

3 MAY—  
22 MAY 2023

# MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY

SOUTHBANK  
THEATRE



# WORLD PROBLEMS

BY **EMMA MARY HALL**  
DIRECTED BY **CASSANDRA FUMI**

EDUCATION PACK – PART B

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Discuss



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Video

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Melbourne Theatre Company acknowledges the Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation, the traditional custodians of the land on which we work, create and gather. We pay our respects to all First Nations people, their Elders past and present, and their enduring connections to Country, knowledge and stories. As a Company we remain committed to the invitation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart and its call for voice, truth and treaty.

# Director's note

## ***World Problems* is about you, and me, and us.**

It has been a gift in so many ways. It's a gift to work with and go on a creative journey with the inspiring, bold and sensational performer Carly Sheppard. Her performance is so present, it makes me laugh, brings me to tears and makes me think, deeply, honestly and feel with my gut. It's a gift to interpret and imagine into the words of Emma Mary Hall. Her writing and language is a real craft – so rich in meaning and so intimate.

In this work, Carly plays a dead planet holding the consciousness of all of humanity who has splintered in the cosmos. She is the collective archive of the memories of humanity. She is holding us all, in all of our complexities. This work is far beyond the individual, it's about the collective.



Director Cassandra Fumi and Carly Sheppard in rehearsal

The creative team – Dann, Rachel and Harrie – have created a heightened theatrical world where this work exists for most of the time, until Carly shatters it and we find ourselves in the theatre. Constantly transforming, the set becomes a black hole, a drain, a whale carcass, a mouldy strawberry, a gramophone, the planet, a vagina, a cave, a school art project. I love theatre that podiums the audience and their imaginations. In *World Problems* we ask you, the audience, to imagine with us, to transform objects, the performer and the space.

Throughout the process of directing this show, Donna Haraway's *Staying With The Trouble* has been close. It MATTERS what stories we tell and who tells them. I wonder how we live and die well together on a dying planet? How do we make kin? Becoming with nature, not just becoming.

A director is only as good as the people that surround them. I feel so lucky to have had the best team – so kind, creatively generous and filled with purpose to tell this story for many. We made this with purpose; we hope the audience, who has always been with us, receive it with purpose.

We hope you see lots, and through humour, rhythm and tone, that we take you on a journey that is complicated, rich and inspiring. We won't and don't answer all the questions but simply embark on the task of asking them. We won't solve the world's problems in the making and performing of this show, but we hope we transport you, and make you think deeply about our planet and its future.



Director Cassandra Fumi



## Revisit Part A

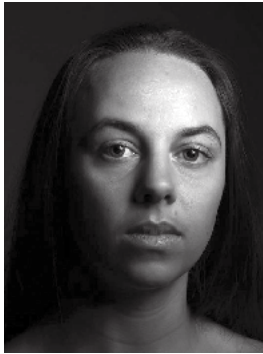
Before you explore this post-show education pack, revisit Part A and recall the predictions you made about the production.

Download the pack at [mtc.com.au/eduhub](https://mtc.com.au/eduhub)

**'I wonder how we live and die well together on a dying planet? How do we make kin?'**

DIRECTOR CASSANDRA FUMI

# Cast and creatives



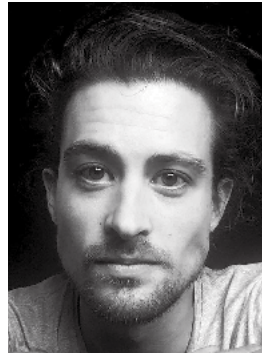
**Carly Sheppard**  
Performer



**Emma Mary Hall**  
Writer



**Cassandra Fumi**  
Director



**Dann Barber**  
Set & Costume Designer



**Harrie Hogan**  
Lighting Designer



**Rachel Lewindon**  
Composer & Sound Designer



**Amelia Jean O'Leary**  
Movement Consultant



**Additional Dramaturgy**  
Kamarra Bell-Wykes

**Stage Manager**  
Annah Jacobs  
**Assistant Stage Manager**  
Brittany Stock  
**Robert McDonald**  
**Award Placement**  
Bridie Noonan  
**Set & Costume Design**  
**Secondment (VCA)**  
Ashley Reid



Carly Sheppard



**Explore  
the digital  
programme**

Read more about this production, including a **Writer's Note** from Emma Mary Hall, in the digital programme at [mtc.com.au/programmes](https://mtc.com.au/programmes)

