



SHOCK THERAPY  
PRODUCTIONS



FUEL

# FUEL TEACHER'S NOTES

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY: SAM FOSTER & HAYDEN JONES  
PERFORMED BY: ZAC BOULTON AND SARAH MCLEOD



## ABOUT THE COMPANY

Shock Therapy Productions was founded in 2015 by Sam Foster and Hayden Jones and has quickly established itself as one of the leading performing arts companies based on the Gold Coast. In this year, the company was awarded Accelerated Triennial Funding by City of Gold Coast for operational costs and to assist in the growth of the company. In 2018 this funding was renewed for a further 3 years.

Shock Therapy Productions aims to deliver Transformative Arts Experiences, and tell stories that are meaningful, thought-provoking, dynamic and entertaining, celebrating both the confronting and cathartic nature of performance.

Working across theatre, film and live events, Shock Therapy Productions aims to establish itself as a leading company in the delivery of high quality, relevant, multidisciplinary performance and a leader in the Arts and Culture Sector on the Gold Coast as well as Nationally and Internationally.

The company has produced a rapidly expanding catalogue of works, including a number of original productions, won 5 Matilda Awards, performed at venues and Arts Festivals in both Australia and Internationally and is proudly sponsored by the City of Gold Coast Council.

### FOR ALL ENQUIRIES AND BOOKINGS

E: [education@shocktherapyproductions.com.au](mailto:education@shocktherapyproductions.com.au)  
[www.shocktherapyproductions.com.au](http://www.shocktherapyproductions.com.au)

## AWARD WINS

2017 MATILDA AWARDS  
*Best Independent Production*  
– *The Forwards*

2016 MATILDA AWARDS  
*Best Independent Production*  
– *Viral*

2015 MATILDA AWARDS  
*Best Independent Production*  
– *The Pillowman*

*Best Director, Sam Foster*  
– *The Pillowman*

*Best Supporting Actor, Tama Matheson*  
– *The Pillowman*

## AWARD NOMINATIONS

2021 MATILDA AWARDS  
*Best New Australian Work*  
– *Undertow*

*Best Independent Production*  
– *Undertow*

*Best Sound Design*  
– *Undertow*

2017 MATILDA AWARDS  
*Best Actor, Sam Foster*  
– *The Forwards*

*Best Actress, Ellen Bailey*  
– *The Forwards*

2016 MATILDA AWARDS  
*Best New Australian Work*  
– *Viral*

*Best Actor, Sam Foster*  
– *Viral*

*Best Audio Visual Design, Nathan Sibthorpe*  
– *Viral*



## MEET THE CREATORS

### HAYDEN JONES – ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Hayden is a performer and contemporary performance maker, working across a range of forms including theatre, installation, immersive experiences and cross art-form collaborations. He has worked as an Actor, Director, Writer, Producer and workshop facilitator, for some of Australia's most recognised and innovative arts organisations. He is a co-founder of Shock Therapy Productions.

Hayden also has an extensive background working in Youth Theatre, Children's Theatre and Theatre-in-Education, writing and directing shows for young people, and touring nation-wide performing and teaching workshops.

### SAM FOSTER – ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Sam is a storyteller, performer and theatre maker. He is an award-winning Actor, Director, Writer, Producer, Stunt Performer and Stunt Rigger as well as being a Physical Theatre Performer, Movement Director and workshop facilitator. He is the co-owner and co-founder of Shock Therapy Productions.

Sam works in theatre, film and large-scale events and has worked for a number of companies and festivals throughout his career. His career has taken him to New York, London, Namibia, South Africa, Denmark, Norway and India as well as all over Australia.



## CONTENTS

- 6 THE CREATIVES
- 6 ABOUT THE SHOW
- 7 ORIGINAL CAST
- 8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
- 9 SYNOPSIS
- 10 RESEARCH
- 13 RESEARCH LINKS
- 14 DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL ASSAULT IN AUSTRALIA DATA
- 16 HELP & SUPPORT
- 17 STYLISTIC INFLUENCES
- 21 CURRICULUM LINKS
- 22 Q&A WITH THE PLAYWRIGHTS
- 24 PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES
- 25 POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES
- 28 SCRIPT EXCERPTS



## FUEL

*noun: fuel; plural noun: fuels*

- material such as coal, gas, or oil that is burned to produce heat or power.
- food, drink, or drugs as a source of energy.
- a thing that sustains or inflames passion, argument, or other intense emotion.



## THE CREATIVES

---

### VISUAL DESIGN:

#### Nathan Sibthorpe

Nathan is a contemporary performance-maker and AV Designer. His key skills include writing, directing, devising and video design. Nathan's performance work often involves the use of digital technologies, objective staging and layered narratives. Nathan sometimes teaches performance studies at QUT, where he holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts with distinction, and a Masters Degree (practice-led research) in contemporary performance.

### COMPOSITION AND AUDIO DESIGN:

#### Guy Webster

Guy is a Brisbane singer/songwriter, composer, sound designer, producer and artist working across the mediums of theatre, dance, sound art, installation and new media. His broad body of work has featured in theatres, festivals, live music venues, galleries and conferences throughout Australia, Japan, Europe, UK, USA and China while his live performances have seen him share the stage with the likes of Beth Orton, Ed Harcourt, Powderfinger, The Cruel Sea, Mad Professor and Sarah Blasko.

## ABOUT THE SHOW

---

### FUEL ORIGINAL TEXT BY:

Sam Foster & Hayden Jones

### DEvised & DIRECTED BY:

Sam Foster & Hayden Jones

### DURATION

55 minutes + 10 minutes post-show Q&A

### SUITABILITY

Grades 9-12

### AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Personal & Social Competence
- Ethical Understanding

### ESSENTIAL LEARNINGS

- The Arts: Drama

### STYLE/Form

- Theatre for Young People
- Physical Theatre

### QCAA – SENIOR DRAMA

**Unit 1:** Share

**Unit 2:** Reflect

**Unit 3:** Challenge

### PERFORMANCE STYLES AND CONVENTIONS

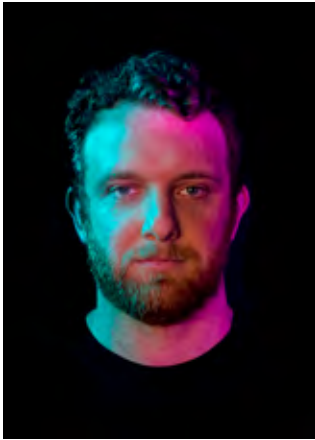
Storytelling, Realism, Epic Theatre, Contemporary Theatre, Physical Theatre, Theatre of Social Comment, Multiple Role Playing, Mime and Political Satire.

### THEMES

Relationships, Coercive Control, Patriarchy, Domestic Violence.

