

BACK TO BACK
THEATRE
2016
YEAR IN
REVIEW
Gods&People





Cover & Back Cover: Scott Price, *Self Portrait*, 2016

We are people, people that work on a show.

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2016 was another remarkable year for Back to Back Theatre, during which we premiered our latest work *LADY EATS APPLE* in Melbourne's Hamer Hall as part of the 2016 Melbourne Festival. The company's largest-scale work to date, *LADY EATS APPLE*, was made possible with support we received from international and Australian co-commissioning bodies and donors.

As we premiered a new work, the ensemble also returned to existing repertoire. Highly successful seasons of small metal objects (celebrating its 11th anniversary) connected us with audiences in New Zealand and also in Greece, where public spaces have been so tenaciously used for social and political exchange. The ways that art can unite us in humanity and compassion also resonated at performances of *GANESH VERSUS THE THIRD REICH*, during our first ever visit to Brazil.

Back to Back is committed to taking risks, exploring new creative territories and representing diverse perspectives. This commitment has seen Back to Back's work extend into screen art, with Scott Price's series of interviews on provocation introducing us to digital audiences, and the development of a major short-form TV project anticipating even broader reach. 2016 also saw us explore the interaction between visual and performing art, with nine of *THE DEMOCRATIC SET* films appearing in the Arp Museum's exhibition *Ready for the Stage Act (Act I and II) 1900-2016* in Germany, and a collaboration with visual artist Steve Salo to produce *The Back to Back Theatre Portraits*.

Community engagement as participatory research and development continues to underpin Back to Back's approach. Community projects in 2016 ranged from open workshops to Geelong After Dark, through to the development of *RADIAL* with Theatre of Speed (a new dance-film residency model). Community work has also included extensive mentorships, internships and advocacy; *CAMP* (our annual weekend of multidisciplinary workshops); and the continuation of our Acting and Writing for Film & TV workshops, all supporting the professional development of our expanding circle of collaborating artists.

As Back to Back continues to explore new possibilities, my fellow Board members are committed and generous. Their wit and wisdom is inspired by the ensemble, Bruce Gladwin, Alice Nash, the staff and our supporters. We all endeavour to make Back to Back Theatre a reflection of our better selves and the community in which we would all like to live.

Thank you for your interest in, and support of, Back to Back Theatre. I hope you enjoy reading the 2016 Year in Review.

Jo Porter
Chair

About Us

The actors and their performance tell us something about the world which we could not otherwise glean, which we might otherwise not know exists. They simultaneously bring strength, fragility, vulnerability, relentless healthy ego, tenderness, volatility, playfulness and playful deceit, and conceit. They are sly. They make us laugh.

Back to Back Theatre is a creator of astonishing, original Australian contemporary performance that seeks to expand the notion of theatre and thus what is possible for people and civil society. We are presenters of that work, a collaborator with diverse and often marginalised community members with and without disabilities, and an advocate for a better world.

Based in the regional centre of Geelong, Back to Back Theatre is widely recognised as an Australian theatre company of national and international significance.

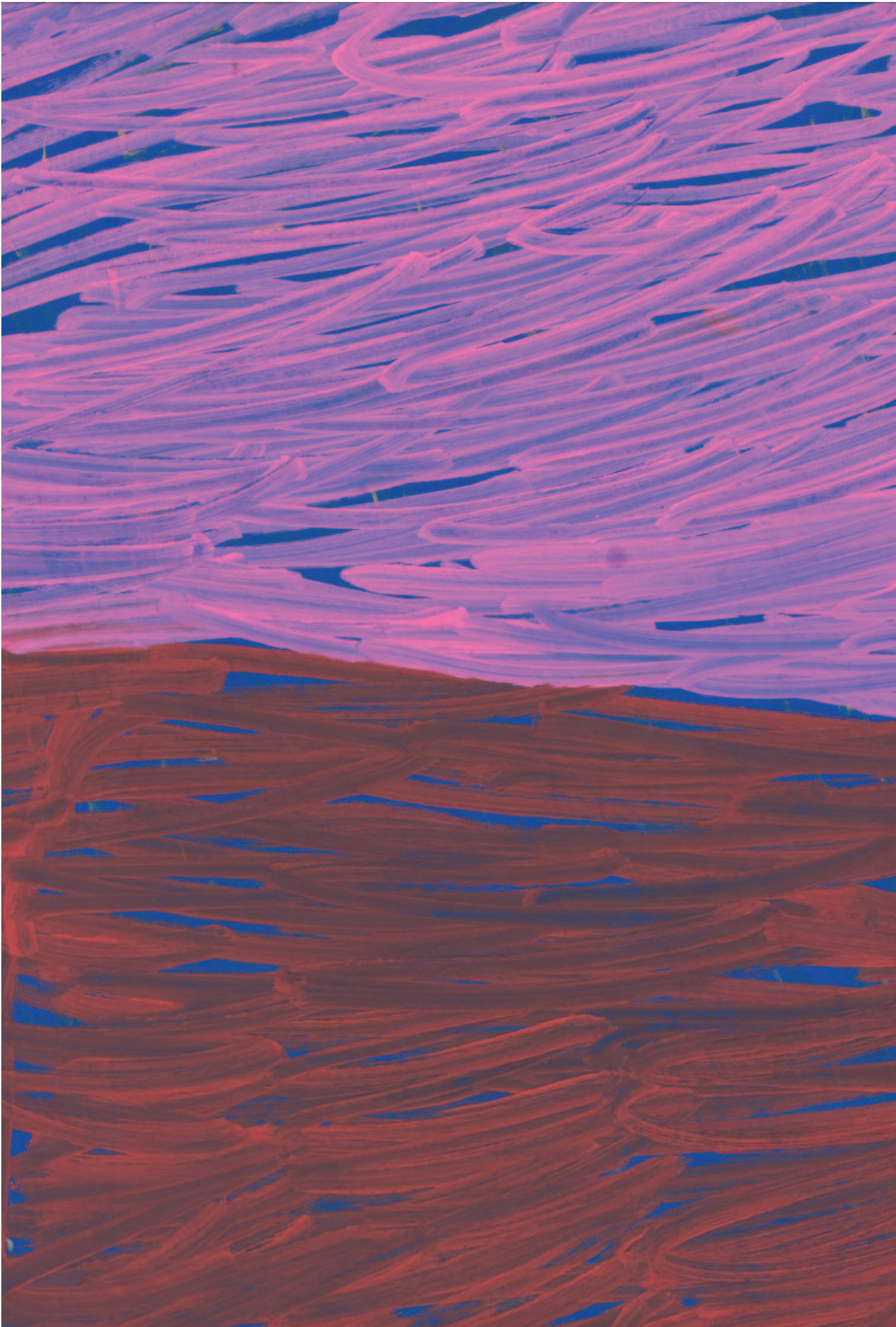
As Back to Back Theatre matures, we move towards a simpler description of what we do. Our aspiration is to make the best theatre in the world.

Alice Nash

Executive Producer & Co-CEO

Our Purpose

Back to Back Theatre exists to create new forms of contemporary performance created by artists with disabilities, giving voice to social and political issues which speak to all people.



Why do we do what we do?

At Back to Back Theatre we make theatre to risk finding out what we want, to question the assumptions we hold about ourselves and others and to champion our audience's humanity.

Our intention is to make theatre works the like of which have never been seen before. We believe invention is the essential tool in the search for meaning and the betterment of our shared experience.

Our job as theatre makers is to nourish our audience, to give them the possibility of keeping faith with belief of nourishment itself. We unapologetically seek to encourage mystery, belief and hope. We want to place our audience in contact with life itself.

