

GRIFFIN THEATRE COMPANY  
2021 ANNUAL REPORT

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## OPERATIONAL REPORT

2021 started optimistically. The COVID challenges of 2020 gave Griffin a new digital dexterity and we opened our 2021 Season with a Sydney Festival partnership, delivered online: *Pleasuredome* by Xanthie Dobbie and Harriet Gillies.

Our first Main Season show for the year was delivered off-site, at Green Park in Darlinghurst. *Green Park* by Elias Jamieson Brown had a sell-out season, directed by Declan Greene in his directorial debut as Artistic Director, closely followed by *Dogged* by Andrea James & Catherine Ryan, also directed by Declan. Unfortunately our next Main Season show, *Wherever She Wanders* by Kendall Feaver, only got to Dress Rehearsal when Sydney went into its second lockdown due to COVID-19 on 26 June. We were forced to close the doors to the much-loved SBW Stables Theatre and re-opened—four months later—on 5 November to present a five-week season of *Wherever She Wanders*, directed by Tessa Leong. Our sincere thanks to the steadfast commitment of the cast, creatives and Griffin team who kept this work afloat since it was originally scheduled in 2020, and to the wonderful audiences who welcomed it back.

The Sydney season of *Prima Facie* by Suzie Miller was three shows in when we had to cancel due to the Sydney lockdown—ahead of its tour to Queensland and Victoria. The tour to Queensland Theatre went ahead (with extra shows programmed) but the Victorian leg to Hothouse Theatre in Albury and Geelong Art Centre were cancelled due to travel restrictions. We re-presented *Prima Facie* later in the year, back at the Seymour Centre, with sold-out shows.

As a result of the lockdown, Griffin was forced to cancel multiple shows in 2021: two Main Season shows—*Orange Thrower* and *Golden Blood* which have been subsequently been programmed in 2022—as well as our second Griffin Lookout show, *UFO*, and three ATYP shows: *Follow Me Home* (cancelled mid-season), *Shack* and *Soul Trading*.

Our two primary platforms for supporting emerging and independent artists—Special Events and Griffin Lookout—had wonderful success, ahead of the lockdown: Debra Oswald's *Is There Something Wrong With That Lady?* and *Oliver Twist's Jali*. We were only able to present three of four programmed Griffin Scratch nights, evenings of new ideas and works-in-progress by independent artists.

Across the year, Box Office income was even lower than 2020—around 50% of pre-pandemic figures. In 2021, subscriber numbers reached 1,055, still well below pre-pandemic numbers. We deeply appreciated the loyalty and support of our subscribers and other ticket holders who chose to donate their tickets for cancelled show. We were equally grateful for those audiences who chose to return after lockdown and did all we could to keep people safe.

Griffin 2021 Ambassadors—students from Years 10, 11 and 12 from across NSW—were able to see three shows live, and undertook online workshops in playwriting, directing, acting, set design, stage management, voice and text, generously supported by the Robertson Foundation.

Once again, we were humbled by the generosity and care of our donors which enabled the company to continue to pay artists throughout the year and generously payout cancelled contracts where possible. We would like to make special mention of the Neilson Foundation, Girgensohn Foundation, Malcolm Robertson Foundation and Darin-Cooper Foundation. Sponsorship and donation income was \$1,193,114 in 2021, a modest decrease of 10% in philanthropic support compared to the record-breaking result in 2020. We ran a successful End of Financial Year campaign and engaged donors when possible and kept them informed of the ongoing impacts of the pandemic.

It was our first year funded by the National Performing Arts and Partnership Framework through the Australia Council for the Arts and Create NSW. While the year had many challenges, this recognition and support was hard-won and has fueled the company to consider our national footprint and ambitions for the future.

For the financial year ended 31 December 2021, Griffin generated an operating surplus of \$432,221 (compared to an operating surplus of \$418,233 in 2020). The company's reserves increased from \$671,346 as at 31 December 2020 to \$1,103,567 as at 31 December 2021, representing 29% of turnover.

Overall, Griffin's turnover reached \$3,741,366 — an increase of 8% on the 2020 year (\$3,471,557).

