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Brink Productions'

When the Rain Stops Falling

by Andrew Bovell

a collaboration with Hossein Valamanesh and Brink Productions

Teacher's Notes

Researched and Compiled by

Michele Chigwidden

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*The world premiere season of When The Rain Stops Falling was presented by Brink Productions,
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INTRODUCTION

When The Rain Stops Falling is a unique piece of storytelling set against the vastness of the Australian landscape and a dramatically changing climate.

In 2004, Brink Productions' Artistic Director, Chris Drummond approached writer Andrew Bovell and visual artist Hossein Valamanesh about collaborating on an ambitious new Australian theatre work. Under the working title, *The Extinction Project*, the concept was a timely one exploring humanity's relationship to the planet and to one another.

Brink Productions undertook a series of creative development phases over a three year period, with the key collaborators guiding a group of leading actors, musicians, designers and choreographers through a series of explorative workshops.

As a result of this innovative and rigorous collaboration, Andrew Bovell was able to write a script of extraordinary breadth and vision. *When The Rain Stops Falling*'s magical and deeply moving story covers two continents, stretching over eighty years from 1959 to 2039 and includes a richly imaginative and highly integrated visual world inspired and realised by Hossein Valamanesh.

The knowledge, experience and encouragement that teachers bring to their students when arranging to view live theatre gives alternative perspectives and broadens students' understanding of the human condition and that of the world. Planning student visits to the theatre takes time, organisation and commitment to the Arts education. We thank you for the opportunities you give your students. These Teacher's Notes provide information on Brink Productions, background notes on the Creative Team and Cast, Synopsis, Themes & Ideas of *When The Rain Stops Falling* in addition to suggested pre and post performance activities for senior Drama and English students.

Please consider some of the topics carefully as some students may find the subject matter confronting or touch on personal experiences. Respect and sensitivity to others' feelings will clearly enable open and meaningful discussion. Post performance activities are aimed at assisting students with an informed **response** to theatre; care should be taken not to pre-empt events in the play as this can unwittingly create a focus for students that may prevent them from viewing the play as a whole.

Prior to attending *When The Rain Stops Falling*, please remind students and accompanying adults about theatre etiquette. Any inappropriate noise or movement the audience makes can be distracting for both actors and other audience members. Photography is prohibited.

Thank you.

About the Company

Brink Productions creates powerfully imaginative theatre through sustained collaboration with artists from different disciplines. The company's repertoire of original work includes epic narrative, re-imagined classics, music theatre and children's theatre. Brink strives to communicate complex ideas and feelings with simplicity and insight, in forms that are surprising, challenging, thought-provoking and accessible.

The company was founded in Adelaide in 1996 by a collective of South Australian actors. Brink Productions today is a company limited by guarantee, governed by a board of directors, with two full-time staff and a 3 year strategic plan to continue the growth of the company's profile, activities and resources with the help of state and federal funding, sponsors, individual donors and strategic business partnerships.

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When The Rain Stops Falling

Creative Team

Writer	Andrew Bovell
Director	Chris Drummond
Designer	Hossein Valamanesh
Composer	Quentin Grant
Lighting Design	Niklas Pajanti
Video Design	TheimaGen
Producer	Kay Jamieson

Peformers

Paul Blackwell
Michaela Cantwell
Carmel Johnson
Kris McQuade
Yalin Ozucelik
Anna Lise Phillips
Neil Pigot
and
Musician, Quentin Grant

Notes from the director — Chris Drummond

I first talked to Andrew, Hossein and Quincy in late 2004 about collaborating with Brink on the creation of a new theatre work. Under the working title, *The Extinction Project*, the initial idea was to explore humanity's relationship to the planet, to the unknown and to one another. My request was that we begin with no preconceived notions of what the work might be, so as to allow each discipline to inform and inspire the other. Because of this, it took time to find our way forward although, even when we found it difficult to articulate it to others, we always shared a unity of vision. Over several stages of development a number of artists and theatre workers contributed to the exploration of ideas. *When the Rain Stops Falling* would not exist without their talent and enthusiastic response to the collaborative spirit of the project. Now, three years later, nearing the end of the road, the roles of writer, designer, composer, director are easily delineated, and yet in every element of the production are the traces of so many shared discoveries that have inspired and lead each of us into unexpected places. I would like to acknowledge Tim Flannery's *The Future Eaters* which was an early inspiration. My thanks to Andrew, Hossein, Quincy and Kay, and the fabulous cast, creative and production teams.

Notes from the writer — Andrew Bovell

I'm not sure what to write, which says a great deal, given that I am a writer. The play must speak for itself and be judged accordingly. But only on the stage can the past, the present and the future be revealed in the same moment. It is a wonderful medium in which to play with time and to shed a little light on the human condition. I am so grateful to Chris for paving the way for me to find the way back to the theatre after some years away from it. His generous and astute feedback has been integral to the development of this play as has Hossein's unique vision and Quincy's moving composition. The production of a new Australian play is worth celebrating. It requires patience and trust. I have been given both in abundance by my collaborators, Kay and this wonderful cast. Now it's my turn to give it back as they present this untried work to you, its audience.

