

ARTS ACCESS
NEWS
THE BLUE EDITION 2005



DID YOU KNOW?

Most local councils provide community activities, including art classes, and many of them are low cost or free. Look up the number in your white pages, and ask for the Access All Abilities Officer or the Arts Officer. Most councils have one of these officers. Other tips like this are available on our website, under Art Directories:

www.artsaccess.com.au

(or we can send you a hard copy, just call 9699 8299 or TTY 9699 7636.)

COVER DESIGN

Western Lodge Supported Residential Service. With a mix of residents who are in effect one step off the street, this project focused on body scaring, marking and tattooing. Artists worked with residents to create paper stencils reflecting the residents own personal scaring, marking and tattooing on their arms and hands. Love, hate scratched into knuckles many years ago were drawn onto the paper ...butterflies that have not flown were set free too. Short term residents were keen to participate in this project and share their own stories together through the arts.

Artists Jacquie Stockdale Christine Mooney

The Arts Access News is also available in Braille, Audio Tape and Email.

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ART DAY SOUTH 2004

FILM PROJECTS

It was all “lights camera action” at the Art Day South Program in 2004 where the participants created a short film, five animations and seven digital stories. After this massive feat, their efforts were rewarded when all thirteen films were included in Arts Access’ Other Film Festival at Melbourne Museum in December 2004. Art Day South Coordinator Jo Cohen talked to six of the participants about their exciting projects.

ANIMATIONS

Also in 2004, Tina Douglas was employed as the artist on the Handmade Animation Project, which involved her working with five Art Day South participants over 12 weeks to create their own individual animations. Each of these animations are as diverse and interesting as the participants who have illustrated, animated and narrated their unique stories. This project was funded through the Arts Victoria, Artists in Communities Program. Debra Lissek is the animator behind “My Bedroom” and John Barnett created “St. Kilda”.

Jo: Tell me about your films

Debra: It's about my bedroom at mum's house where I go on the weekend. I liked working with Tina. It was different from what I've done before. I did the drawings and took the photos. People at my house said it was beautiful and my mum loved it. It was easy, not too hard – you use your fingers “rain is coming down”. No mistakes, nothing wrong, perfect. I liked doing the drawings and moving them.

John: It was about St. Kilda “warm in summer, cold in winter”. Fitzroy St, Acland St, beach, shops, Luna Park, massage parlours, beats, belly-naked, g-strings! I enjoyed making the film and I especially liked working with Tina. I wrote the words to go with the pictures. Tina did the camera and I did the rest. I liked doing the voice. It was easy to make, no problems!

Jo: If you made another film what would it be about?

Debra: I'd like to make it about houses, flowers, gardening with my mum.

John: The mighty Murray River, redgums and paddle-steamers.



TELLING TALES - DIGITAL STORIES

In addition, seven Art Day South participants were involved in the Telling Tales project, a partnership between Arts Access and ACMI (Australian Centre for the Moving Image). 3-day workshops were held at the ACMI studios in Federation Square and resulted in participants creating 5-minute digital stories reflecting an aspect of their lives. Each participant created their own script, supplied their own photographs or artworks, then were guided through the process of editing and filming their own story. The project was funded through the Innovations Program, Disability Services, Department of Human Services.

Cathy Craig is the creator of “My Sister’s Wedding” and John Eslick is the creator of “My House”.

Jo: Tell me about your films.

Cathy: My film was about my sister's wedding. It was embarrassing because I put my stockings on back to front and there was 72 people watching. Both the rehearsal and the wedding were funny. There were lots of good memories. It was a good learning experience. I liked going into the city. I thought the computer technology was amazing. I liked choosing the music. The staff were really great.

John: We had a good talk and made the film. My house got pulled down and I got caught with a bit of the house, a bit of wood because it brings back memories, good memories. The people who helped us were really good. I feel happy and proud to show it to people. I like to watch my film again and again.

Jo: What did you find difficult about making it?

Cathy: The computer stuff was difficult but the staff did most of that for us. They did the editing but we chose everything and talked about everything together. Three days was enough!

John: It was easy to make because people helped me.

Jo: If you made another film what would it be about?