## 2021 OPERATIONS SUMMARY – KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Goals & Key Performance Indicators	2021 Outcomes	
1: Produce the best Australian Stories	TARGET	ACTUALS
Premiere at least three new Australian plays in Griffin's annual Main Seasons	3	2 presented, 2 cancelled due to COVID-19
Invest in five-week rehearsals for all new Main Season works	5	2 presented, 2 cancelled due to COVID-19
Engage nationally with writers, artists and audiences	Ongoing	Ongoing
2: Lead artistic thought and conversation on Australian Playwriting		
Curate a season of Australian works	5	6 presented, 3 cancelled due to COVID-19
Run national playwriting competitions	1	1
Deliver workshops, presentations, audience participation events	Ongoing	Achieved: 6 Ambassadors workshops; 1 community performance; 12 artist membership workshops
3: Reflect the Diversity of Contemporary Australia		
Develop one work per year with a CALD playwright	1	10+
Conduct open auditions annually	1	Achieved
Develop strategies for employment of First Nations people Indigenous to Australia within the company	Ongoing	Ongoing
Ensure diverse programming of Australian artists across all main season shows	Ongoing	Achieved
4: Provide relevant and accessible opportunities		
Provide opportunities for Griffin Studio resident artists on an annual basis	2	5
Mentor at least one Affiliate Director on a Main Season Griffin production	1	Not possible due to COVID-19
Produce the Griffin Ambassadors program for high school students	1	Achieved (97 Ambassadors)
Create opportunities for emerging theatre makers to present work at the Stables	2	Achieved (1 Lookout, 14 artists in Scratch)
5: Reach the widest possible audience – Grow connections and deepen relationships		
Engage in at least one coproduction per year	1	2
Present one regional or national tour per year	1	Achieved
Achieve a combined average of 70% paid attendance across all Main Season shows	70%	Achieved
Increase reach of Griffin website, newsletter and social media platforms annually by 2%	Ongoing	Ongoing

<b>6: Operate</b> an outstanding, sustainable business.		
Review Board Governance Policy annually	Ongoing	Achieved
Review staffing performance and organisational structure to lead industry practice	Ongoing	Achieved
Grow donation and sponsorship income by 2% pa (against 2019 baseline value)	2%	10% Decrease
Develop strategies for First Nations employment	Ongoing	Ongoing

**Performance Key:**

Target Exceeded



Target Met



Ongoing



Target Unmet



## ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The second year of the pandemic saw Griffin fight on as valiantly as the first. Though we produced few shows to completion, the work we did produce was of exceptional quality. In 2021 we platformed new plays which helped audiences face an increasingly unstable world with hope and clarity. These works were tough, gritty, warm, inviting and—above all—humanist. But the quality of this work came at an expense. With little capacity to buoy the additional demands of the pandemic for yet another year, our staff and artists ended the year exhausted.

In late 2020, when we were planning our 2021 year, it had looked like a coin-flip as to whether our home—the SBW Stables Theatre—would be viable as a venue in light of COVID restrictions. Under the 1-in-4-square-metres rule that was in place at the time, only around 20 patrons could be seated in the theatre. As such, we planned 2021 to begin Griffin's Main Season with a piece of outdoor, site-specific theatre: *Green Park* by Elias Jamieson Brown.

Originally set in a Kings Cross apartment, Elias rewrote the play to take place in the real-life Green Park—where the audience sat on the grass outfitted with wireless headphones. We were unsure how audiences would respond to this unconventional space for a mainstage production but it was a sell-out success and returned in 2022 as part of Sydney Festival. We further experimented with *Pleasuredome* by Harriet Gillies and Xanthe Dobbie—an online interactive work presented as part of Sydney Festival, after 2020 development support from Google Creative Labs.

In March we returned to the SBW Stables Theatre with a Griffin Lookout season of independent work *Jali* by Oliver Twist, which was subsequently picked up by Live Nation for a national tour. This was swiftly followed by Debra Oswald's *Is There Something Wrong With That Lady?* which sold out completely. Our second Main Season work was *Dogged*—an unflinching and surreal record of the historical massacres on Gunaikurnai Country. An ambitious work for Griffin, *Dogged* harnessed a new partnership with Force Majeure to score Andrea James & Catherine Ryan's text with explosive choreography and engaged visual artist and Ngarigo elder Peter Waples Crowe to collaborate on its set and mask design.