## ORIGINAL CAST

*Fuel* was first performed in 2022 by Zachary Boulton and Sarah McLeod.  
The characters were allocated as below:



### ZACHARY BOULTON

SEB  
IVY'S MUM  
CHASE  
MR HENRY  
TRIPOD  
RORY  
LIAM  
SALVO  
STONER 1  
POPPY  
JACK  
SEB'S DAD  
LOU RICARDO

### SARAH MCLEOD

IVY  
TURBO  
MAGGOT  
CLINTON  
CHLOE  
MEGAN  
VINNIE  
STONER 2  
AVA  
MR CARBERRY

### ON SCREEN

BINH TRAN  
– Ngoc Phan  
ALLENBY JONES  
– Hayden Jones  
MINISTER GUY POWERS  
– Grayson Millwood  
ALLENBY JONES' FAMILY  
– Veronica Neave, Julene Foster,  
Charlii Gregory and Essi Rintala-Jones  
PETA MCKENZIE  
– Marja-Liisa Rintala  
LARRY HAGGARD  
– Dave Eastgate  
GORDIE "WOMBAT" NEWMAN  
– Michael Foster  
DALLAS BRONSON  
– Sam Foster  
DALLAS BRONSON'S LAWYER  
– Ben Foster



THE SHOCKERS L-R: SARAH MCLEOD, ZACHARY BOULTON, SAM FOSTER AND HAYDEN JONES

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

Shock Therapy would like to thank everyone who in some way supported or contributed to this work, in particular the women who bravely shared their stories and personal experiences with us. Your input was invaluable in informing the accuracy and authenticity of this story and how the issues have been represented.

We would like to acknowledge the City of Gold Coast for being our major sponsor.

Huge thanks to the Creative team; Sound Designer Guy Webster, AV Designer and Videographer Nathan Sibthorpe, our cast Zachary Boulton and Sarah McLeod, set builder Darren Curtis, everyone who made a cameo in the video components – Ngoc Phan, Marja-Liisa Rintala, Dave Eastgate, Michael Foster, Julene foster, Ben Foster, Charlii Gregory, Essi Rintala-Jones, and Grayson Millwood.

Thanks Playlab Theatre for the publication; Saffron Jensen Photography and Design for the hero image; and the board of Shock Therapy Arts Ltd consisting of Paul Bishop (Chair), Andrew Larder (Secretary) and Inke Loos; and our producer David Carberry and Education officer Michelle Watkins.

Love and gratitude to our family and friends for their ongoing love and support, especially Mike and Julene Foster, Barbara and Keith Maher, Wendy and Erkki Rintala, Veronica Neave, Kaspar Foster, Marja-Liisa Rintala, Charlii Gregory, Hunter Gregory, and Essi Rintala-Jones. Thanks to Stefo Nantsou, Tom Lycos and the Zeal Theatre family for the years of knowledge, inspiration and support you continue to give us.

Shock Therapy acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, water and community. We pay our respect to their elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.





## SYNOPSIS

---

*Fuel* is an original work by Shock Therapy Productions. Written by company founders Hayden Jones and Sam Foster, it explores the ideas of toxic relationships, coercive control and patriarchal systems.

It follows Seb and Ivy, who are in a new relationship and are crazy about each other. They're always together. However, what begins as bright young love deteriorates into obsession, control, need and destruction, as we witness their relationship unfold over a 12-month period.

This hard-hitting show takes an honest look at the complex nature of domestic abuse, the psychology behind it, and the broader societal factors that contribute to this troubling epidemic. It weaves together cinematic AV, dynamic sound design, political satire, and psychological drama, carried by the skill and versatility of its two performers, who play in excess of 20 characters.

*When fuel is added to the fire, who will get burnt?*

### **WARNING:**

*Fuel* contains some content and themes that some viewers may find disturbing. There are references to domestic violence, toxic relationships, manipulation, drinking and smoking. It is recommended that guidance counsellors attend *Fuel* and/or be on stand-by at the end of the performance.

### CENTRAL THEME: COERCIVE CONTROL



**COERCIVE**  
*adjective*

Serving or tending to coerce  
(coerce: to compel by force, intimidation, or authority, especially without regard for individual desire or volition)

**CONTROL**  
*noun*

The act of controlling; regulation; domination or command  
Being under the regulation, domination, or command of another

Coercive control is a term depicting repeated pattern of control and domination in a domestic relationship. It can include tactics such as verbal, economic and psychological abuse, as well as sexual and physical violence. Victims can be subjected behaviours where they are isolated, intimidated, controlled, threatened, surveilled, humiliated, degraded and abused. Coercive control is not obvious at first and is sometimes seen as a non-physical form of domestic violence, but sadly is a predictor of severe physical violence and homicide. Gaslighting is now a term used in a relationship context to describe a situation when a person will distort the perceptions of their partner to gain power in the relationship and to ensure that their partner is solely focused on them.

#### **Coercive Control**

<https://www.whiteribbon.org.au/Find-Help/Help-Lines>

<https://www.healthline.com/health/coercive-control>

<https://www.sbs.com.au/topics/voices/relationships/article/2021/03/31/what-coercive-control>


<https://www.relationshipsnsw.org.au/what-is-gaslighting/>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/basics/gaslighting>

#### **Domestic Violence**

<https://www.dvrcv.org.au/about/what-domestic-violence>

### CENTRAL THEME: TOXIC MASCULINITY



**TOXIC**  
*adjective*

Acting as or having the effect of a poison; poisonous

Causing unpleasant feelings; harmful or malicious

**MASCULINITY**  
*noun*

The quality or condition of being masculine

Something traditionally considered to be characteristic of a male

Toxic masculinity is a term often used to describe the negative aspects of exaggerated masculine traits. The term has evolved over time and has a place both in academia and everyday speech. Exaggerated masculine traits that society and cultures have glorified and accepted. The importance of ‘manliness’ result in traits of strength and toughness, lack of emotion, emotional insensitivity, stoicism, dominance and aggression. These traits can lead to aggression, suppression of emotions, low empathy, hyper-competitiveness, controlling and dominating behaviours, entitlement, chauvinism and sexism, isolation, and glorification of violence.

#### **Toxic Masculinity**

<https://junctionjournalism.com/2020/11/04/toughen-up-mate-the-harmful-effects-of-toxic-masculinity-on-australian-men/>

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/toxic-masculinity>

<https://www.healthline.com/health/toxic-masculinity#traits>

### CENTRAL THEME: PATRIARCHAL SYSTEMS



# PATRIARCHAL SYSTEM

## PATRIARCHAL

*adjective*

Relating to a patriarch, male head of a family, tribe, community etc.

