



**Dead Puppet Society**  
**Limited**

**Annual Report**  
**2022**

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## Acknowledgement of Country

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Dead Puppet Society is honoured to be working on the Traditional Lands of the *Yuggera and Turrbal* Peoples of the Brisbane region and pay respect to their Elders, past and present.

We acknowledge that this *Country* is sacred and respect the continuous living cultures of all First Nations Queenslanders who live here.

We acknowledge First Nations peoples' sacred connection to *Country*, and their deep relationship and responsibility to land, sea and sky, knowing that it is integral to First Nations identity and central to culture and being. We pay respects to the many and diverse language groups, their customs, traditions, and knowledge systems.

Dead Puppet Society is honoured to be in a Land where First Nations peoples continue to: speak to *Country*; listen to *Country*; sing up *Country*; dance up *Country*; understand *Country*; and continue to long for the *Country* they have lost.

*Colleen Wall, a Dauwa-Kaubvai senior woman from the Mary River Watershed of Queensland's South East and Wide Bay Burnett region, assisted Dead Puppet Society to develop a meaningful Acknowledgment to Country, in line with the Queensland Government's Department of Environment and Science, Acknowledgement to Country Statement within The Gurra Gurra Framework 2020-2026.*

This Acknowledgement will guide our future processes in engaging with First Nations peoples in a respectful and responsive manner to develop strong and meaningful working relationships.



## Creative Director and Executive Producer Report

2022 was a year of continued creative and organisational growth for Dead Puppet Society. As the first full year supported by operational funding from Arts Queensland we were able to bring several long-term projects to fruition, as well as invest in the inception of a number of ambitious new projects, which will carry the company through the coming years. In addition to the production focussed programming, 2022 also saw significant development of our Activation and Education focussed activities.

DPS HQ continues to be a hive of activity as we make new creatures and objects in our Fabrication Workshop, make and display new additions to our Collection range in our Gallery and dream up new ideas in our office. Thanks to The Princess Theatre for continuing to have us as a part of this incredibly exciting precinct.

2022 saw us get back on the national stage, touring *The Wider Earth* to 10 venues across four states. We're thankful to the Australia Council for awarding us with Playing Australia funding to support this tour and look forward to returning to these regions soon.

2022 also marked the long-awaited world premiere of *Holding Achilles*, a refreshing

take on one of the ancient world's best-known heroes, and his relationship with Patroclus, his not so well-known lover. In a groundbreaking collaboration with Legs On The Wall, this production started with Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC) for Brisbane Festival. A truly global partnership, it was supported by the Australian Government's Major Festivals Initiative, and also commissioned with Sydney Festival and Glass Half Full Productions together with Bristol Old Vic and Northampton Royal and Deragate in the UK. We were legitimately overwhelmed by the audience's response to this new work. Many people, particularly young adults, expressed their gratitude about seeing their queer identity on stage; 3% of people bought tickets to see the show a second and even third time; QPAC saw 32% first-time ticket buyers; and several audience members produced fan art. The production toured nationally to Sydney Festival in January 2023 and conversations are already underway to tour internationally.

Dead Puppet Society also secured rights with international producers on some very exciting new titles, more on this soon.

Throughout 2022 Activation and Collection also continued to be a core part of our

offerings. *Swarm* saw a custom creation of 2,000 miniature brass bee sculptures with a 360° treetop light and sound display depicting the insects in flight for West Village's Bee Month. We toured our giant *Megafauna* puppets to both Tweed Regional Museum and Empire Theatre in Toowoomba. Our Pelicans soared to Cairns Festival and we also worked and trained with local Cairns-based puppeteers.

Collection saw the release of a new range, including the Ornate Eagle Ray, Rosellas, School Shark (Large), Blue Skimmer Dragonflies and the Olive Branch Laurel.

Finally, our Education program saw us deliver more workshops than ever before. We also grew our partnership with QPAC to make our productions and workshops available digitally on Digital Stage. We continued to partner with Queensland Theatre to deliver Theatre Residency week and a new offering with the Kingston Butter Factory in Logan. We partnered with Brisbane Powerhouse for our flagship artist training program the DPS Academy, mentoring Grace Law, BLAT Productions and Yours Sincerely to create three new bite-sized works, which were presented as part of THE DPS LAB – an evening of wonder and theatrical exploration. Thanks to the Jelley Family Foundation for your ongoing commitment to back this program.

2022 also saw a growth in membership to The Society, our private donor circle, leading to a significant increase in philanthropic revenue and provoking a successful application for Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status to enable further donations. We sincerely thank you all for your generous contributions, as our biggest fans you help turn our dreams and visions into reality.

On top of these already significant achievements, a change over the last 12 months that has brought us great joy was growing our core company to eight permanent employees.

A heartfelt thanks once again to our inimitable management committee, who have continued to provide advice on how to steer the company through both the challenges and victories.

**Dr David Morton** Creative Director,  
Dead Puppet Society  
Meanjin/Brisbane

**Nicholas Paine** Executive Producer,  
Dead Puppet Society  
Meanjin/Brisbane

IMAGE CREDIT: LOUIS LIM

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# Chair's Report

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Over the last 14 years Dead Puppet Society has transitioned from homegrown heroes to a major theatrical producer. Their work receives outstanding responses from audiences and critics alike and we have an excellent reputation as a producing partner. The company's early reimagining of the use of puppetry in live performance has grown into a deeper exploration of the performativity of non-human objects. The work of Dead Puppet Society sits at the nexus between theatre, live music, rapid prototyping and industrial technologies. The company's unique process is agile and expands the scope of stories told on stage and in the public realm. Puppetry for us is a rallying cry. What began as an interest in the work of world-class theatre makers including Julie Taymor and Handspring Puppet Company, has become a provocation for interdisciplinary creation.

