

Arts House Company in Residence

# Slap Talk Action Hero

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Image: Action Hero

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28 May, 11am – 5pm

6 Hours

**Warning:** Coarse language

Audience are welcome to enter  
and leave at any time, early attendance  
is encouraged

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[artshouse.com.au](http://artshouse.com.au)

**Co-Artistic Director,  
Writer & Performer:**  
Gemma Paintin  
**Co-Artistic Director,  
Writer & Performer:**  
James Stenhouse

Text by Gemma Paintin & James Stenhouse, with the exception of:

0hr54  
"the Horror...."  
*text from Apocalypse Now, 1979*

1hr58  
"You're Blowing It Son..."  
*adapted from a text by Nick Walker, 2012*

4hr57  
"Angels have visited me..."  
*adapted from Robert Tilton, televangelist, 1989*

4hr26  
"I am going to dominate you..."  
*adapted from texts by WWF wrestler Ultimate Warrior*

5hr07  
"Don't you want to hear your mind speak...?"  
*adapted from a text by Marshall Applewhite, Heaven's Gate, 1996*

5hr35  
"There will be casualties..."  
*adapted from Barack Obama speech to National Security Committee 23 May, 2013*

5hr 39  
"That we are in the midst of a crisis..."  
*adapted from Barack Obama Inaugural address 21 Jan 2009*

Image: Action Hero



Developed via residencies at BIOS in Athens and China Plate's Dark Room, *Slap Talk* began as a series of experiments around sport and its mythologies and ideas around the performance space as a site of competition and/or adversarial combat. It quickly expanded into a text that clashed together a series of binaries, placing world views, personal politics and identities in conflict with each other; scientific vs spiritual, male vs female, capitalism vs communism.

*Slap Talk* is a dialogic, discursive arena in which we playfully re-render, re-enact, radically reverse and relentlessly repeat the gestures, codes, images and rhetoric of popular culture. With *Slap Talk* we diligently avoid adopting a moral position; the piece only borrows the shapes of ideologies. It is a machine for manufacturing conflict and so it challenges our disposition towards singular authoritative narratives and

defined moral outcomes. Its ceaseless doubling of language and form reflects the simultaneity of our lived experience and the simulations, fabrications and performances that make up the world we live in. *Slap Talk* is a serious game and an unserious argument; a playful conflict and a grim amusement. Like the interstitial space between the two artists that form Action Hero, *Slap Talk* creates a space where multiple ideas and sensations can exist at once. It is both confrontational and equitable, entertaining and horrifying, intimate and distant, totally earnest and wholly unreal.

**Gemma Paintin & James Stenhouse**

Co-Artistic Directors & Performers

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Gemma Paintin and James Stenhouse live in Bristol, UK, and create interdisciplinary performances together under the name Action Hero. For more than a decade, they have worked almost exclusively with each other, and are committed to creating work together as part of a long form collaborative practice. Together they have toured to more than twenty five countries across 5 continents to critical and popular acclaim.

Their ongoing interests lie in the iconography of popular culture and its use; both as a weapon and as a shared cultural memory, and although their work manifests many different forms, the live experience is at the heart of everything they do.

Gemma & James won an Austin (Texas) Critic's Table Award in 2013; in 2016 they were shortlisted for the Anti Festival International Prize for Live Art for their contribution to the field. A book of six of their works was recently published by Oberon and they are visiting lecturers Central School of Speech and Drama.



Thank You



Developed with the support of Caravan and BIOS, Athens. *Slap Talk* began in The Darkroom, China Plate's development space for writing and performance. Produced by Mel Scaffold for Theatre Bristol. Special thanks to Nick Walker.

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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Arts House acknowledges the traditional land upon which we are located, of the Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung people of the Kulin nation, and pay our respect to Elders both past and present and, through them, to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

