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Miss W Treads

Author

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Research Statement

Jane Woollard – *Miss W Treads*

RB

Miss W Treads is an original theatre work which investigates Australian early nineteenth-century performance methodology and practice through the career and performances of leading actress Eliza Winstanley. Jane Woollard was the writer and director of the work, which asks: How did female performers physically transform between the diverse roles they were required to play? How would a nineteenth-century performer contribute to a collaborative playwrighting process?

RC

Jane lead the exploration of archival material through the lens of her substantial practice as a theatre director, using obscure nineteenth-century performance texts, nineteenth-century theatre reviews, newspaper articles and the Colonial Secretary's Papers as source material. The audience were aware of the use of archival material as it was projected throughout the performance. This research project contributes to the field of Australian theatre historiography, explored via theatre practice. *Miss W Treads* integrated detailed historical research and practice-based enquiry, contributing to knowledge about the performance methodology of early Australian female theatre practitioners. Unlike many theatre projects which utilise realist narrative modes to explore historical material, *Miss W Treads* was a post-dramatic piece of theatre that shifted between 1842 Sydney and 2017 Melbourne. The 'double vision' adopted by the playwright as historian and dreamer challenged audiences to dwell in the gaps in our knowledge of early Australian theatre practice.

RS

The significance and excellence of the work was evident in its debut performance at La Mama theatre, a nationally and internationally acknowledged institution for contemporary theatre since 1967. Recognition of its significance and quality was also reflected in the funding of the project by The Australia Council, Creative Victoria and City of Melbourne.

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