were asked by our sixth-form junior dramaturgs. Some of them were with us on our early R&D showing and some of them have joined us on creating the tour. Being students who have worked their way through various live performance evaluations for exam boards as some of current audience will be wanting to do we wanted to give them the chance to grill us on your behalf.

**Amy Day (AD):** Right at the beginning of the process of creating the play, what techniques/exercises did you use to explore your first thoughts and ideas?

**Phil King (PK):** Right at the beginning the process was a small thought from me as a writer. An idea to play around with “water” and to see what that gave us. I’m pessimistic to the point where I believe that in fifty years time wars will not be fought over oil or energy security but over something more fundamental – clean water. I hope this is not the case but already countries that border major rivers are locked in disputes about ownership.

When I was lucky enough to get in a room with the Rough Fiction ensemble that Simon runs in Covent Garden we played. We saw what movements water suggested. We interrogated different viewings of images that particularly interested me involving water and various scientific articles on the subject. Exercises which particularly helped had a sense of journeying through the space towards something. We set up various physical and imaginative journeys, which then the ensemble lead people through one by one. In one sense this is all very child-like and this freedom and happy sense of largely unstructured outcomes was liberating. I appreciate this is at odds with the given wisdom in our educational systems today which focus on specific outcomes but I would urge students who devise their own work to set aside time for play, to set time aside to see where a movement might end up, to set time aside for just being in a group having fun. Devising takes time and this is one reason why.



Leah Muller and Tessa Parr in front of animation by James Jones Morris. Image: Ben Ward

**AD:** How important do you believe the sound, lighting and other aspects of theatre have been in creating your final production?

**PK:** This production is, and has always been conceived as, incredibly visual. I was told by one of my first playwriting tutors to “make the air move” and I have always endeavored to see the space whilst writing as I’ve no intention (at the moment at least) to write a novel. This means the technical capabilities of the theatre have to be harnessed to the same aim. In the R&D showing we played with projection and worked with an incredibly able AV designer who managed to project our talking fish onto what

was then a pile of salt. For this version of the play animation was chosen as the most useful way of telling the story, a story now more consciously written in the genre of magic realism.



Lucy Ellinson and Tessa Parr as Sabina and Verity - First Draft Development showing at The Point Eastleigh, 2011. Images © Simon Pittman 2011.

**AD:** Was the first draft of the script written before this exploration, or was it written as a result?

**PK:** Over the years we've been doing this we've discovered a lot about the push and pull between devised, so-called "new work" and written, so-called "new writing". For me as writer I've always had quite a strong idea of the written script in my head and Simon works from the other perspective. However, much like the terms "new work" and "new writing" definitions and specific roles and responsibilities can be overly constrictive. If one accepts the wisdom that "success has many Mothers" and everyone pitches in what they can when they can a better product can result. This time round Simon was excellent at putting the breaks on my written creativity until I'd first got into a room with the ensemble lab and with an ensemble group at Brighton Dome too. This time and this creative atmosphere with others was invaluable and gave rise to an R&D draft that was better and more suited to actors than something I could have produced alone.

Having said this I am still a massive believer in the writer locking themselves away and ploughing through draft after draft and listening to their gut. The draft that came after the R&D showing was a massive transformation and a completely new incarnation that has been given to actors as the script to work with. Having said this Simon will still view the script as fluid in rehearsal and it is our relationship (and friendship) that allows this to happen with fear of treading on anyone's toes. Or at least that's the idea.

**Natasha Carlin (NC):** In the devising process who plays a bigger role with developing lines and actions for the piece, the actors or the directors?