Cathy: Our own version of Hamlet. We could call this place ‘Dinglywood’ instead of ‘Hollywood’! I'd also like to try animation.

John: I would like to make another film and have people help me and go into the city. I showed the film at my house and they liked it and I showed it here and they liked it and I would like to show it at Gawith Villa.

THE GOOD LOOKING FILM

In 2004, Art Day South participants brought to life the characters they had portrayed in the Good Looking poster and card exhibition shown at Arts Access in 2003.

They developed these wild and wonderful characters- into a film script, which was loosely based on the Beauty and the Beast story, and named it, The Good Looking Film. As well as creating their own characters and script, the participants collaborated with artists Andrew Tranter and Katrine Gabb, to design and make their own costumes, make-up and sets, which were then all brought together in the final film. During the filming, some of the participants chose to be in front of the camera – acting, while others preferred to be behind it - assisting with directing, sound and camera operating.

The Good Looking Film is the exciting culmination of an extensive body of work that reflects the multi-faceted, multi-talented nature of Art Day South. Candice Jones and Paula Whiting give an insight to their involvement with The Good Looking Film:

Jo: Tell me about the film.

Candice: It was the Beauty and the Beast story. I was a spirit hiding behind a tree looking. I wore makeup and a costume which looked good – I had a pink face and red lipstick. I liked the statue, the waves, the boats rocking and the pirates, the storm going fast and the boat breaking down.

Paula: Katrine and Andrew bought in four stories and we chose Beauty and the Beast. We made up our own characters, costumes, makeup and sets. Cathy wrote the script. We started filming after we chose our character, mine was Beauty. I liked making and wearing the costume and the makeup. I enjoyed acting and working with the camera. I liked making some of the sets – “the garden” and “the rose”.

Jo: If you made another film, what would it be about?

Candice: My mum's new house, it's a nice house. My mum would be in it the film and my stepdad and my sisters and my whole big family. I want to do animation next time.

Paula: I would like to make another film.

Well done Art Day South, we look forward to the next creative installment from “Dingleywood 2005”!

Art Day South is a weekly multi-arts program for adults with an intellectual disability funded by Disability Services, DHS Southern Region. Ring Jo Cohen on 9699 8299 Wednesdays or Fridays for enquiries.

Good Looking postcard

Artwork: Paula Whiting

Photography: Andrew Tranter.

ART OF THE MATTER

by Nuala Calvi

Arts Access is pleased to reprint this article with the kind permission of Nuala Calvi and Ouch! www.bbc.co.uk/ouch (copyright bbc)

Visit any mainstream art gallery in Britain and chances are you won't find 'disability art' given so much as a mention. Yet the movement, which started in the late 70s, played a key part in the battle to get disability recognised as a human rights issue and has since spawned countless disability arts organisations across the country.

One of those, Holton Lee in Dorset, was this year awarded a staggering £380,000 from the Arts Council and Heritage Lottery Fund to create the first ever national archive of disability art. A team of twenty disabled people has been chosen from the disability art world and is about to embark on the task of deciding what that archive should include. Tony Heaton, disabled artist and Holton Lee director, explains why this is the most important thing to happen to disability culture for years, and how YOU can join the debate.

Why do we need a disability art archive - shouldn't disability art just be part of mainstream art collections?

I've visited a lot of major art archives in Britain and found very little evidence that

disability art exists at all. Tate Britain, for example, has got two pamphlets on the subject. And very few disability arts organisations have any sort of archive of things they've done, or records of what's happened in their region.

Leicester University did a study recently called Buried in the Footnotes, which highlighted the fact that disability works are there in collections but are 'hidden' - they're not being displayed. Plus, very few disabled artists are represented by dealers or galleries and have not had the same exposure or promotion as mainstream artists. As a result, the social impact of disability art isn't widely understood. The archive hopes to redress the balance.

Do you think all minority groups should have their own national art collections?

There's the South Asian Diaspora Literature and Arts Archive or the National Black Archive, but nothing similar for disability art. It's easy for minority cultures to get hijacked, so it's important that we do this for ourselves. You've only got to look at cultures that, like disability culture, are marginalised or have an oral tradition - Aboriginal or American Indian culture, for example - to see that, if this isn't done, there's a danger of being misrepresented or disappearing altogether.