In 2022 Dead Puppet Society continued to demonstrate the company's commitment to innovation, creativity, and excellence in the world of performance. Through ground-breaking productions and creative collaborations, the company has established themselves as one of the leading voices in contemporary Australian visual and design-led theatre today.

The company achieved a significant milestone implementing the first full year of four-year funding support from Queensland Government through Arts Queensland. This stable base of funding has allowed the company to sustain growth and to be a part of the pantheon of Queensland companies to assist the Queensland Government to realise *Grow 2022-2026*, the second action plan for *Creative Together 2020-2030: A Roadmap for arts, culture and creativity in Queensland*.

This financial investment by the Queensland Government is augmented through the generous support of Dead Puppet Society's donor circle, The Society. This group of donors, comprising foundations and individuals, enables the company to produce innovative, large-scale new work that pushes the boundaries of design-led theatre. The members of The Society are highly engaged in the life of the company by not only attending performances and events, The Society members also volunteer time to assist with fabrication at DPS headquarters in Woolloongabba, Brisbane. At the Christmas gathering in December 2022, The Society and management committee joined together to trial a social maker space, by constructing Christmas wreaths from sustainable materials. This successful trial has become DPS Social that rolls out in 2023.

Emerging from two years of reduced touring and creative development resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, 2022 saw the company return to full strength and creative development. *Holding Achilles*, a co-creation by Dead Puppet Society and Legs On The Wall, premiered at Brisbane Festival and was significant as it was the first Australian Government's Major Festivals Initiative project delivered by the company. *Holding Achilles* went onto presentation at Sydney Festival in January 2023 and plans for international touring of the production are in the works.

As the impact of COVID-19 on the performance industry worldwide recedes, Dead Puppet Society is dreaming again to make significant



strides in expanding its audience and creative engagement beyond Brisbane. In 2022 the company initiated several new collaborations with leading Australian and international producers. These collaborations will result in the company continuing to push the boundaries of design-led and visual theatre puppetry as an art form with their involvement in several interdisciplinary projects. Dead Puppet Society's management committee is working closely with David and Nick to reshape the company to ensure that aspirations can be realised in a sustainable and measured growth phase that the company has moved towards.

On behalf of the management committee, I thank David and Nick for their combined creative leadership of the company. The commitment and ingenuity of the Dead Puppet Society team – Matt, Helen, Jodie, Scott, Savannah and Tash – makes the company hum and ensures that creative visions are realised. The productions, activations and workshops delivered by the company are an inspiration to artists, audiences and communities alike, and the management committee hopes that audiences and stakeholders continue to engage and be challenged by the stories presented by the company.

## Professor Sandra Gattenhof

Chair, Dead Puppet Society Management Committee  
Yuggera and Turrbal Country



# Treasurer's Report

It is a pleasure to present the third annual Dead Puppet Society Ltd Treasurer's report.

2022 represents the second full year of Dead Puppet Society operating as a not-for-profit organisation, and was punctuated by the delivery of the major work *Holding Achilles*. The Arts Queensland organisational funding secured in 2021 has had a major positive impact on the organisation in 2022. The company continues to make strong progress in adopting best practice governance procedures.

The financial position of the company, including its cash position, is described in the financial statements. As the heavy impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Arts sector subsides to a new normal, the current economic and arts funding environment in which the company operates remains challenging, but optimistic.

During the reporting period, the organisation's total revenue was \$2,243,822.01 while the total expenses incurred were \$2,245,170.51. As a result, the organisation had a net deficit of \$1,288.50. The organisation's financial position has remained stable during this period.

The organisation has six major sources of income. These are described with a percentage change comparison to the previous year in the following table. This showcases the massive growth the company has experienced in 2022, with trading income increasing 79.09%.

Trading Income	2021	2022	% Change YoY
Education Income	31,402.72	39,454.89	25.64%
Production Income	683,318.01	1,129,190.90	65.25%
Donations Revenue	33,868.00	93,606.41	176.39%
Government Grants	442,881.93	847,984.67	91.47%
Activation	10,225.00	91,775.00	797.56%
Collection	48,474.11	36,958.99	-23.76%
<b>Total Trading Income</b>	<b>1,250,169.77</b>	<b>2,238,970.86</b>	<b>79.09%</b>

The 176.39% growth in donations revenue is particularly pleasing given the competitive environment for arts funding, and is a testament to the strength of the company's brand. The entity became a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) in 2022, which has also aided the strong growth in donations.

The major cost centres of the entity are described in the table below. The development of the major work saw a large increase in production costs. The organisation has also acquired more space in The Princess Theatre precinct for its administrative and production work, leading to increased rent costs. Full-time equivalent staff increased from 4.5 in 2021 to 7 in 2022.

Cost Centres	2022	2021	% Change YoY
Production Costs	814,573.65	367,099.91	121.89%
Rent	38,939.45	24,735.50	57.42%
Wages & Salaries	811,065.29	370,454.95	118.94%



IMAGE CREDIT: HOLDING ACHILLES BY DEAN HANSON

The organisation was able to meet its budgeted targets in most areas, with some minor deviations in a few categories. The 2022 budget estimated a surplus of \$13,882.34 for 2022. This is a small deviation (less than 1%) from the actual result when compared to total trading income. The organisation's cash position at the end of the reporting period was \$337,211.45. While liquidity is strong it requires continuous oversight by both the Board and management committee.