However, this was the endpoint of the season as planned. During technical rehearsals for our third Main Season work—*Wherever She Wanders* by Kendall Feaver—Sydney and NSW went back into lockdown and for the second year Griffin pivoted towards script development and artistic activity in the online space.

As our long-running artist residency program—Griffin Studio entered its 11<sup>th</sup> year and proved particularly valuable over this lockdown period. Additional philanthropic support meant that we could engage five studio artists (an increase from two in the previous year)—whose projects developed in leaps and bounds over the period of lockdown. This was owed in no small part to a one-year initiative called 'Griffin Studio Ensemble', in which four actors were engaged casually to work with the Studio artists on their projects over 2021. The contact between these writers and actors, which occurred primarily over Zoom, proved invaluable and one of the Studio works (Dylan Van Den Berg's *Whitefella Yella Tree*) was programmed for the 2022 Main Season.

However, Griffin Studio (and the Ensemble) were only a small part of the artistic activity that took place during Lockdown 2021. In its second year, the Griffin x Create NSW Incubator Fellowship for Emerging Artists saw another five early-career artists working closely with Griffin's Artistic staff over two months to develop a project to pitch for a \$30,000 one-year fellowship. The NSW government's COVID-19 Restart stimulus funding enabled Griffin to engage artists with commissions and script development workshops - including Johnny Hawkins, Wendy Mocke, Nicholas Brown, Adrienne Daff, Jane Bodie, Benjamin Law, Maxine Beneba Clarke, Winnie Dunn, and Van Badham. While we could not deliver our long-running prize - the Griffin Award - in person, we pivoted to modest online ceremony and re-allocated its budget so every nominated playwright received a table-read of their play by actors.

But in the background of lockdown were Griffin's hard-working staff, who fell to the grinding task of contacting ticket holders for each cancelled show, and scheduling and budgeting 2021 and 2022 - and then re-budgeting and re-scheduling—on seemingly endless repeat. Our 2021 Main Season productions *Golden Blood* and *Orange Thrower* moved to 2022. We endeavored to deliver the remaining works of 2021 within the footprint of the year, while also launching a 2022 Season. This pushed every department of Griffin beyond its limit: from Marketing (who had to

build the 2022 brochure to a hugely truncated timeline)—to our Box Office department whose team of two had to refund, credit or transfer thousands of tickets to cancelled and re-scheduled performances.

We re-emerged at the end of lockdown in November 2021 with Kendall Feaver's *Wherever She Wanders* - delivered, finally, in a triumphant season. The new dates for this work fell across our similarly rescheduled return season of Suzie Miller's *Prima Facie* at the Seymour Centre. Both these blazing pieces of new Australian writing were similarly engaged in questions of justice for female victims of sexual assault - and to have them running concurrently was a rare moment of synchronicity in the chaos that dogged 2021. I ended the year enormously proud of all that our team and our artists achieved in this year, while recognising the significant cost to their financial, mental and physical wellbeing wrought upon them by this collapse of our sector.

Declan Greene  
Artistic Director

## 2021 ARTISTIC SUMMARY

MAIN SEASON PROGRAM – SBW STABLES THEATRE					
	Number of Performances	Total Audience	% Attendance Tickets		Income vs. Target (%)
			Paid (KPI = 70%)	Total	
<i>Dogged</i> By Andrea James & Catherine Ryan Directed by Declan Greene 30 April – 5 June	38	2768	65	83	122
<i>Wherever She Wanders</i> By Kendall Feaver Directed by Tessa Leong 5 November – 11 December	37	2343	74	86	123
MAIN SEASON PROGRAM – OFF-SITE					
<i>Green Park</i> By Elias Jamieson-Brown Directed by Declan Greene 5 February – 13 March	30	1086	92	109	87
SPECIAL RETURN SEASON					
<i>Prima Facie</i> By Suzie Miller Directed by Lee Lewis Seymour Centre V1.0 23 – 25 June V2.0 24 November – 12 December	3 19	134 2381	11 85	46 92	3% N/A
SPECIALS					
<i>Is There Something Wrong With That Lady?</i> By Debra Oswald Directed by Lee Lewis 13 – 24 April	15	1248	79	88	122
LOOKOUT					
<i>Jali</i> By Oliver Twist Directed by Erin Taylor 16 – 29 March	15	838	50	59	166
ATYP					
<i>Follow Me Home</i> By Lewis Treston Directed by Fraser Corfield 16 – 24 June (cancelled mid-season)	8	247	27	37	N/A