You were among the first artists who formed what is now regarded as the 'disability art movement'. What does the term mean to you?

People started to write about disability in terms of the Social Model in the late '70s and early '80s, and at the same time disabled artists were making art which responded to that, which looked at disability in terms of oppression: people like Adam Reynolds and myself, performers like Johnny Crescendo, Ian Stanton. A lot of it was very politicised - it was about issues like disabled people being denied access to buildings, transport, education, work. So I'd say disability art is art by disabled people which is informed either by their impairment or by the way society views disability; it's part of a developing culture and it's a force for empowerment.

How has disability art changed over the last four decades?

The first wave of disability art was based around the politics and the protests, and I think the second wave was much more subtle, although some of the issues were the same: looking at impairment and how non-disabled people view the notion of disability. At the start, it was also more about the writing and music rather than visual art - that came later, with Adam Reynolds using sculpture to occupy the

WICKED THEATRE

Looking for a totally wicked night at the theatre? Then pack your bags and head to New York for a taste of access at it's best!

The Gershwin Theatre, home of the hit Broadway musical 'Wicked', is proving itself a leader in audience development and access by being the first venue in the world to provide Captioning, Audio Description and language translations at every performance.

Non-English speaking audiences can take advantage of ShowTrans, a revolutionary service that provides automated multilingual descriptive commentaries for theatre. Available in Japanese, Spanish, French and Portuguese, ShowTrans gives a better than word-for-word translation of the show. For patrons who are Deaf or hard of hearing, the I-Caption system displays all

dialogue and lyrics on small handheld units that are synchronised to the shows lighting and sound cues. These discreet screens are easy to hold and have a polarized screen to ensure nearby patrons are not distracted by light or moving text. The Audio Description service at the Gershwin offers blind or vision impaired audiences a detailed description of all the visual aspects of the production, including choreography, lighting, sets and costumes. Like ShowTrans and I-Caption, it is automated and timed perfectly to the show's cueing system. With access of this kind usually available for "special" performances only, patrons who require these services can finally attend theatre with family or friends, with the same choice of dates, times and seating options available to them for the first time.

Although these state-of-the-art communication tools are yet to find their way into Australian theatres, the challenge has now been set and the future for audiences with diverse needs is certainly looking good (or should I say "Wicked").

spaces he saw, because of his impairment, that non-disabled people weren't aware of, using things like gargoyles above doorways. In the late '80s, Colin Hambrook started doing big images that spoke about his experience of the mental health system and, more recently, Aidan Shingler's work *Medication Time*, which shows the hours on a clock face as pills, also gives voice to that more personal experience.

How are you going to decide what goes into the archive - will any work qualify, as long as it's by a disabled person?

Our steering group is made up of disabled people from the disability art movement, who either know about writing, poetry, visual arts, theatre, dance or music. We'll be creating an acquisitions policy with them which will define the exact kind of work we want. We might still include work like that, but it might have to be in a wider context. For instance, if a disabled artist painted landscape or portraits but there was no sense that the work was created by a disabled person, it might be interesting in terms of technique or style, but not necessarily in terms of disability art. And on the other side you have disabled artists throughout history that aren't identified as disabled artists - people like Van Gogh. I think there's a place for that.

What will visitors to the archive find, once it is completed?

There will be a new, purpose-built building on the site, an environment where materials can be stored at a constant temperature. Part of it will be like a research library, so if you came in and said, "I'd like to look at Aidan Shingler", for instance, we'd look up all his files, which might include slides of his work, drawings, writings, exhibition programmes, DVDs, video - and if you wanted to look at a particular painting we could bring it out for you. We've already started asking artists who exhibit in our gallery if they would like to leave a piece behind for the national collection, and we will have a huge amount of storage space which will allow us to run things like retrospectives or themed exhibitions - either here, at our current gallery, or round the country with other disability arts groups. At the moment all that really happens in disability art is that there are exhibitions of current work by individual artists - there's very little of an academic approach to how all that work fits together.