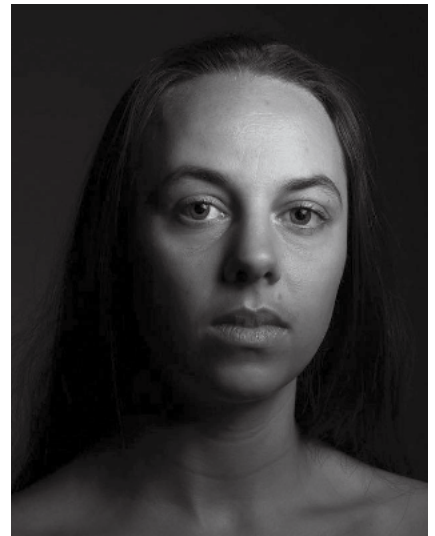
# Performing

**In this solo tour de force, performer Carly Sheppard summons up a childhood with an intensity so visceral it seems to be playing out in front of us.**

But as her memories draw closer to the present, the space between the personal and the speculative grows ever more blurry. Sheppard uses their expressive skills to embody other characters fleetingly, and manipulates performance skills to enhance their performance and presence onstage. Learn more about Carly Sheppard's work on this production in this Q&A.



Carly Sheppard



Carly Sheppard



## Analyse expressive skills

Combine examples Sheppard provides in this Q&A with your own memory of the production, to analyse how the performer uses expressive skills in two specific moments.

### What is *World Problems* about?

I think that *World Problems* is about the universe attempting to archive itself through time and space. It starts as one individual's memories, or multiple individual memories, that then become so broad that you realise that this is the memory of the whole planet, or the whole universe, or the sun, or the memory of the zeitgeist or of matter itself.

### How do you usually start a rehearsal day?

We usually start with a check-in around the table. Our director, Cassandra Fumi, will have figured out what we're doing for the day, but we're quite alive to it so sometimes we'll shift and change the plan around. Then I'll get on the floor and do some leg swings, warm up, put some music on and have a little boogie to get my body warm.

### How are you exploring the set in rehearsal?

When we started rehearsals, I got to improvise with the set, really get to know it, move inside it and test the boundaries of what I could do. What's wonderful about the set and its circular vortex shape is that it gives the impression of time and space being warped. A lot of choices have come out of initial improvisations we did responding to this feeling.

The best part about having the set in the space in rehearsals is that I have time to develop a physical relationship to it – it is me and I am it. I'm dancing and talking with it, and it's speaking as well. In one moment, I climb up the side of the set as I'm talking about travelling, and I stand on this ledge up quite high and it gives this sense of being on the boat. It's not dance, it's just finding different ways to access the story through my body and on the set.

**'I have to use really specific facial expressions and head positions in order to differentiate moments for myself and for the audience.'**

CARLY SHEPPARD

### How do you transform between characters in this production?

In this work, I go in and out of a bunch of different characters, but there are also parts where I'm not in any particular character. I have to use really specific facial expressions and head positions in order to differentiate moments for myself and for the audience.

For example, when I go from talking about the first tampon to talking about the fall of the Berlin Wall – two things that are so different to each other – I tilt my head back a little bit, change my position, and I change the way I look at the audience. I imagine the Berlin Wall falling down in front of me. Then I have to talk about Chernobyl, so I shift my focus downward. Very small movements can completely shift the whole thing.

I'm transforming as the text is transforming. It's so meta because the text is not one big arc, it's a thousand tiny arcs, and I must do justice to each of the memories and create the arc of each of the memories. Having specific physical isolations for where they exist in that arc, and when they're left behind to move on to a new memory – that's been a real technical learning curve for me.



Carly Sheppard

### How are you using expressive skills like voice, movement and facial expression?

The way I create character is quite Bouffon. I generally like to inhabit extreme characters in performance, so that was a really fun thing to play with when making this work. Maybe there's one voice thing and one physical idiosyncrasy. For example, with the date guy who was talking about the woman who died on the plane, the physicality was rolling the sleeves and the voice was exaggerated. I usually think of somebody in the world that I know, or who I have known in the past, and I will take their voice and exaggerate it. That way, I've got something to work with as a base and then I just bring it to its biggest strength. The voice helps me with the facial expression. Voice is the key, because when you've got a different voice, your mouth, throat and palate have to do a different thing, which then affects the rest of your facial expressions.

### How do you navigate the structure of this play?

When Kamarra Bell-Wykes was working with me as a dramaturg, she pointed out that there are a thousand mini arcs within this play, and I need to figure out where one begins, what its zenith is, what its conclusion is and then what happens when you leave it behind and transition to a new one. That has really helped me understand, cerebrally, what I am doing. It's a composite of images: I'm describing the images in narrative arcs.