TOURING					
<i>Prima Facie</i> Written by Suzie Miller Directed by Lee Lewis Queensland Theatre	27	6224	61	68	N/A

## ARTIST DEVELOPMENT

### *Griffin Studio*

The aim of the Griffin Studio is to establish career pathways for artists and to further contribute to the canon of great Australian plays developed and staged at Griffin. In 2021, the Studio Artists were Phoebe Grainer, Nathan Harrison, Taofia Pelesasa, Diana Popovska and Dylan Van Den Berg. Our Studio Artists were mentored throughout the year and presented excerpts from their works on 3 December to an invited audience.

### *Griffin Scratch*

Griffin Scratch is designed as an opportunity for independent artists to work up early drafts, share ideas in development and most importantly test work in front of an audience. While four Scratch nights were scheduled for 2021, we were only able to proceed with three, featuring early-stage works by 15 artists.

### *Incubator Fellowships*

In partnership with Create NSW, Griffin worked with five shortlisted artists on two-month residencies, matched with members of the Artistic team. The successful Fellow, Happy Feraren, was announced in 2022.

### *Artist Membership*

Griffin ran a pilot Artist Membership Program in 2021, providing a range of monthly workshops and artist Q&As. Over 60 artists participated in the program, providing much needed support and connection throughout the year.

## WRITING AND SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT

### *Griffin Award*

The Griffin Award recognises an outstanding new play that displays an authentic, inventive and contemporary Australian voice. Judged by a panel of theatre professionals from national submissions, the prestigious award carries a \$10,000 prize for the winner and \$1,000 for each of the four other finalists through the support of Copyright Agency Limited's Cultural Fund. Griffin continued its commitment to accepting and assessing scripts from around the nation with 130 submissions received in 2021. The 2021 Griffin Award was awarded to Megan Wilding for *Game. Set. Match*. Closed table-readings of all nominated plays were held on 9 December, presenting 30minute excerpts from plays of the 2021 winner and nominees, directed by Tasnim Hossain.

### *Griffin Studio Ensemble*

Griffin Studio Ensemble was piloted in 2021 to shape a stable of actors to attached to the company to work on plays commissioned by Griffin or in development. The 2021 Ensemble included an impressive line-up of actors: Emily Havea, Wendy Mocke, Guy Simon and Ursula Yovich. They worked on a range of performed readings and script development activities throughout the year.

## EDUCATION AND ACCESS

Griffin aims to ensure it remains an accessible company for artists and audiences. Despite the limitations of 2021, the following initiatives were offered throughout the year to encourage participation and access points:

### *Griffin Ambassadors*

In 2021, this education scheme introduced 97 senior high school students to Griffin from over 36 metropolitan and regional schools across NSW. These students became part of Griffin's creative life for a year, albeit during lockdown, with free tickets to shows when possible and online workshops from our associate artists. They attended performances of *Dogged*, *Wherever She Wanders* and *Prima Facie* followed by Q&As with cast and



directors, participated in a 4-week online playwriting program and attended a series of online industry workshops in the school holidays during lockdown.

#### *General Auditions*

These were held over three days in November 2021 in order to give new and emerging actors who are passionate about Australian plays access to Griffin. Griffin received around 800 submissions and saw 70 actors as part of our General Auditions in 2021.

#### **EQUITY ACTION PLAN**

In 2021, Griffin worked with Diversity Arts Australia to develop an Equity Action Plan. A series of workshops were held online, and tailored sessions were run to develop specific actions in relation to core areas of company activity across programming, marketing, community engagement and policy. A draft Equity Action Plan is being developed, to be finalized in 2022.

## APPENDIX 1 - 2021 PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES

### PROJECT ONE – Dogged

#### ***Dogged***

By Andrea James & Catherine Ryan

SBW Stables Theatre, Kings Cross: 30 April – 5 June 2021

The air is freezing. The night is dark. The bush is endless. And there's no certain way home.

