

**University of Technology Sydney**

**The Alchemy of the Acting Process: Transformation and embodiment, in, and beyond, the theatre space**

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**Masters of Arts in Humanities and Social Science (Research)**

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**CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP**

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Student:

Date: 28 February 2017

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## Abstract

### **The Alchemy of the Acting Process: Transformation and embodiment, in, and beyond, the theatre space.**

What makes it possible for actors to create impacting, transformative performance? This thesis refers to theories of acting, performance and devising in western traditions, and theories of consciousness, embodiment and neuroscience. A methodological bricolage approach to a devised theatre project was instigated to collect data during a three-week rehearsal. The thesis presents the empirical basis for a new theory to understand actors' creativity, and its transformative impact. The actors' felt-experiences and the creative processes and strategies they used were determined from video diaries and recorded discussions. The analysis highlighted the complexity at the heart of the actors' creative process and signified six component elements – a quiet mind; activated senses; perceptively minded-body; imaginative exploration; investment of time; transformative, vulnerable instrument. The research revealed that the interaction of the combined elements transformed the actors through an alchemy of the actor's process to achieve an authentic, impacting performance. These findings have implications for the enhancement of creative potential in other areas of life.