I really enjoy the memories that digress, the 'flaps' moment is a great example. It's such a lovely point of relaxation, I get to stay in that moment for a good while and have fun in it, which gives me so much energy for the rest of the play as well.

With the strawberries, I'm attempting to taste strawberries and really remember what that's like, because I actually relate to that memory. I had exactly the same experience in England!



### Discuss Bouffon

Bouffon is a modern French theatre term to describe a style of performance that focuses on the art of mockery. It is commonly associated with French practitioner Jacques Lecoq. Identify moments in the performance where you saw aspects of Bouffon.

**'The way I create character is quite Bouffon. I generally like to inhabit extreme characters in performance, so that was a really fun thing to play with when making this work.'**

CARLY SHEPPARD

**How do you think about the actor-audience relationship when performing this show?**

I'm tuning into the audience the whole time. It's impossible not to in any performance, because I really strongly believe as a performer that it's a collaboration, an energetic collaboration. And that's what makes every performance different. Sometimes you can sense that people in the audience aren't engaged, and I have to shut it off so that I can do my job, and it's the same as when they are fully engaged and involved, to the point sometimes where I will corpse because they're laughing so much. I have to cut it off and just go 'I'm doing a job here.'

**Tell us more about what is scripted as an 'extended moment' halfway through the play, where the writer asks the actor to describe something they did that morning, an hour earlier and right now.**

For the 'present' moment where I describe putting off milk in my coffee that morning, the lighting and the sound are doing lots of work, so I'm fully supported in that shift in energy. I've got those production areas as allies, my stage partners – the set, lighting, sound, the smell, all of those things.

I didn't put off milk in my coffee, but I'm saying that's what I did. I also didn't trip over, but when I say 'I'm looking up and seeing all your faces staring back at me,' I'm saying that like a real thing, we're really looking at each other right now. In that moment, I'm also saying, 'You're watching me right now, but I'm not playing me.' It's a real meta experience for me, which is the reason why I wanted to say, 'I remember being cast as everybody else except for myself,' because I felt lost in the work, and I felt like I was speaking things that I would say differently, things that are not fair to my people and to so many people. So I ground myself and my context in this work. I am me, but I'm not playing me. I'm playing someone who has written the play about me.



Carly Sheppard

**'I'm tuning into the audience the whole time. It's impossible not to in any performance, because I really strongly believe as a performer that it's a collaboration, an energetic collaboration.'**

CARLY SHEPPARD

**Tell us about how you use the teddy bear prop and transform it.**

The very first time you see these props onstage, they're always used literally as what they are: a TV, a teddy bear, a suitcase. But we transform them immediately.

The anthropologist section was really great because we decided to subvert the text in the action. Using the teddy bear in the way we do demonstrates the violence of anthropology towards my people over time, and how this female anthropologist got noticed by other anthropologists basically by using black women. I think that my context in forming this work is really interesting. I wanted to tear that bear apart, just like in the massacres in the frontier wars, the anthropologists would come onto the killing fields and chop up bodies and macerate their skulls and body parts on the fields, and then send them off for science. And so I was like, right, this teddy bear has to die. I have to make it the anthropologist, but then I also have to be the anthropologist ripping the heart out of the victim. Judging by the audience reaction, it works well. That's my most visceral transformation of an object, because I'm doing it for my people.

**What's your pre-show ritual?**

I have a ritual before every show that I try and do. And if I can't do it in the theatre, I do it outside. I use palo santo, and I smoke myself, and I smoke the set, and I say thank you to country. I talk to country about being a part of the millennia of performances and storytelling that has happened on this country and asking permission to do it, gratitude to do it.

# Composition and sound design



Composer & Sound Designer Rachel Lewindon in rehearsal



Composer & Sound Designer  
Rachel Lewindon

## Learn more about Composer & Sound Designer Rachel Lewindon's work on *World Problems* in this Q&A:

**How would you describe the overall composition/sound design you've created for *World Problems*? What is the world of this play?**

Weird! Haha, no it's a wonderful collage of what humanity has been, what it is, and what it could be. It's joyous, silly and dark – similar to Emma Mary Hall's text. To me, the world of *World Problems* doesn't abide by linear time. We sort of experience these adjustments in perception, like we're just tilting reality slightly. I wanted to use this feeling in the sound where the sounds we hear get reframed or used slightly differently as the play shifts.

