

# SNUFF PUPPETS



ANNUAL REPORT 2018





## ARTISTIC REPORT

Snuff Puppets has proven once again in 2018 our commitment to creating unique experiences for our artists and audiences at home and around the world.

The year was full and busy with many performances, workshops, collaborations and developments. Two key works that stood out that enabled Snuff Puppets to continue to experiment and challenge ourselves and our audiences in 2018 were *Punch Agathe* and *Snuff Labb*.

Without a doubt for me the highlight of 2018 would be the creation of the world of *Punch Agathe*, our superheroine and vanquisher of national borders. Over the year we travelled to Germany, the Congo and our own Drill Hall, working with over 100 artists across three continents, making theatre and art into one massive global movement addressing community cultural development and social change through performance, art, spectacle and audience engagement. *Punch Agathe*

is an ever evolving, never finished and continually growing work that exemplifies our reinvigorated approach to making theatre.

Reinvigoration in 2018 is what has been at the heart of our drive to continue investigating and making theatre and *Snuff Labb* was the impetus and vehicle for this reinvigoration. *Punch Agathe* was conceived and literally born in the first *Snuff Labb* while our second *Snuff Labb PPP* saw the creation of the *Sticky Specimen Rebellion* where 14 new giant puppets were handmade by participating local Melbourne artist. We thrive in sharing our skills and advocate for an environment where no challenge is too great, no dream too wild, where passion is limitless and the unknown is a place to play.

From Snuff Puppets management in 2018 we bid farewell to the wonderful Katrina Chandra and welcomed the lovely Lauren Bok as our new producer. Our deepest gratitude goes

to Dave Roper for taking up the mantle of Snuff Puppets' Chair and a huge thank you to all our board members for supporting and believing in this company and its bright future.

Thank you most deeply and sincerely to all our artists, participants, volunteers and friends for your love and enthusiasm. We would be nothing without your hard work, dedication and talent.

And finally thank you to our funders, partners and presenters for supporting us to continue making art and the change we want to see in the world.

*Andy Freer*  
*Artistic Director/CEO*

## ABOUT SNUFF PUPPETS

Snuff Puppets is a community of Melbourne-based artists, artisans and performers dedicated to the art and craft of giant puppet making and the theatre of puppetry.

Since 1992, Snuff Puppets has been unleashing its giant puppet spectacles on millions of people worldwide. Our work is a collision of visual art, sculpture, design, engineering, sound, movement, performance and physical theatre. At the heart is our giant puppets – sometimes gorgeous; sometimes grotesque – and the unpredictable ways they are brought to life.

From our home in Footscray's Drill Hall, in Melbourne's inner western suburbs, our artists and our works regularly travel to dozens of countries across five continents. Our People's Puppet Projects have created more than 25 new works in partnership with communities worldwide.

We specialise in performing for free

audiences and non-traditional arts audiences; reclaiming streets and public spaces for creativity, art and humans.

We collaborate with communities to create giant puppet roaming acts, community workshops, puppet performance master classes and main-stage shows, often in reclaimed public indoor and outdoor spaces.

Our stages are the streets, parks, towns and villages that our audiences worldwide call home. We work with them to produce and perform our work, challenging and delighting audiences of all ages.

Snuff Puppets are deliberately anarchic, rebellious and dangerous. Our work tackles difficult, awkward and taboo topics that challenge our audiences with irreverence; simultaneously causing discomfort and delight. We deliver visceral, electric performances that blur the traditional lines between audience



and performer; creating other worlds that are unfamiliar, uncomfortable and, at times, unsafe and scary.

Snuff Puppets' aesthetic and our approach to theatre making are unique: the audience for our work has been invented simultaneously with the work itself. Snuff Puppets' lofi, spontaneous, collaborative, devised, quick, experimental approach inspires creativity and allows us to leave behind the legacy of our art form and our approach in remote, off-the-beaten-track destinations globally. Snuff Puppets are ambassadors for a distinctive and recognisable Australian culture.





## PUNCH AGATHE

**Melbourne, Kinshasa and Germany**  
*Punch Agathe* was born at *Snuff Labb* in Melbourne, tiny as a pin. In March Artistic Director Andy Freer and Artist Stephane Hisler returned to Kinshasa to run a second *People's Puppet Project* with our collaborators; Espace Masolo and Gütesigel Kultur. Over eight days we worked with 30 artists and created an outdoor theatre spectacle based on the young life of Punch Agathe, performing three locations in Kinshasa; Gare Central (Central train station), Kinkole by the river and puppetry school Espace Masolo.

