

# SNUFF PUPPETS

ANNUAL REPORT  
2024



WE HONOUR AND RESPECT ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE AS THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF COUNTRY. ALWAYS WAS, ALWAYS WILL BE ABORIGINAL LAND.





## ARTISTIC REPORT

**In 2024, Snuff Puppets presented 87 live performances reaching over 74,000 audience members, ran six workshops with 119 participants and over 15.5 million watched our online viral videos.**

This year, we strengthened our connections with communities, particularly in Southeast Arnhem Land and Melbourne. The People's Puppet Project in Numbulwar, in collaboration with Numbulwar Numburindi Arts, allowed us to create giant puppets alongside local children and elders, sharing traditional Wubuy stories and fostering joy within the community.

Our Snuff Skools provided valuable training opportunities, with participants from the North Australian Festival of Arts and VCA Secondary School exploring puppetry and showcasing their skills in performances.

Collaboration with community groups in Melbourne's West —celebrated cultural heritage while addressing contemporary

issues, resulting in huge performance at the Be Bold Festival.

The Find Your Voice Collective in Warrnambool created giant puppets to enhance their choir performances, emphasizing inclusivity and community spirit.

We presented 15 roaming gigs, including tours to the Sydney Festival and Darwin Festival. And we continued our exploration of short filmmaking, experimenting with green screen techniques.

We thank our artists, board, staff, funders, gig partners, Crumpler and Snuff Lovers for their support.

After 33 years we continue to expand our creativity and cultural storytelling, enriching the lives of participants and audiences.

- Co-Artistic Directors Andy Freer & Nick Wilson

ABOUT

## SNUFF PUPPETS

**Snuff Puppets is a community of Naarm-based artists dedicated to the art and theatre of puppetry.**

Since 1992, Snuff Puppets has been unleashing giant puppet spectacles worldwide.

Our work is a collision of sculpture, music and physical theatre.

From our home in the Footscray Drill Hall our artists and works have travelled to festivals in over 30 countries.

Our community People's Puppet Project workshops have created 40 new works.

We love performing for free with non-traditional arts audiences; reclaiming streets and public spaces for art.

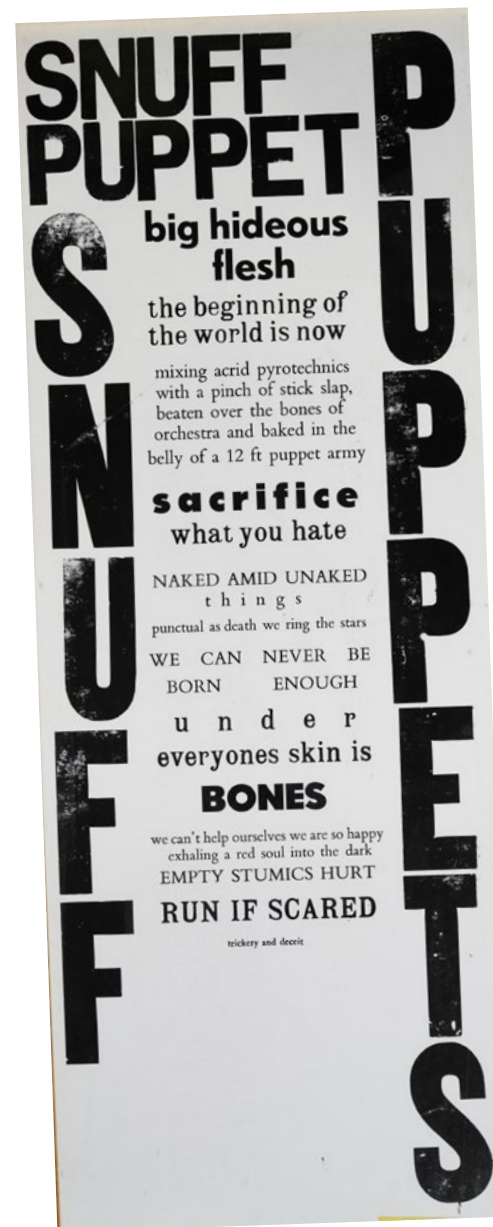
We create giant shows, outdoor roaming acts, community workshops, installations and viral videos.

