

Melinda Hetzel & Co. / Niow's

Conservatory - Relaxed guide

Date: Saturday 21st November 2020

Performance sessions (AEST):

3:00pm - 5:30pm (150 minutes)

6:00pm - 8:30pm (150 minutes)

9:00pm - 10:30pm (120 minutes).

Venue:

Historic Conservatory, Central Park, Malvern
148 Burke Rd, Malvern East, Vic
Australia

Live-stream:

<https://melbournefringe.com.au/event/conservatory/>

Attending:

This is a free, live, one-off event. Attend the live stream via Fringe website or in person. This durational experience unfolds progressively over the course of the evening, across *all three* performance sessions. Drop by, or tune in, any time throughout these sessions.

Contact:

Melinda Hetzel & Co: www.melindahetzel.com/conservatory

Niow: <https://www.niow.com.au/conservatory>

For technical issues on the day please email: theconservatory2020@gmail.com

The City of Stonnington proudly supports *Conservatory*.



Contents

- What is a relaxed performance?.....3
- What does it mean for this performance to be relaxed?.....3
- Attending.....3
- Attending - in person
 - online.....4
- The Site - address
 - venue
 - map.....4
- Photos of the venue.....5
- Venue - tram stop, parking, toilets
 - how to get there.....6
- Suggested Routes - parking to the venue
 - suggested travel route (PTV).....7
 - Burke Rd/ Wattletree Rd tramstop to the venue.....8
- What to Bring.....8
- Covid management plan.....9
- The Set.....9
- The Lighting.....10
- The People.....11
- Audience Permissions.....12
- The Content.....14
- After the Show & Feedback.....31

What is a relaxed performance?

A relaxed performance is a performance that has been adapted in particular ways which make it more accessible for a range of potential audience members, including autistic audiences, as well as audience members with sensory or communication conditions or learning disabilities.

See more at: www.a-tistic.com.au/relaxed-performances

What does it mean for this performance to be relaxed?

This performance takes place looking through the windows of a greenhouse in a public park. We have created this guide because we would like to make our performance more relaxed, working within the resources available to us. We are unable to offer a dedicated 'chill out space' on site, however the performance will be simultaneously live streamed and can be experienced from the comfort of your own home.

We want to create a more inclusive experience because we always seek to welcome new people to share in the stories we tell. We don't believe that certain people's opinions or ways of experiencing the world are more important than others. We believe that inclusive practice is key to better art-making and finding new form, which is at the centre of our practice. In developing this relaxed guide alongside the performance, we have been thinking a lot about how much more enjoyable 'suspense', where you know that a thing is coming, can be than 'surprise', where you don't know that it's coming. We are learning more all the time.

This performance has been relaxed in consultation with A-tistic Theatre, with particular thanks to Tom.

Attending:

This is a free, live, one-off event. There will be no recording made available following the live event. This durational experience unfolds progressively over the course of the evening, across all three performance sessions.

Performance sessions (AEST):

3:00pm - 5:30pm (150 minutes)

6:00pm - 8:30pm (150 minutes)

9:00pm - 10:30pm (120 minutes).

Drop by, or tune in, any time throughout these sessions.

Attending in person:

Attend in person at the Historic Conservatory. You will be able to stand and view the live performance through the windows of the greenhouse - social distancing restrictions may result in 10 minute time limit on your experience.

Attending online:

You will need an internet connection to attend the live stream. You can do this from any computer or device. Click the 'Enter Digital Event button' at <https://melbournefringe.com.au/event/conservatory/> from 30 minutes before the scheduled start time up until the end of the performance at 10:30pm Sat 21 Nov 2020. You won't be able to book, but you will need to create or login into your Melbourne Fringe account at <https://melbournefringe.com.au/login/> It is probably easiest to create your account in advance.

After logging into your Fringe account you will be able to click the 'Enter Digital Event button' on the Fringe event site. This will take you to the 'Digital Foyer'. The live stream will commence automatically from here. During the performance you can also participate in a live chat in the 'Digital Foyer'. You may choose to have this open in a separate window to be able to chat and watch the live stream at the same time.

The Site -



Address:

Historic Conservatory, Central Park, Malvern
148 Burke Rd, Malvern East, Vic

Venue:

The venue is an historical conservatory located in the centre of Central Park. The performance will take place inside the conservatory. Audience members will stand outside, looking in.