*Punch Agathe* continued her journey across the globe, arriving in Germany to become a full grown super heroine, tall as a three storey building. Over 9 days in Bochum, Germany we built the inflatable 18 metre tall *Punch*

*Agathe* puppet while also running our *Peoples Puppet Project* with young artists from Bochum and Stuttgart, culminating in a street parade and performance at FIDENA and Moers Festival.

We also had free run of an abandoned church in Bochum where pianos were dropped from great heights, breasts danced on the altar, mole rats appeared from tunnels under the church floor and *Punch Agathe* ruled supreme.

**"I hope it's not the last time we work together. We will carry on after you leave, please help us to go further."**

– PPP Participant, Democratic Republic of Congo



## SNUFF LABB

*Snuff Labb* is a creative laboratory for research and training where grand theatrical experiments with puppets, humans, artists, art forms, ideas, fantasies and obsessions collide and new possibilities manifest; where fresh pathways are discovered and free expression flows.

Funded over three years by the Ian Potter Foundation, *Snuff Labb* is a capacity-building and artform development program that will train artists, bring in international expertise and provide much-needed pathways into our artform. In 2018 we delivered two *Snuff Labbs*, the first focusing on performance and play with an international Artist-In-Residence, Stefanie Oberhoff. The second was a *PPP* in the Drill Hall with local emerging artists and interns from VCA and Melbourne Polytechnic.

### Punch Agathe X Snuff Labb

We welcomed artist-in-residence, Stefanie Oberhoff from Germany to share her expertise in inflatables, political art and performance. Blending the origin story of *Punch Agathe* with the existing puppets at the Drill Hall, artists were trained in puppetry and storytelling for an immersive and visceral performance of the birth of *Punch Agathe* in the Drill Hall.



### STICKY SPECIMENT REBELLION

*(Fire in Paradise / an Extinction in Pyroclast*

*....too fast & also too slow*

*Precious & Pointless; Chaos from Nowhere; Dog Eats World / A Mining of Minerals & Blood / an Industrial Explosion, Hot Molten Illusion; Biblical, Inimical, Disposable.)*

*a SNUFF PUPPETS intervention in FOOTSCRAY*

Our second *Snuff Labb* for 2018 was the very first *People's Puppet Project* at the Drill Hall was held with 17 emerging local artists and 4 interns. Snuff Puppets artists Andy Freer and Nick Wilson shared their skills in puppet design and building, creating 17 puppets altogether, ranging from a human with a head for a butt and a butt for a head, to a legion of suited up pink bunnies.

**"We were encouraged to take risks and experiment and were provided with a safe environment to do so."**

*- Sticky Specimen Rebellion participant*

## PEOPLE'S PUPPET PROJECTS

The *People's Puppet Project* is a unique creative community engagement model in which diverse groups work intensively with Snuff Puppets to design, build and perform their own outdoor giant puppet spectacles. Workshop participants are placed at the heart of the creative process to drive the development of the characters, issues and local stories, ultimately creating performances that are technically and visually extraordinary and work that is genuinely meaningful to the community who made it.

### Giant Puppets of Xi'an

In partnership with the Shaanxi Performing Arts Center, Snuff Puppets Artists Daniele Poidomani, Nick Wilson, Erin Hall and Suzannah Kalk travelled to Xi'an in China to work with participants in creating new and exciting creatures to premiere at the Xi'an Drama Festival. Lions roared, concubines winked, and Mr Ding caused chaos at the Wild Goose Pagoda.

### Five Easy Payments

A giant eyeball scans Ringwood Square collecting data. Spunky staggers through the crowd, trying to scab a ciggy. Roo Girl is lost in the music on her headphones. Scammer is looking for donations, 'in just five easy payments, the equivalent of a cup of coffee a day'. Roo Girl brushes him aside, but Spunky is a better target. It takes the one-legged magpie to see through the scam and, with the help of Roo Girl, overcome the all-seeing eye and save Spunky from himself.

*Five Easy Payments* was created by VCAL students from Swinburne University, in collaboration with Snuff Puppets as a People Puppet Project, and in partnership with the City of Maroondah.

Facilitated and directed by Snuff Puppets artists Nick Wilson, Stéphane Hisler, Lachlan Plain and Lauren Bok.