**PK:** Everyone has a say and an impact on the process. If they didn't they would be shut out and the work would suffer from being dead, or we'd have to be very dictatorial in getting our ideas across. Some directors can be very shouty and demanding but that isn't the way things are done in the Rough Fiction rehearsal room. Having said that the lines are written largely outside of the acting/devising process and that the actions are put in place by the actors in rehearsals in quite a traditional process. As discussed above though the lines are written over a long devising process and that the actions in the early stages of that process end up informing the lines. We're quite open to changing lines in the rehearsal room though if they sound clunky or if the actor suggests better alternatives, often though we spend time working out why the line's not working and unlock what it is that's blocking the work moving forwards.



**NC:** Other than exercises and techniques what else is significant to the early stages of devising?

**PK:** Belief. Trust. Blind faith. Devising is a long and difficult process that can also be short and simple. It's a world of contradiction that needs perfect clarity at times. Writer/creators like Tim Etchells have managed to talk much more cogently about this obscure process but essentially either one person or more needs to have the conviction that there is an end point out there that's worth travelling to and that person needs to be happy to change course mid-journey. To save this sounding overly "hippy" as long as you all look out for one another and all look after one another (even if arguments flare up when you're working) you'll get there. Simon and I work in a different way to many people and in the first instances we'll talk lots. As the project was about water we took waterproof note pads into steam rooms to get down our initial ideas but very quickly we got to try these out with the amazingly driven actors in the ensemble lab.

**NC:** Before the piece is ready to tour what happens in the final few stages in order to get the play ready for this?

**PK:** A lot. Simon will be able to tell you more but money needs to be found, actors need to be found, venues need to be found and you hope audiences can then be found when it's all together. On this project we're very lucky to be working with producer Tracky Crombie who is able to complete a lot of the work that in previous projects has meant we've had our attentions split between say, contacting venues and assessing their needs and talking further about the script between ourselves to unlock new creative avenues.



William Donaldson, Jan Shepherd, Tessa Parr and Leah Muller in Performance at Winchester Theatre Royal.  
Image: Ben Ward

## 7. Getting Physical

### Exercises and Expanding your Practice

Over the course of the various rehearsal and development weeks for *The Last of The Lake* we have used a range of exercises designed to build a shared performance language as well as to explore and develop new material. Many of the exercises we use, of the pieces of material we generated never make it to the performance.

Sometimes the exercises have clarified our understanding of the story we are telling, sometimes they have clarified a style of performance language we wish to focus on or even avoid. Sometimes it is enough that we have simply undertaken them and have a better understanding of each other as a company.

Here are a few examples you could try yourself. We have written a series of exercises that you could chain together as a longer workshop or series of approaches to a piece or theme you wish to explore.

#### A. Creating movement through Task.

In pairs we made a sequence of movements, using simple instructions and tasks. Add a movement each which moves your partner. Repeat and then and two more and so on. This way you can build a sequence, clarifying, rehearsing and add to it as you go. The aim should be to not 'dance' it but to be practical and smooth

over the transitions between each move and each of you leading and following. Some starting points you might try include:

- Look / Shift / Cover
- Wrap / Through / Around
- Leave / Retrieve
- Wash / Gather / Travel

This Should create a sequence of natural and unexpected moves whilst the performer avoids any thought about meaning or context. Once the sequences are practiced and flowing you can then apply additional focuses to explore and observe the meaning by adding and changing music, pace, tension, a context, eye contact or focus, a piece of text to precede it, an action that you play; e.g. 'I educate you', 'I repel you', 'I warm you' etc.

#### B. Applying Text to Movement Material

Sometimes we would add some written material to a piece of movement. The choice of text or movement might be due to a range of factors - a correlative association someone has made through observation, perhaps a specific aim to explore a theme or moment of narrative. In workshop it could simply be enough that both elements share a common link: e.g.. Drowning ...



*“Opposites carry the very thing they are in opposition to”*

Phil King,  
Playwright

Leah Muller and Tessa Parr in Technical Rehearsal at Newbury Corn Exchange.  
Image: Tracky Crombie 2012



## Getting Physical

### Exercises and Expanding your Practice

First read the text together as a group, draw out images and take time to imagine and connect with the feelings, locations, timeframe, images, atmospheres etc that the text conjures ...

