

POLYGLOT THEATRE

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

ABOUT

First On The Ladder Photography: Simone Ruggiero

Polyglot Theatre is a globally-renowned company based in Melbourne that creates, produces and tours Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) all over the world. Polyglot's artistic approach of child-centred practice has earned our reputation at home and internationally as a leader in the TYA sector, celebrated for creating distinctive, collaborative works that are playful and conceptually robust. We involve kids from creative development through to immersive performances, and reach the broadest range of children by placing our work everywhere from the world's most prestigious theatres to the football grounds of regional Australia.

OUR VISION

Polyglot places children at the heart of our art. Our vision is of a future where children are powerful: artistically, socially and culturally.

Polyglot's work is guided by three value areas:

- » Children are central to our art as collaborators and participants. Our work exists to give children the power to be in control and experience freedom of choice.
- Our artistic approach is one of unbridled curiosity, rigour and daring; we champion innovation and invite the unexpected.
- » We work with respect, resourcefulness and a spirit of genuine collaboration in the pursuit of a sustainable future.

OUR MISSION

Polyglot's mission is to make innovative and daring theatre which provides children worldwide the opportunity for imagination and adventure through participation. We offer transformational, playful arts experiences that are alive and human in their content and connection, knowing that this offers something that is vital for children everywhere. We are committed to advocating for the right of all children to experience arts and culture, and to promoting the value of young people as a discerning audience from the earliest years.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2019

Sarah Hunt – Chair Mario Agostinoni – Treasurer Belinda Bowman (until September) Kathy Fox Mark Williams Sandra Robertson (from May) Jacob Boehme (from May) Greg Ireton (from December)

STAFF 2019

- Sue Giles AM Artistic Director & co-CEO Viv Rosman – Executive Director & co-CEO Kath Fyffe – General Manager Rainbow Sweeny - Producer Julie Wright - Producer Olivia Satchell - Development Coordinator Erica Heller-Wagner - Marketing & Communications Coordinator Sophie Overett – Administration & Operations Coordinator Fleur Brett - Bookkeeper Lexie Wood – Project Producer – 5678 Film Club & Project Manager – Voice Lab Priya Namana – Project Director - 5678 Film Club Simone Ruggiero – Project Producer
- First On The Ladder
- lan Pidd Project Director – First On The Ladder

Polyglot acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live and create. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

ARTISTS, FACILITATORS AND PRODUCTION STAFF

Morgan Rose Aldrich, Nurdan Aliyazilioglu, Matthew Atkinson, Tammy-Lee Atkinson, Christian Bagin, Mischa Baka, Tirese Ballard, Nick Barlow, Sam Bennellick-Jones, Juliet Bennie, Lara Best, Elise Brokensha, Stacey Brown, Andrew Callaghan, Michael Camilleri, Fabio Capodivento, Genevieve Cizevskis, Raguel Clarke, Marcus Cropp, Tom Dent, Rebecca Diele, Marcel Dorney, Amelia Ducker, Anneli Dyall, Jenna Eriksen, Christy Flaws, Katrina Gaskell, Gwen Gilchrist Holmberg, Dan Goronszy, Jaimie-Lee Hindmarsh, Kelly Hucker, Ashlee Hughes, Matt Kelly, Dan Koop, Romi Kupfer, Jo Leishman, Mischa Long, Lachlan MacLeod, Justin Marshall, M'ck Mckeague, Sylvie Meltzer, Zsuzsa Mihaly, Bridget Milesi, Danny Miller, Nick Moon, Hannah Murphy, Chi Nguyen, Steph O'Hara, Sam Osborn, Rachel Perks, David Pidd, Alkira Power, Pambo Priyojati, Cecily Rabey, Tamara Rewse, Stefanie Robinson, Pip Runciman, Caleena Sansbury, Morwenna Schenck, Sonya Suares, Maria Tri Sulistyani, Lucy Taylor, Emily Tomlins, Alana Tompson, Jean Tong, Afsaneh Torabi, Dr Meg Upton, Glen Walton, Justine Warner, Blayne Welsh

ACHIEVEMENTS 2019

INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP

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SUE GILES: AM AWARDED IN THE 2019 AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS LIST, AUSTRALIA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS FELLOWSHIP

VIV ROSMAN: WEARY DUNLOP SCHOLARSHIP (ASIALINK)

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WITH LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Victoria: Abbotsford, Aspendale, Bangholme, Clayton, Clifton Hill, Geelong, Healesville, Hoppers Crossing, Kew, Melbourne, Parkville, Princes Hill, Sale, Springvale, Toorak, Warrandyte, Wedderburn, Werribee South, Westgarth, Wheelers Hill, Wodonga



USA

CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Light Pickers Photography: Theresa Harrison

2019 for Polyglot was a positive and productive year; settling into a new home, focusing on team development, reviewing our strategic direction, and forging national and international alliances.

Having moved into the stunningly realised offices at Abbotsford Convent, the Polyglot team set about seizing the benefits of this thriving artistic environment. Relationships blossomed, and Polyglot provided several installations and free activities for participation by children and the local community. With an enviable international reputation, this new home enables Polyglot to enhance its connection to local audiences, and to continue its mission "to make innovative and daring theatre which provides children the opportunity for imagination and adventure through participation".

This mission is delivered by our two brilliant, hard-working co-CEOs Sue Giles AM and Viv Rosman. We were thrilled when the year began with Sue being appointed a Member of the Order of Australia, receiving this national honour for her significant service to the performing arts as an artistic director, and to theatre for children. The celebration continued when Sue was acknowledged later in the year with an Australia Council for the Arts Fellowship.

We are proud that Sue's vision for enabling the creativity of all young people is not only celebrated at home, but is also recognised internationally through her position as Vice President of the International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People (ASSITEJ) – an organisation that strengthens the global theatre sector on behalf of all children around the world.

Polyglot is committed to supporting the ongoing professional development of our team, and we were delighted when Viv was awarded a Weary Dunlop Scholarship to support her participation in the competitive Asialink Leaders Program in 2019. This course offered vital learning, given that Polyglot continues to build long-term relationships in the Asia-Pacific region and tours to countries including China and Indonesia on a regular basis. Other team members undertook development in disability awareness and safe workplace practice and policies. At each Board meeting, Generator Artists were in attendance with the objective to develop their experience of working with Board members, understanding the

importance of governance, and how the Board/Management relationship works productively. This will continue in 2020.

