

Case study

Living in Hope

Details

What:

"The questions were endless. Why do intelligent people fall victim to online dating scams? Is our underlying desire for love and happiness leaving us vulnerable to online predators? Can we truly say 'it would never happen to me?'" – Deb Sampson

Deb Sampson and Andrea Moor researched, developed and presented a private showing of the creative development phase for *Living in Hope*. Inspired by true stories, this new work explores the experiences of victims of international romance fraud.

With support from the Queensland Police Fraud and Cyber Crime Group (FCCG), police psychologists and victims of online fraud, Deb and Andrea performed interviews and research to inform their work.

Telling this online story demanded the integration of technology into the traditional world of theatre, including:

- combining voiceover, movement and digital projection onto actors and surrounding objects to blur the distinction between the online elements of the technology-driven world with the physical world
- pairing live performance with pre-recorded film
- pairing live performance with online, real-time 'chatting.'

The private showing was received well by an audience of potential producers and respected peers, and resulted in valuable feedback to the creators.



Living in Hope – Creative Development

When: February – December 2014

Where: Brisbane

Key stats:

- 7 paid artists/arts and cultural workers
- 83% of peers/partners rated work as good or excellent
- 94% of peers/partners felt the work was relevant to society and the times we live in and 100% wanted to know more about the subject matter.

Arts Queensland contribution:

\$27,598 – Projects and Programs Fund

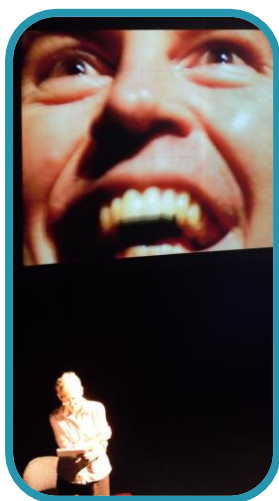
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Outcomes

- Deb and Andrea successfully presented a private showing for potential producing partners and critical friends and gained valuable feedback (verbal and written) for future development:
 - “Excellent portrayal of victims’ stories”
 - “Brave creatives and contributors”
 - “The use of media was lovely – not too intrusive or obvious”
 - “Important stories that need telling”
 - “Can’t wait for the finished show”
- Even though the project has only just completed the creative development stage, it has already developed a following of both industry and general community members.
- Strong relationships with Queensland Police FCCG; Victims of Fraud Support Group; and Queensland Theatre Company were formed and will continue into the future.
- Both Deb and Andrea developed and furthered their skills. Andrea has developed greater confidence in leading a team in a collaborative process that demands high use of technology and invention to tell this online story. Deb further developed her skills as an actor, co-creator and producer, which puts her in a strong position to continue creating a future in Queensland’s arts industry and move this project to the production/touring phase.



Living in Hope – Creative Development

Learnings and reflections

Living in Hope has been a successful creative development which received positive feedback from audiences and encouragement and support from organisations and people involved.

As opposed to many creative developments, which generally start with a drafted script, the development of *Living in Hope* was guided by victim’s experiences. For those involved this was a different but valuable experience. Elaine (writer) reported:

‘The chance to work collaboratively with actors, director and visual designer in establishing the characters and scenarios of the play – I’ve always driven that process, and not being the sole creator was a very interesting and productive experience.’

The telling on the ‘online story’ involved extensive integration of technology. Risks associated with this medium were considered early in the process:

With a huge reliance on this technology (live and pre-recorded) during the private showing, the risk of ‘technical difficulties’ was mitigated by meticulous planning and the engagement of experienced professionals who were able to quickly adapt to these circumstances.

In terms of what they would have done differently or tips for others undertaking creative developments, Deb and Andrea had the following advice:

- *Commence contract management process earlier to avoid unnecessary stress*
- *Engage earlier with potential producing partners to ensure a higher rate of acceptance to the private showing*
- *Free cloud technology allows sharing of research, interviews and ideas easily and assisted in minimising administration costs*
- *Plan, plan, plan.*