

Artist Bios



DANIELLE OKEEFE

Danielle OKeefe has worked in the arts for over 18 years establishing a reputation as one of the country's leading youth arts creators. After finishing her studies in 2003 in London, Danielle returned to Sydney to conduct the Australian Youth Choir (AYC) and held that post until 2012 when she left to take on the roles as Artistic Director of Outback Theatre for Young People. Simultaneous to conducting the AYC, and since returning from OTYP in 2015, Danielle worked with companies such as the Australian Theatre for Young People (ATYP), Sydney Chamber Opera (SCO), The Australian Institute of Performing Arts (AIPA), Brent Street, PACT and St Martins to create exciting works for and with young people. Alongside her work with young people, Danielle has directed productions at the Seymour Centre, The Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Complex and Merrigong Theatre Company. Over the same years Danielle has held MD roles for at Sydney's Mardi Gras and Adelaide Festival and in 2015/16 Danielle was Musical Director for successful

Melbourne Festival and Dark Mofo seasons of Fraught Outfits and St Martins The Bacchae. Since returning to Sydney from her post in the Outback and a stint with Siti in NY, Danielle has focused her practice to allow and encourage opportunities of working with large ensembles of girls and women, now formalising a cross-age female ensemble to work together across a variety of projects through The House That Dan Built. With this ensemble Danielle co-devised and directed The little Mermaid: Not suitable for children and Tender Young Creatures.



HELEN NEWMAN

Helen Newman is an award winning Australian filmmaker whose work over the last 15 years has taken her around the globe gathering stories from the inspiring to the heartbreaking. Trained in classical music she performed and taught piano for several years before completing further tertiary studies to work with survivors of violence and sexual abuse as a crisis counselor and in community development. For the last 15 years Helen has drawn on those eclectic skills in her diverse film work. Helen has travelled to Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, India, Timor-Leste, the Thai-Burma border, Cambodia, America and across

urban and remote Australia producing, filming and subsequently editing, projects that encompass individual and collective stories of conflict, poverty, oppression, celebration and survival. Her work also encompasses a range of performance based arts projects. The nature of her projects has led Helen to work with many varied and inspiring individuals and a wide variety of human rights, community, health and education based organisations in a range of situations; war zones, refugee camps, remote indigenous communities, amid protests and formal interview situations.

Working with a variety of music and theatre groups Helen documents nationally and internationally acclaimed live performances and creates works as part of multi-platform performance-based projects. Helen also collaborates with various community groups as a video artist, graphic designer, filmmaker, editor and facilitator of filmmaking workshops. These projects, developed in conjunction with a wide range of community based organizations, have led to a body of work encompassing education, health, science and the arts.



NATALIE RICHARDS

Natalie completed her professional artistic training at Jacques Lecoq International School of Theatre, Paris 2005. Since then she has worked as a performer, director (ranging from 2 to 60 cast members) and producer over many independent theatre productions, with both youth and adult ensembles. Natalie has been a tutor and facilitator for Kidz on Stage, Sydney Teenage Actors Studio, the Australian Institute of Performing Arts (AIPA) and the Australian Theatre for Young People (ATYP), and is currently running the drama club at Montessori East School. In 2007 Natalie founded her own drama school, which runs out of Bondi Pavilion. Each year, Natalie take three groups of students to the national 10-minute play competition

Sharp Short Theatre at Parramatta Riverside Theatre.

PARAGRAPH OF SUPPORT: I am particularly excited about The Long Table project, not only because as an artist I get to do something very meaningful to me - which is to remind women how empowering it can be just to be together in the same room and talk – but also because I remember what it's like to be a girl growing up in the country, with nothing to do, nothing on, and I remember dreaming about being a part of something special, something different. The Long Table will allow some girls to do just that – be a part of something extraordinary, and to be able to tell the story.



JAYDEN SELVAKUMARASWAMY

Jayden is a student studying a bachelor of music and musical theatre at The Australian Institute of Music. She has grown within the performing arts industry since the age of three, when she started classical ballet training. She has been vocally trained for ten years. Jayden began working with Danielle and Natalie in 2013, answering a call out for young women to work on the mermaid project. Jayden was in the original Toy choir group who sang all over Sydney in 2014. In 2015 Jayden continued her connection with the House and the all female ensembles and created a childrens chorus in her local community to promote children's involvement with storytelling through music in everyday life.

PARAGRAPH OF SUPPORT:

Through my involvement in the The House, I have learnt the power and simplicity of song writing, and the difference it makes to approach and share what we love to do. This year I look forward to growing with the choir in our development of original repertoire and really just spreading joy. The AKIN workshops grant me opportunities to travel across Australia, not only share my passion and knowledge for songwriting with students of diverse backgrounds but to learn the stories and voices of the children we encounter. I am very excited to start the development of The Long Table verbatim creative development, which takes us all on a journey of sharing. I always looked for role models growing up as a young women from different cultures, Danielle makes us think of ourselves as mentors as well as mentored at every given moment. I feel so lucky to be able to learn and then share new skills with such frequency.

Nomad Films

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30 May 2017

To whom it may concern,

It is with much pleasure that I write this letter of support for the proposed creative project, 'The Long Table'

I am an established filmmaker based in regional Australia with 15 years experience working with various community and arts organisations across a broad range of situations. I have documented and subsequently edited projects that encompass individual and collective stories of personal challenges, collective suffering, survival, strength and celebration.

The long table excites me as a project for many reasons; the empowerment of young women as story gathers, the opportunity to capture voices that are becoming rarer, the exploration of changing relationships, changing technology and the impact of both those things on women living in rural NSW.

As a filmmaker and video artist I am excited by the opportunity to collaborate and explore with other artists on this creative, multi-layered, and empowering project.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helen Newman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Helen Newman