What kinds of themes do you think could be explored with the archive?

It might be the politics of disability, the direct action protests that took place in the 1990s to try and force through anti-discrimination legislation, and the songs and poetry people like Johnny Crescendo and Barbara Lisicki wrote when they protested outside buildings. It might be institutionalisation, or the way the psychiatric system approaches people with schizophrenia, with artists like Aidan Shingler and Stuart Baker-Brown or writers like Joe Bidder and Julie Macnamara. There is a huge amount of potential issues out there about how disability art has informed history that items from the archive could be used to illustrate.

How are you going to promote it to non-disabled people?

It will be promoted a lot through universities and major art galleries, but our audience development plan, which is being undertaken at the moment, will help us work that out in more detail. Promotion will be a major part of the budget proposal that we'll be putting together for running the archive.

"I think strictly speaking disability art is not just art created by a disabled person, if that work is not informed by disability or politics."



AND THE WINNER IS...

Ah, the old Oscars never disappoint us people with a disability do they?

This year we got all the expected things. Fabulous frocks, hideous frocks, and the age old tradition of "cripping-it-up" for a role. As we can see from winners like *Million Dollar Baby*, *Ray*, *The Aviator* and Spanish film *The Sea Inside*, there's nothing like playing a cripple to win you one of those little gold statues, hey?

As for the visibility of actors with a disability on screen - hardly seen. The last person with a disability to win an Academy Award was deaf actress Marlee Martin, who took the Best Actress Award for *Children of a Lesser God* in 1987.

Undoubtedly, the most controversial winner (in disability circles at least) was Clint Eastwood's *Million Dollar Baby*, criticized for its depiction of a female boxer who becomes a quadriplegic and wants to die.

Of course, contempt for the film was not helped by the fact that in 1996 *Dirty Harry* himself was taken to court under the Americans With Disabilities Act, for failing to make his Carmel-based hotel accessible. He later testified in Congress in support of a bill preventing people from suing under the act if they did not give defendants 90 days to make alterations.

But wait, there's MORE! When released in the UK, *Million Dollar Baby* was one of the very few films to be released without subtitles or audio-description!

Go ahead Clint, make our day!

Stella Young
Communications Coordinator, Arts Access
This article was also published on ScreenHub
www.screenhub.com.au

AN INTERVIEW WITH ALISON LAPPER

Arts Access is pleased to reprint this article with the kind permission of Victoria Lucas and Disability Arts In London Magazine. Alison Lapper talks to Victoria Lucas about her career as an artist.

Alison Lapper's work is mainly about her experiences and feelings about being a disabled woman and, more recently, about becoming a disabled mother. Although she is also a painter and installation artist, she is best known for her photography. Challenging, insightful and beautiful - her work is controversial in a world that sees the disabled female body as anything but beautiful. I talked to her in West Sussex, where she lives with her young son Parys.

Vicky: How did you first get into photography?

Alison: When I was doing my Fine Art degree in Brighton I stumbled into it. I was making sculptures of myself with tissue paper and I began to realise I wasn't this ugly blob that I had been brought up to believe I was, and that my body was actually quite attractive. I thought that if I could put myself up on the wall as a nude sculpture then maybe I could go on and do this with photography. So really the whole experience was about looking at my own body and my disability. I was 27 when I did this and I had never been taught to look at my own body. As a woman in society you don't do it and as a disabled woman you certainly don't do it. You're told that you're ugly and grotesque. Why would you want to look at yourself? I was lucky that my course was flexible and allowed me to experiment with sculpture and photography.

Vicky: Did you experience discrimination at university?

Alison: There were one or two tutors who never gave me a tutorial, didn't want to talk about my work, and basically could not hack that there was a disabled art student who was using her own body as part of her own art work. I thought, fine, if you want to be stupid, fine, not my problem. But you have to learn that. It's a long process and it takes a long time to not be offended by people that can't basically hack you. On the other hand there were people there who were just brilliant.

Vicky: Your most famous work is probably the photograph of you as the Venus de Milo. How did that come about?