Characteristic of an entity controlled by men

## SYSTEM

*noun*

Coordinated body of methods or a scheme or plan of procedure; organisational scheme:

Any formulated, regular, or special method or plan of procedure

A patriarchy, from the ancient Greek patriarches, was a society where power was held by and passed down through the elder males. When modern historians and sociologists describe a “patriarchal society,” they mean that men hold the positions of power and have more privilege: head of the family unit, leaders of social groups, boss in the workplace, and heads of government.

### **Patriarchal Systems**

<https://www.thoughtco.com/patriarchal-society-feminism-definition-3528978>



### SEE WHAT YOU MADE ME DO

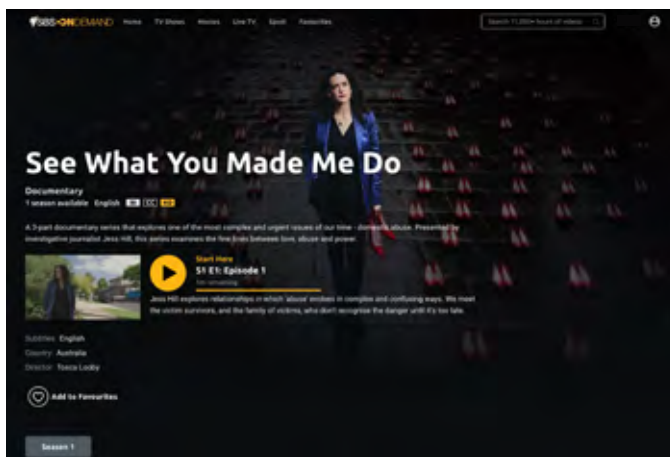
<https://www.blackincbooks.com.au/books/see-what-you-made-me-do>

See What You Made Me Do: Power, Control and Domestic Abuse – By Jess Hill

A searing investigation that challenges everything

you thought you knew about domestic abuse. See What You Made Me Do is a deep dive into the abuse so many women and children experience – abuse that is often reinforced by the justice system they trust to protect them. Critically, it shows that we can drastically reduce domestic violence – not in generations to come, but today. Combining forensic research with riveting storytelling, See What You Made Me Do radically rethinks how to confront the national crisis of fear and abuse in our homes.

Now an SBS documentary series:



[https://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/program/see-what-you-made-me-do?gclid=Cj0KCQiAqbyNBhC2ARIsALDwAsDvMzuPojXUkQzTVJxfGH CpvbCByCiFf8sissJCcefhKK4SvlyoEv8aAgw3EA Lw\\_wcB&gclsrc=aw.ds](https://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/program/see-what-you-made-me-do?gclid=Cj0KCQiAqbyNBhC2ARIsALDwAsDvMzuPojXUkQzTVJxfGH CpvbCByCiFf8sissJCcefhKK4SvlyoEv8aAgw3EA Lw_wcB&gclsrc=aw.ds)

### HANNAH CLARKE

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-02-19/rowan-hannah-baxter-three-children-dead-car-fire-camp-hill/11979628>

### KELLY WILKINSON

<https://www.news.com.au/national/queensland/crime/kelly-wilkinsons-family-claim-decade-of-abuse-before-domestic-violence-death/news-story/4ff2645227c1a1c53483495d502de1fe>

### KYESHA FINEMORE

<https://www.qt.com.au/news/cruel-act-that-shocked-lisa-wilkinson/3444236/>

<https://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/real-life/news-life/brisbane-teenager-who-set-his-girlfriend-on-fire-sentenced/news-story/66ac4b3c7ea3d7be3c0cc52ef4729608>

<https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/national/queensland/man-who-set-his-girlfriend-alight-wins-fight-for-a-retrial-20190917-p52s4h.html>

<https://www.perthnow.com.au/news/crime/man-jailed-for-horrendous-burn-attack-ng-s-2045314>

### BRITTANY HIGGINS RAPE, AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT IN POLITICS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WxbH4bK5vhg>

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-03-22/kriti-gupta-says-brittany-higgins-rape-accused-made-advances/13260496>

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/how-australian-politics-has-been-shaken-to-the-core-in-the-wake-of-brittany-higgins-rape-allegation/k0toul8g2>

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-02-27/governments-brittany-higgins-rape-allegations-black-ironies/13197574>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7F3ExyMa9qo>

### JARRYD HAYNE CASE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pGBC1vg7xX0>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUu\\_PbAENFg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUu_PbAENFg)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GR9yBH5llxg>

## DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL ASSAULT IN AUSTRALIA DATA

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story 2019

In 2018–19, the majority of sexual assault offenders recorded by police were male (97%); males aged 15–19 had the highest offender rates (102.9 per 100,000) of any age group (based on ABS 2020a).

The impacts of family, domestic and sexual violence can be serious and long-lasting, affecting an individual's health, wellbeing, education, relationships and housing outcomes (AIHW 2018b). Most of the available evidence on the impacts focus on women and children.

Partner violence is a major health risk factor for women aged 25–44—with mental health conditions being the largest contributor to the disease burden from partner violence, followed by anxiety disorders and suicide and self-inflicted injuries.

1 woman is killed every 9 days and 1 man is killed every 29 days by a partner.

Between 2014–15 and 2015–16, the National Homicide Monitoring Program recorded 218 domestic homicide victims from 198 domestic homicide incidents. Over half (59%, or 129) victims were female and 64% (82) of these female victims were killed by an intimate partner.

There were also 89 male domestic homicide victims, with over 1 in 4 (28%, or 25) killed by an intimate partner (AIC unpublished).