Engaging with Back to Back Theatre can be profound. Our productions and processes are redemptive. We seek to make theatre that reminds us of sensitivities that we might have lost at some cost, that is something beyond words, or that may never have been acknowledged.

Our Process

The actors and their collaborators are a group of people who have to find a way of working together; this can be both awkward and fluid. The company has always been charged with possibility. Driven by curiosity, each time we pursue a new work, we begin again.

The emerging work is never about a single thematic or singular vision but a list of ideas. It is a list that encompasses theatrical form, content, images, questions about materials, the audience, the actors' development, personal experience, individual and collective imagination, observation and mistakes. It's vast and eclectic and is as much about a journey into fear as it is about bold ambition.

We embrace risk. Attempting to make extraordinary theatre is a tempting of fate, a symbolic quest about how close one can come to death through provocation, complexity, simplicity, exposure, transparency and admission. It is a test of what one can get away with: what one can do and say and still be loved, or simply listened to.

While our creative aim is beyond reach, our faith in our relevance rests solely in our engagement with our audience and community. We start where they are and give them a reason to journey with us. We want our audience to be compelled to care so we give them a story worth telling and allow them to be aware of the risks involved. Simply, we take what is meaningful for the artist and allow it to be meaningful for an audience.

LADY EATS APPLE

Rich, poor, black, white, female, straight, gay, binary, non-binary, conservative or liberal, we all die. None of us can avoid it; death is one thing that unifies us. This is the central theme of our newest major work, LADY EATS APPLE, which had its world premiere at the 2016 Melbourne Festival.

Spanning from the beginning of time to the present day, LADY EATS APPLE is constructed around three acts, each a short work in its own right. With each story comes the creation of new scenography and at its conclusion, a destruction, a metaphor for a cycle we are all familiar with.

Using headphone technology and epic-scale inflatable set-design, the world premiere season at Hamer Hall generated a palpable tension between the extravagance of a traditional venue space and the intimacy of the actors on stage.

We are hugely grateful for the care, determination and ingenuity that went into the making of this highly ambitious work, both on and off stage. Thank you to those who made it possible.

This project was assisted by the Australian Government's Major Festivals Initiative, in association with the Confederation of Australian International Arts Festivals Inc., Melbourne Festival, Adelaide Festival, Perth International Arts Festival, Carriageworks, Wiener Festwochen, Theater der Welt and with support from the Keir Foundation and Thyne Reid Foundation. | This project has also been co-produced by Holland Festival. | *Lady Eats Apple* was supported by Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation (Eldon and Anne Foote Trust Donor Advised Program 2016). | The premiere was supported in its development by the Geelong Performing Arts Centre, Arts Centre Melbourne and Coleby Consulting. The work was first developed in residence at the V&A – Victoria & Albert Museum – as part of the London International Festival of Theatre (LIFT).

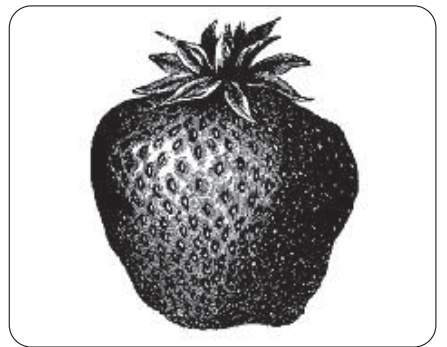
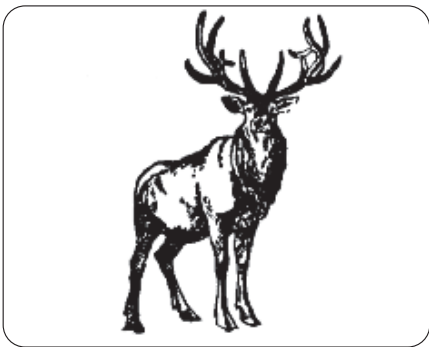
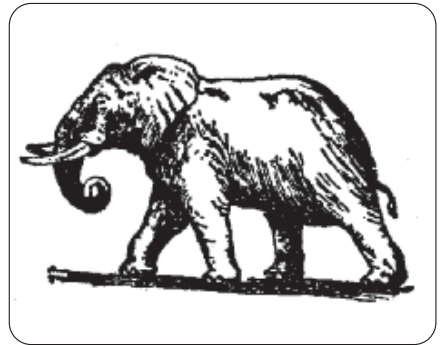
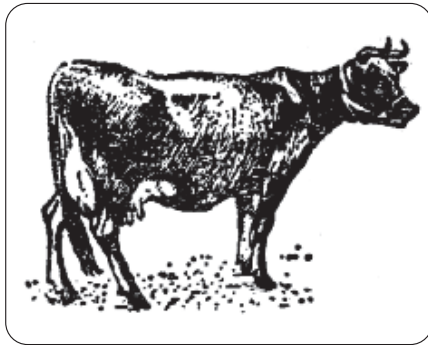
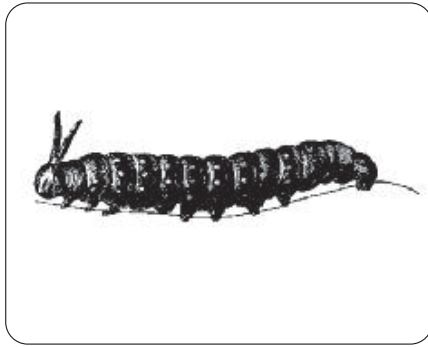
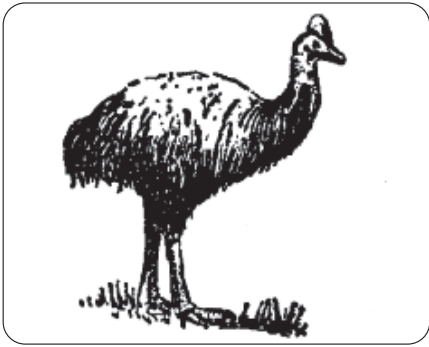
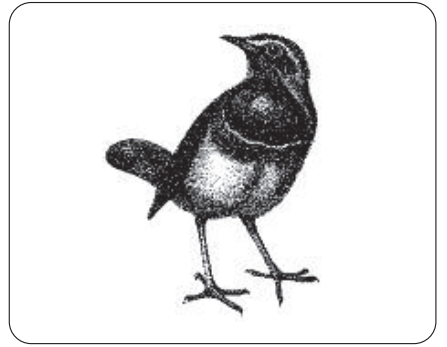
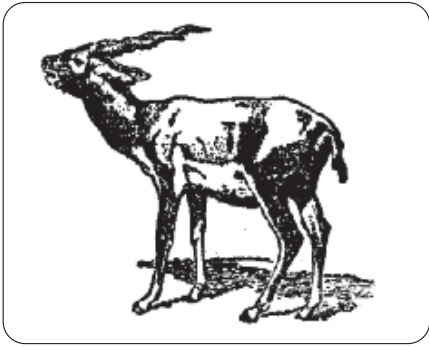
Director / Devisor Bruce Gladwin
Devisors / Performers Brian Lipson, Mark Deans, Romany Latham, Sarah Mainwaring, Scott Price, Simon Laherty
Set Design Mark Cuthbertson
Projection Design Rhian Hinkley
Lighting Design / Technical Direction Andrew Livingston, bluebottle
Composition Chris Abrahams
Sound Design / Mix Lachlan Carrick
Sound Design Marco Cher-Gibard
Sound System Design Nick Carroll
Dramaturgy Kate Sulan, Melissa Reeves, Tamara Searle
Near Death Experience Contributors Zoë Barry, Joe Motley
Creative Development Artists Brian Tilley, Robbie Croft, Shio Otani, Sonia Teuben
Costume Design Eugyeene Teh
Mechanical Design / Fabrication Kinetic Sets
Stage Manager Alice Fleming
Assistant Stage Manager Lucy Harrison
Production Manager Dans Maree Sheehan
Artist Support Nikki Watson

After the Show Post-Show Artist Talk

'Breathtaking, beautiful, heart rendering and stunning; up to your usual standards.' – Audience member

'An outstanding, moving, complex and wonderful show.' – Audience member

'Unbearably moving and intimate'
– Time Out Melbourne



New Zealand Festival, 16 – 19 March
Under the Sails, Wellington, New Zealand

Onassis Cultural Centre's Fast Forward Festival (FF3), 20 – 22 May
Syntagma Square, Athens, Greece

small metal objects

small metal objects unfolds amid the pedestrian traffic against the backdrop of a city. On a raised seating bank, with individual sets of headphones, the audience is wired in to an intensely personal drama about human worth.