Next, with another pair have one group read the text the other whilst they run their movement material alongside it.

- look for 'happy accidents', moments that offer interesting meaning and then tighten / justify / adjust them accordingly – finding a way to draw the two performance languages together to create a piece that reads as we want it to. This approach offers lines of flight, and heightens the importance of the physical narrative (how one might read dance).
- How does the choreography restrict you and what does it offer up to inform how you serve the text?
- Go back to the text and interrogate what moments / intentions / subtext needs to be championed and honoured.

### C. Scores

Another process we use a lot in rehearsal for both devising visual / movement material or even rehearsing a more text-based scene is creating 'scores' for performance.

#### Try a warm up / movement score:

A group of 5–20 people start by walking in the space, balancing themselves across the room. Then with a piece of music playing each person can do any of the following at

anytime from the following 'score' or list of guidelines:

People in the group can at any point: Walk, Run, Sit, Stand, Follow

It is interesting to note this is a reasonably 'closed' score as your actions are limited to five instructions but it can non-the-less create an huge variety of patterns. To make the score even more 'closed' one might say the whole group have to all do the same action at the same time. and the score might change to:

As a group you can: Walk | Run | Sit | Stand |

Notes and pointers:

- Focus on listening and responding to everyone working in the score.
- Rather than lead, respond boldly to impulses of observations
- look for patterns that emerge as a group
- Say yes to offer by either working with or against the offer (building upon what is offered)
- let events that happen follow their course and then look to respond to the next trigger or moment.

### Using RSVP Cycles

This is a mode of working we use for process was inspired by Anna Halprin's practice in creating dance pieces and community events. Why not look her up on the internet to learn more?

“

In an open and collaborative approach to creating work, “we utilise a methodology based on upward spirals of work creation that grounds resources, analyses performance through value-action, tightens scores and re-performs”. This working practice is essential to the formulation of the company's work that seeks to analytically and creatively explore potential within the pieces. The methodology has close links to Anna Halprin's RSVP cycles and indeed Robert LaPage's and Jacques Lessard's appropriated process of Repère Cycles. Repère means a point of reference or starting point. The letters in Lessard's version stand for REsource, Partition (score), Evaluation and REpresentation. “We have discovered it is very important to keep these kinds of 'rules' very flexible. Many people follow a similar structure when they rehearse. We have simply allowed it to be more embodied and out-in-the-open where appropriate. Working in this way also allows us to tighten and structure things as we go, whilst leaving room to truly play and explore. Things are up for grabs. Alongside this we try to develop an independent visual and physical vocabulary in separate sessions. We might explore a specific relationship physically and collect a bank of interesting ideas to return to later when they are useful”. Much of the work above is about play and responding to intuition.

Extract from an article in Noise Off Magazine at NSDF, 2006

# Getting Physical

## Exercises and Expanding your Practice

### D. Combining it all using RSVP

Next try creating a score for performance that might include a wider range of resources or be more specific to an area of investigation. For example you can include movement material you created previously. We often refer to the material we have already made as a 'movement bank' that can be drawn upon at anytime in more 'open' or improvised scores. We also run performance scores with people reading in text from outside that the performers respond to (avoiding literal illustration or mime). If memorised by performers the text can be included by performers in the performance. Eg. an instruction within the score might be "Tessa and Will will include their text at any point and speak it to any target" (See notes below on this).

Here's an explanation of RSVP Cycles and an example of how you might try using them in your process:

**R – RESOURCES: What we have available to us** E.g.: we have this room, these objects, three chairs, the text, this piece of music, 7 people.

**S – SCORE: A set of guideline or instructions the group follow** (can be very open to very closed) Our score was: There is a beginning and an end | A couple run their movement sequence and interact with someone reading the text | 4 people up-stage can walk in straight lines across space, pause and face the back, look over their shoulder towards the couple |

Everyone should act in response to the text | The walkers should listen respond also to each other | everything else is up for grabs so listen, respond and make good offers.