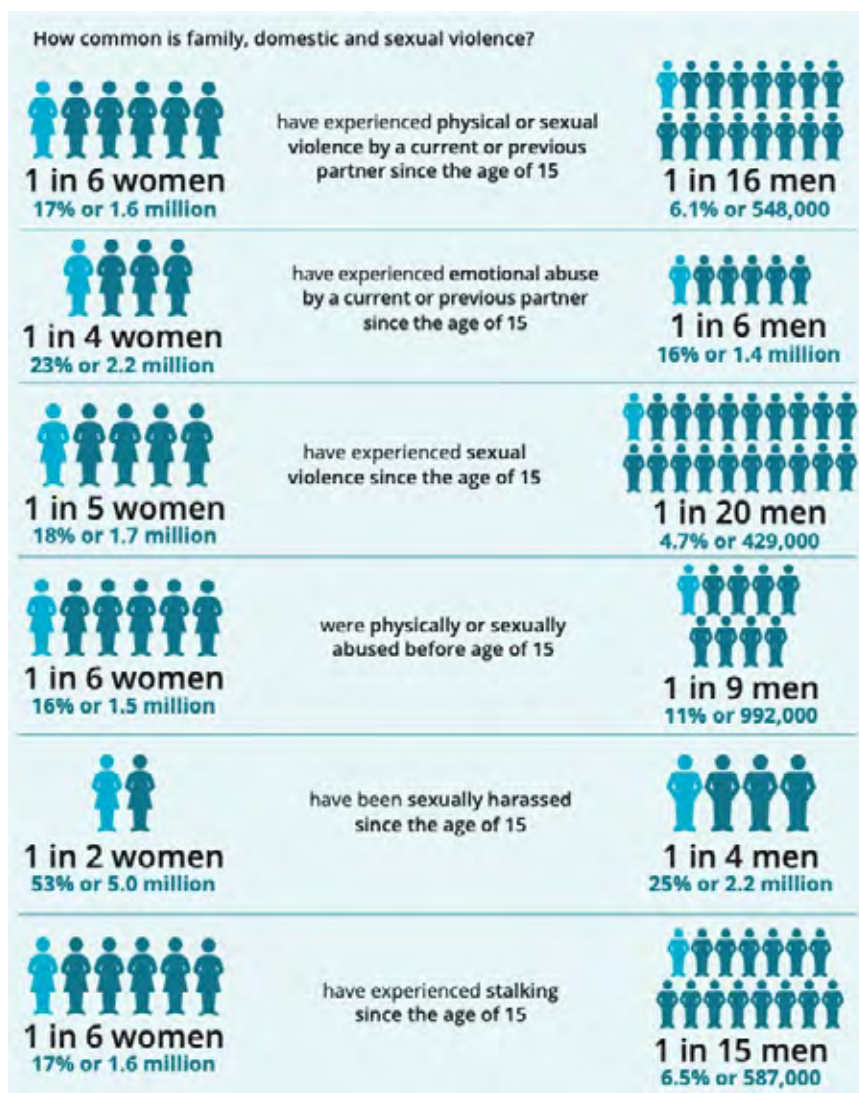
More people are recognising non-physical behaviours as violence.

Most Australians have an accurate knowledge of what constitutes violence against women and do not endorse this violence. More Australians are recognising non-physical behaviours as violence; in 2017, 81% agreed that controlling or denying a partner money was a form of violence—up from 70% in 2013.

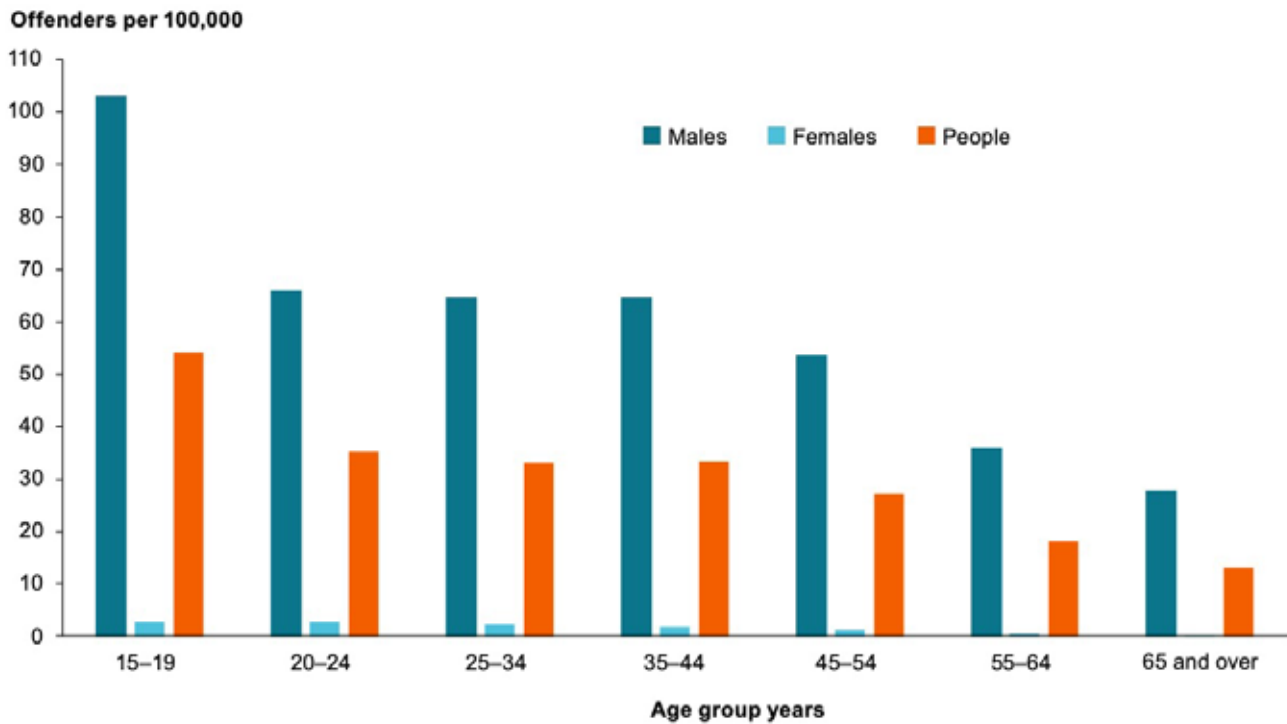
While most people's knowledge of violence against women has increased, there are still some areas for concern—1 in 3 Australians are unaware that women are more likely to be sexually assaulted by a known person than a stranger; 2 in 5 are unsure where to access help for domestic violence (Webster et al. 2018).

<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/domestic-violence/sexual-assault-in-australia/contents/summary>

<https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/b0037b2d-a651-4abf-9f7b-00a85e3de528/aihw-fdv3-FDSV-in-Australia-2019.pdf.aspx?inline=true>