Snuff Puppets are deliberately anarchic, and rebellious. Our work tackles important, awkward and taboo topics.

We blur the traditional lines between audience and performer; creating other worlds that are unfamiliar, and sometimes uncomfortable and scary.

Snuff Puppets' experimental, handmade and joyful work celebrates the creativity in everybody.

**art for  
everyone**



*Handprinted poster, circa 1992*



WORKSHOP  
**NUMBURINDI NT PPP**





## WORKSHOP

# NUMBURINDI NT PPP

**Snuff Puppets were invited by Numbulwar Numburindi Arts in Southeast Arnhem Land, NT, to run a two-week People's Puppet Project at the Numbulwar School.**

Together with elders from the arts centre and youngsters from the school, the team made a giant Brolga and Emu, and a gang of Baby Emus for the kids to perform.

"The Snuffs joined years seven and eight at Numbulwar School to produce these incredible large scale brolgas and Emus to help tell a traditional Wubuy story. Meanwhile the birds caused a stir around town and brought about smiles all around." – Numbulwar Numburindi Arts

Thank you Meryn, Craig, all the teachers & students at the school for being so welcoming & fun.



Numbulwar Numburindi Arts



COMMUNITY

# AUSTRALIAN VIETNAMESE ARTS AND CULTURE

**Australian Vietnamese Arts and Culture giant puppet rendition of 100 Eggs tells the tale of Lạc Long Quân and Âu Cơ, the creation story of Vietnam and its people.**

The group are working with Snuff Puppets to expand their puppet repertoire into stories and characters of the Zodiac.

In addition to roaming at the Be Bold Festival, *100 Eggs* was presented at Sunshine Lunar New Year celebrations.



Sunshine Lunar New Year

COMMUNITY

# GIANT PUPPETS OF THE WEST



**Snuff Puppets reconnected with three local community groups who've made work with us in recent years, representing local Pacific Islander, East African and Vietnamese communities in Melbourne's West:** Australian Vietnamese Arts and Culture, East African Womans Foundation, and Australia Pacific Arts Network / Pacific Island Creative Arts Australia.

Giant Puppets of the West is revisiting the puppets as cultural assets for these groups, training new young people in performance and production, and pursuing new professional opportunities.

In pulling the groups together, sprucing up the puppets and collaboratively developing the works into their next phase, we are building on the strength of previous work, developing skills in giant puppetry into the future, and bringing important cultural stories to a broader audience.

All three groups performed together at Be Bold Festival 2024 in St Albans.

**East African Womans Foundation:**

*Anisa Mohamed, Yasir Mohamed, Tasneem Duale, Ramla Duale, Muna Duale, Najma Sambul, Ikran*

**Australia Pacific Arts Network & Pacific Island Creative Arts Australia:**

*Austin, Loketi Latu, Asalemo Tofeti*

**Australian Vietnamese Arts & Culture:**

*Andrew Dao, Jennifer Tran*



COMMUNITY

# EAST AFRICAN WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

East African Women's Foundation show *Deghdeer* is a classic Somali folktale told through giant puppets, and was made by youth and elders of Melbourne's Western suburbs Somali community during a 2022 People's Puppet Project workshop.

It features *Deghdeer* (a witch) *Arawheela* (a mother), a Camel, a Goat and a Magic Cooking-Pot.

In 2024, in addition to the Be Bold Festival, *Deghdeer* was performed by young puppeteers at Melbourne University's African Culture on Campus Day.



Melbourne University



Melbourne University





## WORKSHOP

# FIND YOUR VOICE

**Warrnambool's Find Your Voice Collective created 12 giant puppets as part of a People's Puppet Project.**

Participants designed and built 12 animal-themed puppets mounted on a mix of backpack and wheelchair frames, including an Octo-Pig, Rainbow-Eagle, Elephant, and Vampire-Wolf.

A giant trumpet puppet was also created, based on their Reg Mombassa-designed company logo.