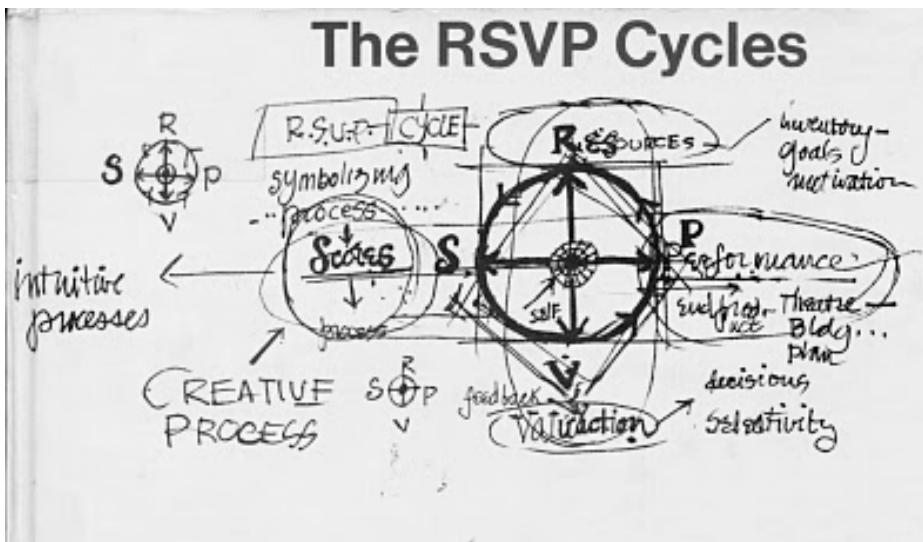
**V – VALUE-ACTION: Feeding back and developing the piece:** At any point in process, usually after a performance stage, we can stop and take value – specifically what worked? What should we keep? – and then action accordingly (changing the score, opening or closing it down, and perhaps removing or adding resources each time.

**P – PERFORMANCE: Using the Score and Resources we perform** (either in rehearsals or as a performance to an audience) and no one interrupts our commitment to this act.

When using the RSVP cycle in rehearsal a group may decide to perform several times in a row before value-action depending on what is useful. Each time, depending on the results of the value-action stage the group may choose to open or close the score, or edit the resources.

Ultimately we think of this process as a spiral. It spirals up to a tightened and rehearsed version for a production – ideally closed enough that we feel safe, but still open enough that the performers still have freedom and the space to play and respond in the moment keeping the work fresh and exciting.

SP.



You can see footage of some of our movement work and performance scores in action online as part of a mini documentary on about ensemble here:

[www.roughfiction.com/ensemble-lab/](http://www.roughfiction.com/ensemble-lab/)

Left: A diagram for RSVP Cycles



## 8. Director's Preparation and Rehearsal Notes

Simon Pittman

Each project's rehearsal process requires a different approach depending on what the form and content of the piece is asking for. That said, I've found over the last few years that in order to be able to direct a play and help actors and creatives come together towards a common goal it is vital to have developed an understanding and detailed view of the play, its characters, its world, before entering the rehearsal room. That is not to say one should have all the answers, far from it. I simply want to be able to enter a rehearsal room in an informed position, without my head buried in my notes of script, so that I'm free to observe, question, investigate what is happening.