Notes from the designer — Hossein Valamanesh

As a visual artist I have worked in different fields of practice from sculptural installations to works in public places and small works on paper. This is the first time I have worked as a designer for theatre. Three years ago I was asked by Chris Drummond to be part of a team with Andrew Bovell, Quentin Grant and Brink Productions to make a new work. What attracted me to this project was its open ended, experimental and collaborative nature. Initial introductions helped us to understand each other's practice and in subsequent workshops we started our conversations to establish core concerns of the work and the way we wished to express it. The initial desire of Andrew to express a number of parallel narratives triggered images of layering and repetition. As the text developed and through further conversations I was able to develop a visual vocabulary to complement the narrative. The complexity of the writing and its ever-changing settings required a space that could be flexible: from the intimacy of a domestic room to the grandeur of a vast natural environment. I have very much enjoyed the collaborative process and the freedom I had in designing this work. I am grateful for the opportunity and would like to thank and acknowledge the creative and professional efforts of the production team from management to workshop and wardrobe and many others.

Notes from the composer – Quentin Grant

Three years ago I joined Andrew, Hossein, Chris and members of the Brink ensemble to begin the long journey that has led us to the play as you will now experience it. The ideas for the design and music grew alongside the emergence of the writing which has led, we hope, to a piece of theatre that has a feeling of completeness and uniqueness. The richness and toughness of Andrew's work along with the beauty of Hossein's have given me such a great place to work. Some of the music you'll hear was written in 2006 (the music for the Uluru scenes derives from a concert work I wrote that year entitled *the path to the red heart* – only later did I realise that work had its roots in this project), and most completed by October of 2007, before the final script was delivered. You'll hear an electronic piece, live sounds from my bowed instrument (a clothes rack with guitar and cotton strings), the piano (at times accompanied by a pre-recorded quartet of violin, viola, cello and double bass), plus numerous pre-recorded natural sounds.

Synopsis

Alice Springs in the year 2039. A fish falls from the sky and lands at the feet of Gabriel York. It still smells of the sea. It's been raining for days and Gabriel knows something is wrong.

Eighty years earlier, his grandfather, Henry Law predicted that, in 2039, fish would fall from the sky heralding a great flood that would overcome the human race.

When The Rain Stops Falling takes place between the worlds of these two men – between a prediction in 1959 and its outcome eighty years later. Through four generations of interconnected stories, from the claustrophobia of a small 1950s London flat to the windswept coast of South Australia and into the heart of the Australian desert, *When The Rain Stops Falling* follows the central journey of Gabriel Law as he retraces his father Henry's footsteps in an attempt to solve the mystery of his disappearance.

At a roadhouse in the Coorong he meets a young woman named Gabrielle. Two wounded souls in a wild landscape, their connection is instant and powerful. As the young lovers' story unfolds amidst the interweaving narratives of their ancestors and descendants we are led back to 2039... to Gabriel York as he arrives home with the fish to await the arrival of his own estranged son. A son he knows will come seeking answers. A son he knows will want to understand the past. But for Gabriel York the past is as mysterious as the fish.

Setting

The play takes place over the course of eighty years from 1959 – 2039

- In a room in Alice Springs in the year 2039
- In a room in London during the 1960's
- In the same room in London in 1988
- In the Coorong in 1988
- At Uluru in 1988
- In a room and a park in Adelaide in 2013

