

Presented by Arts House and Mobile States

Ahilan Ratnamohan (AU/BE)

SDS1



Wed 19 – Sat 22 August 2015

55min, no interval

Post Show Q&A: Sat 22 Aug, 6.05pm

About SDS1

Drawing on his personal experiences as a player, Ahilan Ratnamohan delves into the psyche of the vulnerable warrior of the pitch – striving, loved, hated, worshipped, scorned or triumphant. Through sheer athletic prowess, both with and without the ball, he extracts the essences, emotions and gestures of the game to create a work that sees the player caught in the performance, rather than in control of it. This is soccer as theatre: physically charged, stripped back, extracted, frozen, repeated and abstracted. Beautiful and ugly at once.

Creative Team

Creator & Performer **Ahilan Ratnamohan**
Dramaturge **Kristof Persyn**
Lighting Designer **Mirabelle Wouters**
Outside Eye **Lee Wilson**
Tour Producer **Performing Lines**

Music
'Portatherm' **Scott Smallwood**
'Doun Doun' **DJ Mutamassik**

Image **Olympe Tits**

Artistic Notes

In creating **SDS1** I set out to challenge myself and the football-dance-theatre I had been creating. My first two shows, *The Football Diaries* and *Michael Essien I want to play as you....*, had relied on text to drive the pieces; I wanted to make a piece which was driven by the movement. While I had already been working with common football movements, I wanted to push these further into an abstract terrain, re-contextualising them as contemporary dance. I hope that by using this movement vocabulary the piece will access a new audience, to whom these movements are familiar, even if the theatre is not.

I was hoping to make a piece which was tour-able. I've always lamented the incredible pieces which have been made in Australia and never toured. Though the creative process is a phenomenal thing, I find it a shame that two years' hard work is often only seen by maybe 1,000 people. Fiscally this doesn't make sense, but above all my experience is that the work only fully realises itself after a number of shows. *The Football Diaries* had been restricted by a set and video projections. *Essien* had a cast of six, of which many didn't have papers; they were always in a state of transience, ready to leave for a football trial at the drop of a hat. While this also made the process and touring incredibly interesting and dynamic, I was keen to make a piece with which I could jump on the last train.

While **SDS1** is a much more abstract work compared to my previous pieces, I still hope that this piece connects with audiences less versed in contemporary performance. In a sense I hope I am pushing my audience as much as I am pushing myself. Even though their stories are not told in **SDS1**, I still channel a lot of the movements and feelings of the performers from *Essien*. Back in Belgium I continue to work with these guys and we've been fortunate to have the chance to make further performances. In these shows they now stand in front of the audience as performers, not footballers. We're in the process of creating a number of sociopolitical pieces made by this troupe of unlikely performers.

Ahilan Ratnamohan

Biographies

Ahilan Ratnamohan
Creator & Performer

Theatre-maker Ahilan Ratnamohan creates physical performance inspired by sport, film, language and unorthodox forms. He has performed in Australia, South Africa and Europe since 2007. Since 2012 he has been based in Antwerp, Belgium, where he has developed his working methodology. After graduating in Film Studies at UTS, Sydney (2005), he attempted a professional soccer career in the Netherlands, Sweden and Germany. His experience as a footballer deeply informs his work.

In 2013 Ahilan Ratnamohan performed in choreographer Jochen Roller's *Trachtenbummler* at Berlin's Tanz im August festival. He also premiered his first work as a director in Antwerp, *Michael Essien I want to play as you....*: a football-dance work addressing the aspirations of transient African migrants seeking a way out of poverty through football. The work has toured to Theater Aan Zee Festival (Belgium); the EXPLOSIVE! Festival (Germany); and London's LIFT in 2014. He has worked with Australian companies and artists including Urban Theatre Projects (UTP), Branch Nebula, Legs on the Wall, PACT, Powerhouse Youth Theatre, Theatre Kantanka, Martin del Amo and Campbelltown Arts Centre.

Kristof Persyn
Dramaturge

Dramaturge, director and theatre educator Kristof Persyn studied at Amsterdam's Theaterschool before creating productions with youth companies in Curaçao, Croatia and France. Since 2006 he has initiated projects in the Middle East, collaborating with artists in Egypt, Syria and Jordan. His work focuses on socially or ecologically urgent issues. Throughout Egypt he collected popular folk tales, resulting in the performance *The Nile Song* with Shady El Dali. In Jordan, with Lana Nasser, he undertook an artistic awareness campaign about the Dead Sea drought. Since the Arab Spring in 2011,

he has created projects for AAT-network, which runs an annual women's rights festival in Amman, Jordan. He has recently opened a workshop and studio in Brussels, where he teaches drama and discourse.

Mirabelle Wouters
Lighting Designer

Set/lighting designer and performer Mirabelle Wouters studied at the High Institute for Architecture and Industrial Design in Antwerp, and completed postgraduate studies in scenography at the Flemish Autonomous University of Antwerp. Her design credits include UTP's and Company B's *Buried City* (2012), *The Football Diaries* by Ahilan Ratnamohan and Lee Wilson, UTP's *The Last Highway* (2008) and Martin Del Amo's *Never Been This Far Away From Home*. She designed lighting for Matt Prest and Clare Britton's *Hole in the Wall* and Wade Marynowsky's *The Hosts: A Masquerade of Improvising Automatons*.

Lee Wilson
Outside Eye

Lee Wilson has been a major contributor to independent performance and dance for over 20 years, as a highly regarded and award-winning performer and director. He directed *The Football Diaries*, which toured to South Africa for the 2010 World Cup; and was choreographer for Roslyn Oades's *I'm Your Man* (2012). He has worked with Shaun Parker, Kate Champion, Stalker Theatre Company, Acrobat, Legs on the Wall, Opera Australia, UTP, Sydney Theatre Company and Post Arrivalists.

ARTS HOUSE

Thank You

Ahilan Ratnamohan would like to thank Kristof Persyn for his incredibly generous collaboration on this project, in making and touring the show; also CC Luchtbal and Monty Kultuurfaktorij, who have provided a nest for him in his second home in Belgium; as well as Urban Theatre Projects and Bankstown Arts Centre for their support earlier in the work's development.

SDS1 is toured by Performing Lines for Mobile States; and has been supported by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body; Urban Theatre Projects and CC Luchtbal (Belgium); and the City of Melbourne through Arts House.

Community Engagement

Prior to this season of **SDS1**, Ahilan Ratnamohan has presented a number workshops for soccer players within the North Melbourne community; including members of local sports groups, high school students and the asylum seeker community.

Arts House

Arts House presents contemporary arts in programs encompassing performance, festivals, live art, residencies and other activities that nurture, support and stimulate cultural engagement. We value work in which artists at different stages of their careers, as well as our diverse audiences and communities, are actively involved in creating an imaginative, just and environmentally sustainable global society.

Arts House's programs include two curated public seasons of multidisciplinary work each year. Approximately half of this work is selected through an Expression of Interest process. We seek artists who are responding to the urgent issues of our time in imaginative and surprising ways, taking artistic risks and offering multiple ways for audiences to engage with or co-author their work.

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

521 Queensberry Street
North Melbourne VIC 3051
(03) 9322 3720
artshouse@melbourne.vic.gov.au

artshouse.com.au