The team ranged far and wide again this year, to the US, Hong Kong, China – and for the first time, Canada! Rich partnerships have been formed with each place visited, and it is with pride that we are able to see the impact of Sue's vision for young people resonate so strongly in each community. Similarly, the connections made closer to home with the Tjanpi Desert Weavers and FORM thrive owing to the mutual respect demonstrated by the skilled and caring artists involved.

A significant focus for Polyglot in 2019 was reviewing the strategic plan and submitting our vision and business plans to the Australia Council for the Arts. Already deeply committed to access and inclusion, for some time Polyglot has been exploring how its methodology can have a positive impact on young people with disabilities. This area of work requires careful planning, skills-building and knowledge-enhancement; all of which the Polyglot team is thoughtfully putting into place with their trademark high-level care and diligence.

All of this work is made possible owing to the investment of our government funders, the Australia Council for the Arts, Creative Victoria, City of Melbourne, City of Yarra, our engaged philanthropic trust and foundation partners, and our growing network of connected donors, without whom we could not deliver the breadth of work that we do. I would like to thank my fellow board members for their focus, commitment and engagement during this year of review. We were sad to farewell one board member, Belinda Bowman, who had served the company for four years, and we thank Belinda for her guidance and dedication. We welcomed three new members: Sandra Robertson, Jacob Boehme and Greg Ireton, who each bring valuable skills, knowledge and expertise to the company. They join a supportive and engaged Board who I thank for their ongoing dedication to the company.

Sarah Hunt

Chair, Polyglot Board

EXECUTIVES' MESSAGE

2019 was a year of significance and exploration. It marked our first full year at Abbotsford Convent, we toured to Canada for the first time, premiered *Manguri Wiltja* - our collaboration with Tjanpi Desert Weavers and FORM, completed the final year of First On The Ladder and 5678 Film Club, toured *Cerita Anak (Child's Story)* to China and Singapore, were joined by new Board members, and the whole team worked together to create Polyglot's strategy for the years to come.

The Convent is a beautiful place to be, with local families and children and a culturally diverse, creative community at our doorstep. We invited friends, donors, artists, children and colleagues to our office throughout the year and they found it welcoming and inspiring. We also presented *Light Pickers* at the Convent – the first of what will be annual presentations as part of its Convent Kids program.

We went to Canada! This was a fantastic new frontier for us, long overdue, and the tour was very successful. Touring is a large component of Polyglot's program, and our artists' experience and maturity ensures their ability to deliver high quality experiences to audiences around the world, as well as representing Polyglot in the cultural exchange that international touring always offers. In 2019, we also toured to China, Singapore and the USA, as well as delivering local and national tours that included a version of Paper Planet for metro and regional Victorian specialist education schools, supported by the Victorian Department of Education and Training.

Manguri Wiltja found a perfect first performance opportunity at Revealed, the Indigenous art fair at Fremantle Arts Centre early in the year. This collaboration between Polyglot, Tjanpi Desert Weavers and FORM has been a journey of discovery and friendship and has shifted our understanding of how art can be made in vital ways. We feel privileged to be part of this extraordinary opportunity and hope to see this important work presented in other parts of Australia.

After three energetic years First On The Ladder came to an end, with the Boomerangs in Moree and Rumbalara in Shepparton hosting community celebrations created by the children of each club. Our relationships in both communities have been deep and impactful, and we know they will be maintained into the future. 5678 Film Club also came to an end with a screening retrospective at Kino Cinema that celebrated four years of incredible child-led filmmaking. In 2019, the 5678 team also created an education resource, partnering with ACMI to enable child-led filmmaking in schools.

The Generator program continues to offer a rich and diverse field of artistic possibility. Collaboration with the core artists who are at the heart of all of our successes is exciting, with shared values around broadening our diversity, expanding our reach and refreshing our program. It's a joy to know how embedded this group is in Polyglot's thinking and planning, and we value their dedication, loyalty and skill very highly.

In expanding Polyglot's influence in the sector, we commissioned articles from artists, colleagues and academics, focusing on our areas of distinction in the field. This initiative has sparked a future focus on sharing our expertise and skills more proactively, responding to calls for workshops and masterclasses in specialised topics such as Baby Theatre and child-led practice.

Cerita Anak (Child's Story), made in collaboration with Papermoon Puppet Theatre (Indonesia), had a great year of touring with five weeks in China with Art Space for Kids (ASK) and a season in Singapore at the Esplanade, attended by the Governor of Victoria, the Honourable Linda Dessau AC. We are thrilled that this important work continues its journey in 2020.



Paper Planet Photography: Ai Ueda

We welcomed three new Board members – Jacob Boehme, Greg Ireton and Sandra Robertson– expanding Polyglot's diversity of expertise at Board level, and sadly farewelled Belinda Bowman, who we thank for her generous service. Led by Chair Sarah Hunt, our board is inspiring and engaged, taking part in strategic planning with insight and experience, and always supportive of the work that we do and the way that we do it.

As we developed Polyglot's new Strategic Plan in 2019, we found ourselves discussing the future and the ways that we, as a company, can contribute towards the changes we want to see in the world. As a result, we're increasing our focus on sustainability, honing our skills and networks in the field of theatre for children with disabilities, striving to make all our activities accessible for as many as possible, and becoming even more invested in the Generator program's invention and vision. There are exciting times ahead, and in 2019 Polyglot shone as a company that is flexible, resourceful, collegiate and supportive of new ideas, new people and new approaches. We thank our wonderful team of staff, board and artists, and look ahead with excitement to 2020 and beyond!

