

VIANNE THEATRE

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February 7 2025 - Union Theatre - Arts and Cultural Building
University of Melbourne

Choreographer and Director	Shelley Lasica
Music	Milo Kossowski and Morgan McWaters for PEACE OUT!
Mise-en-scène	Anne-Marie May
Costumes	Shelley Lasica and Kara Baker for PROJECT
Lighting	Jenny Hector
Performers	Deanne Butterworth Timothy Harvey Jo Lloyd Bonnie Paskas Lee Serle
Producers	Phoebe Kelly and Indiana Coole
Project Administration	Auspicious Arts

VIANNE THEATRE is the current iteration of the VIANNE series

- 2008 VIANNE fortyfivedownstairs
- 2009 VIANNE Dancehouse, Dance Massive
- 2012 VIANNE AGAIN Drawing Room D112, School of Art, Monash University, Caulfield Campus
VIANNE AGAIN Iwaki Auditorium, ABC Southbank Centre
- 2013 VIANNE AGAIN RMIT Design Hub
- 2013 INSIDE VIANNE AGAIN National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Now - an installation with
Anne-Marie May and Helen Grogan

VIANNE is about the space and place one holds within, that is also inhabited by and with others and their traces. It is about knowing or not and how one knows. Where is VIANNE, what does VIANNE know and how does she know it? VIANNE now inhabits the THEATRE.

VIANNE is a project that has spanned eighteen years so far and as part of that has involved a huge number of people and many different ways of working. This has included various development periods with the performers and has also included a curatorium of artists - Ben Cobham, Anne-Marie May, Robyn McKenzie, Milo Kossowski and Ben Speth - with whom I worked on scenography (the first working title).

Thank you to the huge number of people who have made VIANNE happen over the work's long life, most especially the performers for their enormous contribution in developing the work and their ongoing commitment to bringing it into being again. I would also like to thank Ben Cobham and Studio 24.

Biographies

Shelley Lasica

For more than 40 years, Shelley Lasica has pushed the confines of dance, choreography and performance. Her practice is defined by an enduring interest in the context and situations of presenting choreography.

Throughout her career, she has been making solo performances that function as a mechanism and a commentary on making work. This practice provides the basis for generating ensemble works with a network of artists working in dance and other media, that question the collaborative and interdisciplinary possibilities of choreography.

She regularly collaborates with visual artists, including Tony Clark, Helen Grogan, Anne Marie May, Callum Morton, Kathy Temin and Jacqui Shelton, in order to create dialogues between different modes and means of presentation. She has also contributed to the work of artists including Bridie Lunney, Faye D'Evie, Tony Clark, Spencer Lai, Fiona Macdonald and Alicia Frankovich. Lasica's choreographic works have been shown nationally and internationally within both visual art and theatre contexts, including: Melbourne Festival; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Chunky Move, Melbourne; Artspace, Sydney; Centre Nationale de la Danse, Paris; Siobhan Davies Studios, London; Dance Massive, Melbourne; Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne; Murray White Room, Melbourne; Neon Parc, Melbourne and Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne. She has been a lead research associate with the Precarious Movements: Choreography and the Gallery. Lasica has also been a mentor, teacher and advocate in choreography and dance throughout her career.

WHEN I AM NOT THERE a survey work as a performance-exhibition was commissioned by Monash University Museum of Art (2022), Art Gallery of New South Wales 2023, and Precarious Movements: Choreography and the Gallery, a research project 2021-2024 hosted by the University of New South Wales with support through the Australian Research Council. The work travelled to Perth Institute of Contemporary Art in June 2024. Beginning in 2023 she has undertaken the iterative work **RENDER** between Melbourne and Berlin. In Australia it has been shown at s-y-d-n-e-y in Sydney and in a room in the Nicholas Building in Melbourne as a solo work and at Haydens Melbourne with all the collaborators. In September of 2024 she undertook the second part of a residency at Callie's Berlin. In November 2024 and March 2025, **REPRESENT**, a performance with scenery with Tony Clark, will be presented again at Buxton Contemporary as part of Clark's exhibition, Tony Clark Unsculpted.

PEACE OUT! was a band that existed between 2008-2012, a spin-off of The Emergency. The group was composed of Daina Fanning, Morgan McWaters and Milo Kossowski. They released a self-titled album in 2010, reworking some of the soundtrack to Vianne. McWaters continues to create music as Worng while Kossowski releases music under the moniker Bad Thoughts.