**Where have you drawn inspiration from?**

I love to make a playlist of songs that have unique textures and colours – this serves as inspiration for my work. The playlist gives me a sense of the world that we're in – for *World Problems*, the world has been founded on a juxtaposition of the natural and unnatural. I've been listening to a diverse set of artists from film composers like Jerskin Fendrix, Colin Stetson and Jóhann Jóhannsson, to contemporary artists like Björk, Brian Eno and Oneohtrix Point Never, and back to the classical impressionist roots of Claude Debussy, Erik Satie and Edvard Grieg. I love how all of these artists use textures and harmonic functions that place them outside of their specific time period and sonic expectations. They're all visionaries for their time, and it's a joy to have them influence the work!

My practice comes from a live performance background, so I like to use a hybrid of my own recordings, existing music and then having the flexibility of being able to play live in the room. I'm then able to adapt to changes that come up in rehearsal. I have my laptop running some sounds that I've locked in, or some base palettes that I've made. I've got a small synthesizer sampler that I'm playing some sampled voice on, which helps me add to the voice I've already recorded, and let's me play with some effect parameters live. Then I have this big spaceship-looking synthesizer (a Moog One) that I've got a lot of pre-programmed sounds on. On this, I make a few textures or sounds that I like, and then I have them ready to play and test out in rehearsal.

In this, I also have a microphone that's running into a vocoder, which turns your voice into this sort of digital-sounding thing! I'm enjoying playing live because it gives me the freedom to adapt to what is happening and build the sound alongside the physicality and text. This practice comes from a devised theatre background where design, text and physicality all work collaboratively. The last thing that's fairly crucial (I'm nearly done!) is the piano, which is the foundation of my compositional process. So everything you've heard musically started as an idea on the piano, that then gets morphed into other instruments and sounds.

**TLDR:** Laptops, Vocals, Synthesisers and Pianos, oh my!



### Discuss sound and performance styles

Discuss how Lewindon's sound design complements the performance styles of this production. In what way is the music postdramatic? How does sound support the performer's physicality? Incorporate language from Lewindon's Q&A into your discussion.

**'The palette primarily uses voice, synthesizer and field recordings, with sprinklings of recorder.'**

COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER  
RACHEL LEWINDON



### How does your music/sound manipulate tension?

Around 80 percent of the way through the play, the work starts to accelerate and jump through time towards a climactic moment. Here the sound works in a way that throws the listener around in time as well – almost as if there are multiple times existing at once – some slow, some fast. This is done rhythmically as well as harmonically, with rhythms that shift; starting slow, becoming quick, then slow again, then so fast that rhythms are unintelligible. Harmonically it's moving through chords that lift us but never repeat. The harmonic grounding constantly so we are unable to predict or hold on to anything we know. These two factors (I believe at least) heighten and add the tension to the text!

### How does music/sound shift the mood in the play?

In the very first page of the text, Carly becomes her father yelling at a TV and we hear a darker digital sound coming from the back of the space. This is the first indication that there is a deeper and darker world and gives us a glimpse into the relationship between the performer and the sound.

### What kinds of sounds/instruments are you using in your design and why?

The palette primarily uses voice, synthesizer and field recordings, with sprinklings of recorder. These link to the way we are introduced to the objects in the space – we hear these all in their natural/simplest/most familiar context before they are reframed and processed to create abstract versions of themselves.



Carly Sheppard

I've chosen to use voice in this work because we all have a voice – it's a sound source that allows a lot of access because we are so familiar with the sound. Anyone can sing, and to me, voice represents the scale of a human life; from a child to an elderly person, the change of voice over the course of one's life is so innate to the human experience. So I went on a quest to record as many different groups as I could from some very generous and keen community singing groups. I've got voices from ages 7 up to 70! These voices are heard at the end of the show where the intention is to create the sense of the collective rather than the singular human on stage. This supports the idea that the whole play is a collage of humanity, a composite of the human experience.

### Are there any recurring themes or motifs that we should listen for?

Absolutely! There is a melodic motif that simultaneously represents both performer Carly Sheppard and humanity, which you hear snippets of throughout the show until it is realised at the very end. Additionally, there is a timbral motif (this is not melodic but a texture of sound) that we hear every time Carly goes towards the centre hole of the structure that is contextualised in a climactic moment about 80 percent of the way through.



### Analyse tension and mood

Using language from Lewindon's Q&A, combined with your own recollections, write a paragraph analysing how the music and sound design manipulates tension and mood. Include two specific moments, such as the 'father yelling at the TV'.



### Evaluate voice

Thinking about Lewindon's use of voice in the composition and sound design, evaluate how this music enhances the performance. How do the recordings of people singing support the big ideas in the play?