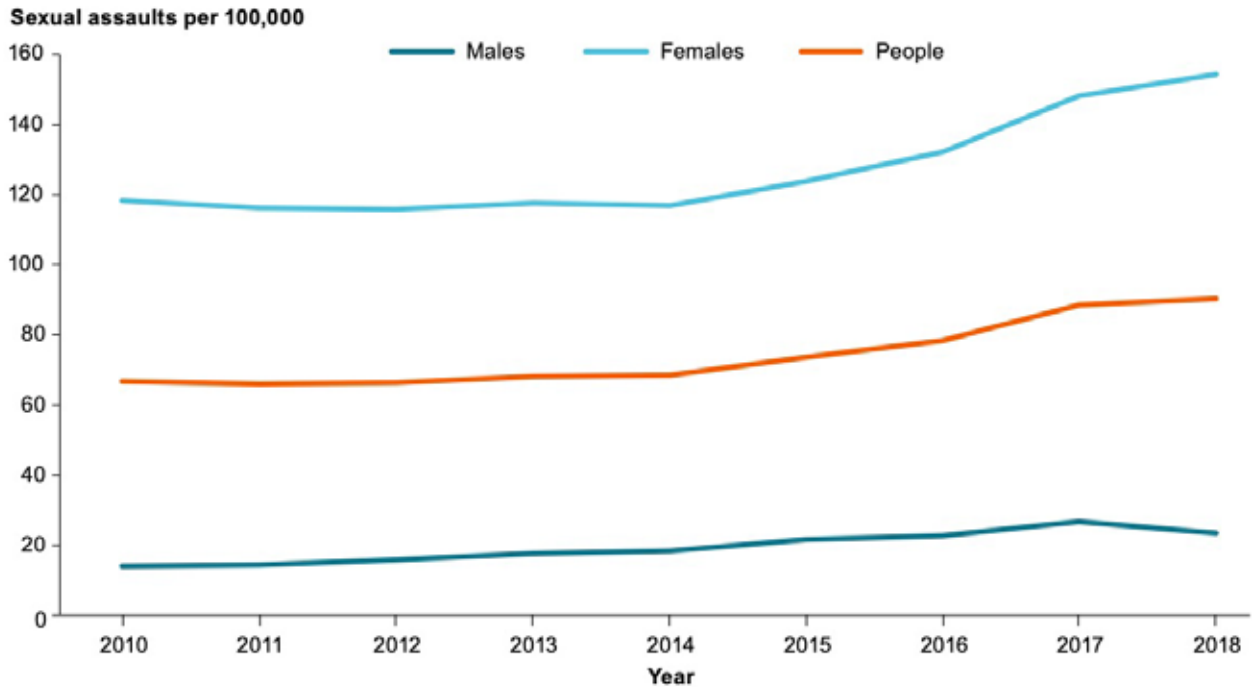


**Figure 2: Offenders with a principal offence of sexual assault, by age and sex, 2018-19**



Source: Based on ABS 2020a.

**Figure 1: Police-recorded sexual assaults against people aged 15 and over, by sex, 2010-2018**



Source: Based on ABS 2019.



PHOTO BY DANNY G ON UNSPLASH

### GET HELP

<https://www.1800respect.org.au/>

<https://www.whiteribbon.org.au/>

<https://www.dvconnect.org/womensline/>

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/>

<https://www.lifeline.org.au/>

<https://www.betterman.org.au/welcome-guest/?bm-visit-from=Th2qoLQP4wel7ehO>

<https://mensline.org.au/>

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

### VIDEO LINKS

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IV\\_FGul2qcY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IV_FGul2qcY)

<https://www.qld.gov.au/law/crime-and-police/abuse-family-matters-and-protection-orders/domestic-and-family-violence-non-physical-abuse>

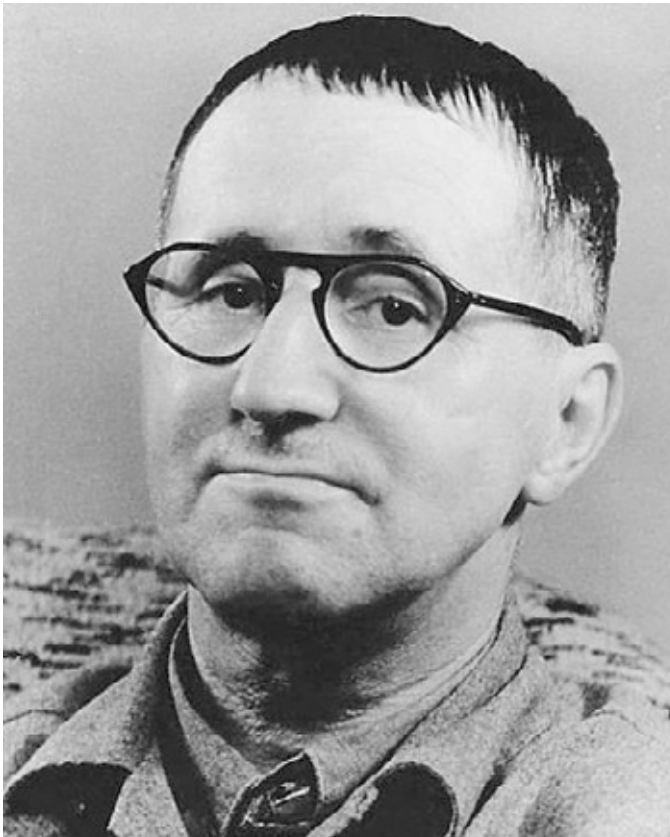
<https://events.whiteribbon.org.au/learn--how-can-men-make-change>



## STYLISTIC INFLUENCES

---

Shock Therapy Productions often take an eclectic approach to their style of theatre, drawing on a range of theatrical influences to create work that feels inventive and contemporary. Below are some of the main stylistic influences found in *Fuel*.



BERTOLT BRECHT - FLICKR

“We need a type of theatre which not only releases the feelings, insights and impulses possible within the particular historical field of human relations in which the action takes place, but employs and encourages those thoughts and feelings which help transform the field itself.”

– Bertolt Brecht

### EPIC THEATRE

The term Epic Theatre was coined by 20th Century theatre practitioner Erwin Piscator. It became an ideological and stylistic approach to theatre and gave rise to several practitioners such as Vladimir Mayakovsky, Vsevolod Meyerhold and, most famously, Bertolt Brecht. Epic Theatre uses a range of conventions including narrative, montage, disjointed and non-linear episodes, metaphor, multiple role playing and stepping in and out of character, music and song, signs and captions and many more. Epic Theatre productions will often reveal elements of the staging process itself. The actors' characterisation and the use of set and props are designed to reinforce an idea rather than reality.

The productions that Shock Therapy present are a direct response to current events and provide social commentary on themes and topics that can sometimes be avoided. The use of narration, montage, minimal set and costume, multiple characters, breaking the fourth wall, tableaux, song and music draws on the styles and techniques that became a feature of Brecht's work.

- **What Epic conventions were used in *Fuel*?**
- **Did you think they used the conventions effectively?**
- **Did the use of the minimal set tell the story clearly enough?**
- **Which other Epic conventions do you think could work well in the show? How could they be included?**

## PHYSICAL THEATRE



THE CLEANERS BY SHOCK THERAPY PRODUCTIONS FEATURING SAM FOSTER & HAYDEN JONES. PHOTO BY SAFFRON JENSEN.

Physical theatre bases the storytelling through physical movement rather than words and dialogue. The dramatic action can incorporate dance, acrobatics, mime, tableaux, stage fighting, actions, gestures and movement to communicate a story. A physical language is developed by the group of performers and the performance is often created through improvising around certain themes and set tasks. This 'physical language' is then crafted into a structured series of movements that help to convey the story.