The Find Your Voice all-abilities choir made the puppets to augment their impressive performances of up to 250 singers, beginning with the 2025 Port Fairy Folk Festival and leading towards a 2026 collaboration with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

*Supported by Create Australia, Fletcher Jones Family Foundations, and Regional Arts Victoria*



Find Your Voice PPP







## WORKSHOPS

# SNUFF SKOOLS

**Snuff Skool continues to be a valuable space for participants to explore large-scale puppetry, develop performance skills, and connect with the arts community.**

In 2024 we conducted two Snuff Skools...

North Australian Festival of Arts hosted a Snuff Skool in Townsville, as part of our run at the festival. Participants finished the session with a roaming performance at the festival opening.

38 theatre students from VCA Secondary School spent half a day in our Drill Hall exploring the possibilities of our puppets with support from the Snuff Puppets team.







## INTERNATIONAL PUNCH AGENCY

**International projects continued to develop, with our German collaborator Stefanie Oberhoff inviting us to a creative development residency at Konvent Zero in Catalunya, with a presentation at Festival Kontrast, Cal Rosal, titled "*Punch Agency Office for Practical Joke and Flying Lie!*".**

Our small team led local artists in the construction of two Fly puppets and began tests in puppet climbing, rappel and zip-line techniques, to inform development of a new major work - *Kaspar Kills Flies*, to be premiered at the 24th International Puppet Theatre Festival in Erlangen, Germany in 2025.

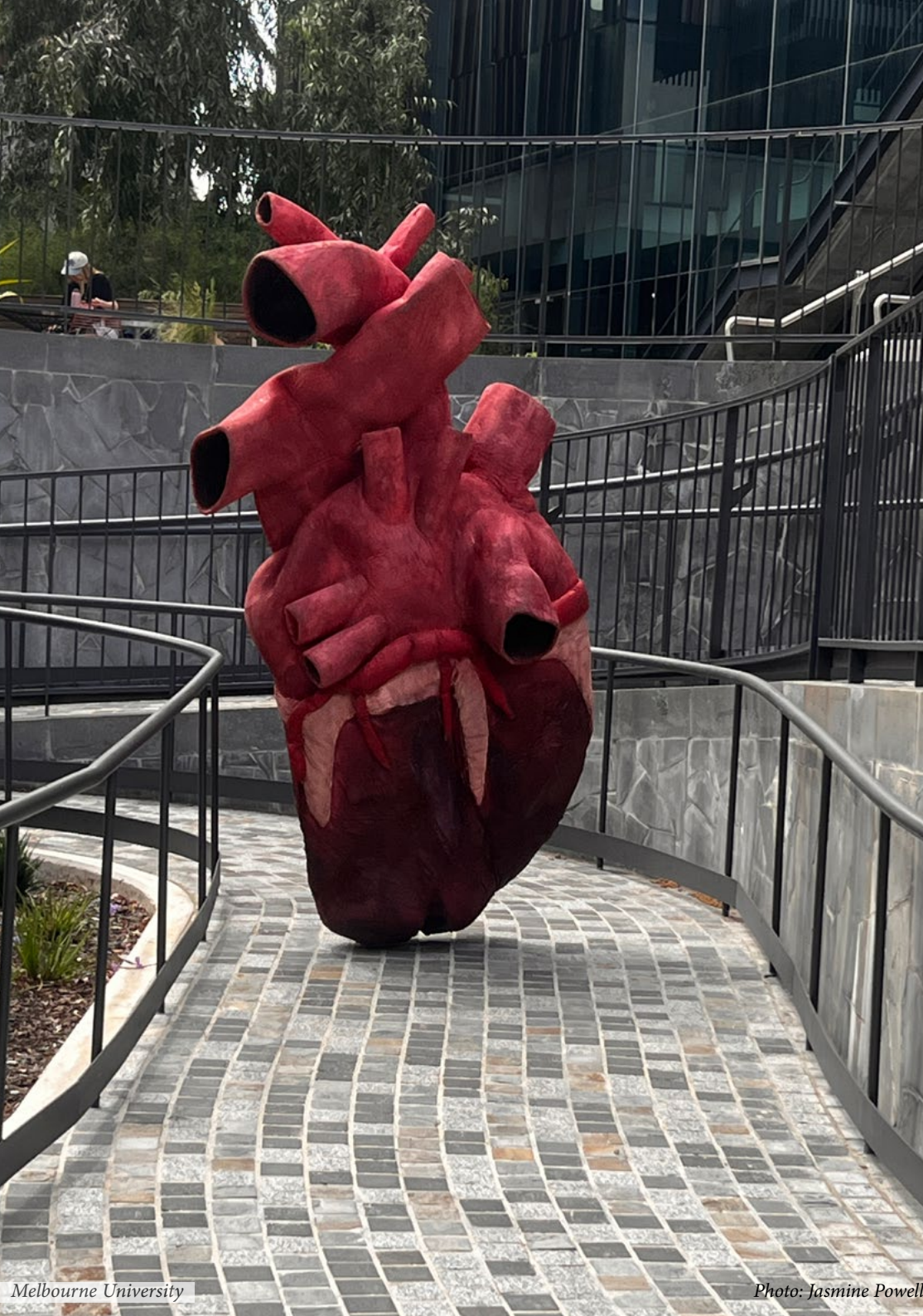
*Artists: Gabriel Agosti, Clarisa Esevich, Erin Hall, Cèlia Legaz, Anicet Leon, Andrés Lerena, Stefanie Oberhoff, Nick Wilson*