In 2016 we celebrated the 11th year of small metal objects in repertoire, travelling to Wellington for the New Zealand Festival, before heading to Greece for the capital's Fast Forward Festival.

In Wellington we performed four sell-out shows and marked the first time Back to Back Theatre presented in New Zealand. In Athens, the show was staged in the heart of the city at Syntagma Square, the recent and long-standing site of public demonstration and democratic rallies. This was a fitting location for small metal objects, an intimate story that explores the relationship between the personal and political, a tale of the triumph of friendship over money or personal economic gain.

In both cities, we were delighted to reunite the original co-authors of the show who performed the work together for the first time since they devised it in 2005.

Director / Devisor Bruce Gladwin
Devisors / Performers Genevieve Morris, Jim Russell, Simon Laherty, Sonia Teuben
Sound Composition / Design Hugh Covill
Sound Engineer Marco Cher-Gibard
Stage Manager / Artist Support Nikki Watson
Production Manager Dans Maree Sheehan

After the Show Company Exchange Dinner, Art Talk – Breaking Barriers Q&A, Powhiri Traditional Maori Welcome Ceremony in Wellington; UNMASTERCLASS Workshop in Athens

'Breaks out of the confines of the theatre and serves itself up to the predictability of the public space' – Stuff, Wellington

'Infinitely complex public spectacle'
– Culture Now, Athens

'Profoundly moving theatre'
– Audience Member, Wellington

Presented with support from Australian Arts and Culture Fund – Catalyst
Developed with support from Australia Council, Creative Victoria, City of Greater Geelong, City of Melbourne, Melbourne Festival, Myer Foundation, RE Ross Trust, Victorian Government's Community Support Fund



Brian Tilley, *Self Portrait*, 2016

GANESH VERSUS THE THIRD REICH

GANESH VERSUS THE THIRD REICH begins with the elephant-headed God travelling to Nazi Germany to reclaim the Swastika from Hitler.

It's an epic narrative about who has the right to tell a story and who has the right to be heard. It explores our complicity in creating and dismantling the world, human possibility and hope. A beautiful and profound work, GANESH has taken us to 40,000 audience members around the world since its premiere in 2011.

We were delighted to bring GANESH VERSUS THE THIRD REICH to São Paulo at the Australia Now Festival where we performed to 1,300 audience members across three shows, and were heartened by three consecutive standing ovations. We also welcomed two new members to the GANESH touring party: James Saunders in the role of David and Tamara Searle as Show Director.

There is always an element of anticipation when taking our work to a new city and culture and São Paulo met GANESH with warmth, humour and enthusiasm. It demonstrated to us the remarkable power of cultural engagement to audiences worldwide, revealing a deep connection between the actors and their audience.

Director Bruce Gladwin

Show Director Tamara Searle

Devisors Brian Tilley, Bruce Gladwin, David Woods, Kate Sulan, Marcia Ferguson, Mark Deans, Nicki Holland, Sarah Mainwaring, Scott Price, Simon Laherty

Performers Brian Tilley, James Saunders, Mark Deans, Simon Laherty, Scott Price

Lighting Design Andrew Livingston, bluebottle

Design Construction Mark Cuthbertson

Design / Animation Rhian Hinkley

Composer Jóhann Jóhannsson

Costume Design Shio Otani

Production Manager Dans Maree Sheehan

Stage Manager Alice Fleming

Sound Operator Phillip Pietruschka

Artist Support Nikki Watson

After the Show Discussion and Post-Show Q&A

'This was the best piece of theatre I have ever seen – it was innovative, confronting and amazing' – Audience member, São Paulo

'Ganesh can provoke different reactions, but not indifference. It confronts us with the "elephant in the room" of our society, disability, and forces us to question the place we give to the most vulnerable people.' – Weekly Otra Parte, São Paulo

Presented with support from COALAR – Council on Australian Latin American Relations, Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade

Developed with support from Australia Council, Creative Victoria, City of Greater Geelong, City of Melbourne, Geelong Performing Arts Centre, Goethe-Institut (Melbourne), Keir Foundation, Kit Denton Fellowship, Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne Festival, National Theatre Studio (London), Sidney Myer Fund



Rita Halabarec, *Untitled*, Unknown

Geelong After Dark, 6 May

Back to Back Theatre Studio, Geelong, Australia

Festival Belluard Bollwerk International, 28 – 30 June

Festival Hub, Fribourg, Switzerland

Bühnenreif 1. und 2. Akt (Ready for the Stage Act I & 2) (1900–2016) Exhibition, 23 September 2016 – 30 April 2017

Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandeck, Remagen, Germany

THE DEMOCRATIC SET

THE DEMOCRATIC SET is an experimental residency model for working with communities. Using a custom-made film set – a neutral room with two opposing doors – community members are invited into a free space that can be manipulated and used in whichever way they choose. These short performances are captured on film and stitched together, authoring a unique living trace of a community at a particular moment in time. THE DEMOCRATIC SET is both simple and complex, singular and communal, obvious and strange. In 2016, we again appeared in Geelong After Dark, a major regional arts event that transforms the city of Geelong with pop-up art installations, exhibitions and music. We invited 180 locals into the Back to Back studio to spend time in THE DEMOCRATIC SET box, to untangle what an uncensored space means to them. In the SET's second incarnation of the year, we travelled to Switzerland for a residency exploring the living traditions of Fribourg as part of Festival Belluard Bollwerk International. We were honoured to witness the laughter, tears and hugs of the 200 people at our Swiss film premiere, as we watched the theme of 'Living Traditions' come to life.

Original Concept, Design / Direction Bruce Gladwin
Original Set Design Mark Cuthbertson
Original Videography Rhian Hinkley

Geelong Director Bruce Gladwin
Ensemble Romany Latham & Sarah Mainwaring
Videography / Editing Justin Batchelor
Sound Design Harry Myers Covill
Sound Technician Tillman Schauble
Lighting Design / Production Management
Jen Hector

Fribourg Co-Director / Videographer Rhian Hinkley
Co-Director Luke George
Ensemble Romany Latham
Lighting Design / Production Management
Jen Hector
Company Manager Rebecca McIntyre

'Gorgeously hypnotic'

– Audience member, Fribourg

Exhibitions & Screenings

In celebration of the 100th anniversary of Dadaist art, Arp Museum in Remagen, Germany exhibited 'Ready for the Stage Act I and 2 (1900-2016)', an exploration of the theme of stage in the visual arts. Nine existing DEMOCRATIC SET films were included in the exhibition, thus marking our first connection to a major visual arts exhibition. An audience of 20,000 will view the work before the exhibition concludes in April 2017.