Having regard to the above, the Directors have a reasonable expectation that the company will have adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Accordingly, the Directors continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial report.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Dead Puppet Society's management team of Nicholas Paine and David Morton, and all of the company's staff and supporters for their hard work and dedication in delivering significant artistic work and strong administration during 2022.

I thank the Chair Sandra Gattenhof and the other management committee members for their dedication, hard work and support.

## Tim Hall

Treasurer, Dead Puppet Society Management Committee  
Chartered Accountant, Registered Tax Agent, Registered ASIC Agent  
Yuggera and Turrbal Country

# Goals and Strategies – Achievements to date

In 2022 Dead Puppet Society undertook activities to align with the goals and strategies of the 2022-25 Strategic Plan. The company alongside the management committee will continue to work towards achieving all goals and monitoring Key Performance Indicators over the next three-year Arts Queensland funding period.

Below is a summary of the company goals and what activities or strategies have been implemented to meet them to date.

## Cement a new brand of design-led theatre.

We will create and present relevant, world-class productions and experiences by:

Stated Goal	Activity to date
1. Developing our productions with rigour and a commitment to excellence through long-term, sustained creative development.	The world premiere of <i>Holding Achilles</i> took place with Brisbane Festival and QPAC from 29 August to 10 September, following several years of creative development with our creative partners Legs On The Wall. We also redeveloped <i>The Wider Earth</i> and undertook a three-month national tour to four Australian states. We ended 2022 with eight new productions in development.
2. Investing in Queensland artists and creatives through employment opportunities and ongoing professional development including artists from diverse backgrounds.	Over 200 Queensland actors, creatives and crew were employed to deliver a variety of company activities and 15 training opportunities through DPS Academy and internships. We are continuing the development of a strategy for engaging First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse artists alongside Aunty Colleen Wall. Permanent employees undertook Cultural Training.
3. Creating socially engaged entertainment that tells diverse stories, with a focus on innovative design-led productions.	<i>Holding Achilles</i> reclaimed the queer aspects of <i>The Iliad</i> , and featured powerful visuals, daring aerial work, exquisite puppetry, and breathtaking costumes.
4. Taking our work into the public realm and private collections through diversifying our creative output.	Our creative ventures, Activation and Collection, saw the creation and delivery of six presentations and the sale of 20 sculptures.
5. Engaging with emerging artists to inspire the next generation of visual-theatre makers.	We ran the DPS Academy with three emerging artist collectives that resulted in the presentation of THE DPS LAB with Brisbane Powerhouse on 2 November, and engaged with hundreds of primary and high school students through our Education program and school tickets to see <i>The Wider Earth</i> and <i>Holding Achilles</i> .
6. Delivering an integrated education program.	We delivered 70+ in-school workshops, teacher professional development workshops, bespoke residencies and digital workshops throughout Brisbane and regional Queensland.



IMAGE CREDIT: HOLDING ACHILLES BY ROBERT CATTO  
AND THE WIDER EARTH BY DEAN HANSON





IMAGE CREDIT: HOLDING ACHILLES BY DEAN HANSON

## Forge and maintain quality relationships.

We will seek out artistic and corporate partners that are values-aligned and engage with a mix of public, private and philanthropic organisations by:

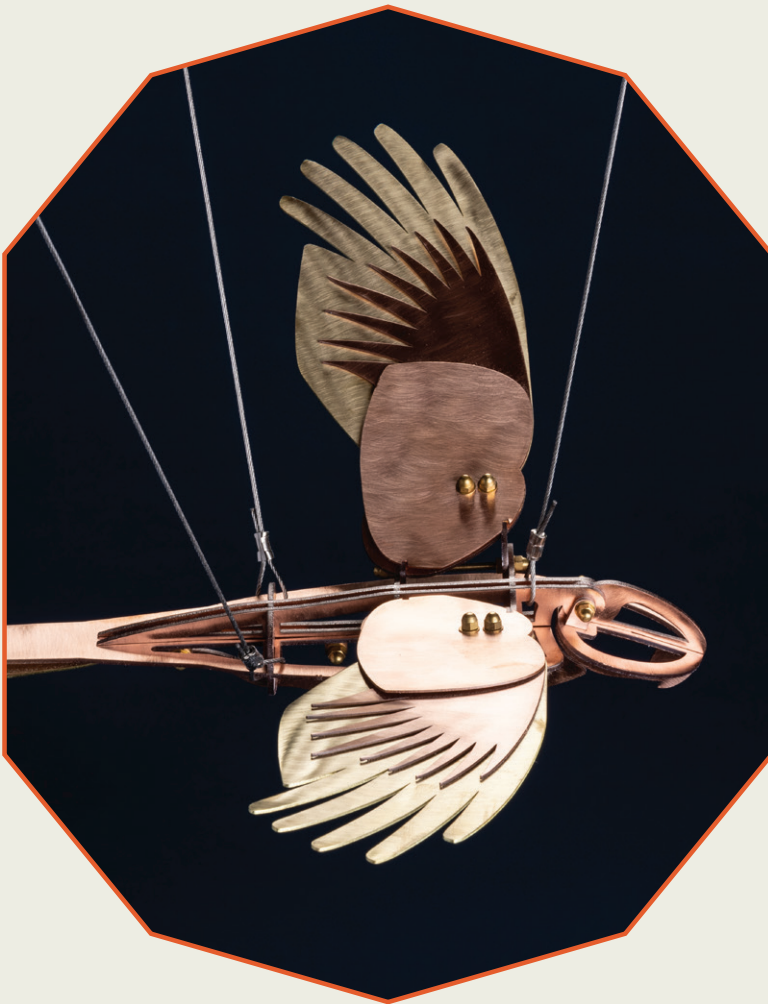
Stated Goal	Activity to date
1. Making Queensland the epicentre of our work, which will remain borderless, while focussing on premium partners regardless of geography.	We continued to make our work at DPS HQ, our Fabrication Workshop, Gallery and office space in Woolloongabba, Brisbane. We also expanded our reach back into regional Queensland across all activities after the hiatus due to COVID-19.
2. Entering co-production arrangements with subsidised partners and seeking government funding.	<i> Holding Achilles </i> was co-produced with Legs On The Wall, Brisbane Festival, Sydney Festival and QPAC, with commercial investment from Glass Half Full Productions and support from Bristol Old Vic and Northampton Royal and Derngate in the UK.
3. Raising commercial investment and working in partnership with commercial producers.	We continued our first look agreement for our next five projects with producer Glass Half Full Productions, to grow the international life of our work and also started development on new titles with Michael Cassel Group, Disney Theatrical Productions Limited, JONES and Damien Hewitt.
4. Fostering relationships with leading international technology partners.	We partnered again with Christie, our technology partner, on the presentation of <i> The Wider Earth </i> .
5. Nurturing corporate partnerships through the delivery of our out-of-theatre work.	We partnered with West Village Brisbane, the Empire Theatre (Toowoomba) and Tweed Regional Museum on the delivery of Activation projects.
6. Welcoming the support of our philanthropic circle and embedding these individuals in the company's processes and values.	The company secured DGR status. We continued to engage and grow The Society, our intimate donor circle, raising \$48,000 in 2022. We have an ongoing commitment with these donors until 2024 and will continue to grow The Society and raise additional philanthropic support through individual donations.

## Build a dedicated audience-base.

We will build a program that is accessible to a broad audience and engages them across a range of activities by:

Stated Goal	Activity to date
1. Creating productions that are suitable for a broad audience.	A contemporary take on one the ancient world's greatest legends, with queer heroes at its heart, <i>Holding Achilles</i> attracted an audience with diverse interests and a broad spectrum of age groups, ranging from school groups to audiences aged 50+. We saw particularly strong sales among 18 to 24 year olds. We gained new audiences, with many ticket buyers not having seen a Dead Puppet Society production before, and brought new audiences to QPAC, with a third of ticket buyers seeing a show at QPAC for the first time. <i>Holding Achilles</i> resonated strongly among queer audiences with personal messages of gratitude sent to the company and a variety of fan art produced and published on social media. THE DPS LAB also garnered new audiences for Dead Puppet Society and participating DPS Academy artists. Our custom Activation for West Village <i>Swarm</i> saw over 900 people nightly interact with the artwork.
2. Delivering high-impact education activities around landmark productions.	Several school visits occurred during <i>The Wider Earth</i> National Tour, including in Darwin. <i>Holding Achilles</i> was incredibly popular among school groups, alongside our comprehensive downloadable Education Notes including associated classroom activities. Our new look Education Brochure 2023 was distributed digitally in November, generating lots of expressions of interest and bookings for 2023.
3. Running a public facing fabrication workshop to showcase our process and contribute to creative placemaking.	To encourage visitation and interest, we communicated how to visit DPS HQ and the Gallery via our digital platforms and developed artwork for custom window decals that were installed in early 2023, bringing the storytelling of the company outside. We held an intimate event on Thursday 17 November including donors, local businesses and potential collectors and collaborators to unveil new Collection sculptures and to engage with existing and potential collectors and partners. We tested our new DPS Social workshop offering to our donor circle in December, with a hands-on Christmas wreath making workshop. The inaugural public-facing, ticketed DPS Social workshop will occur during our 2023 season of <i>Ishmael</i> .
4. Maintaining a strong brand presence on all public-facing activity.	Our newly appointed Head of Marketing and PR developed and implemented strategic marketing and publicity plans for <i>Holding Achilles</i> , THE DPS LAB, <i>Swarm</i> and other public-facing activity, ensuring brand building throughout 2022. A topline marketing strategy to increase Collection sales has been developed and is being rolled out. How we talk about Dead Puppet Society externally has been updated across owned digital platforms. A long-term four-year marketing and communications strategy focusing on audience insights, development and brand profile goals is being developed in line with our international ambitions.
5. Adopting a proactive, year-round marketing strategy to keep our audience abreast of the ongoing life and activities of the company.	Our monthly eNews, DPS POST, saw a month-on-month increase in subscribers from opt-in data from ticket buyers and organic sign-ups. A dedicated quarterly Education eNews has been distributed to a consolidated and increased education database. The Head of Marketing and PR developed a content and social media strategy. Various website development updates were implemented to enable better content storytelling and investment is being made in creating behind the scenes and branding content for storytelling purposes across owned and earned digital channels. We leveraged publicity opportunities with <i>Holding Achilles</i> to gain national and international exposure. In 2023 there will be a focus on generating PR profile opportunities, and growing brand and presence.
6. Consolidating this data into an audience database.	Data sharing provisions were included in presenter contracts, segmentation of the eNews database is occurring and we are gathering audience data with post-show / post-program surveys. Post-show surveys went to THE DPS LAB and <i>Holding Achilles</i> audiences. Our social media followers have grown on Facebook and Instagram (478 new page likes and 871 new Instagram followers). Looking ahead to 2023 and beyond, media monitoring and audience research will enable us to understand our audiences more, providing increased commercial value to investors.