*Muchas gracias: Anna Benet & Berni Puig*









## AUSTRALIA ROAMING GIGS

### **Sydney Festival**

Seagulls flew to Sydney landing on the Sydney Morning Herald's front page

### **Darwin Festival**

Seagulls flew to Darwin landing on the front page of the NT News

### **Sunshine Lunar New Year**

The Beast of Oz entertained crowds

### **Science Gallery**

Beast of Oz and Snuff Labb puppets entertained crowds

### **Slow Food Market**

Mirabelle the Snail entertained shoppers in Spotswood

### **Verbena Carnaval**

Skullie raved to the first picó outside Colombia's Caribbean coast at Preston Town Hall.

### **Get a Taste of Creative West**

Beasts of Oz caused chaos in Footscray promoting Council's Creative West plans

### **North Australian Festival of Arts**

Seagulls flew up to Townsville, Queensland

### **Bendigo Art Gallery**

Mirabelle the Snail went viral after sliding down Bendigo's main road.

### **APAX Geelong**

Giant SWAMP creatures roamed thru Geelong Performing Arts Centre

### **Tessellate-topia**

Mirabelle the Snail slid around Tessellate-topia at Abbotsford Convent

### **Thick 'N' Juicy**

Skullies, Eyeball, Heart, Bag of Mince Meat, & 7-foot Penis danced at THICK 'N' JUICY's Horny Halloween

### **Melbourne Uni Halloween**

Skullies and Everybody's Heart spooked university students for Halloween

### **Tongan Fundraiser**

Pacific Gods puppets supported a fundraiser for the Tonga community at Williamstown Town Hall

### **New Years Eve**

Skullies entertained New Years Eve crowds at Flagstaff Gardens Melbourne









*Snow Dome by Lachlan MacLeod & Niow*

## OUR HOME SNUFF HUBB

**We continued to develop our studio into live performance space and workshop in 2024.**

Also, in early 2024, we concluded a mentorship with [sausage women](#), funded by Maribyrnong City Council.

Lighting designer Gina Gascoigne completed the installation of our new lighting rig and provided training on its operation.

We shared our studio with six independent artists, offering free - or very affordable - space for rehearsals, prop & set construction.