Developed and presented with support from Australia Council, Creative Victoria

Presented with support from Catalyst – Australian Arts and Culture Fund, City of Greater Geelong, Geelong Connected Communities, Give Where You Live, Transport Accident Commission (TAC)

BUNG HOLE TV PROJECT

BUNGHOLE tells the darkly humorous story of a team of people who embark on the clean-up of a strange toxic wasteland. When they find what could be the last living survivor, their day proves to be anything but normal.

Stepping into the screen world for the first time with our partners Matchbox Pictures, one of the most dynamic production houses in Australia, this project aims to extend our long-term impact and reach with global audiences. We know Back to Back's philosophy, process and cultural capital can be applied to related industries, specifically digital arenas, and this project will assist to define a new aesthetic for screen, one that represents the full breadth of our community.

We look forward to shooting the film in the Geelong region in May 2017 before its premiere at the 2017 Adelaide Film Festival and future screening on ABC TV in 2017 or beyond.

Writer Bruce Gladwin

Script Editor Warren Clarke (Matchbox Pictures)

Ensemble Mark Deans, Romany Latham, Sarah Mainwaring, Scott Price, Simon Laherty

Executive Producers Debbie Lee & Julie Eckersley (Matchbox Pictures)

Producers Stephen Corvini (Matchbox Pictures), Alice Nash

Co-Producer Brendan Campbell

'We jumped at the chance having long been admirers of Back to Back Theatre's ground breaking theatre work which is recognised in Australia and internationally. I first saw their incredible show small metal objects in Sydney many years ago and had my mind blown – so the idea of working with them was thrilling.' – Debbie Lee, Matchbox Pictures

BUNGHOLE is a co-production with Matchbox Pictures.

Developed with the assistance of the HIVE Production Fund, an initiative of the Adelaide Film Festival in partnership with Screen Australia, Australian Broadcasting Corporation and Australia Council for the Arts and with support from Thyne Reid Foundation, City of Greater Geelong and A&M Costa Foundation. Produced and filmed in Victoria with the assistance of Film Victoria



Why do we do what we do?

Community workshops and residencies are a core component of Back to Back's annual program. We look to our community to tell us stories about the world, many of which thread through the development of major works.

Our community programs aim to increase social inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities by creating a space for people to discover and nurture their own artistic, professional and personal potential. When participants come to Back to Back, they are allowed to be vulnerable and eccentric, they are allowed to make statements about how they want to be seen, and all of these offers are received and valued.

The programs are an integral part of our working model, and have introduced us to many of our current and past ensemble members. Moving forward, the ensemble act as mentors within these programs and their contributions lend knowledge, experience and consistency to our changing program.

In the last decade, we have worked with over 18,000 participants with and without disabilities in programs that include residencies with other arts and education organisations in Australia and beyond, regular workshops in the Back to Back Studio, public performances and training opportunities.

Our Process

Back to Back invites artists from a variety of disciplines to the Back to Back Studio to work with community participants and the core ensemble. The workshops focus on collaboration, not facilitation, which creates an inclusive space for everyone to contribute on an equal platform. Ideas explored in our community programs are often developed into touring projects or residency models, generating a fluidity between all areas of our work.

THEATRE OF SPEED

Theatre of Speed is an experimental centre for young artists with disabilities to develop their creative skills and ideas, while working with some of Australia's leading contemporary arts practitioners. A place for both established and emerging artists working across art forms, Theatre of Speed generates audacious, unexpected and enlightening work in a space that engenders social inclusion for those often marginalised from our society.

In 2016 Theatre of Speed worked with eight guest artists, two secondments and 17 participants presenting three showings to local community members.

Theatre of Speed often acts as a place for the exploration of new performance ideas at Back to Back, which can lead to the development of major and community-based touring works. A highlight for Theatre of Speed in 2016 was the development of a potential new touring work, RADIAL, that uses a circular, rotating dolly to capture performers from all angles. In the first ever RADIAL film, Theatre of Speed participants used the spectacle of dance, music and fashion to playfully reimagine elements of a music video. This collaborative filmmaking process captures the beautiful idiosyncrasies of a community in motion and offers multiple perspectives on the performers, proposing a new way of seeing. RADIAL will be developed further in 2017.

27 January – 14 December

Back to Back Theatre Studio, Geelong, Australia

Participating Artists Adam Berry, Ben Oakes, Brian Tilley, James Lewis, Jessica White, Laura Berrisford, Liam White, Mark Deans, Phoebe Baker, Polly Munday, Robbie Croft, Romany Latham, Rose McLachlan, Sarah Mainwaring, Scott Price, Simon Laherty, Tamika Simpson

Workshop Facilitators Chris Kohn, Dan Han, Dan Schlusser, Harry Myers Covill, Justin Batchelor, Rhian Hinkley, Tamara Searle, Samara Hersch

Artist Support Leanne Stein

Dramaturg Julianne O'Brien

Secondments Laurel Devenie, Millie Cooper

Showings with guest artists

Dan Han, 17 August

Dan Schlusser, 22 June

Samara Hersch, 7 December

RADIAL

Screening, 8 December

Devisors / Performers Adam Berry, Ben Oakes, Brian Tilley, James Lewis, Jessica Walker, Laura Berrisford, Mark Deans, Phoebe Baker, Polly Munday, Robert Croft, Romany Latham, Rose McLachlan, Sarah Mainwaring, Scott Price, Simon Laherty, Tamika Simpson

Co-Directors Rhian Hinkley, Tamara Searle

Videographer Rhian Hinkley

Guest Artist – Composer & Sound Design

Harry Myers Covill

Guest Artist – Costume Designer Adele Varcoe

'Dan Han and Dan Schlusser changed my strengths. Before I didn't know about acting. And they changed my inner rose – [makes a pose with her body]. This is the symbol of giving birth to a baby. Now it is out.' – Rose, Participant

Developed with support from Australia Council, Creative Victoria, City of Greater Geelong, Give Where You Live, Transport Accident Commission (TAC), Perpetual Trustees – Percy Baxter Charitable Trust



Robbie Croft, *Self Portrait*, 2016

2 February — 24 May

Back to Back Theatre Studio, Geelong, Australia

ACTING AND WRITING FOR FILM & TV

As part of the company's foray into screen art, we invited actors with intellectual disabilities from the local community to audition for our first Acting and Writing for Film & TV training program. Facilitated by screen industry professionals, with a view to build the skills of our Artists-in-Residence, the series of workshops focused on improvisational techniques and writing exercises for camera. In order to develop characters and script material for a short film outcome, the artists shared personal stories, both real and imagined, adding an authentic tone to the script writing process.

Acting and Writing for Film & TV created space for individuals to expand their artistic horizons and to develop their professional capacity and aspirations, which is particularly significant for artists not always afforded the same opportunities in the workforce.

Reuniting later in the year for a three-day period, the artists filmed **TALENT QUEST**, a poignant, hilarious, satirical take on the arduous audition process that actors have to endure. **TALENT QUEST** was screened for participating artists and local community members at the Back to Back Studio at the end of 2016.