**Ensure the sustainability of the company.**

We will maintain a nimble organisation capable of adapting to changes and seizing opportunities by:

Stated Goal	Activity to date
1. Engaging strong governance through a connected and committed management committee with diverse skillsets.	Our management committee remained very active, providing strong governance to the organisation.
2. Formalising internal processes surrounding administration, project management and human resources to facilitate smooth day-to-day operation.	We established new administration software, implemented more robust systems and processes, as well as receiving 100% satisfaction from our audit and generation of our first Annual Report.
3. Growing and nurturing our staff pool through the creation of new roles and providing advancement opportunities for existing team members.	We promoted our Associate Producer to Company Manager, ultimately growing our administrative, touring and educational offerings booking capacity. We also appointed a Head of Marketing and PR to build and protect the company's brand and profile, and to continue to meet our audience development and marketing goals.
4. Pursuing diverse revenue streams.	We continued to seek and secure government funding, donations, investment from commercial producers and income from retail, corporate partners, and the education sector.
5. Building company reserves in order to take risks.	We have a reserve of \$90,000, which we'll continue to grow in the coming years to make space for appropriate risk taking.
6. Pursuing ecological sustainability across all organisational and creative processes.	We have continued to build our environmental goals to look at minimising waste and carbon footprint. We were asked to participate in Griffith University Australia's report into Culture for Climate as a leading arts organisation responding to the global environmental crisis, which was published in 2023.

IMAGE CREDIT: ROSELLA, DAVID KELLY; DPS HQ, DEAN HANSON; MEGAFAUNA, IMAGE COURTESY OF TWEED REGIONAL MUSEUM AND DAVE KAN





## Production

### THE WIDER EARTH

BY DAVID MORTON

A DEAD PUPPET SOCIETY, TRISH WADLEY PRODUCTIONS  
AND GLASS HALF FULL PRODUCTIONS PRODUCTION.

#### NATIONAL TOUR 2022

5 - 19 February, The Princess Theatre (Brisbane)  
23 - 24 February, Darwin Entertainment Centre  
28 February, Araluen Arts Centre (Alice Springs)  
5 March, Cairns Performing Arts Centre  
9 - 12 March, Canberra Theatre Centre  
16 - 19 March, Merrigong Theatre Company (Wollongong)  
23 - 24 March, Redland Performing Arts Centre  
31 March - 1 April, Theatre Royal (Hobart)  
4 - 5 April, Theatre North (Launceston)  
7 - 8 April, Parnaple Arts Centre (Devonport)

PERFORMANCES: 42

ATTENDEES: 10,586

Before Darwin changed the world, one voyage changed his life. The award-winning drama *The Wider Earth* by David Morton tells the story of the rebellious young Charles Darwin.

Join the 22-year-old Darwin on HMS Beagle's daring voyage to the far side of the world and discover the gripping story behind one of the most important discoveries in history.

An ensemble cast, remarkable puppetry, cinematic projections and an original score by Lior and Tony Buchen all combine to bring to life uncharted landscapes and incredible creatures in this highly ambitious theatrical event.

*The Wider Earth* was originally developed at St. Ann's Warehouse Puppet Lab (Matt Acheson and Krissy Smith, Lab Directors) at St. Ann's Warehouse in Brooklyn, New York 2014. This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body. It is also supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland and the Restart Investment to Sustain and Expand (RISE) Fund – an Australian Government initiative. Funding for *The Wider Earth* has also been made possible by the English Family Foundation and Puffin Foundation Ltd. Proudly supported by the Hamer Family Fund, a sub-fund of Australian Communities Foundation.

Please refer to the *Dead Puppet Society* website for the full list of creatives, cast and crew credits.

*Expertly written piece that involves drama, humour, suspense, and adventure.*

ArtsHub

*Simply beautiful.*

Limelight

*Feast of visual theatre. Evocative projected visuals and great lighting design.*

Scenestr

*A voyage of extraordinary theatrical discovery that celebrates the power of curiosity, the natural world and big ideas.*

Sydney Morning Herald



## Production

### HOLDING ACHILLES

BY DAVID MORTON

A DEAD PUPPET SOCIETY, LEGS ON THE WALL,  
BRISBANE FESTIVAL, SYDNEY FESTIVAL AND  
GLASS HALF FULL PRODUCTIONS PRODUCTION.

29 AUGUST - 10 SEPTEMBER 2022

VENUE: PLAYHOUSE, QPAC

PERFORMANCES: 13

ATTENDEES: 7,054

Set against the epic violence of the Trojan War, *Holding Achilles* by David Morton is a refreshing take on one of the ancient world's best-known heroes, and his relationship with Patroclus, his not so well-known lover. As a young exile taken in by Achilles' father, Patroclus faces hostility from the young hero until they are thrust together to train under the centaur Chiron, and the two form an unlikely friendship. As Achilles doggedly seeks to fulfil his mother's prophecy to become a legend, their

relationship becomes something more. But war with Troy is brewing, and the two young men find themselves caught between their hopes for a future together and the brutal realities of the world that faces them.