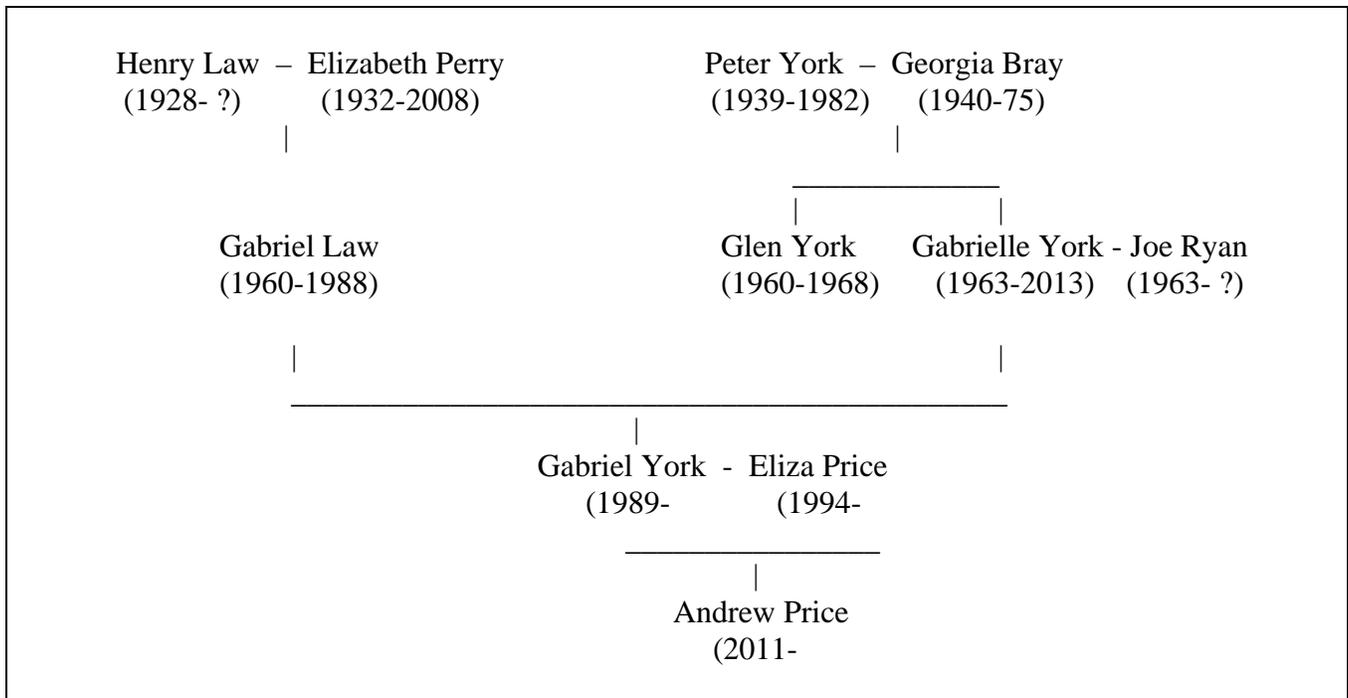
Characters

Henry Law	Forties 1960's
Elizabeth Law	Thirties 1960's
Elizabeth Law	Fifties 1988
Gabriel Law	Twenty-eight 1988
Gabrielle York	Twenty-four 1988
Gabrielle York	Fifties 2013
Joe Ryan	Fifties 2013
Gabriel York	Fifty 2039
Andrew Price	Twenty-eight 2039

The play has been written for an ensemble of seven actors.

The roles of Henry Law and Gabriel York can be played by the same actor as can the roles of Gabriel Law and Andrew Price.

A Family Tree



Pre Production activities

It's new territory when it comes to preparing students for a performance of a new play. The aim of these activities is to encourage students to identify and think about the issues, to make connections with these broad ideas and then be open to how the performance 'speaks to them'.

Themes and Ideas

- Regret
- Grief
- Betrayal
- Abandonment
- Deception
- Fate vs Free Will
- Coincidences
- Surprise/ the unexpected
- Melancholy
- Hope
- Redemption
- Legacy
- Nature vs Nurture
- Memory

- Explore understanding of the above. In groups, students select three that are the most meaningful to them and explore these in depth. Each student chooses one that can become the subject of a narrative, written or enacted.
- Research the Family Tree: what have students discovered about what is handed down? Cultural traditions and beliefs, a family business/profession etc. Have physical resemblances been handed down?
- Legacy: consider what this means, what legacy does a person wish to leave? Must it be a momentous discovery or a new way of looking at something or being a famous role model? What legacy do students wish to leave? Is this different to the legacy they think their parents and/or grandparents wish to leave? (See reference to *The Butterfly Effect* (2004) below)
- Tim Flannery, in his introduction to *The Future Eaters*, states;
"I have learned how important histories are to people, including myself. They define our place in the world and validate our claims to inheritance, both individual and national".
Talk about what this means. Explore the idea of how we increasingly want to ensure a better physical environment for future generations and compare this to how we can ensure a better emotional environment for future generations.
- View a video/DVD of *Lantana* (2001). Andrew Bovell wrote the screenplay based on his play *Speaking in Tongues*. Discuss the multi-layered narratives as the film moves between the adult lives that are in crisis.
The Australian Centre for the Moving Image produces study guides and Gary Simmons' *Lantana: A Rippling Good Yarn* (2005) is recommended, especially for senior English.

- Would be most suitable for study of a film text, text response or oral presentation. The film is on the List of Prescribed Texts for 2008 (Stage 2 English Studies).
 - Drama students may wish to explore the transition from play to film. The introduction to Currency Press publications of *Speaking in Tongues* and *Lantana* would be helpful when considering the movement of play to film.
 - Read article at <http://www.playbill.com/features/article/66672.html> (attached)
- View a video/DVD of **The Butterfly Effect** (2004) – discuss chaos theory. The Butterfly Effect is described by Ian Stewart in *Does God Play Dice – The Mathematics of Chaos*: “How differently events can unfold by changing only relatively small things. The flapping of a butterfly’s wings today produces a tiny change in the state of the atmosphere. Over a period of time, what it would have done. So, in a month’s time, a tornado that would have devastated the Indonesian coast doesn’t happen. Or maybe one that wasn’t going to happen does.”
 - Draw comparisons between this quote and the film.
 - Devise a story involving the same characters in the same situation with three different outcomes. Write about it or enact it.
 - Read the play *Life x 3* by Yasmina Reza, translated by Christopher Hampton.
 - In the film, *The Butterfly Effect*, (2004) Tommy states; “true happiness can only be achieved through sacrifice, like the sacrifices our parents have made for us to be here today”. Discuss this quote in relation to discussion about “the legacy we leave our children”.
 - Nature vs Nurture. The play invites consideration of this theme. Consider the idea that we cannot begin to understand the future unless we understand the past. Discuss, debate.
 - Statements from Prime Minister Kevin Rudd’s speech of apology to indigenous Australians on 13 Feb 2008 included reference to the importance of family and understanding the past to be able to move on to the future. There are different schools of thought regarding how we view history - those who view moving on from the past to a better future and those who believe that we have to come to terms with the past through understanding, acknowledging wrongs, forgiveness and healing before we can then move on to an enriched future. [see Reference list] Explore and discuss.
 - In the play, reference is made to the planet, Saturn. Research the mythology in conjunction with viewing an image of the painting, *Saturn Devouring His Son* by Francesco Goya. (Saturn mythology, Wikipedia reference is attached)
 - The Education Notes from Valamanesh’s 2001 Exhibition, *Hossein Valamanesh: A Survey* (Art Gallery of South Australia) states that “..... the artist encourages us to reflect on the fragility of life and look internally for universal truths and answers”. It continues to describe his works as based on personal memory and experience that invite the observer to also contemplate our own relationship with self, others and the environment. (These notes are attached)

Students may wish to view some of Valamanesh’s works prior to the performance. They might like to consider what is appealing about these pieces. Are personal connections made?

