

Presented by Arts House

# We All Know What's Happening Samara Hersch & Lara Thoms

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Image: Bryony Jackson

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6:15pm, Wed 19 – Fri 22 Jul  
5pm, Sat 22 Jul – Auslan Interpreted  
75 mins

**Warning:** Children of all ages are welcome to attend this show however, it does contain some adult concepts

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

## Creative Team

### **Co-Creators:**

Samara Hersch & Lara Thoms

### **Performers & Creators:**

Bridie Noonan, Eve Nixon,  
Allegra Di Lallo, Lazar Feldman,  
Finn Owen, Tove Due &  
Venu Elisaia

### **Designer:**

Romanie Harper

### **Lighting Design:**

Jen Hector

### **Music Direction/Sound Design:**

Marco Cher-Gibard

### **Pianist/Sound Collaborator:**

Grace Ferguson

### **Production Coordinator & Youth**

### **Support:**

Prue Clark

### **Stage Manager:**

Olivia Bishop

## Artist Statement

*We All Know What's Happening* is a response to Australia's ongoing colonial relationship with Nauru. From very early phosphate mining to current negotiations around refugee detention centres, our country has repeatedly interfered with this tiny pacific island, contributing to a long list of complex and absurd injustices.

Going to school in the early 90s we were taught to celebrate Captain Cook's "settlement" of Australia, while current school children have only recently begun to learn about Australia's history of violence against First Nations people. This work hopes to extend the awareness of our country's questionable behavior further, to across the Pacific, including continuing violations of asylum seekers' basic human rights.

*We All Know What's Happening* premieres exactly four years from the day that the Australian government announced: "Asylum seekers who come here by boat without a visa will never be settled in Australia." This effort to keep the realities of offshore detention invisible is what our work hopes to challenge. We, like many others, want to keep this conversation on the table and see an end to the unnecessary cycle of suffering.

The instinct to shield our children from the truth of our government's policies is challenged when the victims include other children their own age. Throughout this process we have worked with seven incredible young people from across Melbourne who are thoughtful, political and deeply concerned. Some of these performers have even created their own organisation dedicated to children's rights called Children for Children.

There are no simple ways to explore this material, attempting to speak about history inevitably means deciding what to leave out. Likewise trying to create a presence for those who are absent requires complex questions regarding the politics of representation. Whilst this work plays with traditional and sometimes satirical forms such as the school musical and the history lesson, the politics of this work are intentionally palpable. What we, as makers, didn't expect was that the despair

felt as we explored these ideas has been accompanied by inspiration as we witness young people dedicated to changing Australia's policies and seeing children their age find justice.

— *Samara Hersch & Lara Thoms*  
*Co-Creators*

*We All Know What's Happening* is a work that bridges the gap between the political and the personal. Interrogating politics through devised performance, especially with young people feels hugely important. What has emerged from this project was the realisation of how our perceptions and approach to issues such as the refugee crisis are shaped and directed by the format of news reports. What strikes me amongst the debates about policy surrounding Nauru is the removal of the human element of the situation, including the voices of the people trapped on the island. However, during the many discussions throughout rehearsals what was most prevalent was this human element of the Nauru story. What this show does, while politically engaging with the topic, reminds us that this is an issue of human rights and fundamental respect of others, not just economics or policy. Through the collaborative and devising process, children of all ages have formed and strengthened a compassionate understanding of the content, which has profoundly informed the work.

— *Tove Due*  
*Performer and Co-Creator*

**Samara Hersch**

Co-Creator

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Samara Hersch is an artist working across theatre, film and contemporary performance. She recently presented *Sex and Death* for the Festival of Live Art at Arts House which received two Green Room Award nominations for Best Contemporary and Experimental Performance. In 2015, Samara was a Director in Residence at the Malthouse Theatre where she directed *A Dybbuk Event*. Samara was mentored by Bruce Gladwin, from Back to Back Theatre Co. through the JUMP National Mentorship Program and later worked as a show director on their production of *Super Discount* (Sydney Theatre Co. and Malthouse Theatre).

As a teaching artist Samara has worked as a guest lecturer in Performance Studies at Deakin University as well as teaching at Monash University, St Martins Youth Arts Centre and Access Inc.

**Lara Thoms**

Co-Creator

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Lara Thoms is interested in socially engaged, site-specific and participatory possibilities in contemporary art and performance. Many of her projects collaborate with people beyond the arts including recent commissions for Perth Festival and The Museum of Contemporary Art. Recent projects include *A Singular Phenomenon* (Malthouse) *How To Piss off the Music Industry and the Art World* (Liquid Architecture) and *Howl* (Arts House). Lara also works as an artist with Aphids and Field Theory and as a producer for Dark Mofo. Her next performance project is a collaboration with a funeral director.

**Romanie Harper**

Designer

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Romanie is a theatre maker and designer working with a wide range of artists and companies. Recently she had collaborated with St Martins Youth Arts and Malthouse Theatre and she has previously designed shows in Melbourne Festival, Next Wave and MTC Neon Festival. This year she won a Greenroom Award for her design for *Conviction* (ZLMD Shakespeare, 2016).

**Jen Hector**

Lighting Design

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Jenny designed the Hub for the 2017 YIRRAMBOI First Nations Arts Festival and both her set and lighting designs for *Blood on the Dance Floor* and Jodee Mundy's *Imagined Touch* were part of this years Sydney Festival, having both premiered as part of 2016 Arts House season.

Jenny has designed lights and collaborated alongside the likes of Aphids, Chamber Made Opera, Dark MOFO, Madeleine Flynn and Tim Humphrey, Jo Lloyd, Back to Back Theatre Company and Rimini Protokoll.

