

Forrest Lights: collaborative glimmerings in performance making with mediated light

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Through this short paper I will be sharing some of the challenges and productive collisions that are fuelling *Forrest Lights*, a current collaborative practice research project that brings together choreographer and performer Michelle Man and lighting designer and board operator Dave Forrest. Both artists work within a wide range of dance, theatre and site-specific contexts, and the prime factor that brings them together is their fascination for the reciprocal relationships that emerge from the interactions of light and the dancing body. In the *Forrest Lights* project, their starting point will be to reverse their habitual creative roles in order to provoke new methods for devising ‘light-dance’ work in collaboration.

To date our collaborative relationship has developed from working together over four years on short-term projects, where restricted time to ‘play’ with the material of light, protocols and creative imperatives have for the most held us within our prescribed roles. Nevertheless, inherent in our work is a strong sense of overlap, where Forrest through my suggestions gives shape to light environments that are integral to my choreographic thinking and making. Sensitized responses and spatial attunements are then made to the danced work, to meet these lightscapes. As the processes of *Forrest Lights* develop, attention will be paid to how these overlappings shift and become sites for creative and productive ex-change within our established premise of artistic role reversal. By framing *Forrest Lights* as a practice research project, we are setting ourselves new boundaries within which to affront challenges with a rigor that we hope will formulate fresh questions around collaboration, whilst developing ways of scoring dance from light.

As *Forrest Lights* will be working with illumination operated through pixel mapping, my practice research will also ‘be in conversation with’ the dancers and their sensorial experiences in choreographic processes molded by digitally programmed lighting. In the mediated light environment we will explore Chris Salter’s posit that “[t]echnology does something in and to the world modifying existing relations and constructing new ones between humans, tools, processes and the environment in which all are deeply entangled.” (2010:xxxv).

Salter, C. (2010) *Entangled: Technology and the Transformation of Performance*. Massachusetts: The MIT Press