These are:



- *Knocking from the inside*, 1989 Adelaide Plaza , northern end near Adelaide Convention Centre.



- *14 Pieces*, 2005 Hossein Valamanesh & Angela Valamanesh, adjacent to the entrance of the South Australian Museum, North Terrace, Adelaide.



- *Target Practice*, 1987 top of Barr Smith Library stairs, Adelaide University.



- *Growing Up*, 1990 Finlaysons Building, corner Flinders Street and Divett Place, Adelaide.
- Students may also view *Falling Branch* in Gallery 10 at the Art Gallery of SA
- Create a flow chart of the process of developing a performance – page to stage. Read the notes from the director, writer, designer and composer. What have you learnt about the added dynamics of creating a performance piece through collaboration with writer, designer, composer, director and actors?
- Research Brecht and representational style of theatre.

Viewing performance

As part of any preparation of going to the theatre, whether it be for the sheer excitement of a shared experience or analysis in preparation for formative or summative assessment tasks, consideration of the production elements of a performance enhances enjoyment and understanding.

- List the essential production elements that enable the audience to understand how and why meaning is delivered in a performance.
- Audiences respond to different elements of a performance – it may be the skills of the actor, dialogue, design concept, movement and use of the space, the pace of the performance or the technical aspects of lighting, sound and sets. Students explore their preferences and explain to the class or in small groups what they respond to.

Post performance activities

These activities essentially focus on questions for analysis of various elements – considerations if you like. They can be used as preparation for student review, text response, individual study etc in Drama and English courses.

- The first moments of a performance capture an audience and clinch the dynamic interaction between actor and audience How did students respond to the opening scene and narrative at the beginning? What were the “ah-haa” moments as the play progressed – the moments when questions were answered, revelations made, motivations understood etc. [look at comment re clever writing of the text below]
- Examine the structure of the play;
 - How does it move from one time frame to another?
 - What is the linking device used between time frames.
 - How does the production support this?
 - Are the different time frames clear?
 - What are the structural patterns in the play... when is the pattern broken and why?
 - Who is the play’s central character? Perhaps there isn’t one. Why?
 - What are the differences between a single narrative story and a multi narrative story?
 - What is the significance of the last scene – the passing of objects: the stamp album, a piece of driftwood, a boy’s shoe, an urn, a copy of Diderot's Encyclopedie, Joe Ryan’s hat and Gabriel Law’s notebook?
- Re visit the list of Themes and Ideas: discuss how relevant these are to students’ response to the performance. What connections do students now make with Themes and Ideas? Students could write up their own list in order of importance.
- Relationships: students list the different relationships in the play. Discuss what is positive/destructive about these relationships. What legacy has been handed down? Do you think that Andrew Price will continue this legacy?
- Humours: a medieval theory of physiology in which the state of health - and by extension the state of mind, or character - depended upon a balance among the four elemental fluids: blood, yellow bile, phlegm, and black bile. These were closely allied with the four elements (air, fire, water, and earth respectively). The "humours" gave off vapors which ascended to the brain; an individual's personal characteristics (physical, mental, moral) were explained by his or her "temperament," or the state of that person's "humours" known as “sanguine”, “choleric”, “phlegmatic” and “melancholic” respectively. The perfect temperament resulted when not one of these humours dominated. Gabriel Law is described as “melancholy” by his mother. Do you agree?
Understanding of melancholia is important in understanding the play. Recent interpretations have reconsidered the link between melancholia and depression; that is, rather than melancholia being a passive emotion, it is viewed as a state of deep reflection that precedes change and enlightenment. Is this relevant to Gabriel Law? What is the playwright inviting his audience to consider about humanity?

- Sub text: The play has adult themes that in part involve child abuse. How is it relevant in the play – theme, character motivations? Does your response to characters change when you discover their secret? Do you feel sorry for them? Students may wish to consider child abuse in its different forms – exploiting the vulnerability of children, taking away innocence. Revisit the mythology of Saturn and Goya’s painting – “devouring” children, eating away at or eliminating the future.
- Consider the theme of Fate vs Free Will. What is destiny? Are our lives predetermined? Identify the predictions, repetitions, surprises, coincidences and random intersections in the play. Is there a connection here with “the legacy we leave our children”? How does the play conclude – is there a sense of optimism or pessimism?
- Design concept:



Photo 1 of set model for *When The Rain Stops Falling*
Designer: Hossein Valamanesh



Photo 2 of set model for *When The Rain Stops Falling*
 Designer: Hossein Valamanesh

- “Hossein Valamanesh’s design is an equal voice with Andrew Bovell’s text, creating an epic visual world in which the layered narratives and their emotional and physical journeys coalesce”.
 - The designer uses screens to represent layers of time and lives – how did this aid the multi-layered narratives and parallel timeframes of the play? Identify examples in the play where both the text and design work together or complement each other.
 - What is suggested when Uluru and the tree “appear”?
 - What links the landscapes of Alice Springs, Coorong , Uluru?
 - How are the locations of the flats in London and Adelaide similar?
 - Is there significance in the contrast between the exterior and interior locations?
- Music/soundscape: How does Quentin Grant’s music work in with the setting & character? At times there is a deliberate contrast between style of music and the scene which is meant to startle or surprise; our expectations are turned upside down. What other production elements does this connect with? Identify moments in the play when the audience is surprised or startled by the unexpected.
- Style of presentation: Identify these elements. The play has been described as an epic piece of storytelling. What makes it epic? Identify how metaphor – both theatrical and literal have been used in the performance. Are there connections with Brecht?
- Staging - think about the following;
 - the dynamics of the first scene (scream) & role of the first narrative. How does it work on stage? How does it set the momentum of the play?
 - what made the ROOMS scene work?
 - how does the theatrical use of the other narratives work in the play?