Physical theatre can also include characterisation. Each character has their own unique movement quality, their own tempo, rhythm, weight, size, etc. The actor must use their physicality to create the character they are portraying. The actors in the Shock Therapy company play multiple characters in their shows. In *Fuel*, the script requires the performers to shift and change rapidly from one character to the next. This requires the actors to have a high level of physical awareness and control.

- **What were some of the ways that Shock Therapy made *Fuel* physical?**
- **Do you think the way the story was physicalized made it more interesting to watch?**
- **Choose one of the actors and select two of the characters they played. What and how did they change to create multiple roles?**

## DOCUMENTARY DRAMA



ACTORS, CO-WRITERS AND CO-DIRECTORS STEFO NANTSOU AND TOM LYCOS IN *THE STONES*. PHOTO BY ROB LEVINE.

Documentary theatre uses factual information and documents (newspapers, reports, interviews, journals, correspondences, etc) as the impetus for drama. The story and the drama is based on real events and people. This can sometimes be linked with Verbatim Theatre, where the story is taken word-for-word from a pre-existing document.

The social commentary provided in *Fuel* was inspired by the current events plaguing news in Australia in 2020 and 2021. Stories of women losing their lives and being injured gave the *Fuel* creators ample material to create this all too common story. News articles and interviews became the cautionary tale with a strong message for its audience.

## POLITICAL SATIRE



CREATOR: DON LINDSAY. PHOTO CREDIT: THE WEST AUSTRALIAN .

Political satire is a humorous, ironic, or sarcastic examination of the political arena in an attempt to expose absurdity and hypocrisy. A combination of humour and political analysis, political satire can skew more toward bringing laughs or toward activism, depending on the content and the intent of the satirist. There are many different forms of political satire, including prose, editorial cartoons, and fake news. True satire attempts to rise above simple comedy, with the aim of exposing an underlying absurd truth or paradox: a congresswoman who endlessly preaches family values being caught in numerous extramarital affairs, for instance, would be an easy target for an examination of hypocrisy. When political rhetoric fails to match up with reality, the opportunity for satire is truly born.

The satirical approach taken by Shock Therapy Productions provides a tongue in cheek commentary on real stories occurring in Australian politics. By creating fictitious political figures, the mood is lightened, however a compelling argument is also being made.

## CINEMATIC THEATRE



STILL SHOT FROM ALLENBY JONES PRESS CONFERENCE IN *FUEL*

Cinematic theatre is the fusion of live theatre and images on a screen using digital projection and cinematic vision. Screens are used as a part of the production where still and moving images, backgrounds, words, objects and people interact with the narrative on stage, in order to enhance the dramatic context. The cinematic component can provide segues and transitions between scenes, link characters ideas, and it can be a literal or symbolic backdrop.

The opening scene in *Fuel* is a montage of masculinity and femininity and the social pressures placed on humans to conform to the 'norm'. In conjunction with a powerful audio soundtrack, the cinematic components provide symbolic backdrops, transitions and commentaries for the audience to better understand place and space, as well as enhancing tension and mood.

## CURRICULUM LINKS

---

### AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM:

#### Essential Learnings

- The Arts: Drama

### GENERAL CAPABILITIES:

- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Personal & Social Capability
- Ethical Understanding
- Literacy

### STYLE/Form:

- Theatre for Young People
- Physical Theatre
- Forum Theatre
- Brechtian / Epic Theatre
- Australian Theatre
- Contemporary Theatre

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING:

#### *Elements of Drama*

- Role, character and relationships
- Voice and movement
- Focus
- Tension
- Space and time
- Language, ideas and dramatic action
- Audience

### DRAMATIC CONVENTIONS:

- Direct address
- Magic realism
- Narration
- Monologue
- Multiple role playing
- Mime
- Live music
- Slow motion
- Flashbacks / flashforwards
- Cinematic component

### PURPOSE

- To challenge
- To educate
- To empower
- To inform

### QCAA 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

#### Critical thinking

- analytical thinking
- problem-solving
- decision-making
- reasoning
- reflecting and evaluating
- intellectual flexibility

#### Creative thinking

- innovation
- initiative and enterprise
- curiosity and imagination
- creativity
- generating and applying new ideas
- identifying alternatives
- seeing or making new links

#### Communication

- effective oral and written communication
- using language, symbols and texts
- communicating ideas effectively with diverse audiences

#### Collaboration and teamwork

- relating to others (interacting with others)
- recognising and using diverse perspectives
- participating and contributing
- community connections

#### Personal and social skills

- adaptability/flexibility
- management (self, career, time, planning and organising)
- character (resilience, mindfulness, open- and fair-mindedness, self-awareness)
- leadership
- citizenship
- cultural awareness
- ethical (and moral) understanding

(SOURCE: [HTTPS://WWW.QCAA.QLD.EDU.AU/DOWNLOADS/SENIOR/SNR\\_SYLL\\_REDEV\\_21ST\\_CENTURY\\_SKILLS\\_PREPARING\\_STUDENTS.PDF](https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/downloads/senior/snr_syll_redev_21st_century_skills_preparing_students.pdf))

## Q&A WITH THE PLAYWRIGHTS

---

### WHAT WAS THE IMPETUS FOR *FUEL*?

*Fuel* was born out of three predominant feelings; a feeling of outrage and concern over the alarmingly high number of cases of domestic abuse in this country and the treatment of women more broadly, wanting to tell a story that addressed the idea of healthy relationships for young adults, and the need to create relevant and relatable content for our education programme.

### WHAT WAS YOUR APPROACH FOR WRITING AND DEVISING *FUEL*? IS THIS THE WAY YOU WRITE ALL YOUR WORKS?

Like all our works the first step is to decide on the central themes and concepts that we want the script to focus on. From there we start to discuss potential narratives and stories that could highlight these themes. After that we tend to dive into the research phase of the development. This is vitally important and is what makes the story feel relevant and authentic. Once we have decided on the themes, narrative and done the research we tend to focus on the structure of the piece. The decisions we make around the structure of the work then largely dictate how we write it. *Fuel* follows a typical three act structure so when we got to the writing phase we knew pretty clearly how the narrative needed to play out. There were some sections of the script that we knew we wanted to devise on the floor with the actors as they relied heavily on physical action so they were left somewhat open, and of course there were many tweaks and changes throughout the rehearsal process as we started to bring the work to life. This tends to be quite typical for us as we are not solely writers, we are theatre makers so if something initially seems to work on the page but we later discover that doesn't work on stage, we change it.

### WHAT DO YOU HOPE AUDIENCES GAIN FROM WATCHING THIS PIECE OF WORK?

Like all our work we hope that *Fuel* makes people reflect on their own lives and actions and more broadly, the actions of society. Theatre has a unique ability to reflect our own

shared stories back to us and allow us to dissect and analyse them in a safe environment. It can present a physical, imagined reality that gives us a deeper insight into our own human nature.

