

Best Festival Ever: How to Manage a Disaster BOHO

Image: Courtesy of the artist

Arts House



Season 1

Artist's Notes

As human beings, we are surrounded by and embedded within systems; natural systems such as climate and ecosystems, and human systems such as economies and societies.

Many of the significant issues facing us today have emerged from the interplay between human and natural systems. Over the last two decades, scientists in the field of Systems Science have created a toolkit of vital concepts for understanding and grappling with real-world complexity.

Best Festival Ever brings these ideas from Systems Science to life in a unique theatrical presentation.

This project began in 2012 with a provocation from University College London's Environment Institute: is it possible to take concepts from Systems Science and turn them into a live performance? We worked with scientists and researchers from University College London and Stockholm Resilience Centre who showed us how these ideas are being used in the world.

We came to these ideas as writers and performers, all with a history of making interactive theatre. When we started we didn't have much of an idea of what this show might look like. We created more than 50 new board games exploring aspects of climate and systems science, and built a story world based on some of the worst music festival disasters of the last 50 years.

Since 2014, *Best Festival Ever* has had public seasons in the UK and Sweden at Battersea Arts Centre, London Science Museum, Kings College London, Central St Martins College, Forum for the Future, Stockholm Resilience Centre, Miljöverkstan and Färgfabriken. The first Australian performance season was in 2015 at the Street Theatre in Canberra.

Best Festival Ever was created with the intention of providing an introduction to systems thinking, offering an insight into the concepts and terminology that systems scientists use to understand the world. From our perspective, one of the most rewarding parts of this process is the post-show conversations with scientists. This is a really key feature of the show, where we unpack some of the ideas from climate and systems science that have informed the making of the work. For us as artists, *Best Festival Ever* was always intended to provide the platform for these sorts of conversations, and it's an honour to bring on board scientists and thinkers of this calibre.

This season we are joined by scientists including Mark Burgman (University of Melbourne), Dave Winkler (CSIRO), Anne-Marie Grisogono (Flinders University), Kevin Grove (Florida International University), Lauren Rickard (RMIT) and David Batten (CSIRO).

We're really excited to bring our last four years of work to Melbourne to share as part of Performing Climates.

Artistic Credits

Artists:
David Finnigan, Nathan Harrison, Nikki Kennedy, Rachel Roberts & David Shaw

Biographies

David Shaw is the Editor of CSIRO's *Maths by Email* and *Science by Email* newsletters, and contributing editor of *Double Helix* magazine. David is a founding member of BOHO Interactive.

Nikki Kennedy is a performer, director and interdisciplinary theatre-maker with an interest in feminism, psychology, communication and collaborative creative process. She is a co-founder of Sydney based performance collective Applespiel. Nikki is currently Co-Artistic Director of Crack Theatre Festival.

David Finnigan is an Australian writer and theatre artist. Working with research scientists in the UK, Australia and Sweden, he creates work exploring climate and systems science. David is a Churchill Fellow and an Australia Council Early Career Fellow.

Nathan Harrison is a performer, writer and Honours graduate of University of Wollongong. A founding member of Applespiel, he has devised and presented work around Australia and internationally. Nathan is a broadcaster on FBi Radio and hosts the podcast *Hottest 100s and 1000s*.

Rachel Roberts is an actor and theatre-maker. She has created and performed internationally in Australia, the Philippines and Europe. Her work with science-theatre company BOHO Interactive has been featured in *New Scientist* magazine. Rachel has been artist-in-residence at Battersea Arts Centre, University College London, the London Science Museum and Shopfront Youth Theatre.

Image: Courtesy of the artist



Arts House

Arts House is a program of the City of Melbourne and our home is North Melbourne Town Hall. We support new and diverse ways to make and experience art providing a nexus for cultural expression and social connection in a city environment.

Arts House develops work that is contemporary, experimental and participatory.

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