

Full



A dance and theatre performance

Full

Space is shrinking. Cities are packed. Airways are jammed with electronic transmissions, and cyberspace is home to more than 2 billion web pages. Full is an old woman with no space left to go.

Full is the new dance performance work devised by choreographer Simon Ellis, in collaboration with sound designer Jacqueline Grenfell, lighting designer Alycia Hevey, and visual artist Elizabeth Boyce. To be performed at Glass Street Gallery in North Melbourne from June 20 - July 1, *Full* examines the internal world of an 87 year old woman who is “uncertain whether she is walking or being pushed”.

Ellis has a reputation for making work that is understated and calm, something that runs in direct contrast to a lot of contemporary dance seen in Melbourne. He says, “As a male dancer it is easy to slide into ways of moving that are muscular and highly physical, but I do not feel compelled to do this, and am more interested in an aesthetic that affords the viewer room to notice other things.”

All the same, the life of an elderly woman seems unusual subject matter for Ellis, but he is adamant that, in the performance, he will not make any effort to pretend to be an old woman. “I am interested in exploring relationships between generations of people. But I am aware that, in *Full*, the connection between the elderly woman and me as performer will be ambiguous; am I her former lover, her father, or even an awry memory of herself?”

Critical to the performance is the size of the gallery space. Each night the audience will be squeezed into the gallery, unintentionally contributing to the claustrophobia of the elderly woman, and being forced to trace the performer about the venue.

Glass Street Gallery is a contemporary art space directed by practising artists Richard Manning and Mary-Ann Skehill. Manning says, “*Full* is an important event in the 2001 calendar at Glass Street. It is the first time an artist working with movement, light, photography and sound in such an integrated manner has exhibited here, and it is also the first time an artist has asked me to cut a hole in the mezzanine floor!”

Ellis has been typically thorough in his preparation for *Full*, a work conceived more than two years ago whilst he sat listening to his grandmother, New Zealand painter Gladys Eastwood. He says, “I like to work slowly, and patiently, letting ideas be filtered and distilled. It is important that, putting the content of the work aside, I am able to understand the context of the work, what it is referring to, both in terms of contemporary dance practice, but also the broader community.”

Ellis also has the considerable luxury of having three weeks in the gallery prior to the opening performance. “It is necessary to be able to spend time working as a team investigating the artistic possibilities of the space itself. It is too common in dance to spend months rehearsing a work only to be left with three days to install it in a theatre. My goal with this work is to shape the gallery space into the performance, as opposed to squeezing the movement into the performance space.”

Full has the support of North Arts through the City of Melbourne. For further information, visit www.skellis.net/Full.

Simon Ellis *Choreography, performance*

Simon is an independent dancer, choreographer and teacher. His choreography is influenced by dance and theatre traditions, and also by visual design. Simon is a graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts School of Dance, where he is currently a sessional teacher in Contemporary technique. He has worked with Big Fish Dance, Shona McCullagh, Michael Parmenter, Don Asker, Shaun McLeod and Anna Smith. His own work includes *Touch* (1998), *Semi-detached* (1999), and *undone years* (2000). Simon is currently preparing to spend three and a half months in the United States working on a dance video project, and in early 2002 he will perform for the Douglas Wright Dance Company.

Jacqueline Grenfell *Sound*

Jacqueline Grenfell is a sound designer with a strong interest in hybrid and collaborative art practises. Although trained formally as an acoustic musician, Jacqueline has developed and performed a diverse range of interdisciplinary work. She draws strongly on influences from Chinese, Tibetan and the wider Asian cultures. Language and text are highly valued elements in her compositions. New technologies are her primary compositional vehicle. Jacqueline's sound score for *Full* will be generated from the work's text, examining the themes of time and remembering. The sound scape will consider the properties of two voices; those of an elderly woman and a young girl. Through the manipulation of their voices, the score intends to both support and challenge the central themes as well as the visual aspects of the work. Jacqueline is currently completing a Graduate Diploma in Sound Design in Dramatic Art through Victorian College of the Arts.

Elizabeth Boyce *Photography, design*

Elizabeth Boyce is a visual artist, whose practice incorporates site-specific installation, object making and photography. With a particular concern for audience she has focused on site-specific installation in public spaces such as travel agency windows, the Platform exhibition space at Spencer Street Station and transport shelter advertising spaces. She often uses text to engage with an audience and as a means of addressing contemporary concerns embedded in language. She is currently working in Castlemaine as part of the Castlemaine Contemporary Artists' Initiative's Federation Residency Program. The purposeful and collaborative aspects of designing for dance theatre appeal to her. She has worked with choreographer Anna Smith and most recently Simon Ellis on his work, *Semi-detached* (poss. 2nd bdrm).

Alycia Hevey *Light*

Alycia is currently in her final year at the Victorian College of the Arts School of Production, where she is focusing on designing light for movement. She has recently returned from Tasmania where she worked as assistant to the Production Manager for the inaugural *10 Days on the Island* Festival. Alycia has previously collaborated with Simon Ellis on *undone years* (2000). The lighting design for *Full* has been constrained by the lack of three phase power in the Glass Street Gallery space. Alycia has used this apparent limitation as a strength in her design, and the sudden on/off cues, tightly focused dichromatic lamps, and painted text illuminated via handheld blacklight combine to innervate the performer's journey through and about the gallery space.

Information Sheet

Full

Devised and performed by Simon Ellis

Sound by Jacqueline Grenfell

Light by Alycia Hevey

Photography and design by Elizabeth Boyce

June 20-23 8pm

June 24 6pm

June 27-30 8pm

July 1 6pm

Tickets \$10/\$8

Glass Street Gallery

16 Glass Street

North Melbourne

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Visit www.skellis.net/Full

Photographic quality prints ready for publication are presented on the following page (courtesy of Elizabeth Boyce).

The performance of *Full* has been assisted by North Arts through the City of Melbourne, Victorian College of the Arts and Glass Street Gallery.



North Arts



glass street gallery

Photographs