This breathtaking new production from visual theatre masterminds Dead Puppet Society and physical theatre virtuosos Legs On The Wall reclaims the queer aspects of *The Iliad*. Set to a haunting new score composed by Tony Buchen and Chris Bear with Montaigne, and a live performance by Montaigne, this innovative new work blends daring aerial work, puppetry and visual storytelling with an ensemble cast to weave a legend of mythic proportions. A tale of trials, grief and love - *Holding Achilles* is an epic tale about a fearless bond forged in the toughest of times.

This project has been assisted by the Australian Government's Major Festivals Initiative, managed by the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, in association with the Confederation of Australian International Arts Festivals Inc., commissioned by Brisbane Festival, Queensland Performing Arts Centre, Sydney Festival and Glass Half Full Productions together with Bristol Old Vic and Northampton Royal and Derngate in the UK. It is also supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland.

*Please refer to the Dead Puppet Society website for the full list of creatives, cast and crew credits.*

**One of the most  
inventive shows  
I have ever seen.**

Australian Stage

**Charts a new  
theatrical landscape.**

The Australian

**Epic tale of love and  
war, with physical feats and  
technical wizardry.**

Limelight

**This is the sort of work you go to a festival to see...something daring,  
something risky, something inspirational.**

The Courier-Mail



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# Activation

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Our Activation and Collection offerings flourished in 2022, bringing Dead Puppet Society into the public realm in unexpected places and growing our diverse audience base.

Our Activations offerings transform locations and captivate crowds with one-of-a-kind public artworks, laser-cut artefacts or open-air performances. From awe-inspiring puppet creature encounters to light and sound installations, we create bespoke experiences that blend our timeless approach to craftsmanship with cutting edge technology.

## SWARM

WEST VILLAGE  
6 - 29 MAY 2022

*Swarm* is a sprawling, open-air installation combining over 2,000 hand-crafted, miniature brass bee sculptures with a dazzling 360° treetop light and sound display with a beautiful original score depicting the magnificent insects in flight. A custom creation for West Village to celebrate Bee Month, this artwork encourages visitors to admire the individual and collective beauty of Australia's many native bee species.

Crafted especially for West Village, where natural and urban worlds co-exist, *Swarm* is a heartfelt tribute to these tiny pollinators, and a reminder of the irreplaceable relationship we share with the natural world around us.

AUDIENCE: 20,700



IMAGE CREDIT: JARED VATHAAK

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## MEGAFUNA

EMPIRE THEATRE, TOOWOOMBA  
29 SEPTEMBER - 2 OCTOBER 2022

*Roving as part of Thrive on Arts Festival during the September school holidays and Creature Design & Puppet Making Workshop.*

AUDIENCE: 1,696 PATRONS ENGAGED WITH THE FESTIVAL ACROSS 4 DAYS THROUGH FREE AND PAID ACTIVITIES.

TWEED REGIONAL MUSEUM  
29 OCTOBER 2022 - 31 DECEMBER 2022

*Installed as part of Capturing Nature exhibition and roving as part of Up Late official opening party.*

TOTAL AUDIENCE (INCLUDING MUSEUM VISITORS): 1,586

Following their migratory route down river, ancient, dinosaur-like giant creatures become lost. These prehistoric *Megafauna* are based on the grass-eating diprotodon, a giant wombat-like creature that was the largest known marsupial that used to walk this land.

As these giants search for their seasonal feeding ground, they encounter a jungle made of concrete. As they try to make their way in the altered landscape, stopping to feed and interact with passersby, these visitors from a forgotten time provoke reflection on how the landscape and creatures of our country have altered.



IMAGE CREDIT: COURTESY TWEED REGIONAL MUSEUM AND RHIANNON JONES

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# Activation

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## DPS SOCIAL

FRIDAY 9 DECEMBER 2022

DPS HQ FABRICATION WORKSHOP

To thank our donors for their ongoing generosity and support and to celebrate the festive season, we hosted the first edition of DPS Social, a brand new workshop series we are launching as a paid event in 2023. Our aim is to provide participants with unique experiences that share our love of combining timeless craftsmanship with cutting edge technology. Each workshop will be different, and participants will make a unique item under the guidance of our artists that they can take home.

For our inaugural DPS Social, our Head of Fabrication Savannah Mojidi guided participants through a creative, hands-on workshop to design and assemble a Christmas wreath using laser-cut materials inspired by native flora.

