



"The very best of its kind"
-Robyn Archer, AO

Background

- Established in Burnie, Tasmania by John Bakes and Scott Rankin in 1992.
- Big *hART* is a national award-winning arts and social change organisation.
- Big *hART* has worked with over 4,600 individuals in more than 32 communities.
- Big *hART* works in small towns or in cities where groups of people lack opportunity because of policy decisions, circumstance, survival issues or personal choice.

Big *hART* experiments with the process of making art over long periods of time, involving large groups of people and then placing the finished work in national and international arts festivals. This often creates new opportunities for participants, helps build the skills in communities and contributes to national social policy debate.

Over the last 16 years, the company has won many awards, and its work has received strong praise from diverse sources such as:

- The World Health Organisation;
- Ministers in the Australian Parliament;
- People at the grass roots of communities; and
- The Chair of the Australia Council - Mr James Strong.

These accolades recognise Big *hART*'s exemplary work in communities, and the quality of the Art it leads to, reinforcing the company's standing as a leader in both the Arts and Social Change.

What sets Big *hART* apart most strongly from others in the field is the opportunity for individual development and the consistent output of highly acclaimed films, performances and art works, which have enriched National and International festivals, while at the same time giving a voice to people in our midst whose plight we often don't hear.

In 2008 Big *hART* celebrates 16 years work.

Current Big hART projects

1. *Ngapartji Ngapartji* - Based in Alice Springs

Ngapartji Ngapartji has many facets. It is:

- A community project based in Alice Springs, working in the Pitjantjatjara lands;
- An online project encouraging both Pitjantjatjara and English literacy as a crime prevention strategy;
- An arts project with touring performances.

First staged as a small scale show at the 2005 Melbourne International Festival, it has played to full houses in Melbourne, Alice Springs, Adelaide, Perth, Queensland and most recently Sydney during the 2008 Sydney Festival. Such is the interest in this piece, every ticket has been sold and every night sees another standing ovation.

Australia is the continent with the largest language loss. With the growing recognition the project is receiving, the solid work on the ground, the expanding website and the high profile touring production, Ngapartji Ngapartji is making a powerful plea for action over this pressing issue.

Reviews

"A rare, compelling and essential gift indeed."
-Stephen Dunne, SMH January 2008

"...a truly major work of art...Such beauty can make you weep."
- James Waites, Australian Stage Online, January 2008

"An inclusive plea for understanding and justice."
-Miriam Cosic, The Australian, October 2006

2. **GOLD**- Griffith and the Murray Darling Basin

"It's not about the survival of the farm. It's the survival of the family"
Farmer - Boree Creek

Australia's first potential climate change refugees- stories of love and resilience.

GOLD is a major new performance work, from Big hART on a par with the acclaimed "StickybrickS," and *Ngapartji Ngapartji*.

GOLD is in development and will result in a new touring acoustic musical featuring some of the countries finest songwriters, in 2009.

Over the past 2 years, Big hART has been working with young people in Griffith, New South Wales and drought affected farming families across the Murray-Darling Basin in Eastern Australia. Young people and photographers, filmmakers, designers and producers, have spent time creating film, image and

text with farmers on rural properties in Rand, Boree Creek, the Hume Weir, Condobolin, Stanthorpe and Goondiwindi, sharing and collecting stories for the **GOLD** project.

In 2009 Big *hART* will stage **GOLD** as a series of intimate performance events in dry dams on these same rural properties. This tour will be the subject of an ABC documentary, in conjunction with an interactive website. Following this showcase, **GOLD** will be available to tour nationally in the form of a new acoustic musical written and directed by Scott Rankin.

3. DRIVE- North West Coast ,Tasmania

Cars kill. In terms of body count, the car is the greatest disaster in the history of humankind.

Drive is a cinematic exploration of the self-inflicted carnage of Autocide, performed kinetically against a backdrop of film. Made with and about young men coming of age, **Drive** explores two major rights of passage – getting a drivers licence and the legal right to consume alcohol.

Through a 12 month process, skaters, filmmakers, sound artists, dancers and young men chart the life threatening possibilities of these most coveted markers as they move towards adulthood.

Autocide is endemic... young men like to die alone, at high speed, in single vehicle accidents, crushed in a crumpled metal coffin.