Sue Giles AM Artistic Director

Viv Rosman Executive Director



INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP

Photography: Sarah Walker

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THE GENERATOR

- » Artistic Director and co-CEO Sue Giles was appointed Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the 2019 Australia Day Honours List. Sue was recognised with this national honour for her significant service to the performing arts as an artistic director, and to theatre for children.
- » Sue was also awarded an Australia Council for the Arts Fellowship to support her ASSITEJ participation over the next two years as well as several creative projects.
- » Executive Director Viv Rosman attended the International Society for the Performing Arts (ISPA) Congress in New York City in her capacity as an Australian ISPA Fellow.
- » Sue, Viv, Producer Julie Wright and the Cerita Anak (Child's Story) team attended the International Performing Arts for Youth (IPAY) conference in Philadelphia, as the show was selected to perform in the prestigious IPAY Showcase.
- » Viv was accepted into the Asialink Leaders Program and awarded a Weary Dunlop Scholarship to support her participation in the year-long program.

- » Voice Lab Project Manager Lexie Wood delivered a presentation about the module at Bankstown Communities for Children's Children's Voices Out Loud project launch. Voice Lab was also invited to the 2019 OPEN Symposium

 delivered by The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare.
- » Sue attended ASSITEJ International Executive Committee meetings in Uruguay and France in her capacity as Vice President.
- » Sue and core artist Justine Warner were invited to Hong Kong to deliver a professional development Baby Theatre workshop for local artists, in collaboration with Five Senses Education Theatre.
- » Viv was interviewed for the ArtsHub article 'Know before you go: how to tour abroad' and participated as a panellist for an APAM Wire Series briefing, sharing experiences and tips about the ISPA Congress in New York City.
- » A work-in-progress version of the 5678 Film Club documentary was screened at the Australian Literacy Educators' Association (ALEA)

conference, followed by a Q&A session with Sue Giles, Project Director Priya Namana and Education Consultant Dr. Meg Upton.

- » Sue and Julie attended the Performing Arts Exchange (PAX) to pitch *Cerita Anak (Child's Story)* to Australian presenters.
- » Sue attended the Australian Singapore Cultural Leaders Forum.
- » Cerita Anak (Child's Story) toured to the Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay in Singapore and the Governor of Victoria, the Hon. Linda Dessau AC, made a special visit to host a reception to celebrate the creative connections between Australia and South East Asia. Performers Emily Tomlins and Pambo Priyojati delivered a professional development workshop for Singaporean artists.

The Generator is a capacity-building program that supports Polyglot's artistic vibrancy and sustainability. Through the Generator, our core artists undertake artistic leadership roles, represent Polyglot at conferences, deliver training and mentorship to artists and educators, and receive professional development opportunities.

The Generator demonstrates Polyglot's sector leadership through employment and capacity-building opportunities that support the sustainability of artists' careers in the independent sector. Generatordriven works make up the majority of new work in development, embedding artistic rigour, new voices and diverse approaches across Polyglot to ensure the strongest work for our young audiences.

In 2019, Generator-led projects and initiatives included:

- » Invisible Orchestra this popular work, created by Glen Walton, Andy Callaghan and Matt Kelly was programmed by Arts Centre Melbourne for a school holiday season that reached over 4000 people.
- » Light Pickers driven by artist Mischa Long with Stefanie Robinson, Glen Walton and Hannah Murphy, this new installation for babies and toddlers premiered in a sold-out season at Abbotsford Convent.

- » Thoughtaculture artists Justine Warner, Sylvie Meltzer and Lachlan MacLeod developed this new school workshop through collaborative sessions with children at ArtPlay and Spensley Street Primary School.
- » Workshop redevelopment artists Tamara Rewse, Tirese Ballard, Dan Goronszy and David Pidd reviewed and refreshed Polyglot's workshop program, creating two new high school workshops and a professional development workshop for teachers, artists and educators.
- » Catalyst sessions and Board observation – core artists participated in several Catalyst sessions over the year: contributing to the development of Polyglot's new Strategic Plan, reviewing tours and new works, undertaking training on policies and procedures, and reflecting on artistic practice. Several artists also observed Board Meetings during the year, an initiative which continues in 2020.



Photography: Theresa Harrison

PROJECT PARTNER

» Canny Quine Foundation



ST. ALBERT

TORONTO OTTAWA PHILADELPHIA

SAN DIEGO

TOURING AND MARKET DEVELOPMENT

Polyglot's work transcends language and culture, and it is always wonderful to see how it is embraced and celebrated around the world. In 2019, we shared our immersive participatory theatre and practice with children and adults in six countries.

Polyglot representatives also attended key market development events to connect with new national and international presenters and stakeholders and deepen existing relationships. In 2019, events attended included the International Society for the Performing Arts (ISPA) Congress in New York City, the International Performing Arts for Youth (IPAY) Showcase in Philadelphia, the ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering in Uruguay, the Performing Arts Exchange in Caloundra QLD, and the Australian-Singapore Cultural Leaders Forum in Melbourne.

INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS IN PERFORMANCE

When touring internationally, we regularly invite local artists and production personnel to join our performing teams. They play an important role in providing both the language and cultural context for our work to be accessed more effectively by local audiences. An opportunity for cultural diplomacy, creative exchange,



and broadcasting our advocacy for theatre for children, it also significantly reduces Polyglot's carbon footprint. In 2019, we worked with local artists and crew in Canada, China and the USA.

An exciting new initiative to support the increased sustainability of Polyglot's international program was developed in 2019 through a partnership with Inlet Dance Theatre in Cleveland, USA. A team of Inlet's dancers was trained to perform *Ants*, and delivered their first shows alongside Polyglot artists in New York City. Our partnership with Inlet will help Polyglot's work reach more children and families in the USA while reducing our need for international travel.

PROJECT PARTNERS

The Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Australia Council for the Arts, the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria, and the International Society for the Performing Arts.

TOURING REPERTOIRE



Ants Photography: Matheus Jose Maria

ANTS

Ants is an interactive performance with giant Ants bringing children together in a gentle and unusual landscaping project.

Faced with hundreds of giant bread crumbs and three big insects, children are irresistibly drawn in to figure out what the Ants want them to do. Gradually, a world of meaning unfolds, illustrating the human desire for order and occupation as public spaces are transformed with wavering lines and patterns. *Ants* is an enchanting investigation into the nature of work and independent action, and illuminates children's relationship with public spaces.

