

# Case study

## White Porcelain Doll

### Details

**What:**

Prying Eye is a Queensland based dance theatre company harnessing the power of collaboration to take bold creative risks to exquisitely combine different art forms and combine structured movement improvisation techniques within performance, stimulating the emotional core of human experience. Arts Queensland funding was provided for the final creative development and presentation of a new dance work by Prying Eye titled *White Porcelain Doll*. The work is a psychological thriller captivated by the real life survival of long-term female hostages and explores the incredible strength and tenacity of such women, who developed remarkable coping mechanisms to withstand the volatile actions of their captors.

Experienced Queensland dancers and choreographers Lizzie and Zaimon Vilmanis are the key creatives of Prying Eye. Other artists collaborating on the project included: Ryadan Jeavons, Bruce McKinven, Dr Clare Dyson, Veronica Neave, Dan Black and Tessa Smallhorn.

The project included an outreach component which supported Lizzie and Zaimon Vilmanis to deliver dance workshops for 2nd and 3rd year dance students at the Queensland University of Technology and a creative minds movement workshop for students at the Aboriginal Centre of Performing Arts at Kangaroo Point in Brisbane.

**When:** June – August 2014

**Where:** Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Art, Brisbane



Photo: Fenlan Photography

**Key stats:**

- Creative development of full scale production including 6 performances and three outreach workshops
- 405 participants and audiences attended
- 95 per cent of attendees surveyed rated the performance as good or excellent

**Arts Queensland contribution:**

\$18,818– Projects and Programs Fund

**Contact for further information:**

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**Links**

<http://vimeo.com/96786547>

## Outcomes

- Prying Eye were able to establish their profile in Brisbane as an emerging and innovative dance company that is collaborative and pushing the boundaries of new performance practices.
- Collaboration also supported the artists during the creative process to take bold artistic risks not normally taken at the final development and presentation phase of a project.
- The project pioneered new and innovative ways to seamlessly integrate video art with dance theatre. Multimedia was used both with the body as a canvas to convey metaphors, as well as a tool to depict imagination as a means of escapism. This enhanced the impact of both the performance and the design of the production without the need of high tech projection mapping.
- The facilitation of the workshops with students enabled Prying Eye to develop new workshop material and build tools for more effective transfer of creative skills, expanding the scope and improving the delivery of workshops on offer in the future.



FenLan Photography

## Audience feedback

- *VERY good treatment of a difficult, confronting subject matter.*
- *Thought you approached it respectfully but also fearlessly and you definitely sparked much conversation between my peers and I over the next few weeks, which I think you should consider a great success as artists.*
- *The topic of abduction is a very out of site out of mind situation. I felt it was good that you gave the topic some light because abduction should be an approachable topic and people shouldn't feel uncomfortable when confronted about it.*

## Learnings and reflections

The creative development process has enabled the company to gain new knowledge of how to market and produce work, learning vital skills from industry professionals and refining their arts practice.

A partnership with the Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts through the Fresh Ground program and support through Projects and Program Funding enabled Prying Eye to create work of the highest quality and build the company's capacity.

Prying Eye members reflected that the guidance and support of experienced collaborative artists involved in the project helped build expertise and confidence.

*'Engaging a number of very experienced artists who could offer their expert knowledge and guidance was invaluable to us when we found ourselves in uncharted territory as they provided the right level of assistance when we needed it most and supported us to be bold in our decision making.'*

In terms of future work Prying Eye noted, feedback from industry peers suggested that a targeted marketing campaign to sell this confronting work could improve audience attendance and help promote trust in Prying Eye's work.

Prying Eye also identified the need to further build capacity of the company and employ personnel to help with the production side of the project in particular a Production Manager to take on scheduling.