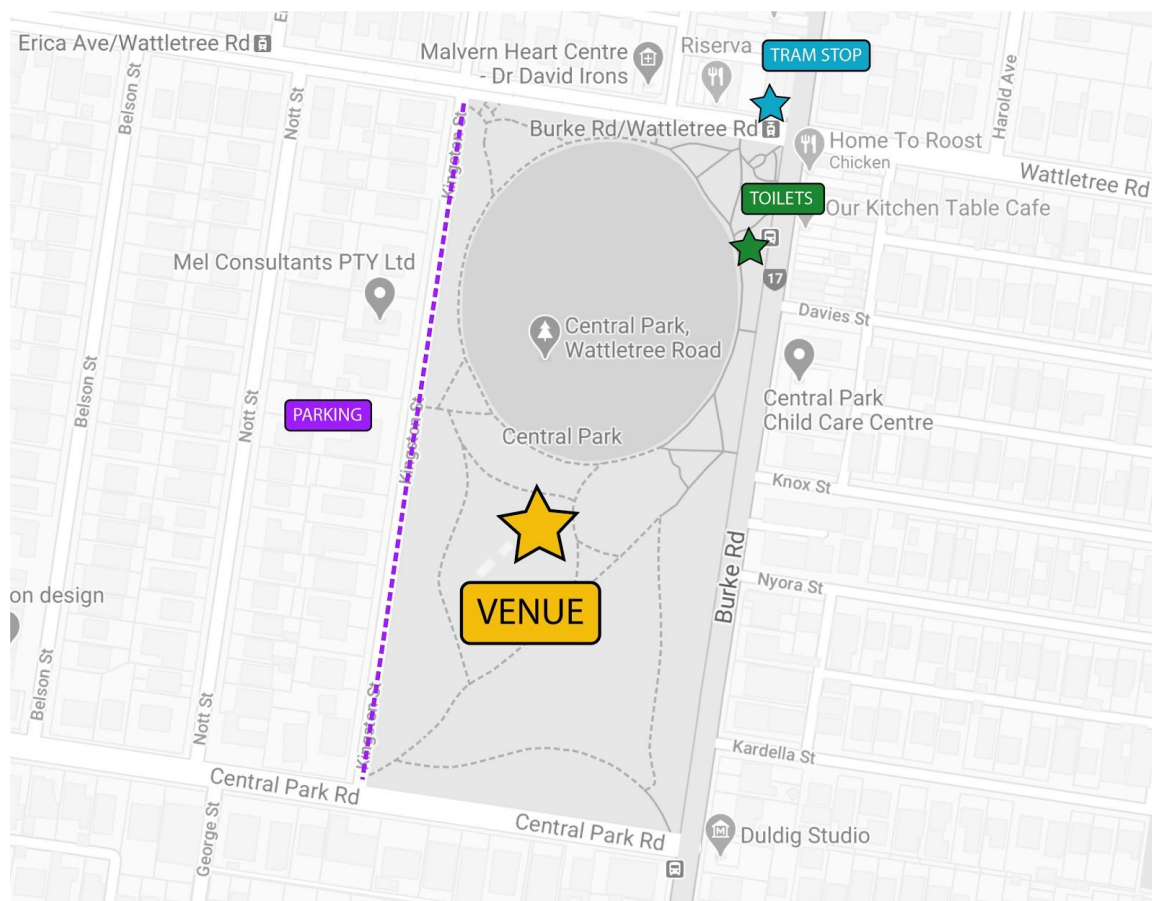
Map:

<https://goo.gl/maps/YsuvvpMx4m9xsPzC9>

Photos of the venue



Map - tram stop, parking, toilets



How to get there:

By car to either Burke Road or Kingston Street, Malvern East.

- **Parking** Best parking is on Kingston Street – untimed and unsigned. Reserved accessible parking is located at the Kingston St entrance (opposite 13 Kingston St, East Malvern).

Train The nearest station is 1.5km away - Darling Station (Glen Waverley line)