Much of my work on this production has been about having a running dialogue with Phil about the piece in his role as a writer. This is often to further my understanding of what is written and why he writes in certain ways. At this stage in the making process our conversations are centered around the goal of what one might call "making the play more itself", as apposed to trying to have new

ideas of personal opinions on the play realised. However, I also spend time reading and re-reading the play in private, each time with a new investigative focus. This might be to answer a specific question such as "what is the question the play is asking?" or to compile a particular type of information and observations. These reads often end in a series of lists or statements that I keep a record of. For example: listing the places, listing what one character says about themselves, a list of facts and questions about each scene, etc. This helps to widen and clarify my understanding of what is written in order to choose productive approaches realising the production in the rehearsal room and facilitating the other creatives in the design process. It is important to always remember to that this work is about finding the best way to tell the story and realise the world that is asking to be offered to the audience. As our understanding of the piece grow, these lists and answers are honed and clarified. **Here are a few extracts from my preparatory notes on the rehearsal draft of The Last of The Lake...**

### Themes - initial thoughts

Opposition - See Derrida's 'sou rautres' Derridian opposition. e.g. Black and Black / Power and Power  
In saying white I hear black - so a line through accounts for idea that everything contains its opposite. - so don't over highlight the opposition - in going to points of excess we are already seeing them in the opposite and let in the other.

The more angry we get with character the more we love them

The more upset we get the closer we are to joy  
This world is not black and white it's a paradigm, the world is x and x

survival

sisterhood - sibling attachment

community and a community of two

coming of age and the coming of sexual age - they leave themselves, and their physical bodies behind and entering sexual adulthood

the imbalance of having and not having

attachment to place and to dreams

belief and spirituality - seeking truth

The quest

The new world

### What is the question the play is asking? - initial thoughts

'Can the sisters save the village (and themselves in the process)?'

### Currency of play - initial thoughts

What is the territory that is being fought over?

What is being traded, negotiated, moved around?

The means for survival ...

water, food, money, power, freedom, happiness

### Axis of the play - initial thoughts

What is the tension in the play? ... two things in opposition

power and not power / weakness?

everything and nothing

life and death - its about saving the village

truth and lies - 'Mentiroso' a liar in Spanish / the name

'Verity' means truth

the chosen one and the rejected one

pre-pubescent and then sexualised - 'big undertow'

Phil's Postit above his desk whilst writing the rehearsal draft:

"Opposites carry the very thing they are in opposition to"

Note to self: Create the circumstances and a world in which the play can feasibly happen



## 8. Director's Preparation and Rehearsal Notes

Simon Pittman

These two pages show some example extracts from list making and preparation work on the rehearsal draft. Other lists you might wish to make include Immediate Circumstances (events within 24-hours before the scene), What Happened between scenes? (More than 24-hours before).

### Back History List

#### Facts

The lake is blisteringly beautiful.  
 There are lots of fish in the lake.  
 There are villagers.  
 There is an older woman.  
 It gets muddy near the lake when wet – fertile land.  
 The villagers have torches.  
 The village have a tradition of ritual music/practice (bells, stamping, rhythm etc) – they therefore don't recognise or question this – ingrained / natural.  
 The villagers has been wandering the land in search of a new home.  
 The villagers have been travelling for 40-months – See Biblical reference – 40 is such a large number – it represents all large numbers – an exaggeration – 10s of people were buried over the 40-months.  
 There is a 'priest-like' figure.  
 The villagers believe in a deal which has been struck with the Gods  
 ...

#### Questions

Is the village dust ridden or is the desert dust ridden?  
 How many villagers are there? 18/19 – 11 years later – over 60 people – they arrived and fucked for babies.  
 How many times have the village relocated before?  
 What materials and resources have the village brought with them?  
 Who are the villagers?  
 Why did the village have to move in the first place? – See Austrian village in Puru – forge new routes  
 Exactly what have the villagers been searching for?  
 Where have they come from?  
 Have the villagers travelled in one direction or several before finding the lake? (probably: they wandered)  
 Are the torches fire?  
 Did the villagers know there would be a lake here?  
 What has 'come true?'  
 What is the villagers' religion?  
 ...

### Place List

#### Facts

We are not in the heart of Africa.  
 This is a stretched and altered reality but real in it's constituent elements.  
 There is another location, a long way away from where the villagers originally travelled.  
 There is a bounteous salt lake.  
 The lake is blisteringly beautiful.  
 There are trees by the lake.  
 The village main village will be paced on higher ground where it is warm and dry.  
 It can get damp by the lake.  
 There are butterflies and locusts by the lake.  
 ...