Director Bruce Gladwin

Artists-in-Residence Adam Berry, Allan V Watt, Ben Oakes, Chris Hansen, Grace-Rose Turner, Jake Anson, Jess Walker, Josh Haigh, Liam White, Michael Chan, Nicholas Walsh, Nikita Veitch, Noah Zvekic, Robbie Croft, Sonia Teuben, Stephanie Cook, Taylor Powell

Guest Artists Daniela Farinacci, Jim Russell, Luke Ryan

Dramaturg Julianne O'Brien

Project Videographers Audrey Major, Rhian Hinkley, Samuel Millar

TALENT QUEST **Screening, 14 December**

Devisors / Performers Ben Oakes, Brian Tilley, Chris Hansen, Jessica Walker, Mark Deans, Nicholas Walsh, Robbie Croft, Sarah Mainwaring, Scott Price, Simon Laherty, Stephanie Cook

Writer / Co-Director Luke Ryan

Director of Photography / Co-Director Rhian Hinkley

Sound Designer Harry Myers Covill

'How different it is from performing in a theatre, how opposite it was. For one the effective parts of a film, have more subtle details, such a quiver of a lip, a slight lean back.' – Artist-in-Residence

Developed with support from Australia Council, Creative Victoria, City of Greater Geelong, Department of Social Services, Give Where You Live, Perpetual Trustees – Percy Baxter Charitable Trust, Transport Accident Commission (TAC)

16 – 17 April

Back to Back Theatre Studio, Geelong, Australia

CAMP

CAMP (Come And Make Performance) is Back to Back's annual weekend workshop series for people with and without disabilities. Dedicated to the investigation of contemporary performance making, it provides people from across Australia with access to exemplary contemporary practice. In 2016, 37 individuals participated in 12 multi-disciplinary arts workshops, led by leading Australian arts practitioners at our home in Geelong.

The workshops in 2016 included surrealist performance, a film making mash up, a high camp frolic in Elizabethan dress, comedy workshops, creative writing and physical performance. The explosive expressions of joy throughout the weekend demonstrate the powerful impact of arts participation on the personal wellbeing of those in our community, and the transcendental quality of taking people outside their normal, everyday experience.

Program Curator Tamara Searle

Program Coordinator Nikki Watson

Workshop Facilitators Adena Jacobs, Dan Giovannoni, Dan Han, Dan Schlusser, Eugyeene Teh, Ian Pidd, Ingrid Voorendt, James Hullick, James Pratt, Justin Batchelor, Lyndel Quick, Raimondo Cortese, Samara Hersch, Tamara Searle

Emerging Artists Laura Hartnell, Marissa Bennett, Milly Cooper

'I believe it is amazing what we can do. At the same time feel relieved, I feel I can be myself for once' – CAMP Participant

'CAMP is about creating connections through art' – CAMP Participant

'CAMP is a great way to make friends and mix with people with all different disabilities, and to be able to have the opportunity to make theatre with professional actors.' – CAMP Participant

Developed with support from Australia Council, Creative Victoria, City of Greater Geelong – Community Arts Grants Program, Give Where You Live, Perpetual Trustees – Percy Baxter Charitable Trust Transport Accident Commission (TAC)

15 April – 24 June

Nelson Park School, Geelong, Australia

NELSON PARK SCHOOL RESIDENCY

Director Tamara Searle

Ensemble Romany Latham

Guest Artists Dan Giovannoni, Marco Cher-Gibard

Nelson Park School is a Prep to Year 12 school for students with intellectual disabilities in Geelong. Back to Back has a longstanding relationship with Nelson Park and several past and current ensemble members have been introduced to us through the school. In 2016, we teamed up again to author a radio play with Year 7 - 9 students, titled Rosie's Latest Adventure. The story takes protagonist Rosie from another ordinary day at school into a far-reaching magical world, explored by her and her sidekicks, the three school chickens.

Collaborating with guest artists and members of the Back to Back team was an important opportunity to introduce performance making to students who have limited access to the arts. By putting forward ideas, recording scripts and practicing the art of improvisation, the students reported feeling a greater sense of confidence, both creatively and personally. Students also expressed a reduced sense of nervousness and improved listening skills as a result of working on the project.

Rosie's Last Adventure aired on 3CR and Pulse Radio for International Day of People with Disability on 3 December 2016.

'Through practical, hands on participation students have no barrier to learning. As opposed to paper and pens as a potential barrier' – Nelson Park Teacher

I am joy. I am the sun. I am a rock. I am a whisper. I am a brother, and a sister. I am a penguin. I am an echo. I am the earth. I am down. I am burnt. I am green like grass. I am taking you out. I am a house. I am made of helium. I am a chair and I don't like being sat on. I am red. I am a rocket. I am Prince. I am afraid of clowns. I am haunting your dreams.

– Poem by Nelson Park students

Developed with support from Australia Council, Creative Victoria, City of Greater Geelong, Give Where You Live, Jack Brockhoff Foundation, Perpetual Trustees – Percy Baxter Charitable Trust, Transport Accident Commission (TAC)

PRICE

Price Scott Price

Interviewees Adele Varcoe, Emma Valente, Jason Tuazon-McCheyne, Jonathan Holloway, Nicola Gunn, Patricia Cornelius, Penny Arcade, Vallejo Gantner, Van T Rudd

Director Tamara Searle

Videographer Rhian Hinkley

Production Manager Dans Maree Sheehan

In 2016, ensemble member Scott Price began an online video blog, producing a series of interviews that take provocative art as their central theme. Publishing one episode a month for twelve months, the PRICE blog brings online audiences closer to some of the theatre makers, artists, fashion designers and political activists causing a stir in our community.

Scott's catalogue of films has had over 25,000 views online, supporting our goal to develop our audiences between shows. More importantly, PRICE gave Scott the opportunity to extend himself as an artist and created more space for an outsider voice in the public realm. Placing an artist with an intellectual disability on screen and in conversation with other prominent cultural identities and leaders, in a mutual and respectful exchange of ideas and stories, is a powerful scene.

The success of PRICE has inspired the company to continue to dedicate real time and resources to individually-led, ensemble-based artistic marketing projects.

'The opportunity for me to interview provocative artists and other leaders in their chosen fields is a beautiful, wondrous thing. It's about helping people with important messages to get their message across.' – Scott Price for ArtsHub

February — June

Back to Back Theatre Studio, Geelong, Australia

STEVE SALO

THE BACK TO BACK THEATRE PORTRAITS

Geelong based artist Steve Salo is an award-winning Australian painter celebrated for his portraiture and depictions of the Australian landscape. In 2016, we were thrilled to collaborate with him on The Back to Back Theatre Portraits, a series depicting Bruce Gladwin and the ensemble members.

The portraits began as a series of sketches in the Back to Back Studio. Described by the artist as 'a painter's dream', the sittings were contemplative, serene, intense moments of artistry in a medium seldom seen in our performing arts space. Using oil paints for their thick texture and translucent qualities, the artist produced six remarkably poignant portraits of the company members, capturing their sensitivity, fragility and intense focus.

The works are displayed in rotation at the Back to Back Theatre office.