On the lands of alpine Victoria, on Gunaikurnai country, a story of familial bonds unfolds.

Faced with the looming foreclosure of her family's property, a farmer's daughter is on the hunt in the rugged Australian bush—on territory that by rights isn't hers to travel through. From deep between the eucalypts, another woman—a mother dingo—searches desperately for her lost pups. She howls into the night, run ragged by hunger and grief.

Over the course of one long night, the Woman and Dingo forge an alliance to claw closer to the things they ache for... but it's a dangerous deal to make.

Witness a total transformation of the SBW Stables stage as you tumble down the dingo's den into a work of sheer Australian Gothic, brought to you by the collaborative collision of playwrights Andrea James (*Sunshine Super Girl*), AWGIE-winner Catherine Ryan and director Declan Greene (*Wake in Fright*).

*Dogged* is a bloody parable painted with electric movement, jaw-dropping design, and a story that stares you straight down the barrel—and trust us, it's quite unlike anything you've seen before.

#### **In association with Force Majeure**

**Director** Declan Greene

**Associate Director** Danielle Micich

**Movement Director** Kirk Page

**Set Co-Designer and Costume Designer** Renée Mulder

**Set Co-Designer & Mural Artist** Peter Waples-Crowe

**Lighting Designer** Verity Hampson

**Sound & Composition** Steve Toulmin

**Stage Manager** Ella Griffin

**Assistant Stage Manager** Nicola Stavar

**Assistant Mural Artist** Jessica Johnson

**With** Blazey Best, Sandy Greenwood, Anthony Yangoyan

#### **Outcomes**

*Dogged* was presented at the SBW Stables for a five-week season of 38 performances to an audience of 2,768. The show achieved 65% paid attendance and 83% total attendance, with Box Office reaching 122% of target.

#### **Critical Response**

"Director Declan Greene, working in collaboration with Danielle Micich of physical theatre company Force Majeure, uses the writing's complexity to deliver an exciting show that's gripping on several levels." ★★★★★ Suzy Wrong, [Time Out](#)

"Dogged is a bruising, brilliantly crafted work of contemporary theatre that demonstrates the work that can emerge when creative power is shared." ★★★★★½ Kate Prendergast, [Limelight Magazine](#)

## PROJECT TWO – Wherever She Wanders

### *Wherever She Wanders*

By Kendall Feaver

SBW Stables Theatre, Kings Cross: 5 November – 11 December 2021

At one of Australia's oldest residential colleges, scandal is rare. Or, scandal that reaches the outside world anyway. Behind closed mahogany doors, there's always quiet money to mop up the mess.

Writing the cheques this year is Jo Mulligan, the first female Master in the college's hundred-year history. And for Nikki Faletau—student resident and aspiring journalist— this is a time for hope, for change, for reform...

That all changes when a serious allegation is made against a fellow resident. For Jo, it's a case of boys will be boys. For Nikki, it's yet another symptom of rape culture rearing its ugly head on campus. Kendall Feaver (*The Almighty Sometimes*) started writing *Wherever She Wanders* when incidents of sexual misconduct were being flung into the unforgiving light of the internet. In 2021, the play has only become more prescient. Online, there are no rules: social media is polarising political discussion, comments sections are as concrete as they are chaotic, and many vulnerable people are getting caught in the crossfire of a debate raging out of any one person's control.

Like a 21st century reworking of *The First Stone*, this brilliant new work plunges into generational feminism's ever-growing divide with Feaver's signature ferocious wit.

**Director** Tessa Leong

**Designer** Ella Butler

**Lighting Designer** Govin Ruben

**Lighting Associate** Sam Read

**Composer & Sound Designer** James Brown

**Sound Associate** Daniel Herten

**Video Designer** Susie Henderson

**Stage Manager** Hannah Crane

**With** Tony Cogin, Emily Havea, Mark Paguio, Jane Phegan, Fiona Press and Julia Robertson

Note: Emma Harvie took on the role of Nikki Faletau (played previously by Emily Havea) for the last week of this season.

### **Outcomes**

*Wherever She Wanders* was presented at the SBW Stables Theatre for a five-week season of 37 performances to an audience of 2,343. The show achieved 74% paid attendance and 86% total attendance, with Box Office reaching 123% of target.