### **Artists hosted in 2024:**

Lachlan MacLeod & [Niow](#) – Rehearsals

[Women's Circus](#) – Classes & backstage space

[East African Women's Association](#) - Dance Rehearsals

[Golden Scissor Puppets](#) – Rehearsals

[Memetica](#) – Theatre building

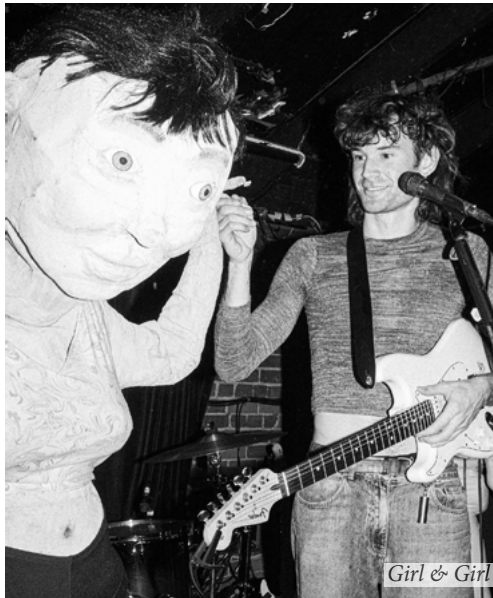


## COLLABORATIONS COMMISSIONS

Rock band **Girl & Girl** commissioned Snuff Puppets to produce a video for the song "[Mother](#)".

The video features [sausage women's](#) Mother & floating Baby puppets & Snuff Puppets' Skullie & Seagull.

The Mother video has garnered over 50,000 YouTube views. Also, the puppets made a special live appearance at the band's gig at the Tote.







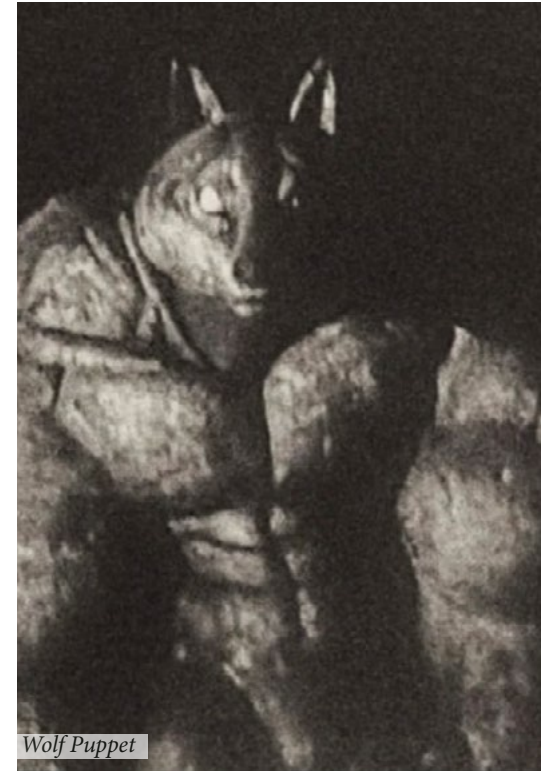
Posseshot

## COLLABORATIONS COMMISSIONS

**Posseshot** rappers performed in Snuff Puppets' puppets on the streets of Melbourne for their *Looking For Something* music video.

A human-sized **Wolf** puppet was commissioned & built for a spectacular performance at Wuyuanhe Stadium in Haikou, People's Republic of China.

**Molonglo**, a sustainable property development in Canberra, featured our giant puppets for an online marketing campaign.