STAGE TO SCREEN: *Speaking with Andrew Bovell*

By Eric Grode

09 Dec 2001

Andrew Bovell's *Speaking in Tongues* went through quite a few changes on its way to becoming the touted indie film "Lantana," which opens in limited release on Dec. 14. It's hard to go into too much detail about either the film or the play without giving away plot twists, but "Lantana" centers on four marriages of varying stability. Anthony LaPaglia, in what may be his trickiest movie role yet, sets the narrative in motion as Leon, a brooding police investigator with marital troubles. Leon comes in contact with all three other couples, often in surprising ways, while investigating the disappearance of one central character.

But while Bovell shows his cards in the very first scene by showing a dead body, he devotes a solid hour to developing the various protagonists before the mystery kicks into gear. This introductory material isn't exposition, as with most mysteries. Instead, "Lantana" simply shifts moods, from a rather bleak study of marital malaise to a whodunit that actually cares enough to flesh out the characters.

Now that *Speaking in Tongues* is well into its run at the Roundabout's off-Broadway space, Bovell had already headed back to his native Australia by the time I started looking for him. So I conducted an e-mail interview with the playwright, who is also in discussions with LaPaglia and Arthur Miller to bring Miller's "A View From the Bridge" to the screen. Rather than attempt to describe his responses as if they were live answers, here's a (slightly condensed) transcript of our e-mail exchange:

Playbill On-Line: Talk about the process of taking an intricate, four-actor, nine-character play and turning it into an equally intricate (in its own way) ensemble film. What problems did it pose? What opportunities did it present?

Andrew Bovell: In the play, I tried to make an asset of the fact that we were only working with four actors. So part of the pleasure was to see the same actors inhabit different characters, different stories. This then further informed the structure and shape of the play. The film allowed me to peel away the theatrical devices--i.e., the split scenes, simultaneous language, lateral narrative movement--and just tell the story simply and truthfully. ... Really, I set out to retell the story rather than to adapt the play. I wanted to reinvent it, discover new aspects and follow new threads. So I was very free with the adaptation. I followed my instincts. I felt that if I could make it fresh and compelling for myself, I had a good chance of doing so for the audience.

PBOL: Was any thought given to capturing "Speaking in Tongues" in its playscript form on stage?

AB: Are you asking whether we thought about capturing the theatrical form of "Speaking in Tongues" on film? No. In the play, particular theatrical devices and forms are being used to veil the truth ... not only in terms of plot but in terms of what is being felt by the characters. Hence it is a more challenging and convoluted viewing experience. In the film, I wanted to peel away all veils to expose something raw and honest. It's a complex story. I wanted to tell it as simply as I could. I also wanted to make the film accessible to a wide audience. Using some of the devices of the play would have marginalized it to being more of an art film.

PBOL: So much of the play and the film hinges on deception, on how people can remain mysterious even to themselves. Was that easier or harder to convey in the more realistic medium of film?

AB: I'm not sure. I think it's easier to play with ambiguity in the theatre. The camera is such a revealing instrument.

PBOL: One thing that impressed me about the film is that the revelations and plot twists near the end, while making sense on a “who done it?” level, also cast new levels of significance on the various characters’ relationships and personalities. Was constructing the script in such a way difficult from a technical perspective?

AB: Yes, technically this was a very difficult script to write. It was difficult to balance the different stories, it was difficult to move the plot forward whilst setting up nine different characters. ... A balance had to be achieved between the elements of mystery and relationship drama. The film crosses genres or mixes them up. Hence there were no guidelines or rules. I had to make it up.

PBOL: Why do you think “Lantana” struck such a nerve in Australia? [It recently swept the Australian Film Institute Awards.] Do you think it will do the same in the United States? Why or why not?

AB: I think there has been a dearth of complex films made for mature audiences in this country. ... People see themselves in this film, where in other successful Australian films of the last decade-- “Strictly Ballroom,” “Pricilla, Queen of the Desert,” “Muriel’s Wedding”--they have seen exaggerations of themselves. The film presented an audience with a different tone in which to examine themselves. It is more reflective. I think there's also a genuine pride in the acting, writing, directing-- it's a well-made film, and people feel proud of that. I don't know how it will go in the States. I feel like the audience there probably has an increased appetite for stories that focus down on the human condition since Sept. 11. The film offers a moment of reflection, a little truth, a little shared communal pain. It's about whether people want to enter that kind of space or whether they want to be taken out of themselves. I hope it strikes a chord there, not only for personal reasons but it would strike a blow for small independent filmmaking.

PBOL: What’s the status of “A View From the Bridge”? Did the project come up before or after working with Anthony on “Lantana”? Will the performance of “Lantana” affect the Arthur Miller project’s progress one way or the other?

AB: I have completed the first draft of “A View From the Bridge,” which Anthony, Richard Gladstein and Arthur Miller have all responded very positively to. I look forward to doing a new draft early next year. The project came out of Anthony's and my association on “Lantana.” It's a great opportunity for me to work on an American film, and I feel extremely honored to be working on a Miller play. I think the project will stand or fall on its own merits, regardless of the response to “Lantana.”

PBOL: What else are you working on?

AB: There’s a number of projects I'm looking at, including another film with [“Lantana” director] Ray Lawrence. But right now my focus is pretty much on “A View From the Bridge.”