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## PELICANS

CAIRNS FESTIVAL 2022

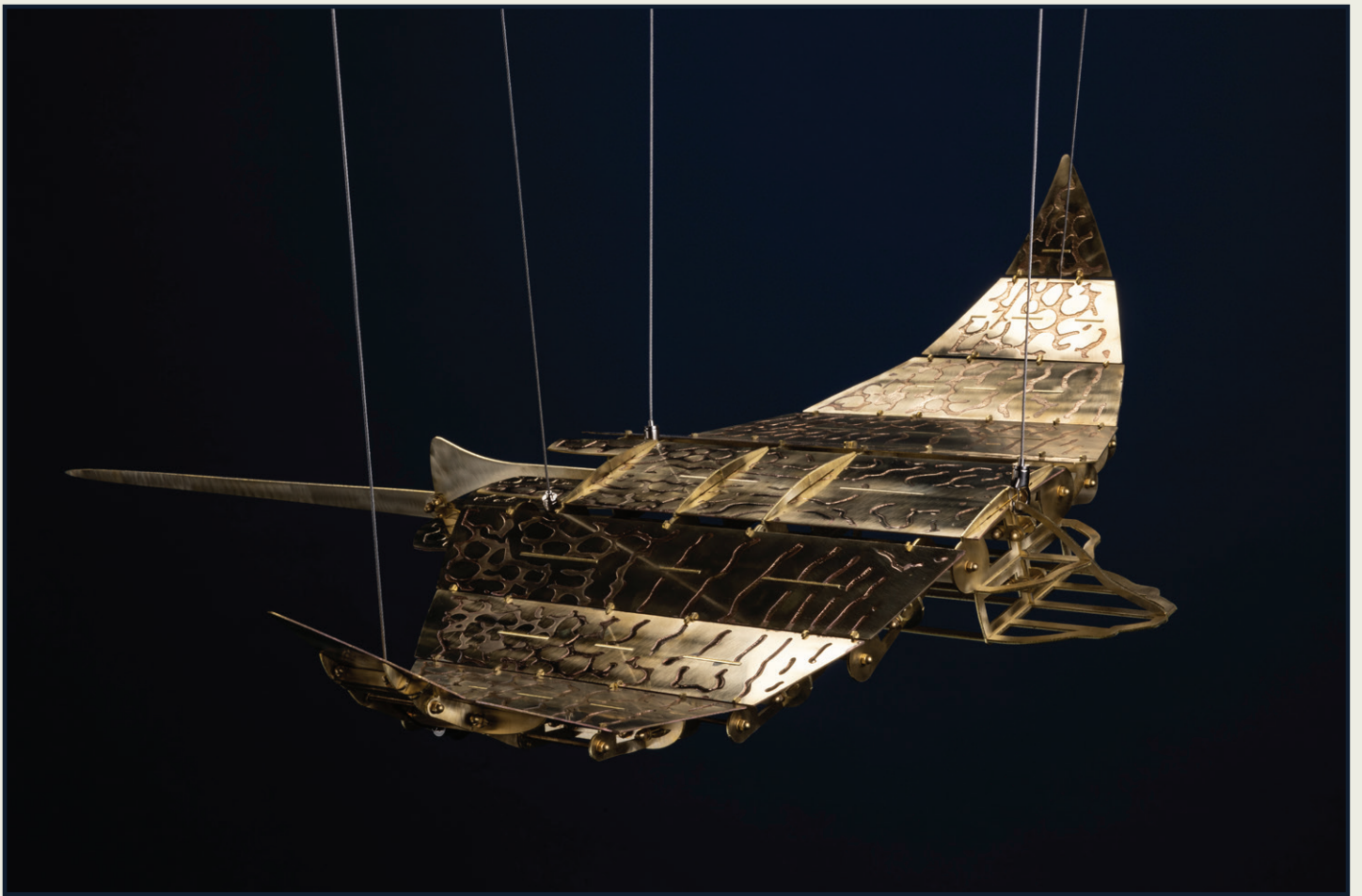
27 AUGUST - 4 SEPTEMBER

Originally created for the Melbourne Theatre Company and Queensland Theatre in association with Dead Puppet Society's production of *Storm Boy*, these enormous pelicans are splendid in parade. With an insatiable curiosity to investigate people, places and objects, these incredible creatures are able to reveal their full majestic wing span, and explore their environment with their beaks whilst waddling through a crowd. Inquisitive yet playful; magnificent, yet clumsy, these great comics of the bird world endeared themselves to crowds as part of Cairns Festival. We also helped build the puppetry skills of two local performers and included them in the puppetry experience.

ESTIMATED AUDIENCE: 20,000







## Collection

In 2022 we released several new sculptures in our exclusive Collection range, including our very popular brass Olive Branch Laurel worn in  *Holding Achilles* . Our handcrafted sculptures, inspired by our stage productions and the natural world, are fashioned from semi-precious metals and employ contemporary design methods including 3D modelling and laser-cutting techniques before being assembled by hand. We enjoyed working with private collectors and hospitality and retail outlets to create and design custom commissions.

Sculptures sold and commissioned in 2022 include:

- European Honey Bee #02
- School Shark #01
- Tawny Frogmouth Flying #02
- School Shark (Large) #01
- Bespoke Laurels for Brisbane Festival's *Raise the Roof* event *Dionysus Redux* with Michael Zavros
- 10x "Frontier Pets" Dog Tags for Aruga PR agency
- Blue Morpho Butterflies #10
- Olive Branch Laurel x10
- Blue Skimmer Dragonflies Centrepiece x1
- Free-standing Blue Morpho Butterflies x1
- Rosella (brass) #01



IMAGE CREDIT: DAVID KELLY



# Education

We are passionate about inspiring the next generation of theatremakers. In 2022 we engaged with a record number of schools and students throughout Queensland with a diverse range of Puppetry and Visual Theatre workshops, bespoke residencies, Teacher Professional Development, as well as through our unique classroom resources including production Education Notes, Training Puppets and Digital Workshop offerings. We also engaged with emerging artists through the DPS Academy to create three new bite-sized works as part of THE DPS LAB.

Highlights include:

## DPS Academy / THE DPS LAB

2 NOVEMBER 2022, POWERHOUSE THEATRE, BRISBANE POWERHOUSE

Now in its fifth year, the DPS Academy is our flagship artist training program that offers a unique professional development opportunity for emerging artists working in the form of visual theatre. Over a 14-week workshop series, our artists helped three artist collectives develop their original ideas into three short works presented during THE DPS LAB at Brisbane Powerhouse, our partners in 2022.