LOCATIONS

- » Junior Toronto's International Children's Festival, Canada
- » Madison Square Park, New York City, USA
- » Xintiandi Festival, Shanghai, China
- » Healesville Sanctuary, VIC

"It was amazing. So beautiful. My kids were totally engaged for the entire time. And I had the privilege of watching my kids *in* the performance."

Parent

Cerita Anak (Child's Story) Photography: Ham



Boats Photography: Theresa Harrison

BOATS

Boats is an adventurous play space for children of all ages, using colourful vessels to navigate urban seascapes.

At a central mooring place, large lightweight boats wait patiently for children's imagination and energy. Once aboard, the boats are propelled by a flurry of feet, with kids working as a crew for their own voyage across the high seas. As the boats journey, Polyglot artists float as castaways to be rescued or as mysterious elements of the urban ocean. Together artists and children guide the boats to safe harbour ready for new crew and the next adventure! *Boats* engages children in play that re-imagines the familiar and concrete into something unpredictable and fun.

LOCATIONS

- » Warrandyte Festival, VIC
- » Without Walls Festival, San Diego, USA

"The kids" faces say it all."

Parent



Cat City Photography: Ai Ueda

CAT CITY

Cat City is a play zone full of cardboard boxes, where you make your own cat character and explore the world around you.

Create tunnels, secret sleeping places and hidden forts by using cardboard as a building material. Kids and the young at heart love turning into cats and immersing themselves in their own cat world. *Cat City* was created by Polyglot to spread the message of the Zoos Victoria community conservation campaign, Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife.

LOCATION

» Melbourne Zoo, VIC



Cerita Anak (Child's Story) Photography: Ham

CERITA ANAK (CHILD'S STORY)

Cerita Anak (Child's Story) takes children and their adults on a sea journey never to be forgotten. Climb aboard and be rocked and rolled across a strange ocean, dive to the bottom of the sea, hear stories on the wind and in the currents of the water and face great danger before coming to safe harbour.

Cerita Anak (Child's Story) draws its inspiration from the seafaring history in Java and the true tale of arrival told by a small boy. Combining puppetry, song, shadow imagery and sound, the show bustles with all the life of the ocean. Audience members, both young and old, are transported by this exquisite encounter.

LOCATION

- » IPAY Showcase, Philadelphia, USA
- » Art Space for Kids, Hangzhou and Beijing, China
- » Esplanade Theatres on the Bay, Singapore

"We were both crew and actors, sailing up and chasing waves, fishing and playing, experiencing storms, sinking, being rescued and then embracing each other... I thought I was strong enough to distinguish drama from reality, but I was still moved to tears several times."

Parent



Feast Photography: Jason Lau



Invisible Orchestra Photography: Carla Gottgens



Light Pickers Photography: Theresa Harrison

FEAST

Feast is a meal like no other. Children enter a room full of strange ingredients, with a long table set with a checked tablecloth.

They are invited to create food for all – sometimes delicious, sometimes bizarre and fantastic. The canteen workers are there, aprons in place, hairnets on, ready to assist and serve up the dishes of the day.

LOCATIONS

- » Arts Centre Melbourne, VIC
- » Abbotsford Convent, VIC



INVISIBLE ORCHESTRA

Created by IO in association with Polyglot Theatre, *Invisible Orchestra* is a musical experiment for children and their adults where beautiful sounds are created with body parts in the most unconventional and hilarious ways.

Imagine a game of musical chairs where the music starts when everyone stops. Participants are invited to compose their own musical masterpiece by playfully interacting with this constantly changing instrument. Just as musicians use their hands to strum a guitar, *Invisible Orchestra* invites children to use their imaginations – and bums – to shimmy, squash, bump and bop their way around the orchestra. Coming together as an ensemble, audiences discover a surprisingly delightful symphony of sound.

LOCATION

» Arts Centre Melbourne, VIC

LIGHT PICKERS

Light Pickers is born from the premise that small children are irresistibly drawn to sources of light.

Babies, toddlers, and their adults are gently invited to enter a dark space, following a path of light. Abstract, organic shapes, flexible and light to handle, fill this space above and below, infusing the darkness with light and sound. The young participants touch, move and interact with the objects, transforming the dark space into ever-changing, glowing scenery. Their exploration and play with the evolving tide of light and sound inspires fascination, wonder and fun.

Light Pickers sees the very young making choices that transform the space, giving meaning to an abstract scene. We see them navigate their way through the darkness as they play and connect with the light – a metaphor for hope and the power of creative minds.

LOCATION

» Abbotsford Convent, VIC

"A magical experience."

"...you get a feeling you are in the deepest depths of the sea."

Mamma Knows East



Manguri Wiltja Photography: Bewley Shaylor



Paper Planet Photography: Ai Ueda



Sound of Drawing Photography: Sarah Walker

MANGURI WILTJA

A play space of repurposed tyres, intricate woven forms, and evocative sound invites children and families to explore, listen, and learn tjanpi weaving skills.

A wiltja (traditional shelter) created from delicate woven circles offers a tranquil space for contemplation. The installation draws upon the playful yet sophisticated aesthetics of both the Tjanpi Desert Weavers and Polyglot Theatre, to introduce children to the culture and country of Warakurna.

Manguri Wiltja is a cross-artform collaboration between Tjanpi Desert Weavers, Polyglot Theatre, and FORM. Over a series of creative developments between 2016 and 2018 our organisations worked to create a performative installation for children and families. *Manguri Wiltja* represents the first major exploration of the medium of performance by artists from Tjanpi.

LOCATION

» Revealed - Fremantle Arts Centre, WA

PAPER PLANET

Children's imaginations go wild in this world made of paper.

In a spectacular forest of tall cardboard trees, children and their adults are invited to fill the space with their own fantastic paper creations. Creatures, vines and flowers, costumes and secret constructions are added to the world around them. *Paper Planet* is an ongoing, durational installation, and an experience that all ages find inspiring and utterly blissful.

LOCATIONS

- » Ottawa Children's Festival, Canada
- » International Children's Festival of the Arts, St. Albert, Canada

SOUND OF DRAWING

Textures and technology come together in a soundscape of kids' own making.