Alison: I was in the library and flicking through some art books and came across the Venus de Milo and thought, 'that's me!'. I wanted to recreate this because it's such a classic image. It was quite a tongue in cheek kind of thing for a disabled person to put herself up as the Venus de Milo because she is looked upon as being the most beautiful sculpture, and because her arms fell off she's kind of allowed to be disabled. Nobody ever says at all that she is disabled, but they look at me and say 'oh she's disabled!'. Where's the difference? I have no arms either. I'm more beautiful than she is because I'm alive, I'm living flesh and blood. But I'm labelled something else. Why? So really it was to challenge people's perceptions of the Venus de Milo. And it did. It was ten years ago now and still people remember it.

Vicky: I first met you in 1999 when you were exhibiting your work at the Fabrica Gallery in Brighton. I remember that beautiful large photograph of you as an angel. How did that come about?

Alison: As a disabled person, people patronise you, and tell you how wonderful and brave you are. But I'm not. I'm just trying to live my life the best way I can and doing what I want to do. So I thought, how can I portray this feeling that people think I am an angel when actually I'm not. So I photographed myself as an angel. This is how people see me but if they look closely there are elements in the photograph that make me naughty, cheeky, rude, sexual, all these things that people do not view angels or disabled people to be like. My halo slipped a long time ago!

Vicky: You also created an image of yourself with different facial expressions.

Alison: I did twelve facial images from laughter to crying to angry and so on. All the kind of facial images that people don't expect you to have. Because if you come across as an angry crip, people think that you're aggressive, bitter and twisted. To every aspect of my work there's a reason behind why I do what I do and whether Joe Public gets it or not is entirely up to them. I had one really snotty remark from a woman at the Fabrica exhibition, which she wrote in the comment book. She was basically saying, 'what makes her any special or different just because she happens to be disabled?'. And the whole exhibition made her angry. Well, I am disabled, I haven't got another body to use. She just didn't get it. I still have a lot to say about my own body and my own disability and once it becomes

boring to me, then I'll stop. But at the moment there are so many different issues that just come up in day-to-day life. I did a project up in Nottingham in 2000 when my son was 6 months old. It was about the fact that on dry land, as it were, I need hands to help me with him. So I did some black and white photographs where I'm nude and my son is nude and a fluorescent pair of pink hands are coming out and holding him. I need that. If I don't have carers for my son, I don't have my son at home. But they are also incredibly intrusive. I have to have another being in my life that isn't my lover, who I have to live with and is in my space because I need that help for my son. Just that on its own is a minefield.

Vicky: In 2000, you spoke about disability and genetics at the ICA. You talked about how, when pregnant, people would say to you 'Is it going to be disabled like you?'. Alison: They never asked whether it was going to be a boy or a girl. I did some work on that. I did a photograph of my womb and the scan and put the words 'boy or girl' on to it and it was the question that no one ever asked. Instead, people asked, 'is it going to be like you then? Oh is that fair?'.

Vicky: Have you sold any work?

Alison: I've never made money out of my photography. That's partly why I paint Christmas cards for the Mouth and Foot Painting Association. I wouldn't be able to afford my house and help for my son otherwise. I've never really had any of my photography work bought, maybe two pieces in ten years. Why don't people buy images of a naked disabled woman?

Vicky: Maybe non-disabled people think a naked disabled woman is too shocking or offensive?

Alison: Probably. When I was a child, I was basically brought up to think that I would never have sex, never have a baby, people wouldn't fancy me because I didn't look like a supermodel. But how many women of my age can look in the mirror and say 'Hey, I like you, you're all right'. And on a day-to-day basis I can do that. I do feel sexy and I do feel attractive and I do feel beautiful and all the other things that people aspire to. I love the way people are shocked when they find me attractive and I play up to it. I find it hysterical.