Exhibitions & Awards

Metropolis Gallery for Geelong After Dark, 6 May

Finalist – Wyndham Art Prize, Melbourne, 17 March - 1 May

Commended – Kogarah Art Prize, Sydney, 10 June - 3 July

Portrait Exhibition, Victorian Artists' Society, Melbourne, 13 - 30 August

Finalist – Salon des Refusés, National Trust S.H Ervin Gallery, Sydney, 16 July - 18 Sept (artist talk 11 Sept) and Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery, 25 Sept - 22 Nov

Upcoming 19 Oct - 9 Dec 2017: The Back to Back Theatre Portraits, Curved Wall Gallery, Frankston Arts Centre, Melbourne

'I've learnt about the amazing creative projection that comes from these people; their sensitivity, fragility at times and their intense focus on their work'

– Steve Salo

Romany Latham by Steve Salo



Steve Salo, *Mark Deans*, 2016



Top: Steve Salo, *Simon Laherty*, 2016
Bottom: Steve Salo, *Bruce Gladwin*, 2016





Top left: Steve Salo, *Romany Latham*, 2016

Top right: Steve Salo, *Scott Price*, 2016

Bottom left: Steve Salo, *Brian Tilley*, 2016

Bottom right: Steve Salo, *Sarah Mainwaring*, 2016



Impact Study

In 2016, Back to Back embarked on the company's first formal evaluation project. In 2016, Back to Back embarked on the company's first formal evaluation project to better understand to better understand the impact of our work on our community. Consultants Think Impact delivered a Social Return on Investment analysis, with the question 'How does Back to Back's art affect people and influence change?' at its core.

The analysis initiated a rare opportunity to hear directly from more than 500 individuals, whose experience and knowledge of Back to Back Theatre was collated through surveys, in-depth consultations and workshops held over a 12-month period. Those involved in the evaluation included ensemble members, artists, staff, donors, peers from the arts and disability sectors, presenters, media representatives, audiences and participant families, reflecting the diversity of Back to Back's valued community.

The report findings outlined three key impact principles for Back to Back Theatre:

Leadership in Performance

Back to Back's ensemble members are seen as leaders in artistic practice. The company's work asks people 'to look deeply within themselves to be better people' (Interviewee, Robyn Archer, Australia Council for the Arts) and in doing so, inspires individual creativity, risk taking and change on a collective scale.

Truth in Diversity

Back to Back creates a culture that respects the myriad of human experience. By promoting the richness of difference in Australia, 'Back to Back provides an opportunity for many people to gain a deeper understanding of what we can all learn from diverse experiences.'

Changed Conversations

The most significant implication of Back to Back's work is the focus 'on ability rather than disability.' Placing artists with disabilities on the world's most prestigious stages is one of several ways the company changes society's perceptions and challenges assumptions about what is possible in this world.

The study provided us with a framework to continue measuring and articulating our social and cultural impact. With this deeper understanding and appreciation of the value of our work, we are excited to look at new ways to grow our impact in the future.

'Back to Back's work is shifting [the] narrative about capability to cultural innovators and interrogators' – Industry Peer

Rita Halabarec, *Untitled*, Unknown

20,841 people around the globe came into contact with Back to Back Theatre in 2016, 898 of those as participants and 15,859 as audience members attending 1 of 33 performances of 4 works. An estimated 4,982 people came into contact with Back to Back Theatre through our participation in 76 national and international events, 4 network associations and 3 academic papers.

Advice, Advocacy & Support

In addition to all of our activities, we provide approximately 300 instances of support, advice to and advocacy for peer organisations and artists each year.

Awards

Performance Studies International – Artist / Scholar / Activist Award (ASA).

An annual award for outstanding achievement within the cross-disciplinary field of performance, given to an Artist / Scholar / Activist who has spent at least a decade fostering exchange and whose work has facilitated collaboration, either interdisciplinary or international.

Australian Multicultural Marketing Awards – Small Business Category Finalist for PRICE. Acknowledgment of PRICE as a unique and innovative marketing campaign that successfully reached a culturally diverse audience.

Environmental Sustainability

We offset 165 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions by contributing to the Lenroy Forest Regeneration project in New South Wales, Australia.

Industry Events

Footscray Community Arts Centre's (FCAC) Annual General Meeting

Geelong Performing Arts Centre's (GPAC) Careers Day

Geelong Performing Arts Centre's (GPAC) Industry Day MPavilion, MTalks & MRelay Artist Talks

National Youth Arts Forum's Spark Strategy Workshop

National Disability Insurance Agency's (NDIA) International Day of Persons with Disability Presentation

Performance Studies International's (PSI) Annual General Meeting & Awards Presentation

Poppy Kettle Festival Workshop

Revitalising Central Geelong's Action Plan Workshop

European Contemporary Performance Network (IETM) Spring Plenary

Wheeler Centre Artist Talk

'What happens here is extraordinary. Back to Back Theatre is about what people can do, not what people can't do.' – Participant's Guardian

'[Back to Back's work] opens something up inside you' – Artistic Collaborator

Media

To our knowledge, we featured in 204 national and international articles and 3 academic arts journals.

Networks & Memberships

Barwon Australia Disability Enterprise Network (BADEN)
Committee for Geelong
European Contemporary Performance Network (IETM)
G21 – Geelong Region Alliance
Geelong Performing Arts Centre (GPAC) Trust
Geelong Region Action Network for Disability (GRAND)
Greener Live Performance
National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) & The Arts National Working Group
Theatre Network Australia (TNA)
Leaders for Geelong
Australian Performing Arts Centres' Association (APACA)
Geelong Chamber of Commerce
Live Performance Australia (LPA)
Our Community Online Not-For-Profit Network

Secondments, Mentorships & Internships

We worked with seven emerging and mid-career artists, producers, theatre makers and arts administration students in 2016.

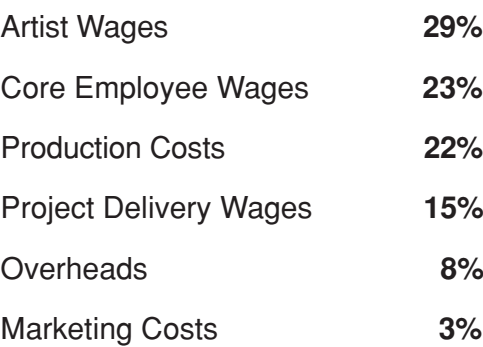
‘So much of the value of Back to Back Theatre is created by the absolute focus on its people being treated as equals. It is a conflation of art and equity, with the former creating a voice for the latter, something Back to Back sees as its contribution to human rights.’ – Think Impact Evaluators

‘Back to Back Theatre is for me an exemplar company I refer to often when discussing the points around how access and opportunity for people structurally excluded from participation is more than just a rights issue: it is also crucial to challenging, defining and developing new aesthetics and practice.’ – Industry Peer

Income



Expenses





Rita Halabarec, *Untitled*, Unknown

Our Supporters

We are very grateful to the generous support of our donors in 2016. Thank you.

Alex Bowen & Catherine Sullivan	Kate Richardson
Angela Pamic	Katrina Sedgwick
Ann Scally	Kim Tompkins
Anonymous (4)	Libby Christie
Barb Dennis	Lisa Chung
Bobbie Hodge	Margaret Wardlaw
Bridget Ikin	Marita Leuver
Brigid Nossal	Marjorie Hall
Bruce Pollack	Martin McCallum
Dimmick Charitable Trust	Mary Ann Rolfe
Edie & Jim Barton	Mary Harber
Eileen Berry Media	Michael McMahon
Elizabeth Spreen	Michele Levine
Emily Sexton & John Bailey	Nan McNab
Fiona Menzies	Nicki Bloom & Geordie Brookman
Frank Costa	Nicole Beyer
Frank Macindoe	Patrick Over
Gael Wilson	Paul Wiegard Family
Gillian Hoysted	Peggy & Leslie Cranbourne Foundation
Gillian Triggs	Peter Bridges
Heather McKeon	Phillip Keir
Helen McKenzie	Rick McPhee
Helena Ng	Rob Brookman
James & Genevieve Fahey	Robin Ramsay
James McCaughey & Ellen Koshland	Rosalind Willett
Jann Kinsela	Rose Hiscock
Jenny Schwarz	Samantha Gilligan
Jo Porter & Michael Nossal	Sarah Benjamin
John & Lesley Nickson	Shaun Cannon
Karilyn Brown	Simon Abrahams
Kate Nossal & Myles Neri	Stephen Armstrong
	Susan Hungar
	Tim Orton
	Wendy Lasica

Government Partners



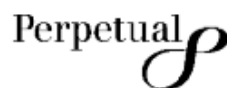
Back to Back Theatre receives funding assistance from the Australian Government via the Disability Employment Assistance Program. This project has been assisted by the Australian government through the Ministry for the Arts' Catalyst—Australian Arts and Culture Fund.