4. Drive In Holiday – Isolated shack communities in Tasmania

Drive In Holiday is part of Big *hART*'s long term Tasmanian program- LUCKY, which takes a 25 year view of regional development across the isolated North West Coast of Tasmania. Following on from *Radio Holiday- Drive in Holiday* is a multi-layered project working with single teenage mothers and their children, as well as the elderly and residents of isolated shack communities on the Tasmanian coast. By focusing on young mothers, early childhood and the elderly, the project's focus is intergenerational, with strong outcomes for each group.

The multi media performance piece, sold out in the 2007 Ten Days on the Island Festival. This successful project has a strong crime prevention theme and has generated a great deal of interest, including favorable mention in the Australian Parliament.

Reviews

"Drive In Holiday is a unique and thoroughly engaging exploration not only of a slice of Tasmanian culture, but of the potential of hybrid performance and expanded storytelling...The scale, complexity, and the integration of interdisciplinary elements in Drive In Holiday is very impressive, and the environment created is completely immersive."

- Gail Priest, Real Time, 2007.

QUOTE

"...with "Drive In Holiday" Big hART has created a whole new form."

- Elizabeth Walsh, Artistic Director Ten Days on the Island.

5. This Is Living- Tasmania

The right to die. The right to live. The right to have sex when you're old and ugly in a world obsessed with youth and beauty.

This Is Living is part of Big *hART*'s *LUCKY* program and brings together teenage mothers, skateboarders and Senior citizens in an effort to answer the question "who is going to look after our old people" given Tasmania's ageing population. In 2008 and 2009, the project will continue, creating new interpretations in and with communities around Tasmania.

The performance piece, grew out of a long community process working with Senior citizens, teenage mothers, skateboarders, artists and producers and along Tasmania's North West Coast and premiered in Burnie in September 2007. It is a compelling dark comedy that follows three lives well lived, and the discovery of a well hidden ménage-a-trois. ***This Is Living*** has been created for actors with a life-time of experience and utilizes the dying art of photo-journalism, to capture the dark underbelly of any small Australian community.

6. JUNK THEORY – Cronulla Sutherland NSW

The riots in Sydney in December 2005 put Cronulla on the international map, causing shock and heartache for Australians across the country. Big *hART* initiated an immediate response moving on from this event with the Sutherland Shire community through a project that proved – *"it's harder to hurt someone when you know their story"*.

Throughout 2006, young people from diverse cultural and social backgrounds met regularly, listening to each other's story, listening to others in the community, and helping to create understanding, respect and empathy. They worked with photographers, filmmakers, composers, older residents, shipwrights, seafarers, and local business in a project designed to prevent violence, build citizenship, increase social inclusion and create a strong picture of life in the Sutherland Shire. The result was a unique new floating multi media installation for the 2007 Sydney Festival - **JUNK THEORY**.

Forty-one local young people and 60 older people from 22 different cultural backgrounds worked together through the project. **JUNK THEORY** generated 81 positive media segments across television, radio, print and internet, nationally and internationally, presenting a different and positive image of the community and of diversity at a time where the horror of the previous year was being revisited by the media.

JUNK THEORY has attracted significant Australian and international attention with invitations from Adelaide, Tasmania, Canberra, Auckland, Vancouver and Dubai.

QUOTES

" I loved the work. It was exquisite"

- Fergus Linehan Artistic Director, Sydney Festival 2007

"The little boat with big ideas"

-Robert McFarlane 18 January SMH

National and International Arts Festivals

Alongside the work with individuals and communities, each Big *hART* project results in a range of artworks that continue to attract the attention of national and international festivals and presenters. This recognition helps to promote the participating communities, assisting in community development and cultural tourism. In recent years large-scale theatre pieces have been included in Melbourne, Sydney, Perth and Tasmanian Arts festivals, selling every ticket, and performing to standing ovations. Festivals that have featured Big *hART*'s work include:

- 1994 National Festival of Australian Theatre
- 2000 Adelaide Festival
- 2000 Cork International Film Festival
- 2002 Melbourne International Festival of the Arts
- 2004 Sydney Opera House
- 2005 Ten Days on the Island Festival
- 2006 Melbourne International Festival of the Arts
- 2006 Sydney Festival
- 2007 Sydney Festival
- 2007 Sydney Opera House
- 2007 UWA Perth International Arts Festival
- 2007 Ten Days on the Island Festival
- 2007 Adelaide Cabaret Festival
- 2007 The Dreaming Festival
- 2008 Sydney Festival
- 2008 Adelaide Bank Festival of the Arts

Websites

www.bighart.org

www.ngapartji.org

www.au.org.au

www.junktheory.org

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