On the long, broad drawing table, children wear headphones and hear their scratches, swirls, tapping and scribbles as they create their own artistic masterpieces and make their collective mark. The sounds of the pastel on the paper is picked up by sensitive microphones and amplified, turning the physical action of drawing into a live soundscape. *Sound of Drawing* connects sound, gesture and artistic intention, drawing masterpieces from every participant.

LOCATIONS

- » Geelong Library, VIC
- » MLIVE, Monash Academy of Performing Arts, VIC





NEW WORK DEVELOPMENT •



Wild Heads Photography: Sarah Walker

WILD HEADS AND NEST

Polyglot was invited by the City of Wyndham to create a new work specifically for the Children's Week Picnic in Werribee. We delivered an interactive workshop called *Wild Heads* – where children and families were invited to create their own wild personalities using branches, leaves and flowers. *Wild Heads* was explored with children at Woodville Primary School in Werribee before the Picnic.

Wild Heads was an exciting first development for a large-scale project called Nest, also commissioned by the City of Wyndham. Working with natural materials - branches, leaves and foliage - families will construct a huge nest, where everyone becomes part of the endeavour and children get a chance to engage with nature and imaginatively play within the communal building process.

Creative team

Sue Giles Lachlan MacLeod Afsaneh Torabi Morwenna Schenk Stefanie Robinson Katrina Gaskell

PROJECT PARTNER

» City of Wyndham



Copy Cat Photography: Theresa Harrison

COPY CAT

Polyglot's fascinating partnership with Elbow Room continued in 2019 as we worked with playwright Rachel Perks to create a new theatre work, *Copy Cat.*

Copy Cat is an exploration of gender and disruption, resulting in a script involving a hack scientist, a super virus where everyone turns into cat/human hybrids, and the participation of an audience in survival mode. We had a fruitful development period with children at Spensley Street Primary School, working on the survival action and story development. *Copy Cat's* script will be finalised in 2020.

Creative team

Sue Giles Emily Tomlins Marcel Dorney Rachel Perks Steph O'Hara M'ck Mckeague Jean Tong Chi Nguyen Tom Dent Stacey Brown

PROJECT PARTNER

» Elbow Room

Cerita Anak (Child's Story) Photography: Ham

VOICE LAB •

"Voice Lab is the best thing I have ever done, it made me feel like I was being heard."



Voice Lab participant

Voice Lab is Polyglot's creative module for listening to the thoughts and opinions of children. One at a time, children are invited into a beautifully designed, serene dome where they have a conversation with Voice Lab — a voice driven by a concealed live performer who elicits detailed responses, gives time for thought and regards the child as the expert. Voice Lab encourages reflective thinking and the articulation of opinions and feelings. The discussion can be completely tailored to explore children's world views, curriculum themes, or to gather feedback on their experiences at school or in their community.

Voice Lab worked with Bankstown Communities for Children on its Children's Voices Out Loud project, aiming to discover what children thought about life in Bankstown and to use their voices to help shape the development of Bankstown as a child-friendly community. Many of the children thanked Voice Lab for providing a space to talk about their thoughts and feelings, with one child saying, *"Thank you for giving me this opportunity, I will remember this for the rest of my life."*

Voice Lab completed a major project with City of Melbourne, speaking to local children about their experience of living and attending school in the area. When asked what adults can learn from children, one child replied, *"That we're all the same. I get emotional, adults get emotional... kids fall down and adults fall down... everyone's the same – it's just that you get older."*

Satellite Foundation works with children, young people and their families in situations where a parent has mental illness. Voice Lab worked with Satellite to ask its young participants questions centred around home and family, as well as seeking feedback on Satellite programs.

Voice Lab was engaged by Mission Australia to attend the City of Greater Dandenong children's festival, Little Day Out, where it spoke to local kids about school, family and the future. In response to the question, *"If you had the power to change the world what would you do?"* many children expressed concern for the environment and the need to rid the ocean of rubbish. City of Greater Dandenong also used Voice Lab at its annual Children's Forum for the second year, where it spoke to local children about making their community happy, safe and healthy. Many children expressed that being healthy includes mental health, with one child stating, *"To be healthy means to have a happy mind and also to eat nice foods and work hard."*

Voice Lab attended the 2019 OPEN Symposium run by The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare and went on its second interstate tour to Queensland, where it was used by Mission Australia's Communities for Children – Ipswich to Inala to talk to local children about its community programs. Voice Lab returns to Queensland in February 2020 to complete the final stage of this project.

PROJECT PARTNERS

- » The Smith Family Bankstown Communities for Children
- » City of Melbourne
- » Satellite Foundation
- » Mission Australia's Communities for Children – Dandenong
- » City of Greater Dandenong
- » Mission Australia's Communities for Children – Ipswich to Inala
- » The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare



KIDS COLLABORATIONS •

Through our Kids Collaboration projects, we focus on the children of specific communities and deliver creative programs that develop capacity, resilience and unique art, based on the child's world view. Polyglot has recognised expertise in supporting community cultural resilience - developing multi-year collaborations with schools and communities which have little access to the arts and which are seeking authentic creative engagement for their young people.

5678 FILM CLUB

5678 Film Club was a three-year project that supported young people making the transition between primary and secondary school in Collingwood, Melbourne. It ran as a weekly after-school film club where Polyglot Theatre and professional filmmakers undertook creative workshops with participants from Grades 5 - 8. The young people were co-creators of the film-making process, giving them a platform to tell their own stories in their own way, and make exciting, innovative and challenging films with children's ideas and messages at their heart.

The key to this project lay in its long-term focus which played out across three years – as the kids moved through Years 5, 6, 7 and 8. The project included regular screenings at community events, independent film festivals and the St Joseph's Primary School annual red carpet evening – Collywood – for the whole community.

In 2019, 24 after-school workshops were delivered. Term 1 workshops focused on making short films to accompany the 5678 Film Club Education Resource. Terms 2 and 3 had regular workshops that produced an ensemble project – a web series called *Mixed Up*.

There was a return to Bargoonga Nganjin Centre (North Fitzroy Library), with highly successful screenings taking place in the July school holiday program. There was also a reprise of the end-of-year festival screening hosted by Polyglot at Kino Cinema in November, which featured the web series as well as highlights from the previous two years of the project. Many parents of Film Club participants were in attendance at this event, as well as key Polyglot stakeholders, donors and industry peers.