Wolf Puppet



## RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

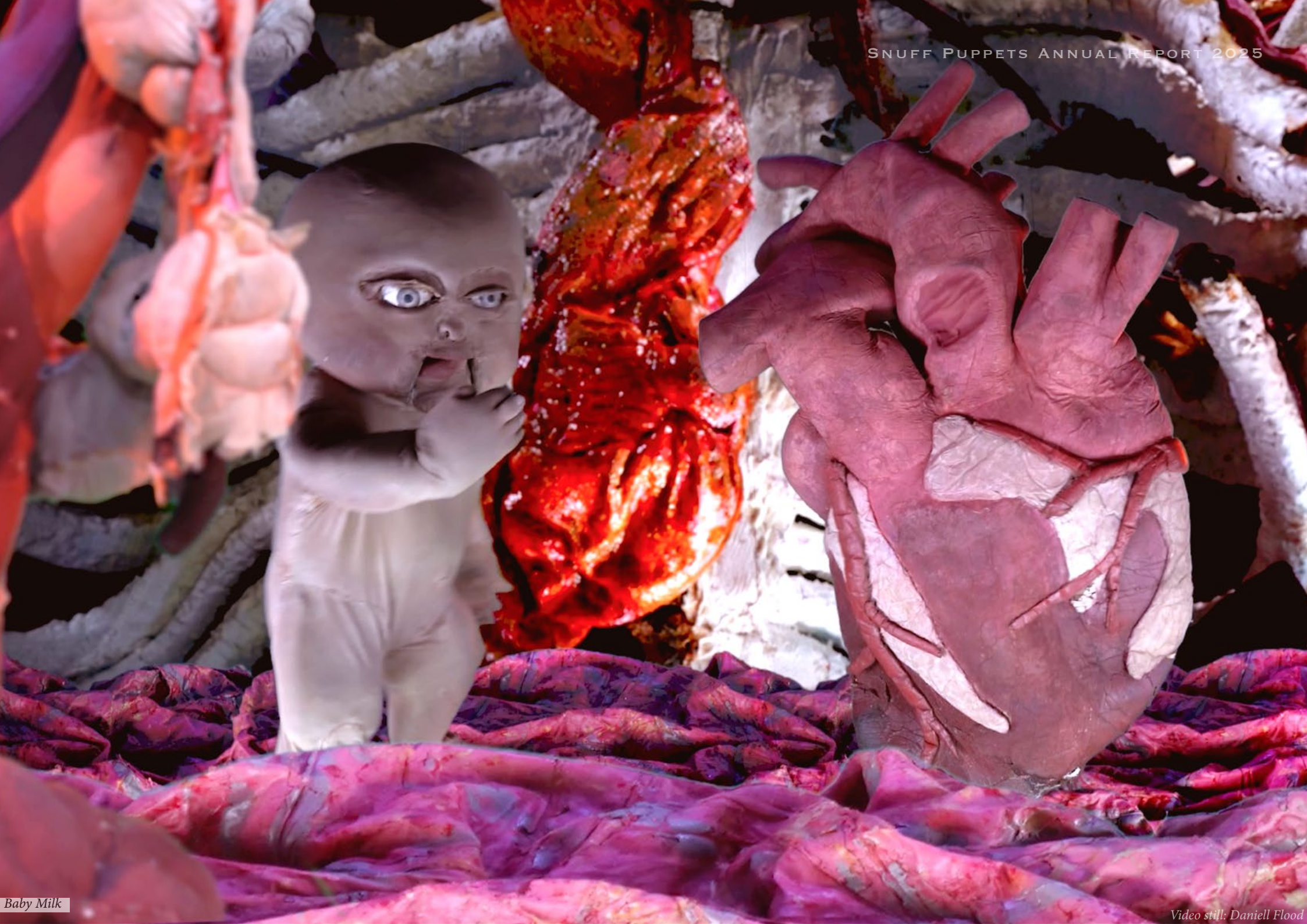
**A team of eight Snuff Puppets and international artists from Japan and America undertook a six-week research & development project in Tokyo.**

Our brief was to investigate how to make spectacular entertainment experiences for tens of thousands of audiences for popular music and cultural events.

The intensive project allowed Snuff Puppets to explore further our work with crane suspended puppetry and designed a massive bird with a 40 metre wingspan.

We also delved into designing and prototyping habitable cavernous spaces using our methodology of organically designed inflatable technology.







**15,547,005**  
**Youtube**  
**views in**  
**2024**



## ENGAGEMENT DIGITAL

**Snuff Puppets art continued to reach MILLIONS of people online in 2024.**

We produced a short video, [Baby Milk](#), experimenting with multiple green screen layers.

Our award-winning Youtube channel enjoyed over 15 MILLION views in 2024

YouTube subscribers increased by 29,000 to over 585,000

Instagram followers grew by 33% in 2024, from 20,300 to 27,000

Tiktok followers remained around 90,000 all year

Facebook followers remained steady all year at over 33,000

In 2024, the [snuffpuppets.com](https://snuffpuppets.com) website attracted 16,000 active users, marking an increase from 11,000 in 2023. The top three countries were Australia (6,000 users), the USA (3,400), and China (1,400).



## COMMUNITY ACTIVISM

### Critical Mass Footscray

Skullies joined a bike ride protest calling for safer streets in Footscray!

### March for Nature

Koala and Magpie from The Beasts of Oz joined the Australian Conservation Foundation for the 'March for Nature' in Sydney! Together, they rallied for the protection of Australia's precious wildlife and natural landscapes.



