



Tanja Beer & Ashlee Hughes (in collaboration with the Lorne community)

Tanja Beer

born Graz, Austria, 1977; arrived Australia
1978; lives and works Melbourne

Ashlee Hughes

born 1988, Australia;
lives and works Melbourne

The living stage (Lorne)

Erskine Paddock garden installation
soil, plants, moss, bio-degradeable
string, reclaimed timber, rope and metal,
assorted found objects
3000 x 10000 x 5000 cm (variable)

Climate & weather / Endangerment & biodiversity / Performance

MAJOR PROJECT

The living stage (Lorne) is a recyclable, biodegradable, edible and biodiverse installation and performance space. Part theatre, part garden and part growing demonstration, the work features a portable plant-lined stage amongst a corridor of suspended botanical sculptures. Created in collaboration with the local community, *The living stage* is a platform for celebrating Lorne's vibrant and eclectic mix of flora and fauna, as well as hosting performances by local artists and musicians. The artwork aims to bring theatre, sustainable design and gardening together to provide a tangible example of how ecological and artistic initiatives can sow the seeds of community vitalisation and environmental stewardship. At the end of the project, all plants and materials will be returned to the community who helped build it. Physical structures will become garden beds and community spaces, plants become food, and waste becomes compost.

Since making its debut at the Castlemaine State Festival in 2013, Tanja Beer's Living Stage concept has travelled to New York (US), Glasgow (UK), Cardiff (UK) and Armidale (NSW, Australia) as well as being featured at the Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space and the V&A Museum in London. *The Living Stage (Lorne)* is the first project situated by the sea. Because each living stage evolves out of a direct response to the localities of site, ecology and community, no project is ever the same. However, ideas of facilitating ecological connection, celebration and contribution are central to the concept.

Tanja Beer is an ecological designer, community artist and Academic Fellow in Performance Design and Sustainability (Ecoscenography) at the Melbourne School of Design (University of Melbourne). She has twenty years' professional experience, including creating numerous designs and public installations in Australia and overseas. Originally trained as a stage designer and theatre maker, her current practice-led research is focused on the potential of temporary event spaces to foster place-making and socio-ecological resilience.

Ashlee Hughes is a graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts Production course, specialising in designing and making sets, props and puppets. She has a keen interest in sustainability and site specific projects that engage with the natural world. Ashlee worked on Armidale's *Living stage (The bower stage)* in 2016, and created puppet installations for *Scenes on the Yarra*, a project that connects people with their local waterways through performance.

Sponsored by the Thrive Research Hub (Melbourne School of Design, The University of Melbourne), the Great Ocean Road Coast Committee, and Graham Blashki & Evelyn Firstenberg. This project has been made possible by the community of Lorne, including: Helen Smith, Anne Nadenbousch, Colin Leitch, Sue Grant and Grace Nicholls. Assistant designer: Pia Guillatt. Set builder: Tim Denshire-Key. Plants donated by Batesford Nursery, Bushland Flora, Flinders Nursery, Tavistock Nursery, Tree Growers Advanced (TGA), Warners Nurseries, Rhodo Glen Nurseries.