

Research Statement

Jane Woollard – *Bright Shiny & Green Night*

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Jane Woollard and Kit Lazaroo have collaborated on theatre works as director and playwright since 2000, investigating how theatre can respond in non-didactic ways to the immense crisis of climate change and diminishing habitat. *Bright Shiny & Green Night* came out of a 4-year period of research and development exploring the intersection of human and non-human worlds. Our research question was: How can actors represent non-human characters and convey the experience of non-humans threatened by human activity?

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Bright Shiny & Green Night are two one-act plays by Kit Lazaroo and directed by Jane Woollard. *Bright Shiny* is a satire set in Bunnings and in depleted habitats, and *Green Night* is a dream play set in the mind and abdomen of the protagonist, Coral. As director I set up physical and kinaesthetic improvisations which allowed the actors to create the animal characters. During this process, the actors explored how to be emotionally 'truthful' while portraying an animal, while retaining its 'otherness'. In *Green Night*, the poetic and abstract language of the play allowed us to move away from literal portrayals of the non-human, and explore how movement might represent concepts of the non-human – how might a coral polyp speak? The project enhanced new knowledge by representing non-humans through traditional theatrical devices such as puppetry, costume and mask, and integrating these with contemporary theatrical forms, such as abstract movement and non-verbal vocal sounds.

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The project contributed an innovative new work to the growing field of art and climate change. *The Age* theatre critic Cameron Woodhead wrote that *Green Night* successfully suggested the connections between personal extinction and the mass extinction created by human activity. In 2012 *Bright Shiny* was included in the Arts Centre Melbourne 'Underground' series of play readings. Both plays were selected by and received funding from La Mama Theatre for their 2015 Autumn program.

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