

Project Title: The Quasi-Living Mahabharata

Project Background

This project is an alliance between performance artist S. Chandrasekaran (Singapore), scientist Gary Cass (Australia) and writer Robert Finlayson (Australia/Indonesia) called Quasi-Living Group. We will be working closely with a selected theatre group and artists from Indonesia through a cluster of workshops over a period of one year.

Project Objectives

The Quasi-Living Mahabharata draws on biological life sciences, performance, visual art and one of the world's great works of literature to create a unique theatrical event. *The Quasi-Living Mahabharata* includes several days of public workshops in which biological artworks are created for inclusion in a final, spectacular performance. *The Quasi-Living Mahabharata* uses highly skilled performers, musicians, visual artists and scientists from Indonesia and Australia to create a unique festival theatre performance highlighting the great themes of humanity, our relationship to all life on Earth, and our perilous future. It is the story of our past and our future.

What is 'Quasi-living'?

'Quasi-living' is something that is part living and part non-living together in the one entity. The biological life scientists and artists of Quasi-Living Group create quasi-living works of art from various simple organisms and inorganic material. See www.bioalloy.org

Description of Project

The Quasi-Living Mahabharata is as an outdoor series of performance events with audience interaction. The production is based on three focus points ('acts') around which performance narratives will be created.

1. Birth of One Hundred and One DNA
2. The Infinite Sari
3. Opening of the Divine Eye

These three points act as artistic and scientific foci around which the final performance will be created, using visual art, performance and life-science processes, including interactive biological art workshops, movement, sound and image projection.

Production Process: Research and Development

Quasi-Living Group proposes to work with an Indonesian theatre group (such as Teater Garasi or Teater Mandiri) to explore through dramatic and scientific techniques the creation of *The Quasi-Living Mahabharata*. Quasi-Living Group expects that the creative relationship established with the Indonesian theatre group will lead to the collaborative creation of a spectacular, unique festival theatre event based around the three focus points.

A basic schedule is proposed:

1. Establish common artistic and scientific understanding regarding the basic proposal.
2. Establish linking performance narrative and codes.
3. Research and develop Act 1 with Indonesian and Australian scientists and artists working together, open to the public on-site and via live web cam, video documentaries and interpretations, blogs and other interactive technologies. The web site will be a key feature of Indonesian and world participation in the project.
4. A performance of Act 1 incorporating the research.
5. After the successful production of Act 1 as a 'proof of concept', acts 2 and 3 will be developed and linked to create the final work with other sources of funding.
6. Indonesian performances and then international touring of the complete production.

International Festival Event

The final work will become an international festival theatre event that will span several days and incorporate public biological art creation workshops and a complete performance of the interlinked acts. Quasi-Living Group proposes to tour the production internationally after performance in Indonesia.