### **Critical Response**

"Feaver has director Tessa Leong as her bridge from idea to lived truth, and Leong digs deep into Feaver's clever and well-researched script, steering her enormous ideas and prowling debates into a deft and stylish production with a natural and satisfying rhythm." ★★★ Cassie Tongue, [The Guardian](#)

"A dynamic, sensitive and profound portrayal of consent, sexuality and race and tells of the complex and paternalistic ways in which authority and social status hold sway over the fraught and deeply personal issue of sexual assault." ★★★★★ Ravena Glover, [Audrey Journal](#)

"Working collaboratively with director Tessa Leong (Associate artistic director of Griffin Theatre Company), Feaver drew on generations of fight, hope, and also despondency to tell this tale." ★★★★★ Alannah Maher, [Time Out](#)

"Directed by Tessa Leong, the show never fails to feel spirited, with an excellent attention to energy levels, aided by the commendable work contributed by designers..." Suzy Wrong, [Suzy Goes See](#)

## PROJECT THREE – Prima Facie

### **Prima Facie**

By Suzie Miller

Billie Brown Theatre, South Brisbane (Queensland Theatre Company): 14 July – 7 August 2021

Seymour Centre, Chippendale: 24 November – 11 December 2021

Suzie Miller's Griffin Award-winning tour de force makes its much-anticipated return to the Seymour Centre stage in 2021 and completed a successful tour to Queensland Theatre.

*Prima Facie* is an indictment of the Australian legal system's failure to provide reliable pathways to justice for women in rape, sexual assault or harassment cases. It's a work of fiction, but one that could have been ripped from the headlines of any paper, any day of the week, so common you could cry. Sheridan Harbridge stars as Tessa—a criminal lawyer at the top of her game who knows the law permits no room for emotion.

To win, you just need to believe in the rules. And Tessa loves to win, even when defending clients accused of sexual assault. Her court-ordained duty trumps her feminism. But when she finds herself on the other side of the bar, Tessa is forced into the shadows of doubt she's so ruthlessly cast over other women.

Turning Sydney's courts of law into a different kind of stage, this taut, rapid-fire and gripping one-woman show by Suzie Miller (*Sunset Strip*) exposes the shortcomings of a patriarchal justice system where it's her word against his. Maybe we need a new system.

**Director** Lee Lewis

**Designer** Renée Mulder

**Lighting Designer** Trent Suidgeest

**Composer & Sound Designer** Paul Charlier

**Stage Manager** Khym Scott

**With** Sheridan Harbridge

### **Outcomes**

*Prima Facie* was presented at the Seymour Centre for a three-week season of 19 performances to an audience of 2,092, after an initial season of three shows before it was cancelled. For the second, fully-fledged season the show achieved 85% paid attendance and 92% total attendance. The Queensland Theatre season of 27 shows reached audiences of 6,224 and achieved 61% paid attendance and 68% total attendance.

### **Critical Response – Touring Performance**

"The creative team behind *Prima Facie* have produced a piece of social theatre that is so gripping, so well told, and exceptionally well realised that their message should certainly assist in being a catalyst for such change. A seriously important work in the Australian cultural calendar, it would be timely to see it performed far and wide." ★★★★★ ½ Suzannah Conway, [Arts Hub](#)

"Audience members are immediately on their feet in an acclaim of thunderous applause that lasts through three curtain calls (...) we must be thankful to still have the chance to access live theatre, especially when it is as exceptional as the powerful and provocative "*Prima Facie*." Meredith Walker, [Blue Curtains Brisbane](#)

## PROJECT FOUR – Green Park

### **Green Park**

By Elias Jamieson Brown

Green Park: 5 February – 13 March 2021

You've walked past it. Maybe through it. Down the end of Victoria Street, opposite St Vincent's Hospital—Green Park. It's picturesque by day, a little eerie by night. And it's where Warren and Edden are meeting, as a prelude to their Grindr hook up.

One of them doesn't look like his photo. There's an age gap between them (but what's a decade or three?). And one is harbouring a dangerous secret. In an hour's time, both will leave the park profoundly transformed.

