

# Unmasking Albany: Addressing Social Issues Through Mask-Work With Young People in a Western Australian Regional Centre.

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### THESES :

## Unmasking Albany : Addressing Social Issues Through Mask-Work With Young People in a Western Australian Regional Centre.



[Fleur Hockey](#), *Edith Cowan University*



#### Date of Award

2008

#### Degree Type

Thesis

#### Degree Name

Bachelor of Arts Honours

#### School

Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA)

#### Faculty

Faculty of Education & Arts

#### First Advisor

Dr Alan Hancock

#### Abstract

My research looked at whether mask-work could be used to address social issues

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affecting young people in a Western Australian regional centre. It consisted of a case study, where I ran a six day workshop series in two Albany primary schools, with students who had been selected by their school to participate. Throughout the workshops, the young participants each made a full expressive mask, learnt how to perform in different mask styles, developed a character and took part in a small performance at their school. I employed a performance ethnography methodology and utilised methods such as participant observation, structured interviews and student and artist evaluations in the project. My research touched on two main areas of theory: mask-work and theatre as therapy. After examining the existing literature in these two fields, I integrated aspects of Augusto Baal's concept of theatre as therapy (1979; 1995; 2006) into the use of mask-work in the field of drama therapy. I then used this integrated approach as the basis for my six day mask workshop series. The aim of this integration was to see whether this approach would be successful in working with children who had been identified as having social issues. The final presentation of the project has two elements: an exegesis and an exhibition. The exhibition is the creative component of the project, showing filmed footage, photographs, interview transcripts, a display of the participant's masks and the results of the project. The exegesis serves to contextualise the exhibition by providing my interpretation of literature on mask-work and theatre as therapy, and how I integrated this into the workshops.

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