**'I've chosen to use voice in this work because we all have a voice ... This supports the idea that the whole play is a collage of humanity, a composite of the human experience.'**

COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER  
RACHEL LEWINDON

# Lighting design

## Learn more about Lighting Designer Harrie Hogan's work on *World Problems* in this Q&A:

### How does your lighting manipulate space?

A big part of this work is the juxtaposition of the personal and the existential. As a whole design team, we've been trying to find ways to do the same – constantly moving between the minute and the expansive. The set is a static structure, so light has been used to control how much of it exists within the stage picture at any given moment. Trying to create something cosmic within a small space is always tricky, but the entirely black set in a black box theatre gives lighting more control over the audience's sense of depth. The set features contrasting shapes (the organic torn edges of cardboard versus the geometric circles). This allows lighting to create lots of interesting shadows, depending on the angle or direction of the light source. I've tried to use these to control when the set feels comforting and when it feels intimidating.



Lighting Designer Harrie Hogan



Carly Sheppard

### How does lighting shift the mood in the play?

When lighting a show, colour, intensity (brightness) and the pace of transitions can all be used to control the mood of a scene. We have chosen to use a very limited colour palette across the entire design so the usual colour theory isn't as applicable. Despite this, using cool or warm white tones can still communicate a lot about the mood of the character or scene. The TV operates in a similar way, featuring warmer whites and gold tones as the performer is talking about her nostalgia for the 1980s, and in other moments the dim blue light we are familiar with now as the glow of the internet.

"Tunnelling" is a somewhat made-up term we've been using as a team to describe moments of intense focus or stress for the character, where all the design elements come together to heighten that feeling of claustrophobia. These moments of tunnelling are supported with much tighter lighting states around the character, as if for a moment she is the only thing left in outer space, before it passes and the set is brought back into light.

### What kinds of fixtures/equipment are you using in your design?

A combination of profiles and fresnels are doing most of the work, with the help of LED strip hidden inside certain props. The lights on the booms are all profiles as they require a level of precision to light through the ribs of the set. With a profile you can control the size of the beam, the shape with shutters and how sharp the beam edge is. The top lighting of the set is done with LED fresnels. We definitely aren't using their full colour potential on this show but the option to shift from cool to warm with the same light is super helpful when trying to subtly shift the mood of a moment. Inside the TV is a panel of LED strip – the same as what you might have at home – except instead of a small remote or



### Identify theatre technologies

Circle terminology in Hogan's Q&A that you could use when describing the fixtures used in the lighting design and annotate the lighting plan included in this pack. For any words that are unfamiliar, explore our theatre glossary at [mtc.com.au/eduhub](https://mtc.com.au/eduhub)

**'The entirely black set in a black box theatre gives lighting more control over the audience's sense of depth.'**

LIGHTING DESIGNER HARRIE HOGAN

phone app it is controlled by the lighting console via a DMX driver hidden under the set. Running intensity effects through the strip (taking the brightness up and down rapidly) is how we create the impression of a moving image playing on screen.



Carly Sheppard

### Are there any recurring themes or motifs that we should look out for?

The script features countless locations and time periods, so we've had to be selective with our design offers in order to ground the audience and make it possible to listen. Lots of images are repeated and remixed across the work, and it has been really fun to find those unexpected parallels between memories. There are even several memories that the performer re-experiences from different perspectives that we've subtly linked through design. The TV is the materialisation of media and information. When does it feel comforting and when does it feel like an intrusion of the outside world? As a design team, we were really curious about what draws her back in each time, not just literally into the black hole, but also to keep revealing more memories to the audience.

There is a reoccurring sound and light motif each time the performer is drawn back into the hole, creating a sense of life coming from the set (or space) itself. So much of memory is sensory – with each “I remember” in the show there was a conversation around what design element should be the strongest in representing that life moment. Examples of this could be the flicker of flames overhead or the sound of the wind at night.



Carly Sheppard

### How would you describe the overall lighting design you've created for *World Problems*? What is the world of this play?

The overall design is a scrapbook collage or faded photo album following the performer as she traverses one side of the universe to the other across many different lives. We never fully realise a memory, only a sketch of what it could have looked or felt like. Each of the times she says “I remember” sits on a spectrum of passing anecdote to fully embodied memory. The lighting design follows this same flow between the abstract gesture and the almost naturalistic representation. For most of the show the lighting design is in sync with the character, but there are some key moments where her and the design are in conflict, and a choice is made whether to continue to perform or “remember”.