Google Maps lists Green Park as "Good for Kids". But just a few decades ago, that definitely wasn't the case. For decades, the Wall opposite the park was where rent boys plied their trade for curb-crawling Johns. The public toilet was a spot for secret all-hours hook ups. When the cops dismantled it, in 1988, a cabal of drag queen nuns—the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence—built a shrine to a chunk of its urinal. These details are becoming lost to time. But in *Green Park*, Warren and Edden will be pushed together—and apart—by forces of Sydney's history that neither of them can comprehend.

In 2021, Griffin is leaving its home at the SBW Stables and wandering down the road to the real Green Park. Outside the rotunda, audience members will be outfitted with a set of headphones. And together, they will eavesdrop on playwright Elias Jamieson Brown's finely wrought Darlinghurst noir. To everyone else, the two men talking on a bench might not look like much. But in the gloom of the setting sun, you'll experience a dangerous psycho-sexual collision... in a very public place.

**Director & Dramaturg** Declan Greene  
**Designer** Emma White  
**Composer & Sound Designer** David Bergman  
**Writing Secondment** Riordan Berry  
**Stage Manager** Isabella Kerdijk  
**With** Joseph Althouse, Steve Le Marquand

#### Outcomes

*Green Park* was presented at Green Park in Darlinghurst for a three-week season of 25 performances to an audience of 1,086. The show achieved 92% paid attendance and 109% total attendance, achieving 87% of box office target.

#### Critical Response

"Director Declan Greene keeps the play on a knife-edge; (...) the credibility of the writing and the intimacy of the production makes every minute matter; it shows us something painfully, perfectly, recognisable alive." ★★★★★ ½ Cassie Tongue, [The Sydney Morning Herald](#)

"Made for the moment – both in its post-Marriage Equality preoccupations and its COVID safe design – *Green Park* is a provoking piece of contemporary theatre and an ambitious start to Griffin Theatre Company's 2021 season." ★★★★★ Kate Prendergast, [Audrey Journal](#)

"You can only admire the initiative. While other companies, with theatres much larger, can return to work almost as normal, Greene has had to think outside the box. Brown's play is suitably adaptable and newly imbued with the rich history of this place." ★★★★★ Jason Whittaker, [Limelight Magazine](#)

"Unintended supporting actors surround the action, offering real-life noise that makes us look over our shoulders, as we sense the omnipresent threat of violence that queer people must live with, every day our lives. Greene imbues an uncanny realism that draws us in, for both the theatrical moment unfolding and the palpable non-fiction concerns to which this work refers." ★★★★★ Suzy Wrong, [Time Out](#)

## PROJECT FIVE – SPECIAL EVENT

### *Is There Something Wrong With That Lady?*

By Debra Oswald

SBW Stables Theatre, Kings Cross: 13 – 24 April 2021

As a lapsed playwright, creator of the Offspring TV series, former Junior Champion Hypochondriac and a floundering novelist, what should Debra Oswald's next move be? And what motivates people to write or create more 'stuff' anyway? Shame? Fear of death? The hope of more sexual offers?

For now, Debra plans to seize control of the Griffin stage: the exact location she fell in love with theatre, aged 11, and the place her plays *Mr Bailey's Minder* and *The Peach Season* came to life.

In a funny and excruciatingly honest one-woman show, Debra tells stories about her neurotic childhood, clumsy romantic history, and the anxieties and joys of the writer's life—all in the hope that the audience can help her work out that ever-important question: what comes next? And having waited for this show to be staged since its original 2020 season... it's kind of urgent.

**Director** Lee Lewis

**Associate Director** Nell Ranney

**Lighting Designer** Benjamin Brockman

**Sound Designer** Jessica Dunn

**Stage Manager** Madelaine Osborn

**With** Debra Oswald

### **Outcomes**

*Is There Something Wrong With That Lady?* was presented at the Stables for 15 shows, reaching audiences of 1,248. Paid attendance was 79% and total attendance was 88%.

### **Critical Response**

"Artists work to bring cohesion to society, whether intentional or not. Oswald is a storyteller of the purest kind." Suzy Wrong [Suzy Goes See](#)

"You may agree with Oswald, you may not. But it's impossible not to be struck by her garrulous charm and her entertaining anecdotes. Director Lee Lewis governs the pace expertly for the show's 70-something minutes." ★★★ ½ Jason Blake, [Audrey Journal](#)

## **PROJECT SIX – GRIFFIN LOOKOUT**

### ***Jali***

By Oliver Twist

SBW Stables Theatre, Kings Cross: 16 – 29 March 2021

*Jali*: noun: a West African historian, storyteller, praise singer, poet, or musician.

