

Accidental Monsters of Meaning

Aimee Smith

Tour Pack



Work Description

What are the monsters of our time? Where are they leading us?

Accidental Monsters of Meaning is a contemporary dance and interdisciplinary performance installation examining the relationship between humans, the natural environment and consumer culture. Set in the ambiguous and sterile space of a museum – zoo – viewing gallery – shopping mall world, the human being becomes a specimen of our times, the consumer becomes the product for consumption, and we are forced to face the realities of survival and extinction.

The work is designed as a performance installation from anywhere between 1 to 4 hours in duration. It comprises of 5 perspex boxes co-existing within a shared space whilst carrying their own themes, these being: P.E.T. (Poly Ethylene Terephthalate), ANTHRO-APOLOGY, HUMAN BUYINGS, DON'T YOU WORRY 'BOUT A THING & THE DISAPPEARANCE. Within each box exists combinations of human being, physical action, dance, text, objects, sound and projected images. Audiences are invited to navigate the space freely, being able to view the boxes individually and/or collectively.

Choreographed by Aimee Smith

Performed by Deb Robertson, Rhiannon Newton, Aisling Donovan, Bianca Martin, Michelle Anderson/Natalie Holmwood

Sound design by Ben Taaffe

Set Construction by Ainsley Canning

Seasons at The Western Australian Museum in March 2011 and Spectrum Project Space (Perth) from 31 July-2 August 2009

'Accidental Monsters of Meaning presents the biggest failings of humanity wordlessly and passionately while confronting the senses'

- Magdeline Lum, philosophicallydisturbed.wordpress.com



'Accidental Monsters of Meaning, affirmed that [Smith] is an artist who makes clever, original, thought-provoking works'
- Nina Levy, *Dance Australia*

'Delicious if not horrendous irony... Beauty and occasional humour ameliorate Smith's dark message' - *Realtime*

'The work is an intriguing combination of elegance, comedy and commentary' - *The West Australian*

'Smith's political commitment to the persuasive attributes of performance is undeniable' - *Maggi Phillips, Realtime*

Smith was nominated as 'Most Interesting Australian Artist for Accidental Monsters of Meaning' in the 2010 Dance Australia Critics' Survey

Choreographer's Notes

Philosopher Jonathan Lear talks about the "blind spot" of any culture: the inability to conceive of its own destruction and possible extinction. This idea fascinates me as I watch my own culture live through a fragile and powerful time in our history. Powerfully destructive or powerfully transformative? This is up to us.

Sometimes culture, the values and beliefs shared across a group of people, gets so ingrained that we forget to stop, to take the time to ask if this is still who we are, what we believe in and what we aspire for. My hope for this work is to create a space where we can stop and ask. But to do it in a way that is all at once humorous, emotional, confronting and hopeful.

Video

4 minutes of footage from the Western Australian Museum season in 2011;
<http://vimeo.com/31072514>



Technical Specifications

Set

- 5 perspex boxes.
- Dimensions (Width/Depth/Height):
 - Box 1: 0.9m x 0.9m x 1.9m
 - Box 2: 2.2m x 1.2m x .9m
 - Box 3: 1.2m x 0.9m x 2.2m
 - Box 4: 2m x 2m x 2m
 - Box 5: 1.2m x 0.6m x 2m

Empty water bottles to fill Box 1
15 x empty packaging boxes

Lighting

5 x Profile spots or track lighting

Audio

- 5 x powered speakers
- 1 x laptop
- 1 x audio interface
- 5 x audio cables (2x 8m & 3x 15m)
- 2 x wireless headphones
- MPD & cable

Visual

- 2 x 4000 lumens projectors
- 2 x DVD players & video cables
- 1 x projector cradle

Running Time

Variable: Between 1– 4 hours



'It feels strangely luxurious to be able to choose how long one spends at each box, and to be able to move around to view the performers from different perspectives'
- *The West Australian*, Nina Levy

'The plastic agitation of the soundscape as a hand penetrates entrapment, mixes humour and desperation with equal and colliding effectiveness'
- *Realtime*, Maggi Phillips



Government of Western Australia
Department of Culture and the Arts



Audience Feedback

Comments from the audience was one of the most interesting and unique aspects of presenting this work. A very diverse audience visited the work, particularly during the WA Museum season, upon which it made a visibly strong impression. For many audience members, it was their first exposure to contemporary dance and performance installation. The demographic who engaged with the work spanned across generations, reaching far beyond the traditional or even contemporary 'arts scene'. Through a guest book we were able to collect feedback from many of these audience members - here are a few examples.

'Nothing I have ever experienced' - Sue, 44

'Imaginative, unique and thought provoking' - Anon

"There's nothing like a longing to focus the mind". This performance does this too. Wonderfully conceived and performed' - Anon

'Mind Blowing. An amazing, captivating, confronting space. Really opened my eyes. Thank you.' - Katie Cameron

'Words are hard to describe the mixed feelings I had (happy, sad, sick) but this is an awesome show... It consumed me!!!' - Stu McMillan

'Brilliant... These images will be with me for a long time.' - Anon

'Impact! Fantastic! Visually stunning, thought-provoking, humorous, amazing performers and awesome experience. Thank you so much. Look forward to your future works.' - Anon

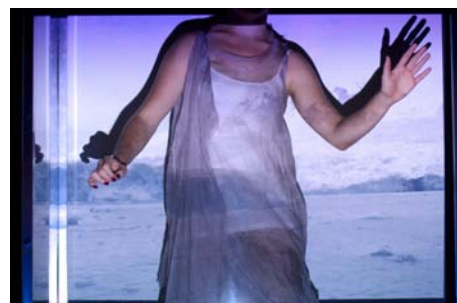
'We loved it - 'Don't you worry bout a thing' was our favourite. Should be more stuff like this that makes you think' - Annette & Seb (10 year old)

'What a lovely surprise in my day' - Lorelle

'From the moment you enter you feel horrified in a very odd way' - Anon

'Harrowing experience' - Anon

'It was an extraordinary experience' - Anon



Contact Details

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