### Discuss motifs

Recall a motif (a recurring idea in an artistic work) from the lighting design in this production, describe it in detail and discuss how it enhanced the performance.



### Contrast

Identify a moment in the play where lighting was used to manipulate contrast. You might recall a moment when lighting quickly shifted the tone of a scene, or where it helped transition from naturalistic representation into abstract.

**‘The overall design is a scrapbook collage or faded photo album – following the performer as she traverses one side of the universe to the other across many different lives.’**

LIGHTING DESIGNER HARRIE HOGAN



# Movement

## Dance has been an important part of First Nations culture for thousands of years.

In this production, Movement Consultant Amelia Jean O’Leary (a First Nations Gamilaroi Yinarr from Northern New South Wales living in Naarm) worked with First Nations performer Carly Sheppard to experiment and explore ways of incorporating dance and storytelling into the performance. Learn more about O’Leary’s work as Movement Consultant in this Q&A.

### How would you describe the movement language/style you’re exploring in rehearsal?

Body as landscape, landscape as body.



Carly Sheppard and Movement Consultant Amelia Jean O’Leary in rehearsal

### What would you say are the ‘big ideas’ you and the team are exploring in this play?

What it is like to be the world, how you transition between characters, questions, landscapes and images.

### How is movement being used to explore space on stage?

It’s being used in many ways: body as space, body as object, body in space. Using movement simply as movement, talking as talking, or in some moments, both. It’s all about finding when each moment is meaty in serving the purpose of the work and the intentionality of each unit and act.



Carly Sheppard



Movement Consultant  
Amelia Jean O’Leary



### Discuss movement

Recall moments in the performance when the performer used movement to evoke an environment, e.g. the wind at the top of a phone tower, freshwater rockpools, stationery cupboard.

**‘The movement breaks away from a sense of individual reality and breaks open a sense of collective consciousness through the body to the audience and outside into the cosmos.’**

MOVEMENT CONSULTANT  
AMELIA JEAN O’LEARY

**Is there a particular moment in the script that you're excited about developing with movement?**

I love the Julie Andrews section. It's just a fun play of movement and talking with interesting contrast and builds of energy.



Carly Sheppard

**How do you work with the cast and creative team to develop the movement for this production?**

I work very closely with both Director Cassandra Fumi and Carly Sheppard. If it's more acting-based movement, I will watch how Cass directs and take notes, and if it's more movement-based I try to either embody it to help Carly and Cass and I note down each section. I am also always in discussion and process with Cass and Carly so my thoughts are always present within ideas. It's interesting how there are so many uses for movement within theatre. I'm learning a lot whilst also offering my expertise from my dance practice.

**Are there any recurring movements or motifs/patterns that we should watch for?**

Within the work I notice a lot of body control through use of strength, to make the body look as if it is floating or hanging upside down. Also, making the body a vessel of time in space, in a very non-naturalistic way, such as gravity in outer space or as if the world has turned upside down. Another motif is the body as a symbol of decay and embodiment of earth. This allows the play to explore ideas of nature/naturalism and then intersect/disrupt this by manipulating time, space, energy and body to create disillusion with 'reality'. The movement breaks away from a sense of individual reality and breaks open a sense of collective consciousness through the body to the audience and outside into the cosmos.



**Annotate images**

Annotate the images in this pack with notes about how the performer is manipulating movement. Recall how the Sheppard's gait, posture and stance at various moments – are specific characters being embodied, e.g. the father or the woman at the festival?



**Performance skills**

Discuss the interrelationship of movement with performance skills like focus, timing and energy. How is Sheppard's movement different when interacting with the teddy bear prop compared to the moments in the inflatable globe costume?

# Props

Carly Sheppard



## Application of symbol

Recall moments when props were transformed by the performer. E.g. the suitcase becoming a stationery cupboard, the teddy bear becoming part of the anthropologist's presentation.

**Set & Costume Designer Dann Barber has designed a series of props that come apart and provide opportunities for the performer to use in different ways to tell the story.**

'Every object that is brought into the space transforms, like matter does,' says Director Cassandra Fumi. All the props have been broken down and art finished to look cohesive with the overall monochromatic, composite design concept.

## TEDDY BEAR

The teddy bear comes apart into six pieces, each of which are attached with Velcro. The belly also comes apart to reveal a strawberry as its heart. This prop further incorporates nostalgia into the design.

## SUITCASE

The suitcase in this production was made from scratch by the Props Department at Melbourne Theatre Company. The performer gets into the suitcase from behind and emerges in a contortion act of sorts. Like the school uniform costume that is made from many different garments, the suitcase has a similar monochromatic patchwork design.