Project Partners



Back to Back Theatre is assisted by the Australian Government through its philanthropic and social investment agency for the cultural sector, Creative Partnerships Australia.

Community Partners



The Percy Baxter Charitable Trust,
managed by Perpetual



Corporate Community Partners



Thank You

We are very grateful to the guidance and commitment of a number of people who have supported us this year. Thank you.

Bobbie Hodge

Bobbie Hodge served on the Board of Back to Back Theatre from 1996 until 2016. She had a significant role in deftly drawing the ethos, philosophies and processes of the company that have marked its longitudinal success. Across 21 years, she has so many times quietly cut to the chase at the end of a vexed or meandering conversation – about ethics or politics or money or risks – reminding us that we need most to consider support of the art and the ensemble. Bobbie, we will miss your fierce, fair generosity and warmth, your indefatigable pursuit of goodness.

Pauline Cady

Back to Back Theatre would like to acknowledge the long-term work of Pauline Cady, who began with the company in 2003. Pauline's pursuit of narrative, her commitment to integrity, to measuring and collecting and saving things (making possible a nationally significant archive and a book) and her desire to constantly interrogate why and how we do things have informed the working culture of Back to Back Theatre immeasurably.

Alan Jones	Berni Sweeney
Ali Kirkpatrick	Bianca Eden
Amanda Duthie	Bill & Helen Coleby
Andrea Bruce	Brendan Campbell
Andrew Abbott	Caris Harper
Andrew Ekin Smyth	Cate Paton
Andrew Livingston	Cathy Amies
Angelique Helman	Cathy Truong
Anita Hopkins	Claire Spencer
Ann Tonks	Corrina O'Toole
Anna Cameron	Courthouse Youth Arts
Austin Paterson	Dan Simmonds
Bec Allen	Dave Harvey
Bec McGuinness	Dave Pelletier
Beck Pearce	Dave Sweeney
Ben Starick	David Berthold

David Everist	Karilyn Brown	Rosie Hinde
David Geoffrey Hall	Kath Mainland	Rupert Reid
David Malacari	Katia Arfara	Ruth Gormley
David Symons	Kaz Paton	Sadat Jon Hussain
Deb Kiper	Kelly Clifford	Sally Basser
Debbie Lee	Kelly O'Grady	Shelagh Magadza
Debra Jefferies	Lainie Kluska	Sigrid Langker
Debra Morgan	Laura McIlrath	Simon Abrahams
Dial a Lunch	Lefteris Karabilas	Sophie Travers
Dimitra Dernikou	Lin Tobias	Stacey Baldwin
Dom Forde	Luke Ryan	Stefan Schmidtke
Don Shaw	Lynette Gillman	Stephen Corvini
Donna Aston	Mandy Chang	Steve Howden
Duncan Esler	Mandy Muschamp	Stuart Koop
Emma Costello	Margaret Bourke	Sweeney Cady
Frederic Mazelly	Marion Potts	Sylvia Admans
Gillian Triggs	Mark Bromilow	Sylvie Kyeck
Glen Hirst	Mark Burlace	Tahlie Ashcroft
Greg Andrews	Mark Cuthbertson	Tatia Sloley
Helen McKenzie	Mary Ann Rolfe	Terry Hickey
Helen Pankhurst	Mat Vittins	Todd Murphy
Helena Grehan	Matthieu Goeury	Tony Ayres
Jane Crawley	Melanie Smith	Tony Grybowski
Jane den Hollander	Melinda Clarke	Vittoria de Stefano
Jen Hector	Michelle Finegan	Warren Clarke
Jennifer Zielinska	Mrs. Anne Foote	Wendy Dimmick
Jerry Hodgkins	Nicole Beyer	Yuhui Ng Rodriguez
Jill Smith	Norm Stanley	Zoë Barry
Joachim Lux	Patrícia Souza Ceschi	
Joe Motley	Pauline Cady	
John Gavens	Peter Bridges	
Jonathan Holloway	Peter Neilson	
Jonathan Nicol	Peter Rippon	
Josephine Ridge	Peter Taub	
Joy Arab	Phillip Besancon	
Julianne O'Brien	Rebecca Casson	
Julie Barnes	Rhian Hinkley	
Julie Eckersley	Richard Bracey	
Julie Graham	Robert Buckingham	
Justin Batchelor	Robert Costa	
Justyn Rowe	Rosemary Malone	
Jutta Mattern	Rosemary White	

Ensemble

Brian Tilley
Mark Deans
Romany Latham (to 8 December)
Sarah Mainwaring
Scott Price
Simon Laherty

Board

Ben Kay
Ben Slater, Treasurer
Bobbie Hodge, Founding Board Member & Secretary (to 17 June)
Callum Morton (from 20 June)
Jann Kinsela
Jo Porter, Chair
Katrina Sedgwick, Secretary
Meg Wardlaw (from 20 June)
Phillip Keir
Rose Hiscock
Sarah Mainwaring, Ensemble Representative
Shaun Cannon (to 5 December)
Yoni Prior, Deputy Chair

Staff

Alice Nash, Executive Producer
Ally Harvey, Senior Producer
Bruce Gladwin, Artistic Director
Cecelia Cooper, Finance Officer (to 17 November)
Dans Maree Sheehan, Production Manager
Erin Watson, Project Coordinator (Maternity Leave Cover)
(from 19 September)
Grace Sims, Development Coordinator (from 4 July)
Julie Fryman, Project Coordinator (to 18 September)
Maria Griffin, Executive Assistant
Melinda Clarke, Development Manager (Corporate Partnerships & Individual Giving) (to 11 April)
Melissa Stark, Development Manager (from 3 May)
Nikki Watson, Community Programs Coordinator
Pauline Cady, Development Manager (Government, Trusts & Foundations) (to 31 March)
Rebecca McIntyre, Marketing Manager
Ryan Lewis, Marketing Assistant (from 4 January)
Sue White, Finance Manager (from 5 December)
Tamara Searle, Artistic Associate

Theatre of Speed

Adam Berry
Ben Oakes
Brian Tilley (to 13 July)
James Lewis (to 16 March)
Jessica White
Laura Berrisford
Liam White (from 6 July)
Mark Deans
Phoebe Baker
Polly Munday (to 14 Dec)
Robbie Croft
Romany Latham (to 22 June)
Rose McLachlan
Sarah Mainwaring
Scott Price
Simon Laherty
Tamika Simpson

Acting and Writing for Film & TV

Adam Berry
Allan V Watt
Ben Oakes
Chris Hansen
Grace-Rose Turner
Jake Anson
Jess Walker
Josh Haigh
Liam White
Michael Chan
Nicholas Walsh
Nikita Veitch
Noah Zveki
Robbie Croft
Sonia Teuben
Stephanie Cook
Taylor Powell

