

SNUFF PUPPETS

ANNUAL REPORT 2019



ARTISTIC REPORT

2019 was once again a full and busy year for Snuff Puppets, with many and varied performances, workshops, collaborations and developments at home, across the country and around the world.

The three major projects in focus over the year were Punch Agathe, eXtinction and Snuff Labb Transform. These major works typify Snuff Puppets process of working across cultures and continents, consistently developing new work and facilitating artist development and collaboration.

The most exciting and unifying element to the years works was the shared creative energy and spirit of all the participating artists. Over sixty artists from Europe, Australia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo worked with us across multiple projects. I sincerely thank everyone who collaborated, created and played with us over this year, bringing fresh questions and testing new possibilities, and helping Snuff to soar into the unknown, our favourite place to be.

All our activities would not have been possible without the dedicated work of Snuff Puppets management team and board. In 2019 we said farewell to our General Manager the wonderful Jodie Kinnersley, and welcomed the awesome Rochelle Bright into the role of Executive Director.

Snuff Puppets exists to keep challenging and exploring through art, and we deeply thank all the various government and private supporters who help us to continue this exceptionally wonderful journey.

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.

**"Snuff Puppets
is a national
treasure"**

– Christine Dunston, Showcase Victoria 2019

GARDEN OF SORROWS/ EXTINCTION

Snuff Puppets began creative development on its newest work, an adaptation of the critically acclaimed *Garden of Sorrows* by John Hughes with illustrations by Marco Luccio. The creative team met for 2 weeks of script development, building and creative development culminating in a presentation and roaming at Showcase Victoria in May. The creative drive of the piece focused on the horrors of the bushfire season, with a new direction and title emerging, *eXtinction*.

A Mosquito, Magpie, Lyrebird, Koala, Snake and Frilled-Neck Lizard each eke out their quiet lives. A Thylacine paces back and forth. A dormant whirlpool begins to swirl, descending into a world of dust and blood, water and flame, strangled trees, dissolved skin, pools of tears and blankets of bones. The Serpent consumes the scene, and then itself. Whether it's a cycle or an ending is up to us.

Creative Team:

Andy Freer – Director
Angus Cerini – Playwright
Eben Greaves – Multimedia + Lighting Designer
James Wilkinson – Sound Designer
Nick Wilson – Performer + Builder
Nick Barlow – Performer + Builder
Rebecca Rutter – Performer
KT Prescott – Performer

Additional Videography and Editing by
Dennis Murphy Visuals.





PUNCH AGATHE

Continuing the journey of Punch Agathe, Snuff Puppets Artists Andy Freer, Nick Wilson, Erin Hall and BJ Morriszonkle travelled to Germany to take part in workshops and performances in Stuttgart and at Flurstucke Festival with Stefanie Oberhoff. During a 2-week collaborative development, the team worked on new puppets, music and story with 25 other resident artists from Germany, Congo, Switzerland, Spain and Japan.

The result was a string of 7 roaming, promenade and site-specific performances, from Muenster City to a Stuttgart Tunnel construction site, to the front steps of the Linden Museum. A highlight was Muenster Mash, an epic lakeside spectacular featuring a giant lake monster emerging from underwater, paddleboat-mounted giant heads, an energetic 8-piece band, a semi-summerged water organ and the 16-metre high Punch Agathe rocking out under her crane before setting sail on a solar powered boat.



SNUFF LABB TRANSFORM

trans- prefix

"across," "beyond," "through,"

"changing thoroughly," "transverse,"



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 Lab is a capacity-building and artform development program that trains artists, brings in international expertise and provides much-needed pathways into our artform.

In 2019 Snuff Labb's focus was on the concept of 'TransForm'. Snuff Puppets embraces the principle that all things are in transition. Nothing is fixed. Nothing is certain.



TRANSGLOBAL

International collaborator Stefanie Oberhoff returned to work with Snuff Labb, building a new inflatable puppet and leading a team of participants in political activations in the city. Punch stormed the Treasury Museum with the Welcome Nugget to send the money to Congo, and hosted a garden party in Sunshine in which we met her new Dog.

Creative Team: Stefanie Oberhoff, Andy Freer

Participants: Riyo Harada, Susannah Kalk, Olivia Floate, Ollie Crafter, Annie Fayzdaughter

Band: Nick Wilson, Lauren Garcia, Bertram Duerr, Dom Willmott

"This work combining collective creation, music, enthusiastic rehearsals and subversive interaction in public space is the way I always imagined artistic life and work to be."
– Stefanie Oberhoff





SNUFF LABB

TRANSMORPH

Butoh and drag queen artist Riyo Harada joined Snuff Puppets for an intimate creative journey, with participants creating objects representing elements of their life and performing a private ritual of purge, memory and connection.

Creative Team: Riyo Harada, Andy Freer

Participants: Daniele Poidomani, Hugh McNab, Katherine Niesche, Josephine Daly, Andy Ethereal, Sasha Leong, Matt Stibbard



"Going through the Butoh exercises opened my mind to thoughts and memories, and inspired ideas for future development. One of my highlights - working with such an amazing team!"
 – TransMorph Participant

TRANS SOCIAL

*"Beyond amazing what Snuff Puppets
created on the night!
- One Night In Footscray*

Presented as part of Due West Festival, 17 participants from Snuff Labb collaborated with Andy Freer, Rebecca Rutter of Fizzy Fingers and Nick Wilson of Soundfossil to create a good old fashioned Snuff Party with a giant lobster attacking the crowd, tiny rooms of poos, feathers, a crocodile, a dancing bear and giant genitals. An epic, immersive, intense experience of puppets, music and ritual in a glorious night to try and remember the next day.

