

Presented by Arts House as
part of Dance Massive

Cockfight The Farm

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Image: Kate Holmes

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Fri 24 Mar 8.45pm
Sat 25 Mar, 1pm & 8.45pm
Sun 26 Mar, 1pm
70 mins

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artshouse.com.au

Creative Team

Gavin Webber

Co-Director/Performer

Joshua Thomson

Co-Director/Performer/

Set Designer

Kate Harman

Co-Director

Julian Louis

Co-Director

Mark Howett

Lighting Designer

Luke Smiles

Sound Designer

Joey Ruigrok

Set Consultant

The Farm, Performing

Lines, NORPA

Producers

Cockfight was made by
The Farm in association with
NORPA and Performing lines

At The Farm work is made in a
collaborative process where
everyone brings their expertise
without being confined to it.
All animals are equal.



Artist Statement

At the heart of *Cockfight* is the relationship between Gavin and Josh. They met as teacher and student, worked together for over 10 years and now are both co-artistic directors of different companies.

Cockfight sets their relationship within a stark office environment and explores a power play that is both dramatic and complex. Both the theatre and the office, as a fictional space, are used by the performers to compete and play out the cockfight.

We don't like to label the work - the industry may describe *Cockfight* as dance theatre or dance or physical theatre or none of the above, we don't really mind as long as the audience is engaged, entertained and given the licence to make their own associations and connections. In the end we have made a show that is raw and honest, open like a wound. *Cockfight* explodes the fictional world it carefully builds as the reality of these two men are caught in the impact of the choreography.

At The Farm we like to take risks. Some might even say we are a little addicted to it, like a bunch of theatrical jackasses. We are always searching for that perfect creative formula, a collaboration based on trust and familiarity spiced with new

input. For this work Julian Louis joined us as a guest Farmer from the work's inception and his influence and energy in the room have helped make *Cockfight* the crazy blend of theatre and dance that it is.

At the core of The Farm's work is collaboration and trust and curiosity - *Cockfight* has more banter within the scenes than we've had in past works - this was improvised and captured. The game between Gavin and Josh at times took us into full length improvisations that lasted over 40 minutes and what you see is a distillation of this play between them. There is not a lot of discarded scenes in the process of making *Cockfight* - we start somewhere with an idea and build upon it - layering it and as a group finding the best way for the idea to show itself.

In the making of this show we broke a lot of props. On the side of our rehearsal space was always a graveyard of stereos, phones, chairs and lamps...and cut up ties. What is intact is our working relationships.

— *The Farm*

Kate Harman

Co-Director

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Kate is a dancer, performer, choreographer and collaborator who has created and performed in works within the realms of dance, theatre, circus, performative installation and in projects created with amateurs and young people.

A graduate of Queensland University of Technology Kate spent for four years at Dancenorth under the Artistic Direction of Gavin Webber, before moving to Germany in 2009, Kate joined PVCtanz (Physical Virus Collective), working in theatre and dance productions, and creating work that was presented in Theater Freiburg, Theater Heidelberg and PVCtanz Germany. Freelance since 2011 Kate continued her collaborative work, first with Animal Farm Collective and now as a member of The Farm, her most recent collaboration with The Farm was *Cockfight*. She is also a guest artist with Theater Freiburg and Klara Theater, Switzerland and continues to pursue her own work which is currently focused on the shows *Depthless* with Ben Ely and *Parlour* with Alice Hinde.

Joshua Thomson

Co-Director/Performer/Set Co-Designer

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A Bachelor of Fine Arts (Dance) graduate from the Queensland University of Technology, Josh is a Dancer, Choreographer, Director and Maker. He has worked nationally and internationally for the past 11 years with company's such as Tasdance, dancenorth, Perth Theatre Company, The Farm and PVC – Physical Virus Collective (Germany), Legs On The Wall, Stalker Stilt Theatre, Shaun Parker & Company and Marrugeku. He specialises in dynamic physical performing work from live theatre to 48h duration work in water. *Cockfight*, a show that Joshua co-created, was nominated in the Best Ballet or Dance work category at the prestigious 2016 Helpmann Awards. This work will also tour Australia and England in 2017.

Joshua is one of Legs' two newly appointed Co-Artistic Directors in 2017, starting in his role with Highly Sprung, a large scale outdoor work that is making it's world premiere as part of the City of Sydney's Art and About festival.