**"My sincere gratitude and appreciation for all the hard work and dedication, provided by everyone involved."**

- VCAL Teacher

*Five Easy Payments* is an outdoor giant puppet performance set in the outer suburbs of Melbourne, tackling themes of surveillance and fraud in the modern world.





## WORKSHOPS

### Mutuashi: Dance Of Freedom

Snuff Puppets artist Stephane Hisler and Congolese dancer Florence Shinaduku presented a series of outdoor dance classes at various locations around Point Cook to get people outdoors and into the summer vibe with Kelly Boom assisting.

*Supported by Wyndham City Council.*



### Snuff Skool

Working with participants to learn the Snuff way: improvisational, group-devised, spontaneous and always with the freedom to play, Snuff Puppets artists Andy Freer, Stephane Hisler and Rebecca Rutter trained a group of locals before venturing out in to the world, creating puppet/audience collisions in the heart of Footscray. All *Snuff Skool* Graduates were then invited to perform alongside *STICKY SPECIMEN REBELLION* puppets at 'One Night In Footscray' in November.

*Supported by Maribyrnong City Council.*

**"So much fun and an immersive, supportive and fabulous environment"**

*- Snuff Skool graduate*



## ROAMING INTERSTATE

### Cairns Festival

Giant *Seagulls* flew up to Queensland and swooped on Cairns Festival crowds.

### Festival 2018

Snuff Puppets' roaming *Human Body Parts* performed on the Gold Coast as part of Festival 2018, the arts and cultural program of the Commonwealth Games.

**“Best thing in Cairns. Stole the show!”**

- Audience Member



Photo by Cairns Festival

snuffpuppets.com





## AT HOME

### La Mama Theatre Benifit

*Everybody's Vulvar* and *Penis* worked as door bitches for a La Mama fire fundraiser.

### Provocaré

*Human Body Parts* stopped traffic at Provocaré Chapel Street Melbourne Winter Arts Festival.

### Giant Crayfish

*Asta the Giant Crayfish* is a new addition to our roaming acts and made in collaboration with the Bob Brown Foundation.

### Maribyrnong Truck Action Group

*The Boom Family* protested with our neighbours for clean air.

### Fireworks in Footscray Park

New *STICKY SPECIMEN REBELLION* puppets made at *Snuff Labb PPP* entertained crowds on New Years Eve.

### Darebin Kite Festival

Giant *Seagulls* roamed.

### Deakin Uni

*Albrecht the Rhino* roamed.

### Queenscliff Music Festival

*Human Body Parts* roamed.



## ENGAGEMENT

Millions of people around the world continued to watch and share our art online in 2018.

### Youtube

20.4 Million views  
64,729 subscribers

### Facebook

16,243 total likes

### Instagram

6,846 total followers

**www.snuffpuppets.com**

24,541 unique visitors



*Human Body Parts On The Streets Of Europe*

**15.6 Million+ Youtube views**

*\*majority of views in 2018*



*The Tunnel*

**3.2 Million+ Youtube views**

*\*majority of views in 2018*

**“This page is  
fuckin awesome,  
dude.”**

*- Instagram @breasurewithab*



*Human Body Parts in London*  
**17.5 Million+ Youtube views**

*\*majority of views in 2018*



## ARTISTS + STAFF + BOARD

### Snuff Puppets Artists

Nick Barlow  
James Wilkinson  
Daniell Flood  
Lachlan Plain  
Nick Wilson  
Stephane Hisler  
Bec Rutter  
Aidan Min  
Keely Windred  
KT Prescott  
Daniele Poidomani

Erin Hall  
Suzanne Kalk  
Florence Shinanduku  
Jonathan Goodfellow  
Julian Wisdom  
Georgia Symons  
Amanda Knight  
Sasha Leong  
Olivia Floate  
Annie Fayzdaughter

### Snuff Puppets Staff

Andy Freer – Artistic Director  
Jodie Kinnersley – General Manager  
Hugh Nguyen – Accounts Manager  
Katrina Chandra – Producer - *until Feb 2018*  
Lauren Bok – Producer - *from Feb 2018*

### Snuff Puppets Board

Andy Freer - CEO/ Acting Chair - *until May 2018*  
Dave Roper - Chair - *from May 2018*  
Janis Lacey - Secretary  
James Adams - Treasurer  
Erin Farley - Committee Member  
Daniell Flood - Committee Member  
Kelly Farrow - Committee Member  
Andria Hutchins - Committee Member







[WWW.SNUFFPUPPETS.COM](http://WWW.SNUFFPUPPETS.COM)