2019 also saw the creation of the 5678 Film Club Education Resource. The resource draws on filmmaking processes used by Polyglot Theatre's 5678 Film Club team, and is designed for teachers who are interested in exploring filmmaking through a child-centred lens with their students. In collaboration with ACMI, a professional development workshop for teachers was delivered to trial and launch the Education Resource.

KEY COLLABORATORS

» St Joseph's Primary School

PROJECT PARTNERS

- » ACMI
- » City of Yarra
- » Newsboys Foundation
- » The R.E. Ross Trust
- » The William Buckland Foundation

"The most cogent changes I observed were with students who are quieter in the classroom and less willing/able to express their ideas and thoughts out loud. It was wonderful to watch these students express and develop their ideas within the Film Club. They 'blossomed' throughout the process and were often the creators of strong, vibrant ideas."

Teacher, St Joseph's Primary School



5678 Film Club Photography: Theresa Harrison

FIRST ON THE LADDER

First On The Ladder was a three-year, art-meets-sport collaboration between Polyglot Theatre and Beyond Empathy, in partnership with Rumbalara Football Netball Club in Shepparton, Victoria and the Moree Boomerangs in New South Wales. The project centred on the young people from these two Indigenous sports clubs – celebrating their culture and achievements through a range of creative experiences. These included making large-scale street art exhibits, hand-drawn zines, stop-motion animation, video clips with original songs and choreography, creative play workshops and radio broadcasting.

2019 was the final year of the project, and its focus was both to explore and reflect on the deep ties built between Polyglot, Beyond Empathy, and the communities of Rumbalara and the Boomerangs. These vibrant Aboriginal-led organisations welcomed us in, and without this, our work would not have been possible. The strength of family and culture in each, and their far-reaching engagement across sport, health and education opened up new ways of thinking about the role that art plays, and its impact, within a community.

In Shepparton, 2019 saw 168 children and young people engage in nine creative play workshops where they designed, constructed and furnished their own miniature Dream Houses which were placed into a reimagined neighbourhood called Rumba Town – an interactive exhibition for the community.

97 young people engaged in seven live Rumba Radio broadcasts facilitated by Jaimie-Lee Hindmarsh, Dan Koop and lan Pidd. The radio station was an opportunity for young people to share stories, discuss their passions and play their favourite songs. Kids engaged with the responsibilities of radio presentation, created their own segments and stings, and had great conversations with their Elders during interviews.

To mark its final year, First On The Ladder showcased the collective artworks created during the project in two exhibitions as part of Shepparton Festival 2019 and YIRRAMBOI Festival 2019. *First On The Ladder: Shopfront* transformed vacant spaces in the centre of Shepparton and the Melbourne CBD into beautifully curated exhibitions of art, video and sound work, celebrating the kids and their Club. It enabled the works of children and young people to reach wider communities beyond the Club, and provide greater awareness of the Club and community in Shepparton and Melbourne.

In Moree, 72 young people were engaged in seven Boomerangs Broadcast Corporation (BBC) radio workshops with Jerome Smith, Blayne Welsh and lan Pidd. During NAIDOC Week, rock legends Fitzroy Xpress visited the BBC to be interviewed on the radio by local kids. 243 young people were engaged in seven creative play workshops with a large-scale fence weaving project taking centre stage throughout the workshops.

A First On The Ladder retrospective exhibition was held at Dhiiyaan Aboriginal Centre, where the resulting work from three years of play workshops was transformed into a showcase of photographs, sculptures, a play space, paintings and artworks. The exhibition was open for three months.

A strong focus of 2019's activities was the transfer of skills from Polyglot's professional artists to local facilitators to run creative play workshops and radio broadcast sessions during the 2019 season and beyond. Polyglot hosted development sessions at each Club to provide training, skill development and employment opportunities to local community leaders in creative play and radio broadcasting.

While First On The Ladder has officially ended, Polyglot looks forward to continuing our relationships with Rumbalara and the Boomerangs into the future.



First On The Ladder Photography: Raquel Clarke

"It's been great to tune into and express who we are, our culture and values. The idea of learning through creation, participation and watching others to see what you do next is part of Aboriginal pedagogy. This enables us (Rumba) to maintain, sustain and safeguard aspects of our culture and identity."

Belinda Briggs, Rumbalara Football Netball Club

LOCATIONS

- » Shepparton, VIC
- » Melbourne, VIC
- » Moree, NSW

KEY COLLABORATORS

- » Beyond Empathy
- » Rumbalara Football Netball Club
- » Moree Boomerangs Rugby League Club

PROJECT PARTNERS

- » Australia Council for the Arts
- » Besen Family Foundation





WORKSHOPS



Paper Planet Photography: Ai Ueda

Polyglot's workshop program engages with schools, festivals, events and communities nationally and internationally, offering children a structured opportunity to discover their imaginative potential.

Our experienced artists work alongside the children to gain the benefit of their insight and energy, to challenge their own preconceptions of what children think and how they act, and to be inspired by their ease of imaginative engagement. In turn, children are given attention and respect by the artists, made to feel their contributions are valid and interesting, and are part of a project that has a horizon often bigger than their own community.

Polyglot also offers professional development workshops for artists, teachers and early childhood workers. These focus on the application of Polyglot's child-led methodology in creative spaces and classrooms.

In 2019, Polyglot delivered 138 workshops with 6440 participants.