Retrieved from- <http://www.playbill.com/features/article/s1753735.html>

Saturn (mythology)

Saturn (Latin: Saturnus) was a major Roman deity of agriculture and harvest. He was identified in classical antiquity with the Greek deity Cronus, and the mythologies of the two gods are commonly mixed.

Saturn's wife was Ops (Roman mythology), Rhea's equivalent (Rhea was the Titaness daughter of Uranus, the sky and Gaia the earth from classical Greek mythology). Saturn was the father of Ceres, Jupiter, and Veritas, among others. Saturn had a temple on the Forum Romanum which contained the Royal Treasury. Saturn is the namesake of Saturday (*dies Saturni*), the only day of the week to retain its Roman name in English. The planet Saturn is also named after the Roman god, being the furthest observable planet of the seven classical planets of antiquity.

Mythology of Saturn

In Babylon he was called Ninib and was an agricultural deity. Saturn, called Cronus by the Greeks, was, at the dawn of the Ages of the Gods, the Protector and Sower of the Seed and his wife, Rhea, (called Ops by the Romans) was a Harvest Helper. Cronus was one of the the Seven Titans or Numina and with them, reigned supreme in the Universe. The Titans were of incredible size and strength and held power for untold ages, until they were deposed by Zeus.

The first inhabitants of the world were the children of Gaia (Mother Earth) and Ouranos (Father Sky). These creatures were very large and manlike, but without human qualities. They were the qualities of Earthquake, Hurricane and Volcano living in a world where there was yet no life. There were only the irresistible forces of nature creating mountains and seas. They were unlike any life form known to man.

Three of these creatures were monstrously huge with one hundred hands and fifty heads. Three others were individually called Cyclops, because each had only one enormous eye in the middle of their foreheads. Then, there were the Titans, seven of them, formidably large and none of whom were purely destructive. One was actually credited with saving man after creation.

Ouranos hated the children with the fifty heads. As each was born he placed it under the earth. Gaia was enraged by the treatment of her children by their father and begged the Cyclopes and the Titans to help her put an end to the cruel treatment. Only the Titan, Cronus, responded. Cronus lay in wait for his father and castrated him with his sickle. From Ouranos's blood sprang the Giants, a fourth race of monsters, and the Erinyes (the Furies), whose purpose was to punish sinners. They were referred to as "those who walk in darkness" and were believed to have writhing snakes for hair and eyes that cried blood. Though eventually all the monsters were driven from Earth, the Erinyes are to remain until the world is free of sin.

With the deposing of his father, Cronus/Saturn became the ruler of the Universe for untold ages and he reigned with his sister, Rhea/Ops, who also became his wife.

It was prophesied that one day Cronus would lose power when one of his children would depose him. To prevent this from happening, each time Rhea delivered a child Cronus would immediately swallow it. When her sixth child, Zeus, was born, Rhea had him spirited away to the island of Crete. She then wrapped a stone in his swaddling clothes. Her deception was complete when Cronus swallowed it, thinking it was the child. When Zeus was grown, he secured the job of cup-bearer to his father. With

the help of Gaia, his grandmother, Zeus fed his father a potion that caused him to vomit up Zeus's five siblings, Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, and Poseidon.

A devastating war that nearly destroyed the Universe ensued between Cronus and his five brothers and Zeus and his five brothers and sisters. Zeus persuaded the fifty headed monsters to fight with him which enabled him to make use of their weapons of thunder, lightning and earthquake. He also convinced the Titan, Prometheus, who was incredibly wise, to join his side. With his forces, Zeus was victorious and the Olympians reigned supreme. Cronus and his brothers were imprisoned in the Tartarus, a dark, gloomy region at the end of the Earth.

In Roman mythology when Jupiter (Zeus) ascended the throne, Saturn (Cronus) fled to Rome and established the Golden Age, a time of perfect peace and harmony, which lasted as long as he reigned. In memory of the Golden Age, the Feast of Saturnalia was held every year in the winter at the Winter Solstice. During this time no war could be declared, slaves and masters ate at the same table, executions were postponed, and it was a season for giving gifts. This was a time of total abandon and merry making. It refreshed the idea of equality, of a time when all men were on the same level. Christians adopted the feast and renamed it Christmas. When the festival ended, the tax collectors appeared and all money owed out to government, landlords, or debtors had to be accounted for.

This is another side to Saturn and it's ruling sign, Capricorn: the settling of accounts. The time of the winter solstice is when the Sun enters the sign Capricorn.

In Hesiod's *Theogony*, a mythological account of the creation of the universe and Zeus' rise to power, Hesiod wrote of the five ages of mankind: Gold, Silver, two ages of Bronze and an age of Iron. The Age of Gold was the purest age, when no labor was required and weather was always pleasant. It was virtually a place of pleasant surroundings and of abundance. Death was not an unpleasant eventuality and people occupied their time in pleasant pursuits. Cronus ruled over this Golden Age.

Astrological Beliefs

Medieval and Renaissance scholars associated Saturn with one of the four humors of ancient medicine, melancholy. Physicians, scholars, philosophers and scientists, which includes writers and musicians, seem to have a strong Saturn placement which tends to lean such natives toward melancholy. The bright side is that Saturn can impart serenity and wisdom. And the wisdom of Saturn is the wisdom of the Earth itself.