**'Every object that is brought into the space transforms, like matter does.'**

DIRECTOR CASSANDRA FUMI



Carly Sheppard

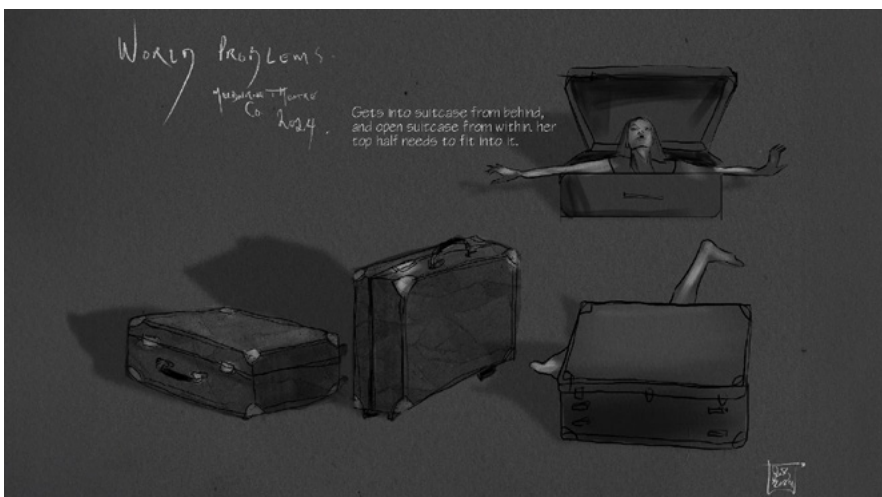
## STRAWBERRIES

Real strawberries are used in the production. These are referred to as consumable props as they must be replaced for each performance. The idea to use strawberries was drawn directly from the script.

The strawberries highlight the contrast between artifice and reality within *World Problems*. 'The only things that are real onstage are the strawberries and the human body,' says Director Cassandra Fumi. 'We researched strawberries and found that their DNA is 60% similar to humans. There's something so thrilling about those two pieces of organic matter in this space when everything else is artificial.' This contrast is highlighted visually, with the bright red strawberries standing out against the mostly black set and props.



Carly Sheppard



Prop renders by Dann Barber



### Transforming props

Analyse the use of strawberries in this performance. What do they symbolise? When are strawberries mentioned in the script and when do they appear onstage? How does the performer interact with the strawberries (e.g. crushing versus eating)? Write a paragraph evaluating how these props are used symbolically.



# Theatre technologies

## INFLATABLE GLOBE COSTUME

The inflatable globe costume is made from Tyvek, a lightweight, breathable non-woven polypropylene material commonly used for disposable painting overalls. It inflates by a battery-operated fan attached to a belt that the performer ties around their waist onstage. The performer activates the fan with a toggle switch hidden in the costume. The batteries need to be recharged after each performance. The venue technician is responsible for recharging the batteries.



Carly Sheppard

## LIGHT-UP TV

Two effects are used in the TV: LED lighting and an automated moiré effect.

Inside the back of the TV, behind the performer's head, is an RGB LED strip – an LED module that can produce almost any colour using these three primary additive colours: Red, Green and Blue. The LED colour can be changed during the performance from the lighting desk.

At the front of the TV, the 'noise' (static seen on older TVs when no transmission signal is obtained by the antenna) is achieved with two overlapping linear images on acetate, which create the moiré (pronounced mwar-ray) effect. One sheet of acetate is fixed and the other is controlled by a small motor, rocking it back and forward from the corner. The images on both sheets are the same, and the movement of the second sheet gives the illusion of static on the TV.

All of the effects in the TV are controlled remotely by the lighting operator from the lighting desk.



Carly Sheppard



### Evaluate a theatre technology

Using terminology from this page, describe and evaluate the use of one theatre technology in this production.

# Analysis questions

The following questions are intended to help you consider how *World Problems* might be interpreted onstage through the lens of VCE Drama. Refresh your memory of the definitions with our flashcards for dramatic elements, performance skills, expressive skills and production areas at [mtc.com.au/eduhub](http://mtc.com.au/eduhub). Remember to always consult VCAA documents when preparing for VCE exams.



Carly Sheppard

## PRODUCTION AREAS

### Costume

- How is application of symbol demonstrated in the costume design? Consider the materials that the costumes are made from and the themes of climate change and sustainability in this play.
- When is costume design used to manipulate tension? Describe two moments in the play, including one where tension is released for comic effect.