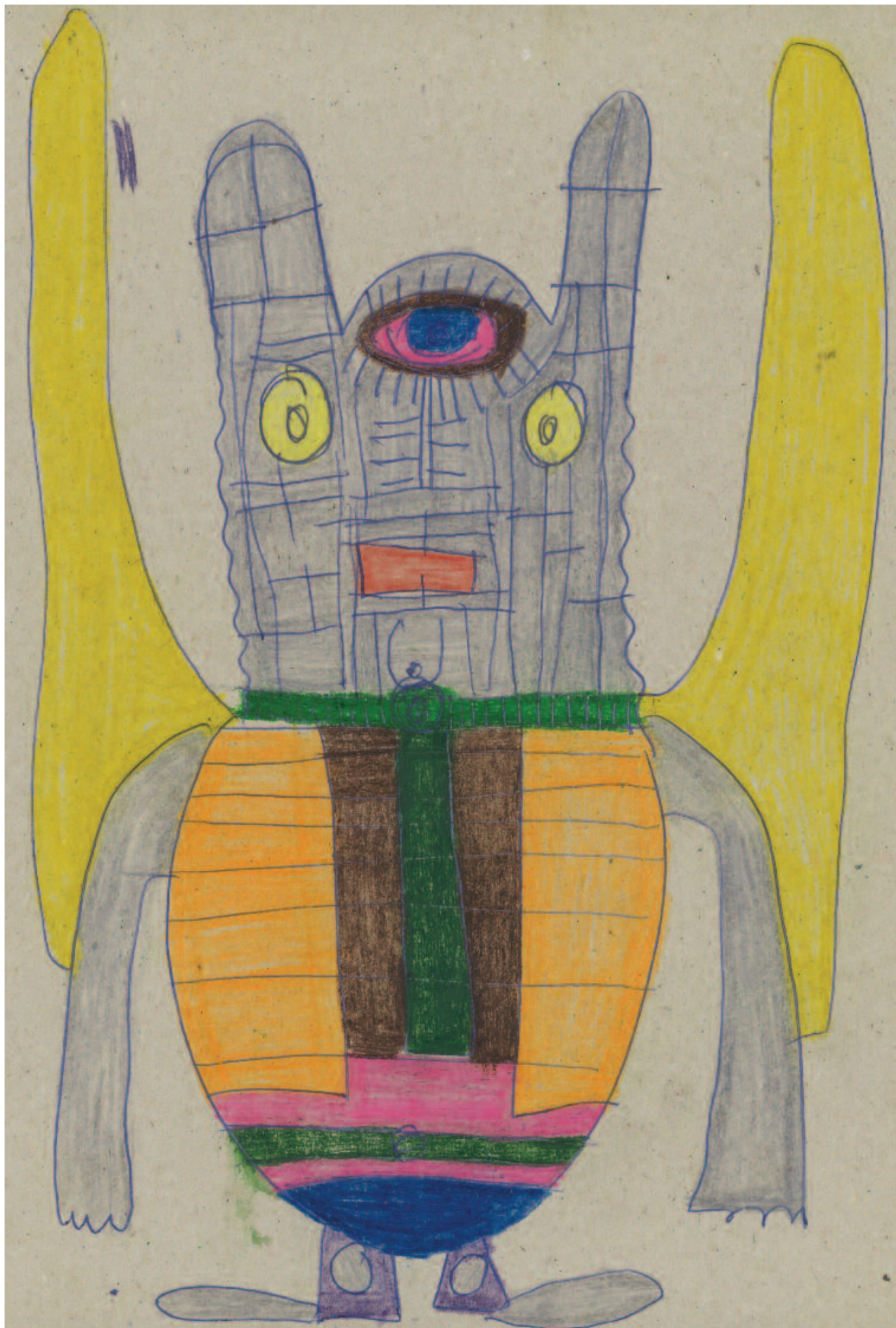
Guest Artists & Collaborators

Adele Varcoe
Adena Jacobs
Alice Fleming
Andrew Livingston
Audrey Major
Brian Lipson
Chris Abrahams
Chris Kohn
Dan Giovannoni
Dan Han
Dan Schlusser
Daniela Farinacci
Emma Valente
Eugyeene Teh
Genevieve Morris
Harry Myers Covill
Ian Pidd
Ingrid Voorendt
James Hullick
James Pratt
James Saunders
Jason Tuazon-McCheyne
Jeff Busby
Jen Hector
Jim Russell
Jonathan Holloway
Julianne O'Brien
Justin Batchelor
Kate Sulan
Lachlan Carrick
Leanne Stein
Lucy Harrison
Luke George
Luke Ryan
Lyndel Quick
Marco Cher-Gibard
Mark Cuthbertson
Melissa Reeves
Nick Carroll
Nicola Gunn
Patricia Cornelius
Penny Arcade
Phillip Pietruschka
Raimondo Cortese
Rhian Hinkley

Robbie Croft
Samara Hersch
Samuel Millar
Shio Otani
Sonia Teuben
Steve Salo
Tillman Schauble
Vallejo Gantner
Van T Rudd

Secondments, Mentorships, Internships & Emerging Artists

Chris Dunston
Chris Kohn
Laura Hartnell
Laurel Devenie
Marissa Bennett
Millie Cooper
Suzanne Ingelbrecht



Support Back to Back Theatre

“We would be welcoming to individuals who want to have a bit more to do with us... make them part of the Back to Back family.” – Scott Price

Ensemble member Scott Price wants your support! Would you like to join us as we tour the world, create exceptional works of theatre and have profound social impact within our community?

Contact Melissa Stark, Development Manager on 03 5221 2029 or at melissa@backtobacktheatre.com for more information, or to join us as a fellow traveler. Help us challenge society's assumptions about what is possible in our world.

Donate online www.backtobacktheatre.com/support/donate

All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

Connect

Join our mailing list
backtobacktheatre.com/mailling-list

Email
info@backtobacktheatre.com

Street Address
60 Little Malop St, Geelong, Victoria, Australia

Postal Address
PO Box 1257, Geelong, Victoria, Australia 3220

Telephone
+61 (0)3 5221 2029

Back to Back Theatre Inc (ABN No. 95 834 484 241)



Theatre is like food. You cook it up, you simmer it and then bang, you eat it. It's tasty, fresh and it's in your face.

I bring true and not true to the studio. I'm not judgemental. I'm not the super hero. I'm your average 43-year-old woman that brings in stories, true and false. I weave real life with fantasy. I free my words and it gets put down on paper. Most of my experience in the theatre inspires.

People sometimes see people with intellectual disabilities as not having a voice or not being able to look out on the world. Performing art is freedom and happiness and having a voice. It shows the world we have eyes and a voice and we're going to use it. Disability, race, gender, who cares. Everyone should have a voice.

Simon's fantastic. Very good mind. Very creative. Very true in his words. He goes to the football in limousines. Scotty, I can't put him into words. Very animated, very into politics. So switched on with life. Deansy, he's beautiful. Great fella. He's soft and friendly and has time for ya. Good friend. Romany nice fella. Friendly. Really nice. Sarah is a great artist. Very bright, like a yellow flower. You paint a portrait and she's there.

We support each other and we listen and we give advice to each other. We give time and space to talk about what we want to talk about. Everyone gets on stage and just knows their lines and movements and reactions. True professionals.

Speak up and you get everywhere. Of course life can be frustrating. Life's really about having a voice and shouting out. Not having a disability, but having your own words.

When I'm on stage, they're looking at me, wondering what I'm going to do and say. I feel powerful. Free. Like a bungee rope about to go off. I'm holding the room. The stage is mine.

Sonia Teuben
Ensemble Member



Inside Cover & Inside Back Cover: Robbie Croft, *Untitled*, 2016

BACK
TO
BACK
THEATRE