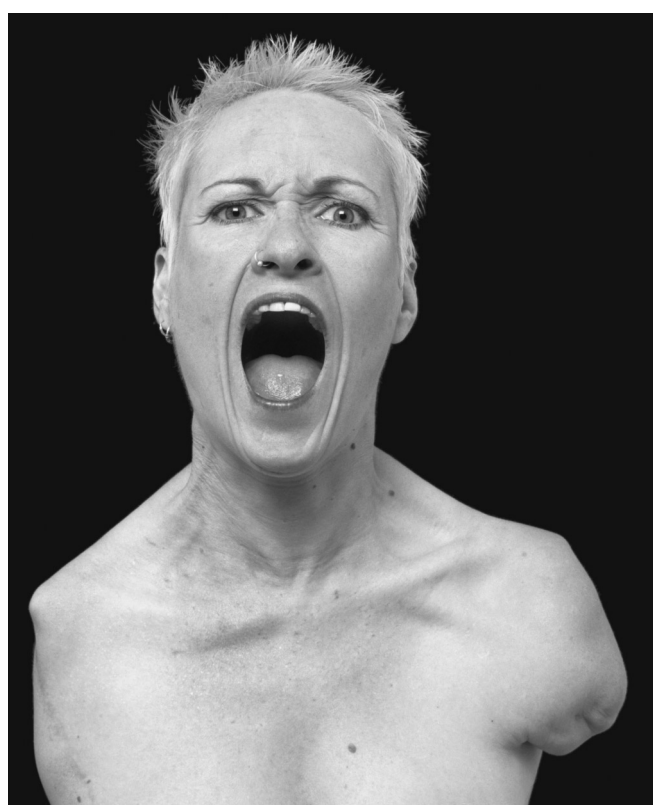
BACK TO BACK REVELS IN FRANK REVIEW

By Sue Hartigan

But I find it a shame that my work, and the work of other disabled artists, isn't taken as seriously as it should be. If I and other disabled people hadn't modelled for the sculptures by Marc Quinn, there wouldn't have been a seminar about disability at the Tate Liverpool. If it had been disabled artists who had created those sculptures, who would have taken it seriously? Although Marc's intentions were good and I respect that, it's a shame that it's my body but I can't afford to do marble statues. I'd thought about doing a sculpture like that way before he did but I have to make do with tissue paper and PVA medium. But because he was a well-known artist, people took him seriously. But he's able bodied. As a disabled artist, I find it frustrating that we were given a platform via the backdoor of an able bodied artist who is dealing with issues of disability. I'm not slating the guy because I actually really like him and his intentions were good, but I just feel that if I had done that, would it be in the Tate Liverpool? I think not.

It's only been in the last 3 or 4 years that people are starting to take my work seriously. It's a challenge. But I've had challenges all my life. If I didn't have a challenge, I'd be lost. Having my son Parys has been my greatest challenge yet and it will continue to be so for the rest of my life

For more information on Alison Lapper and her artwork, and her soon to be released autobiography visit www.alisonlapper.com



SOFT performed by Back to Back Theatre

Photographer Jeff Busby

When Back to Back Theatre toured its major production, *Soft*, to Switzerland and Germany in 2003, we wondered whether European reviewers would be struck by the "bravery" and "humanity" of the performers, or whether Back to Back would be incorporated into a bigger and more rigorous debate about art making and performance. Australian reviews of *Soft*, after its premiere at the 2002 Melbourne International Festival, were overwhelmingly favourable. And as the subject matter was genetic screening and its implications, the fact that five of the seven cast members had a perceived intellectual disability was extensively commented upon. Back to Back has always encouraged critical evaluation of its work, but many of these reviews contained substantial quotes from Back to Back's own media releases. Perhaps this is just a general reviewer laziness, but could it be also a safe way of negotiating a territory where there is a shortage of serious critical writing about work made by people with disabilities? Along with this, there was also an unwillingness to critique individual performances. "... all the cast are great" was typical.

Sometimes arts writers, especially here in Geelong, perhaps feeling uncomfortable writing about "disability", put Back to Back in the special category – "special" reviews that focus on the courage, bravery, humanity etc of the performers and fail to address the work in a critically rigorous manner. Such terms are fuzzy and ill-defined, located in the body of the disabled artist rather than in their artistic intention or aspiration.

