

\$10,000 Neil Curnow Award Announced

Maria Dafneros has been presented with the 2008 Neil Curnow Award to study at the Grotowski Institute in Poland.

The \$10,000 Neil Curnow Award is made possible through the generous bequest of the late Neil Curnow and is open to acting graduates from Flinders University Drama Centre and TAFE SA, Adelaide Centre for the Arts. It allows the recipient to undertake further study interstate or overseas.

Maria Dafneros graduated from the Advanced Diploma of Arts (Acting), Adelaide Centre for the Arts, in 2007. She began her acting career in 1996 with a role in *Shine*, directed by Scott Hicks. In November 2007 Maria received a Minter Ellison Rising Star Award for her achievements in the performing arts.

Earlier this year Maria played the lead female in the theatre production, *Rebecca's Story* by Kate Mandalovic and had the lead female role in two short films, *With Love* and *Take Me to Your Car* by the Kino Film Group.

The Neil Curnow Award will enable Maria to attend a period of practical and theoretical workshops titled 'Suspension of Expression' at the Grotowski Institute in Wroclaw, Poland from June to July this year.

The Grotowski Institute focuses on the creative practice of Polish theatre director Jerzy Grotowski - a leading figure in avant-garde theatre of the 20th Century. Grotowski is significant for advancing the work on psychophysical actions, originally pioneered by Constantin Stanislavski. His experimental exploration of para-theatrical work, focuses on transcending the separation between performer and spectator through simple interactive exchanges.

"I'm looking forward to meeting with artists from diverse cultural and theatrical backgrounds who have experience in theatre that carries the impulse of Jerzy Grotowski," said Maria Dafneros. "I then plan to share this knowledge through local, national and international performances."

In the 1950s South Australian born Neil Curnow left Australia to study theatre in the UK and the USA. After some years acting and directing in British Repertory he returned to Adelaide to teach drama. In 1974 he left Australia again to spend 16 years in Papua New Guinea teaching English and drama as personal development. He returned to Adelaide in 1990, pursuing acting engagements while running his own Speech and Presentation Studio.

The Neil Curnow Award is administered by the Independent Arts Foundation in collaboration with the Helpmann Academy and Arts SA.

Media Contact

Lynda Allen, Marketing & PR Manager, Helpmann Academy
(08) 8463 5015 / 0403 759 729 or email lallen@tafe.sa.edu.au