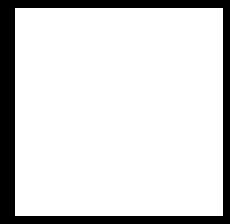


Presented by Arts House for
Festival of Live Art

8.30pm, Wed 21 Mar
50 mins
Warning:
Partial nudity

Emma McManus
Creator & Performer
Maria White
Creator & Performer
Jennifer Medway
Dramaturge
Tom Hogan
Sound Designer

Emma Lockhart-Wilson
Lighting Designer
Romanie Harper
Set Design
Verity Mackey
Costume Design



Never Trust a Creative City

Emma McManus & Maria White



*“What is this thing that homogenises complexity, difference, dynamic dialogic action for change and replaces it with sameness? With a kind of institutionalisation of culture? With a lack of demand on the powers that be?” – Sarah Schulman in *The Gentrification of the Mind: Witness to a Lost Imagination* (2012).*

We’ve all heard that the world is rapidly urbanising and that cities are our future. *Never Trust a Creative City* is a response to the neoliberal forces (re)shaping our cities in the present. At a conference for socially-engaged art, which took place in rapidly gentrifying Bed-Stuy Brooklyn NY in 2015, we started talking about the role that art and culture play in our cities. We also made each other laugh a lot. This new work of performance is the product of those conversations. We started to wonder why cities are interested in branding themselves as ‘creative’. Soon we realised that the ‘creative’ industries included entrepreneurial and corporate

pursuits such as tech start-ups, advertising and digital marketing. How do artists fit into this landscape?

In 2018, most manufacturing jobs have left our cities, factories have been converted into creative precincts or apartments, and people are looking to the creative industries as a solution to 21st Century economic uncertainty. Artists make the city a more ‘vibrant’, enjoyable and desirable place to live, which benefits developers and property owners. Meanwhile artists and other long-term residents are priced out of the inner city; they become ‘other’ to the very city they have helped shape. With a combination of hope, self-deprecation and generational anxiety, *Never Trust a Creative City* is an attempt to step beyond the creative precinct in order to expose the gentrification of our minds, bodies and behaviours. How can we take responsibility for the world we are creating every day?