Anne-Marie May is a contemporary artist who works across sculpture, installation, and textiles to explore spatial, perceptual and chromatic relationships. Making and materiality are central to May's practice, and a long-standing interest in architecture and craft informs her experimentation with process and the production of objects. Through a multifaceted process of reworking materials, her practice seeks to create spatial and conceptual connections between an artwork and its architectural location. Widely known for her brightly coloured suspended sculptures, which hover within a public architectural space. Everything Mobile is Joyful, Shepparton Art Museum, 2021-22; Hook Me Up (Synaesthesia) Melbourne Recital Centre, 2018; Hemaspectrum, Monash University,

Melbourne 2015; RGB (mobile), National Gallery of Victoria 2013-14.

May first exhibited in 1988 at Gertrude Contemporary in Melbourne and has held regular solo exhibitions since then. Exhibitions in Australian galleries and museums include– Strata, Lorne Sculpture Biennale, 2025; A Fictional Retrospective: Gertrude's First Decade 1985-1995, Gertrude Contemporary, 2025; Pliable Planes: Textiles in the Expanded Field, UNSW Galleries, 2022-2024; Inside Out: Space and Process, McClelland Gallery, 2020-2021; Connecting the World Through Sculpture- Part 3, In the Air, Monash Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, 2021; Every Brilliant Eye, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne in 2017; Less is More: Minimal and Post-Minimal Art in Australia, Heide Museum of Modern Art in 2012; and the 2006 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art, Art Gallery of South Australia..

Kara Baker and Shelley Lasica for PROJECT was a collaborative design initiative between Shelley Lasica and Kara Baker, a leading Melbourne independent fashion designer, from 2000 to 2010.

Jenny Hector is an award winning designer whose mediums of light and space have been witnessed across live performance, music and installation. Her designs are driven by strong collaborations and the spaces they find themselves in.

Deanne Butterworth is a Naarm based dance artist whose choreographic, performance, and teaching practice is preoccupied with the investigation of movement and how it relates to the physical, emotional, and sonic space in which it is located. Since 1994 she has shown her work and performed in the works of other choreographers including Phillip Adams, Lucy Guerin, Maria Hassabi, Jo Lloyd, Sandra Parker, Eszter Salamon and many more. Between 1996-2015 she performed in multiple works by Shelley Lasica. Deanne has also performed in the work of many visual artists including Damiano Bertoli, Alicia Frankovich, Sally Smart, and Linda Tegg. Her most recent work 'SWANS' (December, 2024) co-created with Jo Lloyd was shown at MPavilion. Over the past 30 years Deanne has been nominated for multiple Green Room Awards for performance and choreography. deannebutterworth.com

Timothy Harvey is a movement and Myotherapy practitioner based in Naarm / Melbourne. Other than through a regular dance practice, he also connects with movement through anatomy studies, trail running, hiking and as a clinical exercise educator. Timothy's role as a performer in the works of Shelley Lasica has spanned more than twenty years and numerous projects including the Play In A Room series, Situation Live / Set Up, VIANNE, The Design Plot, Greater Union and When I Am Not There.

Jo Lloyd is a dance artist based in Naarm, working with choreography as a social encounter, revealing behaviour over various durations and contexts. Jo has choreographed, performed and taught extensively in Australia and overseas for over 20 years.

After graduating from the Victorian College of the Arts, Jo performed and toured nationally and internationally with Chunky Move (Gideon Obarzanek), Shelley Lasica and Sandra Parker. She has undertaken residencies and commissions with the New Zealand Dance Company, Nibroll Japan, RISING, Chunky Move, Tasdance, Dancenorth, Liveworks, Bundanon, NGA, and NGV. Her work Overture, Arts House 2018 and Melbourne Festival 2019, received three Green Room Awards and a Helpmann Award nomination. Recent works include; Solo Agitato for Happening #1 in Studio 24 at Abbotsford Convent, Swans for MPavilion co-created with Deanne Butterworth, The Mirror of Sadness created with Gabriella Imrichova, Melbourne Fringe 2024, Out of Theatre NGV 2023, FM Air The National 4, Carriageworks 2023, Bang Stop, RISING 2022, Handsome at The Substation 2022, Death Role for Bundanon Art Museum 2021, Archive the archive NGA Know My Name exhibition 2020 and DOUBLE DOUBLE created and performed with Deanne Butterworth, Tina Havelock Stevens and Evelyn Morris, which received three 2023 Green Room Award nominations.