Photograph courtesy of United World College South East Asia

ANTS

» Geelong Grammar ELC

CLIPPY

- » Wedderburn College
- » Sale Art Gallery

PAPER AND TAPE

- » Princes Hill Primary School
- » Geelong Grammar School -Toorak Campus
- » Aspendale Primary School
- » Geelong Gallery
- » Westgarth Primary School

PAPER PLANET

- » Belvoir Specialist School, Wodonga
- » Clifton Hill Primary School
- » Caulfield Grammar Wheelers Hill ELC
- » Springvale Park Special Development School

SHADOW TRICKS

- » Cornish College, Bangholme
- » Toorak Primary School
- » Geelong Grammar School -Toorak Campus



Sound of Drawing Photography: Sarah Walker

SOUND OF DRAWING

» Genazzano ELC, Kew

THOUGHTACULTURE

- » ArtPlay, Melbourne
- » Spensley Street Primary School, Clifton Hill

THEATRECRAFT

» Brunswick Secondary College

SCHOOL RESIDENCY PROGRAM

» Warringa Park School

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

- » Baby Theatre, Five Senses Education Theatre, Hong Kong
- » 'Joyful Disruption', Esplanade Theatres on the Bay, Singapore
- » 5678 Film Club Education Resource launch, ACMI



Photograph courtesy of United World College South East Asia

PROGRAM PARTNERS

Clippy workshops in regional Victoria were supported by Regional Arts Victoria's Education and Families program. *Paper Planet* workshops at Belvoir Specialist School and Springvale Park Special Development School were supported by the Victorian Department of Education and Training's Strategic Partnerships Program.

SCHOOL WORKSHOP SPONSOR

» Lucas Dental Care





EVALUATION

5678 Film Club Photography: Theresa Harrison Since 2009, Polyglot has commissioned independent academic evaluations of our work: school residencies, community collaborations, performances, workshops, and one overview evaluation for an entire year of the company's activities. Through our consistent investment in this process, the impact of our work is demonstrated and Polyglot's best practice approach is validated.

The socio-developmental impact of 5678 Film Club continued to be evaluated by Victoria University in 2019. Evaluators collected perspectives of staff from St Joseph's Primary School to gain insight into how Film Club complemented school hours, and interviewed students about their 2019 Film Club experience. Dr Laurie Chapin, Psychology lecturer at Victoria University and Research Fellow with the VU Institute of Health and Sport, summarised the key findings:



THE QUIET CREATIVES BLOSSOM

Most teachers felt all students benefited from being in Film Club, but a few emphasised that those who were quiet and able to 'blossom' gained more. Film Club seems like the perfect activity for outgoing, animated children, but it allowed the more reserved children to find support and grow their confidence. One of the year 5 students said one thing she learned was "speaking up more."

"It particularly benefited the students who were quiet creatives, they seemed to blossom and this seemed to compound with every film made. It also benefited the students who were socially isolated in the mainstream school setting"

Teacher, St Joseph's Primary School

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5678 Film Club Photography: Theresa Harrison



5678 Film Club Photography: Theresa Harrison

2 CHILDREN'S IDEAS ARE AT THE HEART

Children's ideas, open expression, and "having a voice" are at the heart of the Film Club process. For three teachers, "ideas" was one of the most frequent words used. All but one noted how the children were able to express, explore and grow their ideas at Film Club. The artists and facilitators were respectful and encouraging, and created an inspiring environment, which was key to their child-centred approach.

Several children said that they were encouraged to "do their best" and it was okay to feel nervous, forget lines, or feel unsure, as they felt supported in giving it a go.

3

BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF COLLABORATION

Collaboration and teamwork, which involves problem solving, is important to the Film Club process. Many students grew because of the opportunity to work closely with each other and with the artists.

One Grade 5 boy said "teamwork" was something he had learned, and gave an example of having to work with a boy he didn't like. "I just like went on with it... Pretend he's my best friend."

4

GROWING CONFIDENCE AND EXPERIENCE

The children all easily articulated what they had learned at Film Club, including writing, animating, acting, and camera operation, even though these were new experiences for many of them. Overall most participants felt that they had grown in confidence. One said it was hard just starting Film Club: *"it's the first time, first experience and you think oh my gosh, you think you're gonna mess up."* When asked how she overcame this initial feeling, she said *"I just tried my best. See how I go. And I did well... It helps your confidence more."*

"It was amazing to see the artists take the children's ideas and then ask the right questions or prompt the students to ask their own, as a way of getting the kids to do the heavy lifting when it came to the developing of ideas."

Teacher, St Joseph's Primary School "The kids feel heard and respected as creative collaborators and own the finished work."

Teacher, St Joseph's Primary School "I'm better at confidence."

5678 Film Club participant



FUNDRAISING

Apart from our massive 40th birthday effort in 2018, Polyglot raised more funds in 2019 than any other previous individual fundraising campaign. We were delighted to retain a significant proportion of donors from the 2018 campaign, which was undertaken to achieve our relocation to Abbotsford Convent. The relocation has boosted our company's profile and offers a new integrated approach to fundraising for our organisation, which was demonstrated in 2019.

Focused on Polyglot's child-led vision of the future, the campaign benefited greatly from the use of our new headquarters, through hosting the campaign launch afternoon tea and inviting donors to attend the school holiday season of *Light Pickers* at the Convent. This season was significant as *Light Pickers* is a project produced through Polyglot's artistic development program The Generator, which formed the lynchpin of the 2019 campaign. The opportunity to self-present this season within the cultural precinct from which our company works allowed us to demonstrate the impact of donor support in action.

Light Pickers Photography: Theresa Harrison

POLYGLOT'S CIRCLE

The donors that form Polyglot's Circle are vitally important friends of the organisation. Together, they play a crucial role in strengthening Polyglot through both financial support and advocacy. In 2019, we welcomed new friends and old to Polyglot's Circle and we thank these donors for helping make our work possible.

GROWING DONORS

- » Ausbridge Investments Pty Ltd
- » Greg Shalit and Miriam Faine

SUSTAINING DONORS

- » Carrillo Gantner AC
- » James McCaughey

EMPOWERING DONORS

- » The Australian Decorative and Fine Arts Society Melbourne Inc. (ADFAS)
- » Neredah Burns and Kim Sweeney
- » Clementine Ireton, Kate Taylor and Greg Ireton
- » Naomi Tippet AM

ENCOURAGING DONORS

- » Monica and Sam Abrahams
- » John and Diana Chew
- » Elsie Management
- » Ruth Giles
- » John Gutteridge
- » Sarah Hunt
- » Julian Pocock
- » Eda Ritchie AM
- » Sandra Robertson
- » Dr Meg Upton
- » Anonymous (1)

SHARING DONORS

- » Simon Abrahams
- » Skye Abraham
- » Simon Bedford
- » Nicole Beyer and Kim, Min and Shasha Marriot
- » Margaret Billson
- » Nancy Black
- » Rev Fr Michael Elligate AM
- » Belinda and John Fogarty
- » Kathy Fox
- » Sue Giles AM and Ian Pidd
- » Tom Gutteridge
- » Erica Heller-Wagner and Dave McCarthy
- » Lesley MacLeod
- » Lesley McCarthy
- » mcmahon and nerlich
- » Nami Nelson
- » Naomi Nicholson
- » Dr Angela O'Brien
- » Lou Oppenheim
- » Viv Rosman
- » Antoinette Sharp
- » Dr Fiona Wahr and family
- » Anonymous (1)

Light Pickers Photography: Theresa Harrison

SPONSORSHIP

Polyglot is fortunate to have benefited from two key sponsors in 2019.