### Lighting

- How does lighting manipulate mood? Describe two contrasting moments from the performance and use theatre terminology from the lighting designer's Q&A.
- How is application of symbol demonstrated in the lighting designer's use of shadows? Recall the world map gobo effect the set creates on the back wall, when lit from the front.

### Props

- Analyse how contrast is manipulated by props. Think beyond colours and consider what the prop is made from and how it is used onstage.
- Consider the interrelationship between props and movement in the moment when the performer emerges from the suitcase. How is climax being manipulated here?

### Set pieces

- How is application of symbol demonstrated in the set design? What does the set represent and how does it enhance the production?
- Think about how the performer interacts with the set. Consider the interrelationship between set and movement throughout the performance. Describe how the direction utilises the set to enhance meaning.

### Sound design

- Discuss why voices are included in the composition and sound design and analyse the application of symbol here.
- Describe two contrasting moments when sound design manipulates mood.

### Theatre technologies

- Identify theatre technologies that are used in this production. Describe how the globe costume inflates and how that impacts the actor-audience relationship.
- Discuss how the TV lights up and identify moments in the performance when it was used.



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## EXPRESSIVE SKILLS

### Voice

- Describe the performer's voice for the majority of the performance, including diction, pitch, tone and resonance.
- Describe how the performer manipulated their voice to play one other character (e.g. the father, the woman at the festival, the anthropologist).

### Movement

- Identify a moment when movement enhanced the spoken dialogue. Compare and contrast this moment with another when movement was used in the absence of dialogue.
- Reflect on the Movement Coordinator's Q&A and describe how application of symbol was manipulated with movement in a specific moment.

### Gesture

- Describe the performer's gestures when dancing in the inflatable globe costume. How did gesture manipulate mood here?
- Analyse how the performer manipulated gesture when interactive with the teddy bear prop.

### Facial expressions

- Look through the production photos in this pack and compare and contrast two moments that demonstrate the performer's use of facial expression.



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## PERFORMANCE SKILLS

### Focus

- Analyse the performer's use of focus to sustain characters. Think about moments when they embody another character (such as the father) and how focus contributes to the actor-audience relationship.

### Timing

- How did timing regulate the pace of the performance? Think about a moment of building tension and describe the performer's timing. Contrast this with a moment of comedy or levity and describe the performer's timing.

### Energy

- Describe a moment when the performer used low energy (such as sitting on the set with the TV) and how that manipulated the actor-audience relationship. Contrast this with a moment of high energy and describe the effect.

### Actor-audience relationship

- Describe how you felt in the moments when the performer directly addressed the audience. Do you think this was the intended effect?
- Reflect on a moment when you felt a connection to the character and describe what the performer was doing to make you feel this way.



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## DRAMATIC ELEMENTS

### Climax

- Think about the moment when the performer describes things they did that morning, just past the halfway mark in the performance. Discuss how this could be an example of climax.
- Identify the most significant moment of tension or conflict in the performance and describe how this climax is being achieved through performance skills, expressive skills and production areas.

### Conflict

- Where might there be internal obstacles, or obstacles between the character and the environmental?
- How is conflict shown between characters? Think about the father yelling near the beginning of the performance.

### Contrast

- Describe how the performer uses contrasting expressive skills to realise their main character as compared to a secondary character.
- Compare the first part of the play with the second part – how is contrast explored in settings, times, themes and production areas?

### Mood

- How would you describe the overall mood of the performance? Which scene represents this best? Describe it in detail.
- Evaluate how the production areas of lighting and sound manipulate mood in a specific moment.

### Rhythm

- How would you describe the overall rhythm of this production?
- Analyse how the performer manipulates rhythm in the final moments of the performance as they list names of birds.

### Sound

- Reflect on a moment that used silence or the deliberate absence of sound and its effect on you as an audience.
- Discuss how the performer manipulates the tearing Velcro sound when dismembering the teddy bear prop. What is the dramatic effect?

### Space

- How does the performer interact with the set to define settings? Think about when they climb the set and speak about ascending the phone tower, or when they emerge from the suitcase.
- How is the use of space symbolic? What does the set represent and how does placing a human body inside the set create meaning?

### Tension

- Analyse how the performer uses the inflatable globe costume to release tension for comic effect.
- Identify a moment when the performer created suspense that held your attention. Describe how they manipulated expressive and performance skills in this moment.



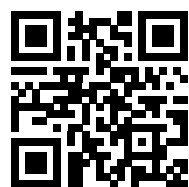
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# WORLD PROBLEMS

BY EMMA MARY HALL



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