The party continued for *One Night In Footscray* with roaming skullies, guts, and an outdoor recreation of the final dance and parade.

Creative Team:

Andy Freer, Rebecca Rutter, Nick Wilson

Participants:

Julian Chapple, Zoe Clarke, Ollie Crafter, Kate Cranney, Tara Daniel, Olivia Floate, Greta Jean, Amelia Lumley, Tobias Manderson-Galvin, Margaret Mayhem, Hugh McNab, Evan Nilsson, Jessica Phelps, Rosy Thurston, Kirrily Todhunter, Julian Wisdom, Georgia Wohlfel

Band:

Nick Wilson, Lauren Garcia, Lauren Bok, Sara Rafferton, Mark Gillis, Micheal Edwards, BJ Morriszonkle, Bertram Duerr

Crew:

Thomas Pidd, Albie UC





SPECIAL GIGS

WinterWild Festival

Snuff Puppets descended upon Apollo Bay's WinterWild Festival for a chilly weekend of *Snuff Skool* workshops with local high school students. Skullies and Seagulls joined the community night parade down main street, before the Cow, Pig and Butcher splintered off for some adults-only appearances at the Feastiality dinner-show.

Wominjeka Festival

Nyet Nyets took part in the *River Ceremony* with Boonwurrung elder N'Arweet Carolyn Briggs at the Footscray Community Arts Centre.

Climate Strike

Skullies supported the historic Global Climate Strike on the 20th of September in Melbourne.

Crowd Theory Exhibition

Skullies tied up art patrons at the opening of Simon Terrill's retrospective at the Centre for Contemporary Photography in Fitzroy.

Friday The 13th

Two Skullies scared locals at the Acland Street Village in St Kilda.

Save Footscray Park

The new Magpie joined our neighbours to help Save Footscray Park! And we won!

ROAMING

St Kilda Festival

Asta The Giant Crayfish was released into crowds at the St Kilda Festival.

BlakHEART

Nyet Nyet bunyips appeared at the BlakHEART Festival in Fed Square.

Boo At The Zoo

Skullies danced and lurked in the dark at Werribee Zoo.

Thick N Juicy Nightclub

Skullies spread intestines on the dance floor at a *Horny Halloween* in Brunswick.

Schoolhouse Studios

Skullies celebrated Halloween at a community art studio in Collingwood.

Due West Arts Festival

Nyet Nyet bunyips helped open the Due West Festival in Footscray.

Endangered Species Day

Asta The Giant Crayfish entertained and educated Melbourne University students.



ENGAGEMENT

Millions of people around the world continued to watch and share our art online in 2019.

Facebook Likes grew by 15% to 18,600. Instagram followers grew by 10% to 7,480.

YouTube honoured us with a *Silver Creator Award* as our channel's subscribers more than tripled with 134,000 new subscribers. The channel enjoyed 70 million views.

The *snuffpuppets.com* website welcomed over 200 visitors each day, with approximately 80,000 online user sessions in 2019.

**"So awesome
wish I was there
to see this"**

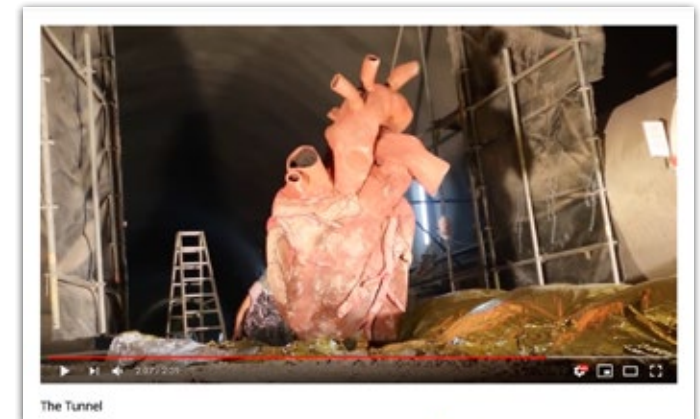
- Instagram @ridkan



Human Body Parts in London
60 Million YouTube views in 2019



Human Body Parts On The Streets Of Europe
8 Million YouTube views in 2019



The Tunnel
1.3 Million YouTube views in 2019

ARTISTS + STAFF + BOARD

Snuff Puppets Artists

Julian Chapple
Ollie Crafter
Olivia Floate
Daniell Flood
Greta Frederick
Dan Goronzsky
Mitch Jones
Sasha Leong
Anto Macaroni
Hugh McNab
Aidan Min

BJ Morriszonkle
Lachlan Plain
Daniele Poidomani
KT Prescott
Shannon Quinn
Suri Bin Saad
Matt Stibbard
Josh Twee
Renato Vacirca
Nick Wilson

Snuff Puppets Staff

Andy Freer – Artistic Director
Lauren Bok – Producer
Rochelle Bright – Executive Director - *from November 2019*
Jodie Kinnersley – General Manager - *until April 2019*
Hugh Nguyen – Accounts Manager

Snuff Puppets Board

Dave Roper - Chair
Janis Lacey - Secretary
James Adams - Treasurer
Andy Freer - Committee Member
Erin Farley - Committee Member
Daniell Flood - Committee Member
Kelly Farrow - Committee Member
Andria Hutchins - Committee Member - *until June 2019*
Mitch Jones - Committee Member - *August to December 2019*





WWW.SNUFFPUPPETS.COM