Critical Mass Footscray



## PEOPLE ARTISTS + STAFF + BOARD

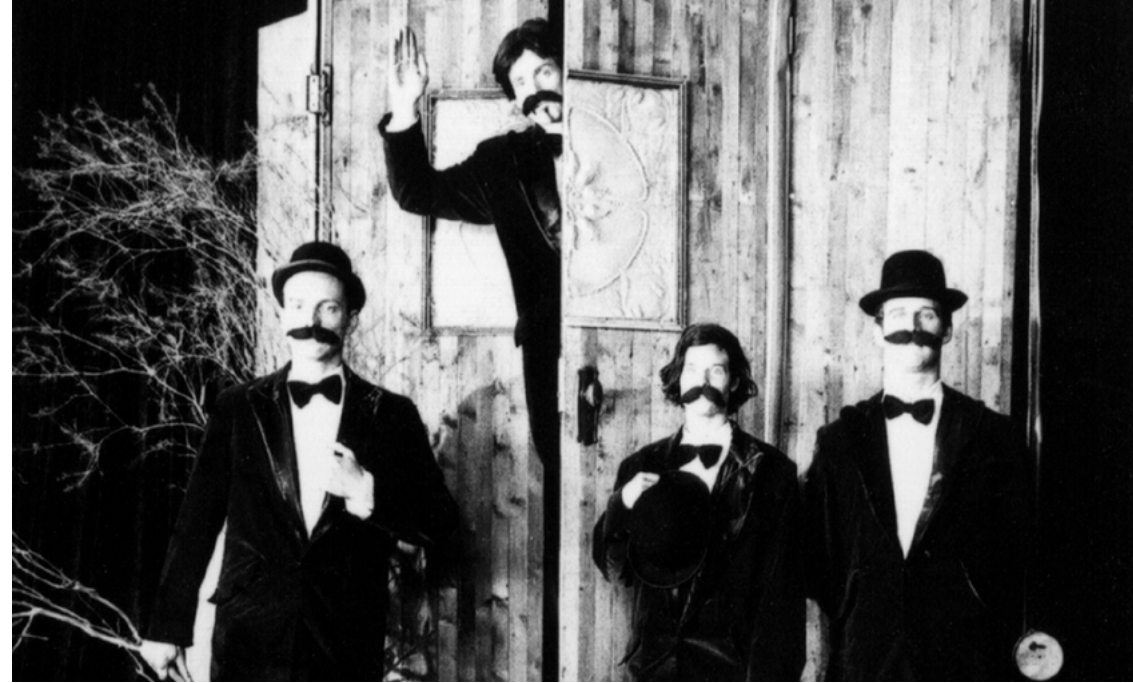
### Snuff Puppets Artists

Liam Berg  
Julian Chapple  
OPAL  
Olivia Floate  
Remi Freer  
Ignatz Freer  
Erin Hall  
Mitch Jones  
Lachlan Plain  
Aidan 'Jet' Min  
Daniele Poidomani  
Rebecca Rutter  
James Wilkinson  
Caito Zacharias

Ivy Crago - Be Bold minder  
Shaun Flynn - NYE minder  
Gina Gascoigne - Lighting consultant  
Leo Gester - Production Manager Tokyo  
Christie Stott- Production Manager Tokyo

### Snuff Puppets Staff

Andy Freer – Artistic Director/CEO  
Nick Wilson – Artistic Director  
Sarah Houbolt – General Manager  
Daniell Flood – Digital Artist/Marketing  
Hugh Nguyen – Accounts Manager



### Snuff Puppets Board

Kelly Farrow - Chair  
Annie Hariharan - Treasurer  
Janis Lacey - Secretary  
Colleen Burke  
Kate Callingham  
Joanna Feely  
Daniell Flood  
Andy Freer  
Leo Gester

Snuff Puppets pays tribute to the memory of the late Kate Callingham, who served as a valued Board member since 2022. Kate brought wisdom, warmth, and strategic insight to our company. Her generosity and spirit will be greatly missed across the arts and council community. Our heartfelt condolences to her family and friends.

Snuff Puppets is supported by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria, City of Maribyrnong & Crumpler



CREATIVE  
VICTORIA



Arts &  
Culture





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