The DPS Academy is generously supported by The Jelley Family Foundation.



- 13 artist applications received
- 3 participating artist groups, made up of 22 early career artists
- 15 mentor-led professional development sessions
- 170+ hours of artist-led creative development and rehearsal
- 354 attendees at THE DPS LAB 2022 including 299 paying patrons
- 100% artists reported feeling more connected to the professional performing arts industry
- 100% artists reported that “the right amount” of creative, technical and marketing support was provided by Dead Puppet Society and Brisbane Powerhouse in order for them to succeed
- 8.4/10 average audience satisfaction rating
- 86% of audiences were attending THE DPS LAB for the first time
- Audiences describe THE DPS LAB 2022 as “experimental” “fresh” “stunning” “exciting” and “celebratory”

IMAGE CREDIT: HOW TO BE HUMAN BY GRACE LAW, THE DPS LAB 2022, DAVID KELLY



## Townsville Community Day, World Science Festival

14 MAY 2022

Helen Stephens, our Head of Youth and Engagement, made an exciting visit to Townsville’s Museum of Tropical North Queensland for World Science Festival Queensland. We were asked to create a maker station for their free Community Day event. From two 23kg packages of black cardboard, cut to A2 size for our laser cutter, we cut 800 diprotodon shadow puppets for a Shadow Puppetry Workshop.

A diprotodon is an ancient wombat, an extinct genus of large marsupials native to Australia from the Pleistocene epoch, considered to be one of Australia’s core species of ‘megafauna’.

Over 250 people participated in the workshop and brought the creatures to life using a shadow light set up against the museum wall.

## Residency - Robin Hood Satellite Ensemble

NOVEMBER 2022, KINGSTON BUTTER FACTORY, LOGAN

Dead Puppet Society was thrilled to collaborate with Queensland Theatre and Kingston Butter Factory Cultural Precinct, Logan City Council's new landmark cultural venue, to devise a new work made with young people, for young people. As Director, Writer and Facilitator, our Head of Youth and Education Helen Stephens led an exciting visual theatre training residency and creative development project with a group of 20 students from Grade 9 to 12 from across Logan alongside local Artist and Facilitator Grace Edward, to create a new play based on Robin Hood.

The project aims to take an investigative approach to create change using compelling visual storytelling and analogue techniques. Following the 10-week process, the students showcased a bite-sized viewing at the Butter Factory on 8 December.



IMAGE CREDIT: SHAN JACOB



IMAGE CREDIT: VIVID VISUAL CO.

In 2022 we partnered with the following schools and organisations to deliver workshops, residencies and bespoke education offerings either in person or digitally:

- Where The Wild Things Are bookshop (Brisbane)
- Tarneit Rise Primary School (Victoria)
- Cairns Festival
- Hillbrook Anglican School (Brisbane)
- Forest Lake State High School (Brisbane)
- Launceston High School
- La Boite Theatre Company
- Brisbane South State Secondary College
- Moreton Bay College
- St Edmunds (Ipswich)
- Emmanuel College (Gold Coast)
- Drama Queensland State Conference
- Lords Pimpama (Gold Coast)
- St John's Anglican College (Brisbane)
- World Science Festival, Townsville Community Day
- The Glennie School (Toowoomba)
- Redlands College
- Stanthorpe High School
- Moreton Bay Regional Council (Pine Rivers Art Gallery)
- Genesis Christian College (Brisbane)
- Coolool State High School
- Trinity Lutheran College (Gold Coast)
- Brisbane Boys' College
- Samford Steiner (Brisbane)
- Aratula State School
- Theatre Residency Week (Queensland Theatre)
- Empire Theatre (Toowoomba)
- Woodridge State High School (Logan)
- Moreton Bay College
- Helensvale State High School (Gold Coast)
- Nirimba State Primary School (Sunshine Coast)
- Matthew Flinders Anglican College (Sunshine Coast)
- Alexandra Hills State High (Brisbane)
- American Community School of Abu Dhabi (Abu Dhabi)
- Metro Arts Emerging Producer Xchange (Artist Development)
- Brisbane Powerhouse (THE DPS LAB 2022)





## Dead Puppet Society Team

### CREATIVE DIRECTOR

David Morton

### EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Nicholas Paine

### ASSOCIATE CREATIVE

DIRECTOR

Matt Seery

### COMPANY MANAGER

Jodie Roche-Jones

### TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

Scott Barton

### HEAD OF YOUTH AND

ENGAGEMENT

Helen Stephens

### HEAD OF FABRICATION

Savannah Mojidi

### HEAD OF MARKETING AND PR

Tash Spong

### MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Prof. Sandra Gattenhof (Chair), Claire Styles (Secretary), Tim Hall (Treasurer), Adam Brunes, Laura Campbell, Katherine Hoepper and Liz Prior.

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- English Family Foundation
- The Jelley Family Foundation
- Liz and Nigel Prior
- Cass and Ian George
- Susan Learmonth and Bernard Curran
- Zoë Connolly
- Denise Wadley
- Anonymous

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- Arts Queensland
- Brisbane City Council
- Christie
- Glass Half Full Productions
- Queensland Performing Arts Centre
- Brisbane Festival



IMAGE CREDIT: LOUIS LIM & DEAN HANSON