Jo has been Resident Director of Lucy Guerin Inc. (2016) and recipient of a Sidney Myer Creative Fellowship (2021) and a Chloe Munro Fellowship (2022). Jo teaches regularly for Chunky Move and Lucy Geurin Inc. and creates/ presents work out of Studio 24 at the Abbotsford Convent with producer Michaela Coventry.

Bonnie Paskas is an Australian born dancer currently based in Europe. She has performed in the works of a diverse array of choreographers, primarily in Germany and Switzerland but also in Finland, Italy, Austria and Australia. While continuing to perform in the works and worlds of others, Bonnie has also enjoyed developing an improvised performance practice with musicians and visual artists in and near Naples (Italy) and inviting collaborations on her rural property in the south of Italy where a small ruin has become an unexpected protagonist.

Lee Serle is a Melbourne/Naarm based choreographer and performer and has presented his work to critical acclaim worldwide, creating dances on all scales, from grand stages to the intimate and personal, commissioned by the Trisha Brown Dance Company, Lyon Opera Ballet, Lucy Guerin Inc, Sydney Dance Company, among many others. Lee has received fellowships from Chloe Munroe Bequest, Australia Council for the Arts, City of Sydney and Rolex Arts Institute, and nominated for several Australian Dance and Greenroom Awards throughout his career. Lee is currently the Resident Director for Lucy Guerin Inc. 2025.

Dear Shelley

Thanks again for inviting me to the preview of VIANNE.

As you can imagine, I don't have much to work with when it comes to movement! The only guide I have, really, is an idea that, somehow, dance might be related to writing, in the sense that all good writing is, or can be said to be, to a certain extent, about the craft of writing itself.

So, watching the work-in-progress, and possibly with the quite rigid and anxious hope of applying my sole aesthetic criterion, I supposed that the piece could generally be described as being about 'the ethics of occupying space'.

It seemed at first that the dancers were somehow 'learning' to move and that there was some sort of analogous relationship between the body learning to read itself and the audience learning to read the choreographic body. This also seemed to partly entail an exploration of the bodies of others (I'm thinking mostly of the sequence where the male dancer moves his face incrementally along the body of the supine female). There seemed also to be something about one (or all?) of the female dancers being oppressed into a negative space by one of the other females. (I interpreted this as a mother/daughter relation but maybe that is just me!).

I also thought the difficulty of the woman relating to the man was really effectively conveyed in her inability to adequately reproduce the actions which he so effortlessly (and so robotically) performed (although it only occurs to me now that her frustration could also be attributed to the male dancer's failure to effectively mirror what she is trying to show).

I liked the two figures undulating against the boards - a kind of Rapid Eye Movement of the body. My favourite part (which I think of, quite literally, as the spine of the piece) was when the dancers lined up at the edge of the performance space and began slowly turning their heads, inclining their necks, swiveling slowly at the hips, like sunflowers or sunflower machines. I'm sure one of them caught my eye. I kept looking away, hoping I was imagining it, but when I looked back, there she was again. Only this time she held my gaze. Very unnerving!

I'm realising as I write this that my other main strategy is to allow my mind to wander and to hope that whatever I end up thinking about might possibly have something to do with what I'm watching (not very intellectually rigorous but I've got to work with what I've got!) So, with that in mind, the piece also seemed to be about memory: the past and its tendency to re-emerge in the present.

The couples seemed somehow tormented by this, as well as all of the things that couples can be tormented by when they encounter their phantasmatic doubles in their all-too-real incarnations.

When we met for coffee, you mentioned that your Grandmother used to tell you stories about her life in Vienna and that these recitations contributed to a tangible bond between the two of you, even though, you suspected, your own mnemonic overlays and misreadings must have distorted the originals, even though the buildings, the streets, the shops, the books, the instrument, the clothing, the cars, the jewellery, the people who had made the stories happen in the first place no longer existed. There's a passage in Swann's Way that talks about love as a kind of homelessness; a state of knowing that "the creature one adores is in some place of enjoyment where oneself is not and cannot follow."