Refusing to be defined by a turbulent past, comedian and performer Oliver Twist uses his exceptional storytelling abilities to reflect on his time as a refugee and to unpack what his life looks like now.

In this one-person show that is as delicately told as it is captivating, Oliver uses personal anecdotes, drama and humour as a powerful antidote to trauma.

Originally part of Griffin's 2020 Season, *Jali* makes a splash in 2021, tapping into feelings of isolation and hopelessness, and transforming them into a story that is clear, resilient and bright.

*Jali* is a vibrant and emotional journey that patiently proves there is light at the end of the tunnel.

**Director** Erin Taylor

**Dramaturgy** Phil Spencer & Erin Taylor

**Designer** Kelsey Lee

**Composer** Chrysoulla Markoulli

**Stage Manager** Jennifer Jackson

**Producer** Emma Diaz

**With** Oliver Twist

### **Outcomes**

*Jali* was presented at the SBW Stables for 15 shows, reaching an audience of 838. Paid attendance was 50% and total attendance was 59%.

### Critical Responses

“We all seem to lean collectively forward to listen closely and well. This is why we came back to the theatre. Director Erin Taylor follows the rhythm of Twist’s script with ease, and Twist roams the stage to tell stories with his whole body – he meets our gaze, he becomes his younger self, he summons worlds.” ★★★★★ Cassie Tongue, [The Sydney Morning Herald](#)

“Twist is full of charm and remarkably at ease with his audience (...) Erin Taylor’s direction capitalises on Twist’s formidable likeability. She ensures that we perceive vulnerability without any need for humiliation and showcases her subject’s vital optimism in a manner that proves irresistible.” ★★★★★ Suzy Wrong, [Time Out](#)

## PROJECT SEVEN – GRIFFIN SCRATCH

### Griffin Scratch

SBW Stables Theatre, Kings Cross: 26 March, 23 April and 5 December

Griffin Scratch is a platform for independent artists to test works-in-progress and ideas in front of an audience. It programs an eclectic array of writers, performance makers and artists from other performance mediums to present snippets of bold, challenging and ambitious ideas for the stage.

Only three of four Griffin Scratch nights were able to go ahead in 2021. Artists included:

26 March	Phoebe Grainer, Diana Popovska, Julia Rorke and Marcus Whale.
23 April	Katie Beckett, Alana Hicks, Ally Morgan and Mel Ree
5 December	Raveena Grover, Tasnim Hossain, Gary Paramanathan, Taofia Pelesasa, Peter Polites and Jeremy Santos.

### Outcomes

*Griffin Scratch* was presented at the Stables for one night only across three separate nights, to audiences of 150.

## PROJECT EIGHT – SPECIAL EVENT

### *Pleasuredome*

Livestreamed: 20 – 23 January

Philosopher. Tech pioneer. Conceptualiser of the internet-connected dildo. Ted Nelson has crammed a lot into his 83 years of existence.

In 1965, Nelson imagined a version of the internet that could rival the mythical Xanadu. Flash forward 55 years: the internet is 20% porn, 20% cat videos, and the rest is targeted advertising from Wish.com.

Xanthe Dobbie is a digital artist. Harriet Gillies is a performance artist. Together, they want to pull apart the internet and rebuild it into the utopia that Nelson envisioned. But they need your help 🙏

*Pleasuredome* is theatre at its truest: live, communal, unpredictable. It just also happens to take place on the internet. After a break-out performance as part of 2020’s *Griffin Lock-In*, we’re bringing back *Pleasuredome* with our friends at Sydney Festival—for a strictly limited season.

**Digital Collaborator** Solomon Thomas

**Live Composer** Marcus Whale

**Dramaturg** Declan Greene

**Set Dresser** Hugh O’Connor

**Company & Broadcast Manager** Lucia Haddad

### Outcomes

*Pleasuredome* was live streamed for free over four nights to an audience of over 10,000.