#### Questions

How does the culture of the village (origins) contrast to the local landscape and people?  
 What fragments of existing real places do the locations in the play reference?  
 What size is the lake?  
 How long does it take to cross the lake in the direction of the sea?  
 Why is there a lake in the middle of the desert?  
 What does this place have in common with parts of Africa?  
 Where is the Lake?  
 Where is the sea?  
 How large is the desert?  
 ...

### Character Biographies

#### E.g. The Mother – Facts

Has travelled for 40 months to arrive here  
 Has witnessed ten's of other villagers die on the journey.  
 Was forced to leave their home.  
 Has been pregnant for 9-months of the journey and is ready to give birth.  
 She has been worshipped for a while by the village.

#### Questions

Did the father travel with village or found on journey?  
 Is the mother a prostitute?  
 How old is the Mother?  
 Who is / Where is the girls' father?  
 Was the mother treated as well as Verity?



## 8. Director's Preparation and Rehearsal Notes

Simon Pittman

I make a list of textures, objects, visuals etc that paint a feeling and texture to each scene. Very helpful to get a sense of how each scene should feel and look compared to the others.

### Textural Mapping

scene	words		
one	<u>man and audience</u> village sea compass	dust ridden full moon midnight	disproportion out of all proportion her reality, our reality
two	thunderclap rain driving rain mud-covered soaking blisteringly beautiful bountiful expansive vista striking walking stick ragged, ragged wriggling fish	sweating bloody beastly weight of a cow lake, lake lake torches gutter and spark thunder riotous celebration delight longing water, earth, fire birth born born salvation umbilical chords sacrifice grotesque and uneasy hearts and souls thunder lightening, lightening trance placenta dark lake incarnadine spreading out like spring blossom	Sun Huts, swiftly erected burnt out brightness sun fish replenish outskirts fish bones fish heads fish fish fish fat Spring sunday sunday sunday
three	Sunday sunny day buckets table gutting fish hut built away from others	prettiest butterflies / locusts and entrails from a distance smell, stink lake half the size from 11 years ago	hungry not hungry cut happy lake bounce dancing almost
four	Sunday sunny day buckets table gutting fish	ornate dolls house gifts beautiful not really real pink silken sheets life as she will never recognise it	shack, shack fish heads and bones

## 9. Company Biography

Phil King and Simon Pittman founded Rough Fiction in 2005 and are currently Associate Artists at The Point Eastleigh.

The company's current production is *The Last of The Lake* and will be touring spring 2012 after development at The Point Eastleigh. Rough Fiction has produced two previous productions; *Killing Alan* (South Hill Park / The Underbelly, Edinburgh Festival, 2009) and *Hospitals and Other Buildings That Catch Fire* (The Underbelly, Edinburgh Festival 2005 / National Student Drama Festival 2006). Both productions garnered wide-spread critical acclaim and 4-star reviews and '*Hospitals*' was shortlisted for a Fringe First Award. Our Ensemble Laboratory is currently based at the Actors Centre in London and provides time and space every weekend for 16 members of our 30-strong ensemble to train and develop work together. The Ensemble Lab will tour a 'pop-up' production of *The Love of The Nightingale* by Timberlake Wertenbaker to venues around the UK this Autumn.