### ***FUEL* DEALS WITH SOME EXTREMELY SENSITIVE MATERIAL (DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, TOXIC MASCULINITY). WHAT WAS THE MOST DIFFICULT PART ABOUT WRITING THIS STORY?**

These issues are often hard to talk about and as a result are sometimes seen as taboo. But unfortunately not talking about them or dissecting them, like we have attempted to do in *Fuel*, doesn't get us any closer to a solution. We felt as though we needed to address these issues head on, but we needed to do it in a sensitive and well thought out way. This is why research is so vital to any story telling, but in particular to the creation of issue based theatre. You need to be able to understand the issue from multiple perspectives and almost anticipate any potential concerns or backlash. The other thing that you need to keep front and centre in your mind is your intention for the work. Throughout the entire process we have been clear on our intention for the piece. We want it to be part of the broader conversation towards changing these deeply concerning patterns in society and be a tool for young men and women to reflect on their actions and make better decisions.

### **HOW DO YOU THINK THE AUDIO-VISUAL COMPLEMENT BENEFITS THIS PRODUCTION?**

It is the first time we have incorporated AV into one of our in schools touring productions and we feel as though it adds a lot to the show. The AV in *Fuel* serves a couple of functions. Firstly, it serves as a visual backdrop for the play or a "moving set" that can symbolically represent different locations or moods that help to support the narrative. The other function that it serves is that it allows us to create a "Macro" and a "Micro" world for the show. The macro story is the broader socio political landscape that sits around the central narrative. It is the world in which the story sits and demonstrates the influences that society has on the central characters and narrative. The micro is the world of Seb and Ivy. It is their story and almost serves as the "foreground" while the fictional, political satire content is the "background" of the story.

## **THE USE OF MULTIPLE CHARACTERS IS A FEATURE IN ALL SHOCK THERAPY PRODUCTIONS. WHAT TIPS AND TRICKS DO YOU AND THE OTHER ACTORS IN YOUR COMPANY USE TO SWITCH CHARACTERS SO EFFECTIVELY AND SO QUICKLY?**

You have to clearly understand what drives each character and how this affects the way they move and speak. It is also important to understand the dramaturgical function that each character serves. Once you are clear on these things then you can begin to create clear physical traits and vocal qualities that reflect the motivation and function of the character. When playing multiple characters it is vitally important to work on each individual character in isolation before you start to worry about how to change from one to the next. The other consideration when playing multiple characters is variation. If two characters are too similar in physicality or vocal quality then it can be confusing for the audience so clarity becomes very important.

## **AS WRITER / DIRECTOR / ACTORS, WHICH PART OF THE PROCESS DO YOU LOVE MOST AND WHICH PART DO YOU FIND MOST DIFFICULT AND WHY?**

It's hard for us to separate any of these parts. When we write, we write from the perspective of what would work on stage as actors. When we direct we understand what the writer is trying to achieve but at the same time understand the actors' process and so we become a conduit between writer and actor. When we are acting then we know that our job is to bring the story and the characters off the page and embody the images that the writer had in their mind. Because we do all three of these things it makes it somewhat easier for us to understand the role that each one plays. We love all aspects of theatre making and they all have their own unique challenges.

## **SHOCK THERAPY PRODUCTIONS IS A THEATRE COMPANY THAT DOESN'T SHY AWAY FROM ADDRESSING DIFFICULT ISSUES. WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR AUDIENCES THAT MAY FIND YOUR SHOWS 'TOO CONFRONTING'?**

Theatre is meant to be confronting! It should make you think and feel. It should make you reflect on your own actions and the actions of society. If something is confronting then as an audience it is important to ask yourself "why did I find that so confronting"? We never aim to be reckless with our writing and be confronting just for the sake of it. If we want a moment to be confronting then there is always a well thought out reason behind why we want the audience to be confronted. It's our way of provoking you to think or feel about a particular issue.

## PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES

---



### DISCUSSION STARTERS

Below are the video links to the 'news reports' that feature throughout *Fuel*. These videos are used as segues between scenes, to provide commentary on 'real-world' issues and stories, and provide a sense of comic relief from the tension building in the live action sequences.

**Allenby Jones Part 1**                    <https://vimeo.com/676679637>

**Allenby Jones Part 2**                    <https://vimeo.com/676679637>

**Dallas Bronson Part 1**                    <https://vimeo.com/676681025>

**Dallas Bronson Part 2**                    <https://vimeo.com/676681595>

- What do you know about *Fuel*?
- What do you know about Shock Therapy Productions?
- What does the title make you think the play is going to be about?
- The play is performed by two actors playing multiple roles. What and how do you think they will be able to succeed in this?
- What assumptions / predictions can you make as to why the play is titled *Fuel*?
- What are some words / themes you associate with the image below? Brainstorm ideas on post-its and put them on the board / wall.



## POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

---

Please take a few minutes to complete the survey and give us valuable feedback on the show:

<https://culturecounts.cc/s/stteacherssurvey/splash>



### DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What are the key messages of *Fuel*?
- Reflecting back on the Allenby Jones and Dallas Bronson video clips that you watched before viewing *Fuel*, how did these clips link the micro to the macro in the production?
- Who was the stand out character and why?
- Did the play end as you predicted? Why / why not?
- Tension is an incredibly important element in *Fuel*. What were the climactic moments in the play? How and why did these moments affect you as an audience member?
- What impact did the audio-visual component have on the drama?
- What do you know about Shock Therapy Productions?
- How did the staging and the props impact the production?

## ACTIVITY #1: STUDENT DEVISING EXERCISE FOR THEATRE FOR SOCIAL COMMENT

This exercise incorporates aspects of Augusto Boal's Image Theatre (Theatre of the Oppressed), Epic Theatre, and Improvisation. It does so in a structured and purposeful way, rather than going into improvising blind, which can be meandering and less productive. This exercise can work with individuals, pairs, or groups.

### 1. Decide on a theme, or issue.

Encourage students to come up with something they are interested in or passionate about. They will be much more invested in the process if they actually care about what they are making. They might want to talk about climate change, reckless behaviour, or inequality, for example.

### 2. Decide on a key event related to that theme or issue and create a powerful, frozen tableau.

This is about finding a pivotal event or moment for the story or scene to centre around. It should be a moment of peak drama. For example, "climate change" may show a moment where a family is struck by a flash flood, "reckless behaviour" could be a car crash, "inequality" could be racial violence. This key event could be a personal experience, a story they have heard or inspired by recent events.

### 3. Create a second tableau, showing what happened prior to the event.

This could be 30 seconds before, 5 days before or 5 years before. It's up to the group to decide what is most relevant, in the lead up to the key event. This image should clearly demonstrate the circumstances that lead to the first tableau (show the causal link).