Back to Back feels the artistic standards applied to the work of other theatre companies – originality, coherence, structure, concept, aesthetics and ethics – should also apply to the work made artists with disabilities. Back to Back's work is unique and different because its conceptual

underpinnings are made by artists whose view of the world is different but no less imaginative or poetic ("a unique, cack-handed spin on the world" said one reviewer). But in the absence of serious critical writing, especially in Australia, are reviewers able to adequately respond to and evaluate art made by people with disabilities? A constant dilemma in the promotion of Back to Back's work for us is whether to focus on the disability of the artists, which makes the company uncommon if not unique, or their ability, thus to a degree effacing the difference which signifies Back to Back's work. Being other, particularly in our culturally cautious times, presents a difference that can sometimes be too overwhelming or threatening for many writers (and potential audience members) to confront.

Over the past five years Back to Back has focused on getting its work into mainstream festivals and theatres as one strategy to consolidate and validate the work. This strategy has paid off to some extent. Thus the Melbourne reviews of the 2000 production, *Dog Farm*, acknowledged the company's history, development and context in making new work. Back to Back is attempting to generate a more substantial and critical contextualising of our work, by moving towards commissioning writers to document, evidence and evaluate the work, placing Back to Back within the wider debate of contemporary arts practice.

In Europe, critical responses to *Soft* were in the context of a theatrical performance at an international festival. Reviewers lacked knowledge of Back to Back's history and place and some of the reviews were more rigorous than those from Australia, focusing on dramaturgical and narrative structures and aesthetics rather than the humanity of the performers. Overall Back to Back was considered "confronting and challenging", but the Europeans did admire the actors' "courage" and "believable authenticity".

In an interesting aside, an image from one of Back to Back's shows was screened at a launch by Arts Victoria. A journalist (we suspect unaware that the performers were disabled) described it as being in the presence of "absurdist semioticians". How "inspiring" is that?

Sue Hartigan is the Workshop Coordinator and Quality Manager at Back to Back Theatre

IMPROVED ACCESS AT THE VIC ARTS CENTRE

In recent years, a range of accessible services have either been introduced or upgraded to enable a broad range of patrons to enjoy performances at the Arts Centre. Some of these changes include trials of live theatre captioning, improved accessible toilet facilities, and an increase in the number of accessible seats in Hamer Hall.

THEATRE CAPTIONING

Two performances each of the Melbourne Theatre Company productions of *Dinner in the Fairfax Studio* and *The Sapphires* in the Playhouse were captioned in 2004. Captioning involves the discreet placement of an LED screen on or near the stage, on which the script is projected, synchronised to the performance. This worked well for both shows, with the dense text of *Dinner* coming through clearly, whilst also preserving the musical spirit of *The Sapphires*. The Arts Centre and Melbourne Theatre Company are currently investigating ways that theatre captioning may become an ongoing feature of performances presented in both the Fairfax and the Playhouse, joining other similar services such as audio description and signed performances.

ACCESSIBLE SEATING

The provision of wheelchair accessible seating has been an ongoing challenge at Hamer Hall, especially in the stalls where the only accessible seating was located at the rear of the auditorium. In the past year, an additional 12 spaces have been created in the stalls of Hamer Hall across a range of areas, with seating options now located in rows C, N & X for both patrons in wheelchairs and their companions. The removal of additional seats behind row C allows for easier positioning of wheelchairs and reduces the chance of blocked sightlines, with portable platforms addressing the rake of the floor and enabling patrons to be seated in comfort.

The Arts Centre is committed to providing the ultimate performing arts experience, and will continue to upgrade and improve the facilities of its venues to enable all visitors to enjoy the wide range of entertainment presented here.

ACCESSIBLE TOILET FACILITIES

The accessible toilet facilities on Level 3 of the Theatres building have just completed a major redesign, joining the recently upgrade facilities in Hamer Hall. These facilities have a large space in which wheelchairs can be easily manoeuvred, with the new style of automatic doors that are fast becoming a common feature of accessible facilities. Large push buttons open the doors, which self-close after entry and exit, and the easily accessible lock button activates a small red "occupied" light outside. The new accessible toilet facilities are available Levels 2, 4, 5 & 6 of Hamer Hall, and on Level 3 of the Theatres, with an additional new facility nearing completion in the entrance to Café Vic on Level 5.

James Dipnall
Front of House Manager The Arts Centre

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