For Swann it is anguish that precedes love, so that even in its absence, anguish persists "at the disposal of one sentiment today, of another tomorrow, of filial piety or affection for a comrade."

In the dancers' ceaseless, restless searching; the intermittent, sometimes frightening sometimes rewarding encounters with the bodies of selves and others, I was reminded always of this underlying anguish. Though you keep trying to convince me that we are all prodigious in our understandings of movement, I still find it mysterious, even bizarre, that two men and three women could enter into a space and proceed to dismantle and reassemble it with a transient, fleeting,

contingency that somehow also manages to communicate ideas of real depth and complexity to a person with almost no experience or understanding of contemporary dance.

I read an article recently that recalled Beckett's response on seeing his mother after she'd been diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease. He said. "Her face was a mask, completely unrecognisable. Looking at her, I had a sudden realization that all the work I'd done before was on the wrong track ... there was no sense adding to the store of information, gathering knowledge ... What I had to do was investigate not knowing, not perceiving, the whole world of incompleteness."

I still think the excerpts I have seen from VIANNE might generally be described as being about 'the ethics of occupying space' (as well as everything else they could be said to be about) but I am wondering now if I have been on the wrong track myself and whether there is some other mode of investigation that underlies the more performative aspects?
it would be great to hear your thoughts.

Best,
Fiona

Fiona Hile is a Melbourne based writer.

This text was first included in the programme for the 2008/2009 presentations of VIANNE.

VIANNE, VIANNE, again; or, the same another

Justin Clemens

The French linguist Jean-Claude Milner once noted a peculiar feature of many languages, whereby apparent antitheses can come to mean the same thing. The same, says the barfly, pointing at an empty beer glass, another. Repetition of what's not there, alternation of opposites. But a contrary situation can also hold. Take the incident in which the famous philosopher J.L. Austin announced that, while double negatives could be positives, there were no languages in which a double positive could be a negative. Yeah yeah, Sidney Morgenbesser interjected from the back of the room. So repetition enables the compaction of contradictions, as well as inversions of sense. But for that to happen, one needs a memory, and an attention to the modulations of the act: no more beer, not another philosopher.... All kinds of movements of the body, as it happens, that presume the body they underplay and which dance out exceptions to the will.

People sometimes say that the essence of performance is its singularity, the you-had-to-be-there liveness. It happens once and once only, even if the same dance repeats night after night. Everyone knows you can repeat every movement precisely, with remarkably different effects. The doubling or splitting of the same letter can give you another: V, W. Wien, Vienna, Vianne - selections, combinations, substitutions, repetitions, capitalizations, the names of real places and imagined personages, the same another. And what if the performance was itself an experiment with the problem of performing the same thing, again? The performance would no longer be this or that performance or even the differences between them, but the performing of performances, expanding the sense of the different differences between performances as self-similarity under variant conditions. As Brandon Chua claims, the encore, the again, or, again, the en-corps, the embodied, began as an interruption of performance - the audience, for example, calling for another rendition of the same aria, at the very moment it was finished in the middle of the opera - not as a call for prolongation after its official conclusion. Problems turn into questions and questions, movements. The same body becomes other to itself; other bodies become organs of the self; the end is folded into the middle; the middle produces differences.

Consider the V, again, like two fingers raised in an obscene or victory gesture or two legs opened in the air or the abstract point of a fat pencil pressing down on an invisible line with orthogonal intensity or the cartoon mouth of a supine character or the double-n, like rounded hills or breasts or the soft ears of a rabbit poking over a hill, the whole terminating in a lower-case e like a busted little theta. Letters are bodies too, or part-bodies, that move upon a page or screen as dancers in a place, a place they inscribe with their effects. No letter can exist as a letter without the possibility of its repetition in another place, without its cursive mobility, without the tiny twist of a perhaps invisible comma that marks a little breath or a pause or a turn of the body or of sense. Writing should be a dance of the pen, wrote mad Friedrich Nietzsche, though he was not thinking of mad Nijinski, whose body also danced his thought.

So the desire to dance the same another, again is already in excess of its proper place, glorious and poisonous, the doubling of memory and madness, the divagations of the body and the arabesques of sense. Here, here, now, then, VIANNE, again.

This text was first included in the programme for the 2012/13 presentations of VIANNE AGAIN.

With thanks to

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