- » LUCAS DENTAL CARE
- Lucas Dental Care began sponsoring Polyglot in 2010. The practice's generous contribution to Polyglot continued in 2019, supporting the School Workshop Program. Lucas Dental Care enables more children across Melbourne and Victoria to engage with Polyglot in their schools.
- » STUDIO BINOCULAR Studio Binocular has supported Polyglot since 2016 and continued its sponsorship as Polyglot's Design Partner in 2019.



2019 FUNDING PARTNERS



PHILANTHROPIC PARTNERS













SPONSORS



Workshop Program Sponsor



Design Partner

SUPPORTERS



Cerita Anak (Child's Story) Photography: Alvin Ho

GOVERNMENT PARTNERS



GOVERNMENT PROJECT PARTNERS



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Education and Training

CREATIVE VICTORIA



THANK YOU

KEY SCHOOL CONTRIBUTORS

Brunswick Secondary College, Spensley Street Primary School, St Joseph's Primary School, Victorian College for the Deaf, Warringa Park School, Woodville Primary School

5678 FILM CLUB

- » Dr Laurie Chapin and the Victoria University evaluation team
- » Christine Evely and Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI)
- » Courtney Jeantou, Anna Thomson
- » Jorr, Integrated Film & Television Solutions
- » Pinch Press Studio
- » Rachel Smith, Sally Hildyard and St Joseph's Primary School
- » Dr Meg Upton

FIRST ON THE LADDER

- » Kylie Benge, Chris Binge and Moree Boomerangs Rugby League Club
- » Belinda Briggs, Kylie Briggs, Paul Briggs, James Miller and Rumbalara Football Netball Club
- » Kim McConville, Minna Lethbridge, Jemma Craigie, Darryl Paull and Beyond Empathy
- » Academy for Sport, Health and Education (Shepparton)
- » J-Maine Beezley and YIRRAMBOI Festival
- » Jamie Lea, Louise Tremper and Shepparton Festival
- » Bonnie McIntosh and Greater Shepparton Council
- » Erin McLeod and Torrens University
- » Moree Sports, Health, Arts and Education Academy
- » Janelle Boyd, Ella Crumpen-Winmar, Aunty Paula Duncan, Audie Duncan, Shae Duncan, Skyela Gillon, Aunty Mandy Haines, Aunty Barb Johnson-Smith, Aunty Valmai Pitt, Matt Saraceni, Dean Thomas, Jacob Turier

POLYGLOT FRIENDS

- » Caroline Bowditch and Arts Access Victoria
- » Collette Brennan and Abbotsford Convent Foundation
- » Jeff Challis and Aakonsult
- » Laura Colby and Elsie Management
- » Laura Cornhill, Camilla Walker and Studio Binocular
- » Elbow Room
- » FORM building a state of creativity
- » Inlet Dance Theatre
- » ITtelligent
- » Dr James Lucas, Megan Boyd and Lucas Dental Care
- » Toby Ovadia and Smart Records Group
- » Papermoon Puppet Theatre
- » Gianna Rosica, Roslyn Buzza and Gianna Rosica Accounting for the Arts
- » Sarah Walker Photography
- » Peter Wilson and MCA Insurance Brokers
- » Theatre Network Australia
- » Theresa Harrison Photography
- » Tjanpi Desert Weavers
- » Winnie Tsang
- » Steph Urruty, Tanya Dickson and ArtPlay
- » The staff of all our government and philanthropic funding partners



Paper Planet Photography: Sarah Walker

FINANCIALS

STATEMENT OF PROFIT AND LOSS AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2018

INCOME	2019 \$	2018 \$
Grants		
Government Funding	932,986	1,019,881
Philanthropic Organisations	142,502	166,138
Other Grants	5,415	4,967
Total Grants Income	1,080,903	1,190,986
Other Earned Income		
Performance and Audience Sales	596,002	497,372
Resources Income	62,988	30,796
Sponsorship and Fundraising	59,987	70,788
Business Related Income	31,963	51,525
Total Other Earned Income	750,940	650,481
TOTAL INCOME	1,831,843	1,841,467

EXPENSES	2019 \$	2018 \$
Production Costs	824,230	845,734
Marketing and Promotion	66,791	54,019
Administration Costs	917,909	912,191
TOTAL EXPENSES	1,808,930	1,811,943
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	22,913	29,524

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2018

ASSETS	2019 \$	2018 \$
Current Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	1,003,864	1,014,214
Other Current Assets	244,781	397,286
Total Current Assets	1,248,645	1,411,500
Non-Current Assets		
Property, Plant and Equipment	100,439	134,467
Total Non-Current Assets	100,439	134,467
TOTAL ASSETS	1,349,084	1,545,967
LIABILITIES	2019 \$	2018 \$
Current Liabilities		
Trade and Other Payables	75,774	106,077
Provisions	59,640	63,939
Other Current Liabilities	573,494	990,992
Total Current Liabilities	708,908	1,161,008
Non-Current Liabilities		
Provisions	4,608	1,504
Other Liabilities	229,200	-
Total Non-Current Liabilities	233,808	1,504
TOTAL LIABILITIES	942,716	1,162,512
NET ASSETS	406,368	383,455
EQUITY	2019 \$	2018 \$

Retained Earnings

TOTAL EQUITY 40	6,368 383	,455

406,368

383,455

Talk with us

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