### 4. Create a third tableau, showing what happened after the event.

Again, it is up to the students to decide what is most relevant or interesting. It could be immediately after the car crash, it could be the resulting court case, it could be 20 years into the future, showing the long term consequences, for example. Again, this should link to the initial tableau image. Perhaps all three images follow the journey of one central protagonist, or maybe it focuses on the lead up, impact and aftermath of an event on an entire town.

### 5. Transition between the 3 tableaux.

Have the students cycle through the frozen images in chronological order. Start at the first frozen image (before the event), and then as an ensemble, transition to the second image (the event) together. Hold the image for a moment. Then transition to image 3 (after the event) together. Encourage students to be creative with how they transition. Eg. Use of space, change of pace, etc. If the three images are strong, they will tell a story.

### 6. Start to fill in the gaps.

These 3 images form the basic structure of the performance. The students can then start at the first image, and improvise in live action and using dialogue, through to the second image, making sure they hit those frozen tableaux as their key moments.

This gives them markers to head towards, as their guide. How do they journey from one to the other? Have them do this several times, discussing with their group each time what worked and what didn't. Do this again from image 2 to image 3.

### 7. Celebrate the transitions

If the students require a transition from one scene to another, this is an opportunity to make the transition a slick and interesting feature, rather than the "bit we have to ignore". Being inventive and economical with how the performers transition between time and space is one of our favourite parts of devising. This also introduces the Epic Theatre convention of breaking from character and celebrating the performer.

The principles of this exercise can be applied to creating one scene, or an entire full-length show, by breaking down each scene or section of the narrative into images first. After all, theatre is a visual medium and as they say, "a picture paints a thousand words". Being conscious of those key visual moments can help to create an effective and memorable piece of theatre.

## ACTIVITY #2: NEWS STORY

Create and present a news story based on one or more of the headlines linked back to the *Fuel* story.

Brainstorm the different characters, conventions and tropes of a news broadcast. Be inventive with how you can deliver intro music, jump time and location, deliver written headlines, still images, interview witnesses, and hear multiple perspectives from opinion panels.



## SCRIPT EXCERPTS

---

Read the script excerpts and act them out.

- What are the main differences between Seb and Ivy's dialogue in the two acts? Consider mood, relationship, tension.

### IVY AND SEB 1

#### **IVY**

Hi. My name is Ivy. I'm 16 and I live in Linkfield but I go to Dugdale High. I live at home with my mum. I'm pretty good at school but my real love is netball. I've been playing since I was like 6 years old, I can't remember exactly. I wanna play in the Super Netball League for the Firebirds one day, and the Diamonds of course. My other love is my boyfriend...

*Seb steps forward. Seb and Ivy are not aware of each other, to give a "split screen" effect.*

#### **BOTH**

Seb.

#### **SEB**

That's me! Well, what can I tell ya? Um, I'm 18 and from Dugdale. I finished school last year and I live with my mates Clinton and Turbo. I'm big into cars, always have been. Muscle cars mainly. Aussie muscle cars, American too. Not so much the Japanese stuff. Turbo loves 'em though. We're always talking about cars, working on cars, showing each other our...cars.

#### **IVY**

He's my first real boyfriend. I mean I've gone out with other guys, but they don't really count. We've been together for a couple months now.

#### **SEB**

I've got this amazing girlfriend, Ivy. She's still in school, the boys give me a bit of flack about it, but man, she's smart, kind and beautiful too. Way out of my league really...

BOTH We met at Matho's party.

#### **IVY**

You see Matho's birthday is right after school ends, so it's always a big end of year celebration. Everyone from Dugdale AND Linkfield goes. That's where we first saw each other.

**SEB**

Felt a connection right away. I was mad about her. I couldn't live without her.

**IVY**

He pursued me for a while, kept asking me out until I finally said yes.

**SEB**

We've seen each other every day since.

**BOTH**

We're always together.

**IVY**

..even on school nights. The best nights are Tuesday nights. Everyone meets up at the Bunnings Carpark at Linkfield to hang out.

## IVY AND SEB 2

**IVY**

Over the next few months, Seb and my relationship started to change.

**SEB**

She was spending all her time at Netball and less time with me. I hardly got to see her. It was really starting to get to me. It was hurtful, y'know. I just wanted to spend time with her.

**IVY**

He'd get mad all the time over stupid things. He didn't like my Mum or my friends, he thought they were all against him. He was putting pressure on me to quit netball, reckoned the coach was a creep.

**BOTH**

I felt like I was giving him/her everything...

**IVY**

But it still wasn't enough. I don't know. Maybe there was something wrong with me? Then one afternoon, he picked me up from school.

IVY AND MUM 2

*Ivy's mum is sitting on the couch. Ivy walks through the front door.*

**MUM**

You didn't come home last night.

**IVY**

Yeah, sorry. I stayed at Sebs.

**MUM**

You said you'd come home.

**IVY**

My plans changed, sorry.

**MUM**

You're 16 Ivy, not 26. You can't just do whatever you want. Do you have any idea how worried I was?

**IVY**

He was really upset, I couldn't leave him.

**MUM**

I thought you were going over there to call it off? After he smashed your phone and everything. I don't think he's good for you.

**IVY**

Well, he actually bought me a new one. Anyway, you don't know anything about him.

**MUM**

And maybe that's the way he wants it.

**IVY**

What are you on about?

**MUM**

Don't you think it's a little weird that you've been with this guy for 8 months now and I've only met him a couple of times?

*Ivy gets a message on her phone. She checks it and types back while continuing the conversation with her mum.*

**IVY**

He's just shy.

**MUM**

Yeah, or he's hiding something.

**IVY**

He's not hiding something, Mum. You don't know him like I do. You have no idea what he's been through.

**MUM**

But I have seen the way he treats you and how it's affected you. No matter what's happened to him, it doesn't make it ok, love.

*Ivy's phone pings again and she responds. Mum knows who it is and is visibly frustrated.*

Coach Carberry called me today, said you had quit the team? What about national trials? You've wanted to go to the AIS since you were 12 years old.

**IVY**

It was just getting in the way of our relationship.

**MUM**

But you love netball!

**IVY**

I love him more! He's a good guy. He's just figuring some stuff out. You don't need to worry about me. I can look after myself!

**MUM**

No you can't, darling. In fact, I called your father today.

**IVY**

What?!

**MUM**

I thought maybe he could talk some sense into you.

**IVY**

Why would I listen to him? What the hell does he know about relationships anyway. He lost the right to give me any advice when he moved away. Seb's never hurt me. He loves me!

**MUM**

That's not love darling.

**IVY**

Look, just stay out of my business and stop telling me how to live my life.