ARTIST STATEMENT BY BRETT BAILEY:

My theatre and performance works are shaped by the intertwining of my unfolding inner reality and my interpretations of outer social-political realities. They arise from my South African identity, and from my consciousness of the long and troubled relationship between Africa and the West, and the effects of the greed and violence of the powerful on the marginalized. Immigration, xenophobia, rampant capitalism, racism and extremism are recurring themes across my portfolio.

Ritual, myth, dreams, trance and the non-rational are fundamental to both the content and the form of my works. I strive to craft compelling atmospheres, unpredictable sequences ofpowerful scenes, and vivid images to create my worlds of beauty and disquiet. I want my pieces to have the quality of those lingering dreams that haunt one for days, and cast one’s reality in another light.

I spend many, many months researching and harvesting ideas, associations, pictures and music, and designing and writing, before I get anywhere near a rehearsal room. Sound, image, costume, colour, text, props, rhythms, light, the performers themselves and the locations in which I stage my pieces are my ‘materials’. I work with them, in fine balance with one another, to convey multiple layers of meaning.

Theatre – in its conventional sense – is only one of my referents. I am inspired also by the rituals, ceremonies and performance modes of diverse cultures and religions, by performance art, installation, promenade performance, visual art, pop and rock concerts, opera and nature. I weave these together – in tandem with the evolving concept of a particular work – to create the form that the work will ultimately take. My eclectic, hybridizing approach is itself conceptual: a refutation of any hegemonic, ethnocentric notion of what theatre should be.