Jenny is the recipient of two Green Room awards and received the 2017 Green Room Award for Technical Achievement.

**Marco Cher-Gibard**

Music Direction / Sound Design

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Marco Cher-Gibard is an artist working through sound. His practice foregrounds live process and often employs DIY approaches and custom software as part of sound making process. Marco is a constant collaborator in performance contexts where he contributes as a sound designer, composer and infrequent performer.

Recent endeavours include work for Back to Back Theatre, Chunky Move, Ridiculusmus, Samara Hersch, Zoe Scolgio, Shian Law, Rebecca Jensen, Malthouse Theatre, Bendigo International Festival of Exploratory Music and sister, a music collaboration with Ben Speth.

**Grace Ferguson**

Pianist/Sound Collaborator

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Grace Ferguson divides her time between performing, composing and teaching almost exclusively for piano. Through each of these different musical realms, she celebrates and challenges the traditions and fixed nature of the instrument. Grace seeks to foster a shift in pianist-as-collaborator and expand contexts in which pianos are played and performed. This emerging perspective integrates acoustic and electronic keyboard sounds across a widespread mix of artistic disciplines including theatre, dance, film and visual art.

**Prue Clark**

Production Co-ordinator & Youth Support

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Prue Clark is a Melbourne-based theatre director with a particular interest in new writing. She completed a Postgraduate Diploma in Directing at the Victorian College of the Arts in 2012. She has twice been nominated for a Green Room Award for Best Direction and won Best Director as Auckland Fringe earlier this year. She has worked with young people across a number of projects and workshops.

**Olivia Bishop**

Stage Manager

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Olivia Bishop is a Melbourne based theatre maker and performer who has just graduated from Monash University with a Bachelor of Performing Arts. As part of the Monash Centre of Theatre and Performance, she performed in *Welcome to Nowhere*, directed by Emma Valente in 2015 and was assistant director to Susie Dee on *Uprising*, by Patricia Cornelius and Melissa Reeves in 2016 (both performed at The Malthouse). Olivia has also worked and trained with artists Tim Miller, Daniel Lammin, Jane Montgomery Griffiths, Felix Nobis, Fleur Kilpatrick and Robert Reid.

## Biographies

### **Venu Elisaia**

Performer & Creator

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Hi I'm Venu Elisaia, I'm 10. I want to be a performer when I grow up. You may know me from *Kids vs Art* last year. What I love about being a performer is that I get to work with amazing people and experience different things. I also play football.

### **Allegra Di Lallo**

Performer & Creator

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My name is Allegra Di Lallo. I am 11 years old and do drama classes. I like tennis, acting and I am interested in topics surrounding refugee issues.

### **Birdie Noonan**

Performer & Creator

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Bridie Noonan is a 15 year old performer and has previously appeared in *The Bacchae* (Melbourne Festival 2015 and Dark Mofo 2016) In 2016 she co-created the youth activist organisation Children for Children with Tove Due.

### **Eve Nixon**

Performer & Creator

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Eve Nixon is a 15 year old performer whose previous works include St Martin's crossage ensemble (2012) and *The Bacchae* for (Melbourne Festival 2015 and Dark Mofo 2016).

### **Lazar Feldman**

Performer & Creator

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Lazar Feldman is 14 and has been involved with crossage ensemble at St Martins Theatre. He plays guitar and loves traveling which has encouraged the belief that everybody deserves human rights.

### **Finn Owen**

Performer & Creator

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Fresh from *Kids vs Art*, 12 year old Finn is a seasoned performer. Finn loves the social side of performing and the opportunity to consider new issues through art.

### **Tove Due**

Performer & Creator

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Tove Due is an 18 year old performer, having previously been involved in Adena Jacob's *Bodily Education of Young Girls* (MTC) and *The Bacchae* (Melbourne Festival 2015 and Dark Mofo 2016).

She is currently in her first year of an arts degree and was recently involved in *The Book of Exodus - Part 1* (Theatreworks/Fraught Outfit) as a director's secondment. She is also interested in philosophy, film and music.



Venu Elisaia



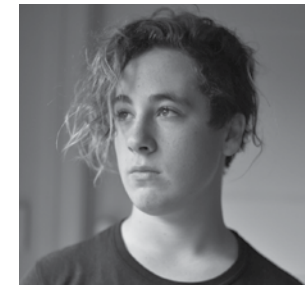
Allegra Di Lallo



Birdie Noonan



Eve Nixon



Lazar Feldman



Finn Owen

Thank You

**ARTS  
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**M** CITY OF  
MELBOURNE

Adena Jacobs  
Alex Walker and House of Muchness  
Angharad Wynne-Jones  
Auspicious Arts - Megan Williams  
Campaign workshop - Lily Gardener  
Children for Children  
Creative Victoria  
David Mintern  
Evelyn Tadros  
Microphone lenders  
Ingrid Voorendt  
Jackson Castiglione  
Jason Tamiru  
Jo Porter  
Julian Burnside  
Julian Burnside  
Karen Flanagan  
Lena McMurray  
Lily Partland  
Luisa Hastings Edge  
Mat Tinkler  
Michael Field  
Mish Grigor  
Naomi Velaphi  
Olivia Anderson  
Parents of all our cast  
Ponch Hawkes  
Rinske Ginsberg  
Robin Fox  
Romaine McSweeney  
Ros Oades  
Rupert Evans  
Save the Children - Jason Ross  
St Martins  
Tillie Stephens  
Tom Arup  
Wally Maloney

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.