### Phil King

Phil has been awarded a First in International Theatre from Royal Holloway University and received the scholarship to the David Edgar-founded playwriting Masters at the University of Birmingham. He recently submitted the winning adult play for the The National Theatre New Views playwriting Competition and his play *House Martin* was commissioned at the West Yorkshire Playhouse as part of the Northern Exposure season. For Rough Fiction Phil has written *The Last of The Lake* (The Point Eastleigh), *Killing Alan* (Underbelly, Edinburgh Festival 2009), *Hospitals and Other Buildings That Catch Fire* (Underbelly, Edinburgh Festival 2005 / National Student Drama Festival 2006) which was also revived by The Brit School in 2009. Other plays include *What's Their Life Got?* and *Listening Out* for The Bite-size Festival at Theatre 503 (2006), *The Big Half, the small ha'f* (Pleasance Theatre Islington, 2004), and *After the Garden* (Theatro Technis, Camden, 2005).

Phil also writes a blog called *Fighting out of the Fringes* for The Independent.

With backgrounds in new-writing and physical theatre, company members have trained and worked with renowned theatre-makers including Frantic Assembly, Paines Plough, The National Theatre of Scotland, *Told by An Idiot* and *Song of The Goat*.

### Simon Pittman

Simon trained on the MFA in Theatre Directing from Birkbeck University of London and attended the National Theatre Studio Directors' Course. He was Resident Director at the Library Theatre Manchester from 2006 - 2007. He now works as a freelance theatre director and was recently Associate Director on *The-Go-Between* (West Yorkshire Playhouse / Derby Live / Royal and Derngate Northampton) and directing Rough Fiction's pop-up production of *The Love of The Nightingale* by Timberlake Wertenbaker.

Directing credits include; *Not A Game For Boys* by Simon Block (Library Theatre Manchester) – nominated for Best Production and the cast for Best Actor at the Manchester Evening News Awards, *Killing Alan* and *Hospitals and Other Buildings That Catch Fire* (Rough Fiction / Edinburgh Festival), *The Interview* (Arcola), *Siblings: Gate Ink* (The Gate Theatre, London), *Peer Gynt* (Bournemouth Arts Institute - Acting BA).

He is Creative Learning Associate for Frantic Assembly for whom he has directed several productions with young people. He has worked with The National Theatre of Scotland as movement director and as assistant director on productions including *365* (Edinburgh International Festival / Lyric Hammersmith), *99...100* (Fife), and *Mixer Maxter* (St Magnus Festival Orkney); '*one of the finest pieces of youth project artwork Scotland has ever produced*' (The Scotsman). He has also assistant directed for Paines Plough, Manchester Library Theatre and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He is a visiting lecturer at Portsmouth University and previously at Royal Holloway, University of London.

Images from *The Love of The Nightingale* pop-up production 2011

Photography: Carys Lavin and James Marshall





## Further Engagement:

### Partnerships

The company often works in partnership with other organisations to engage in longer term or more ambitious projects in creative learning. In the past we have worked with companies such as The Lyric Hammersmith delivering a physical theatre course called N:Gage for the Lyric Young Company. Rough Fiction was recently engaged with Creative Partnerships as Theatre Practitioners for a production project with Burnham Grammar School, and for a Creative Residency to create a 30-minute piece at Bishop's Stortford College.

### The Ensemble Laboratory & People At Play

Rough Fiction have recently made a new association with People at Play, a collective of artists and companies linked to Pimlico Academy The Venue - a school in the heart of Pimlico which doubles as a community and arts venue outside of school hours.

Our Ensemble run weekly laboratory sessions at the venue every weekend and the company has also presented performance work and helped to facilitate community events throughout the year.

Keep an eye out for forthcoming training workshops and weekend intensives available to book in the near future. Workshop intensives will focus on devising and physicality as well and voice and rhythm.



the point  
EASTLEIGH



“Rough Fiction’s commitment and genuine interest in both the students and the method/ acting/ techniques were inspiring. They generated a positive working environment, the program had a good progression and the content was well adapted to the group”.

Head of Performance Studies,  
Dramavedeling Drama School, Norway

## 10. What Next?

If you would like to discuss a workshop or residency related to the project or specific to your needs please contact us via email. You can also access our full workshop and residency program at [www.roughfiction.com](http://www.roughfiction.com). Thank you.

### Company Contacts

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