Astrological Saturn has always been associated with the letter of the law and Gnostics have identified Saturn with the god of Early Scripture, whom they regarded as a tyrannical father, obsessed with rigid enforcement of the law. There is a symbolic link between Saturn and the God of Early Scripture through the use of Saturday. Saturn's Day, the seventh day of Scripture, the holy day of rest.

There is a symbolic connection between the Trinity of the New Testament and Ouranos (Uranus) Saturn (Cronus) and Jupiter (Zeus). Ouranos, the first father figure, was the Greek version of Varuna, the Vedic creator god. Then Saturn castrated Ouranos, ending his generative power. Finally, came Jupiter, who, like a Jesus figure, was perceived as a savior, so that future generations would not be tyrannized by an obsessed deity.

Saturn is the most complex sign in the zodiac. Most of the other planets reveal their negative or problematic side when combined with Saturn yet, when Saturn is in a beneficent position, it's rewards are more substantial than those of any other planet.

Saturn has a somewhat polarized role against Jupiter in astrology. Saturn gets the blame for all things sad, unfortunate, and terrible, while Jupiter gets the credit for all things positive and good.

Saturn often stands for the father in the natal chart, as does the however, with Saturn it usually indicates problems with the father. Saturn indicates a tyrannical, domineering parent who seeks to mold his children in his own image and force them to live by his standards. Children often become "swallowed up" by such domination. Cronus became domineering and swallowed up his children in a need to control Fate. It was the fathering style he was taught, which modern day psychologists tell us is what happens in dysfunctional families. We learn how to parent from our parents. Zeus broke the pattern, which is the example which we ideally seek in dysfunctional parenting. To break the pattern, one must learn to develop the positive side of Saturn. Mastering Saturn as the inner teacher is a difficult task as it forces one to deal with the problematic side of Saturn as well.

Saturn is esoterically linked to Karma. Saturn intensifies feelings of isolation, sadness, depression, etc. Cronus spent the last of his life as a prisoner of Tartarus, a dark, gloomy place that can be described as a pit of blackness. Depression is often a pit of darkness to those who suffer from it. Saturn, badly aspected, gives us this feeling. But once the dark side of Saturn is recognized, his bright side can be brought into view and enhanced. Sadly, Saturn has been regarded only as miserable and attributed to despair and darkness, leading to the thought that there is no way to escape it's confines. Feelings of shame, fear, guilt and humiliation shackle us and keep us confined to the pit of darkness. The way to get out of the pit is to stop placing blame on others and take personal responsibility for our situation in life.

Saturn, therefore, represents our limitations in power and control (by his rulership and its coming to an end), in confinement or isolation (by his banishment to Tartarus) and capacity (as Saturn's placement as a planet, which until modern times was the boundary of our Solar System). Taking all this into consideration, it is no wonder we face difficulty when attempting to transform Saturn from a controlling force to a teaching force because we encounter all our limitations in every aspect of our lives.

Saturn's connection with agriculture suggests the nature of time. Seeds must be sown at their proper times and harvest can only occur when their time of fruition has occurred. Chronos is derived from the Greek word Cronus meaning "time". Cronus/Saturn represents limitations. He is the symbol for Father Time, for he brought all things to an end that have a beginning. Saturn's domain is patience, stability, maturity and realism. Saturn effects us by delaying rewards until they are earned.

The Golden Years is a term we use to describe the retirement years and Saturn rules old age. Those who have learned the lessons of Saturn; perseverance, confrontation of limitations, tyrannies, and inner darkness; who learn to accept the world around them with tolerance of others and self-acceptance, age with dignity and acquire wisdom.

Saturn represents our limitations, our restrictions, yet it is also our inner mentor and teacher. His lessons are manifested only over time, after which we go through inner rebirth and enjoy spiritual growth. The times these life changing events can occur are usually when Saturn returns and testing takes place within different disciplines. Saturn returns every 29 ½ years with appearances at age 29, when we face the discipline of maturity; at 58, when we face the discipline of acceptance and wisdom; and at 87, few people make it to the third return. However, coming in right behind a Uranus return, it is without a doubt, a profound event.

Retrieved from - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saturn_\(mythology\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saturn_(mythology))

Hossein Valamanesh: A Survey

29 June - 26 August 2001

Galleries 23, 24, 25

EDUCATION NOTES

presented by Art Gallery Education Services

Text: John Neylon & Erika Mychalenko

These notes are designed to support teachers and students visiting the Hossein Valamanesh exhibition.

Meet the artist

Family life

Hossein Valamanesh was born in Tehran to Azerbaijani parents in 1949. From the age of four until he began high school, he lived with his family in the remote town of Khash in the province of Sistan-e Baluchestan, a mountainous, arid region in the east of Iran near the Pakistani border. In 1960, the family returned to Tehran where they settled into a small house in the city's down-at heel southern suburbs. Largely their mother and grandmother raised Hossein and his siblings, two brothers and a sister, while their father spent long periods of time working in other parts of the country.

Early training

From the earliest days at school Valamanesh had a strong interest in geometry and mathematics, and showed a particular talent for drawing. After three years at high school, in 1967 he was accepted into Tehran's prestigious School of Fine Art.

Migration

In 1973, Valamanesh, during the social and political upheaval under the Shar's regime, immigrated to Australia at the age of twenty-four, arriving initially in Perth. Later in 1987, his anguish and frustration of war was addressed in a series of drawings that included *Holy war: forgotten key/hand of history*. The cultural transition from Iran to Australia was at first a difficult one, as Valamanesh searched for threads of continuity between his native and newly adopted homelands.