Julian Louis

Co-Director

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Julian is a theatre maker, performer, and is Artistic Director of NORPA (Northern Rivers Performing Arts), a theatre company based in Lismore NSW on Bundjalung country.

For NORPA recent shows include *Railway Wonderland* (site-specific) and *Dreamland* (site-specific), along with *The Bloody Bride* and *Engine* and *Not Like Beckett*. He also conceived/commissioned *My Radio Heart* a mixed abilities music theatre work, *Open House* a circus work in a house, and *The Home Project* which was presented at the Prague Quadrennial Festival of Space and Design.

Julian was Artistic Director of Sydney based theatre company State of Play; a Graduate of Charles Sturt University BA Theatre/ Media, National Institute Dramatic Arts (NIDA) Directors Diploma and trained as a performer in London with Philippe Gaulier.

Gavin Webber

Co-Director/Performer

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Gavin is co-Artistic Director of The Farm with Grayson Millwood. Throughout his career Gavin has worked between Australia and Europe and directed theatre, dance, circus, film and installation. He spent the majority of his early performance career with Meryl Tankard ADT and Belgian company Ultima Vez. As Artistic Director of Dancenorth he took the company from regional Australia to national and international touring and his work has received many awards including six Greenroom awards in a single year. In 2016 The Farm received three Helpmann nominations for their new work. He was co-founder of Collaborative ensemble Splintergroup and Animal Farm Collective, early incarnations of The Farm, whose work has been seen across four continents. The Farm currently have two shows in the making; *Frank Enstein* and *Quarantine*.

Joey Ruigrok van der Werven

Set Designer

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Joey is a freelance designer and director for visual, physical and spectacle theatre. The worlds he creates are a mix of performance, structures, lights, sound, machinery and sensory elements. He writes story with his designs and his work can express real meaning and poetry through the animation of the "material". He creates theatre for unusual places and specific occasions, while often inviting community into the creation process. He has designed and built stages for Stalker, Marrugeku, Legs on the Wall, Gravity Feed, Kantanka, Urban Theatre Projects, Shopfront Theatre, Earth, Performance Space, Perth International Festival Garden, Centenary of Canberra Celebrations, Woodford Folk Festival, many independent new works and his own performance events at Carriage Works, *Fire-Water*; and a large scale spectacle in Sydney Harbour. In 2009 Joey received a 2-year Theatre Board Fellowship.

Mark Howett

Lighting Designer

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Mark studied Theatre Design (1981), at Yale University. *The Rakes Progress* (1983) for Opera Australia was his first significant production. He has worked as a Lighting Designer, Video and Set designer for international productions and as a Director for film and theatre. West End Lighting Credits include: *Evita* (2014), *Cabaret* (2012), *A Country Girl* (2010), *Three Days In May* (2011), *Dreamboats and Petticoats* (2009 & 2013) *A Daughter is a Daughter* (2009) Robert Helpmann Award for *Cloudstreet* (2002).

He is currently the artistic director for Ochre Contemporary Dance Co.

Luke Smiles

Sound Designer

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Luke has developed a unique rapport among choreographers & directors in the development of soundtracks for dance & theatre. He was nominated for a Helpmann Award (2013) for Best Sound Design (Windmill Theatre – School Dance). Working under his business name motion laboratories Luke has composed and produced soundtracks for many Australian and International artists & companies. Various credits include: *G* (Australian Dance Theatre), *Double Think* (Byron Perry), *Glow* (Chunky Move), *Underground* (Dancenorth), *I left my shoes on warm concrete and stood in the rain* (Gabrielle Nankivell), *P.O.V.* (Lee Serle), *Infinity* (Rambert Dance Company), *Roadkill* (Splintergroup), *The Maids* (Sydney Theatre Company), *PUBLIC* (Tamara Saulwick), *Fugitive & School Dance & Girl Asleep* (Windmill Theatre Company).



We would like to say thanks to everyone and every organisation that helped bring Cockfight to life. It takes a lot of friends and partners to get a show made and we are grateful to all of them. Thanks to the city of Gold Coast for supporting The Farm and to Arts Queensland for their initial investment in this work. We'd also like to give a special nod to Betsy-our needleworker, Lyle, Grayson and Craig.

Arts House, as a key program of the City of Melbourne, is Melbourne's contemporary centre for performance and interactive artforms. We support new and diverse ways to make and experience art which is participatory and experiential, interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary, curated through a balance of provocation, responsiveness and collaboration with artists and audiences.

For more information, please contact us on the details below.

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