Cultural influences

A breakthrough occurred in 1974 when he was invited to visit and work with several Aboriginal communities in the Outback. The profound experience with the desert and its people drew parallels with his childhood that produced a turning point in his art. With natural organic materials, Valamanesh explored the connection with nature, searching for a sense of place. Sand has since played a fundamental role in his work, including *Man to Bird*, 1977 and *Day by Day*, 1991; a pair of Iranian shoes filled with red sand refers to the artist fusing his past and present worlds.

Training

In 1975, Valamanesh decided to move to Adelaide to study at the South Australian School of Art where he met his future wife and collaborator, Angela Burdon, with whom he has shared his life ever since.

Public art

Throughout his career, Valamanesh has produced public art works on a regular basis. It is only in the last few projects that he feels the gap has narrowed between the studio work and commission work. The large mud brick *Dwelling* of 1980 was constructed in the Adelaide Parklands and was based on the Iranian *kharaabat* or abandoned building. Another commission, *Earthwork*, 1981, was created for the First Australian Sculpture Triennial in Melbourne and consisted of a large-scale fingerprint dug into a flat grassy area. Other projects include *Fault line*, 1996 and *In memory of snow*, 2000.

Residencies and exhibitions

Between 1981 and the present time, Valamanesh has been Artist-in-Residence at various institutes around Australia and overseas, including New Zealand, Pakistan and Germany. His two-dimensional and three-dimensional works are included in permanent collections of Australia's major museums, touring exhibitions and high-profile gallery shows.

Philosophy and ideas

While Valamanesh is not religious, his work is deeply spiritual, often reflecting his interest in Eastern philosophies, especially Sufism (a mystical branch of Islam) and Buddhism. *Knocking from the inside*, 1989 and *The lover circles his own heart*, 1993, were inspired by the thirteenth century Persian poet, Rumi. Concepts for his work are born out of his search for a sense of place and belonging, with the realisation that man and the universe are inseparable.

Personal symbolism

Inspired by memory, Valamanesh weaves together his contrasting homelands with symbolism and metaphor. His continual use of the four elements of fire, water, earth and air, combined with simple objects like a bowl, Persian carpet or shoes, translate into his exploration of self. His earlier work, like *The untouchable*, 1984, contains the simplicity of geometrical design and a sense of the mystical. Later Valamanesh incorporated archetypal forms into his art, such as the ladder and his own silhouette or shadow. Their repeated use has become a signature in his work, as in the examples *Growing up*, 1989 and *On the way*, 1990. In *Longing belonging*, 1997, a fire burns on a Persian carpet that lays in an Australian Mallee landscape. A circle of black velvet cloth creates the illusion of charred remains, suggesting loss and renewal. Over the years, throughout Valamanesh's work, the recurring motifs have become integral ingredients in revealing the unseen to the seen in a subtle and sensitive way.

Intention of artist

The meditative art of Valamanesh transforms humble objects and raw materials into a beautiful poetic language. Sometimes using ephemeral elements that suggest 'transience', the artist encourages us to reflect on the fragility of life and look internally for universal truths and answers. The intension of the work is to be felt, rather than read, speaking to the spirit in a direct way and not to the intellect. Even though it is his own personal journey, based on memory and experiences, we, the observers, are invited to share in it and contemplate our own intimate relationship with self, others and the environment.

Symbols

Many of the symbols that Valamanesh incorporates in his work are of a highly personal nature and are often re-used.

Silhouette/shadow	Another layer of self, identity, duality, 'black bodies' entrapping a 'spark of light' (Gnostic and Manichean Sufi belief) (<i>Untitled</i> , 1991)
Ladder	Leaving behind cultural origin, climbing to the new (<i>Growing up</i> , 1989)
Flame	Life, warmth of family, cleansing, hope, faith, metamorphosis (<i>The untouchable</i> , 1984)
Well	Source, life-giving, dark void
Water	Life
Bowl	Womb, religious offering
Earth	Mortality, survival (<i>Untitled</i> , 1990)
Joined palms	Evocation of inner life
Dots	Heart pills
Shoes	Travel, connection to place (<i>Day by day</i> , 1991)
Carpet	Loss, transmutation, and duality meeting place (<i>Longing belonging</i> , 1997)
Pool	Spiritual purification, tranquillity
Grave & cradle	Death & birth
Lotus	Enlightenment, presence of divinity (<i>Untitled</i> , 1995)
Door	Hesitation, temptation, security, welcoming, respect, freedom, old and new ideas and experiences (<i>Knocking from the inside</i> , 1989)
Bed	To dream, to awaken in an enlightened state
Swirling skirt	Notion of oneness of person and universe - alludes to dance of the Dervishes*. (<i>The lover circles his own heart</i> , 1993)
Geometry	Human projection (<i>The untouchable</i> , 1984)
Stairs	Escape, self-realisation
Dwelling	Peace, shelter, security, and belonging (<i>Dwelling</i> , 1980)

* *Whirling Dervishes* are Sufis, a mystical sect of Islam that traces its origin to the 13th century Ottoman Empire (Turkey). Rumi, the great philosopher and writer, founded the Mevlevi Order. Dervish literally means 'doorway', believed to be the entrance between the material world and the spiritual world. Through ritualistic dance and chanting of religious text, altered states of consciousness purify the self, creating a personal union with God. From the 14th to the 21st century, they have cultivated not only spiritual attainment but also cultural and artistic excellence, having a profound impact on music, classical poetry, calligraphy and the visual arts.

Retrieved from- <http://www.artgallery.sa.gov.au/2001/EX01%20Valamanesh%20E.html>

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