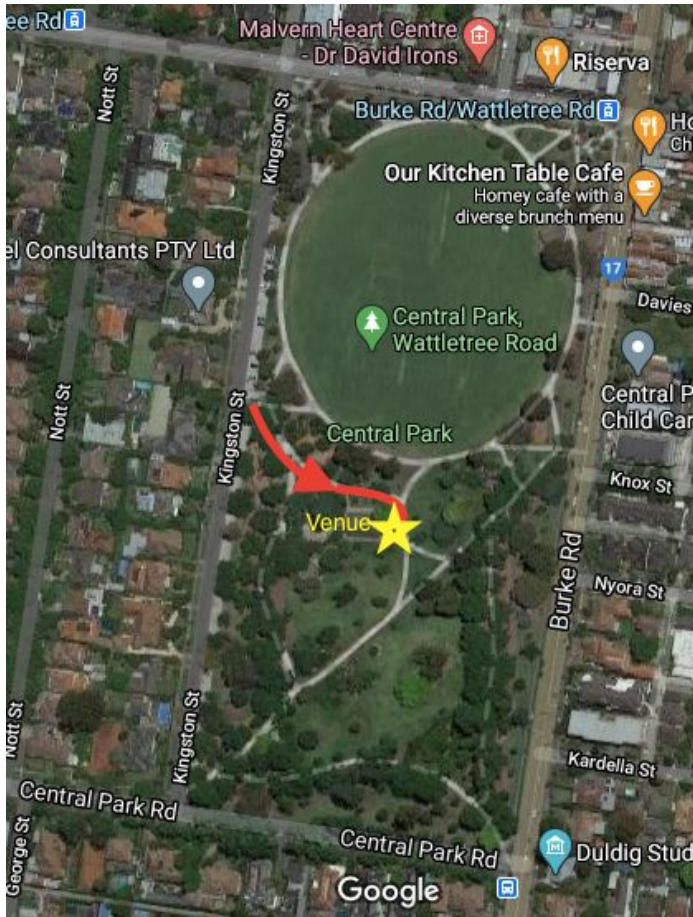
Bus Number 624 stops at Central Park/ Burke Rd.

Tram Number 5 tram stops on Wattletree road (at intersection of Burke road – approx. 250m walk around to oval to the venue)

Bike Bike friendly – lots of places to chain up a bike

Walking Walking friendly - entrances from all sides of the park, gravel pathways within the park.

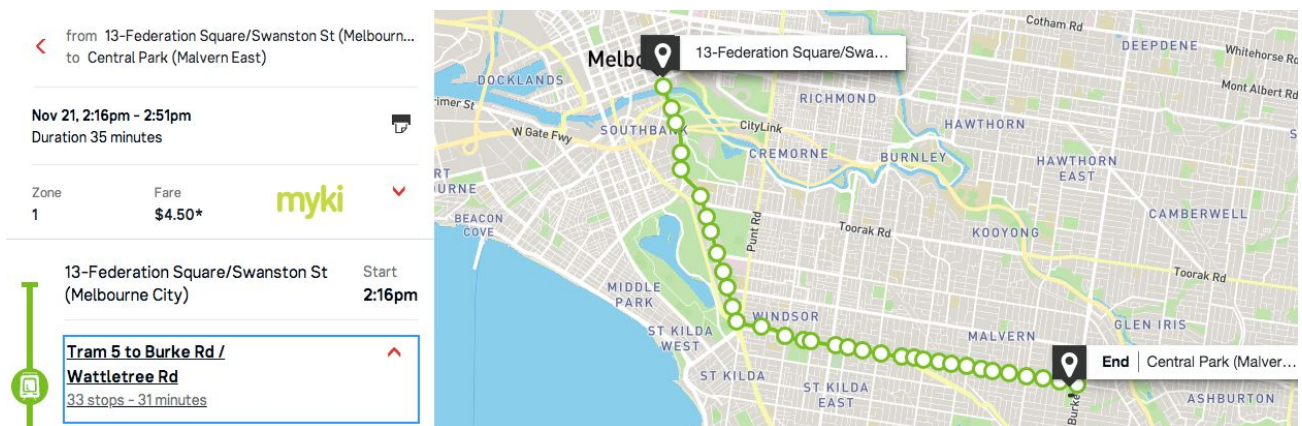
Suggested Routes:



Getting from Kingston St parking to the venue: The approach to the performance site is by gravel pathway through the park, approximately 100m from the Kingston St gate (near parking) to the venue.

Suggested travel route (PTV):

Tram number 5 from Federation Square to Burke Rd/ Wattletree Rd (final stop)
Duration: 35 minutes.



Walking from the Burke Rd/ Wattletree Rd tramstop to the venue - follow the path around the oval approx 250m from the tramstop to the venue along gravel pathway:



What you can bring:

Clothing – the audience will be standing outside the conservatory. Please dress for the weather

- o Food/ drink (there are several food/ coffee outlets on Burke Rd opposite the park)
 - o Sun hat, sunscreen
 - o Rain jacket / umbrella
 - o Headphones
 - o Mobile Phones
 - Feel free to photograph the performance
 - Watch live stream simultaneously on your device
 - o Comfort items eg. soft toys, ipad etc.
 - o Torches – we are not providing torches, please bring your own torch if needed.
- Sunset is at 8:16pm and there is some lighting on main pathways within the park.

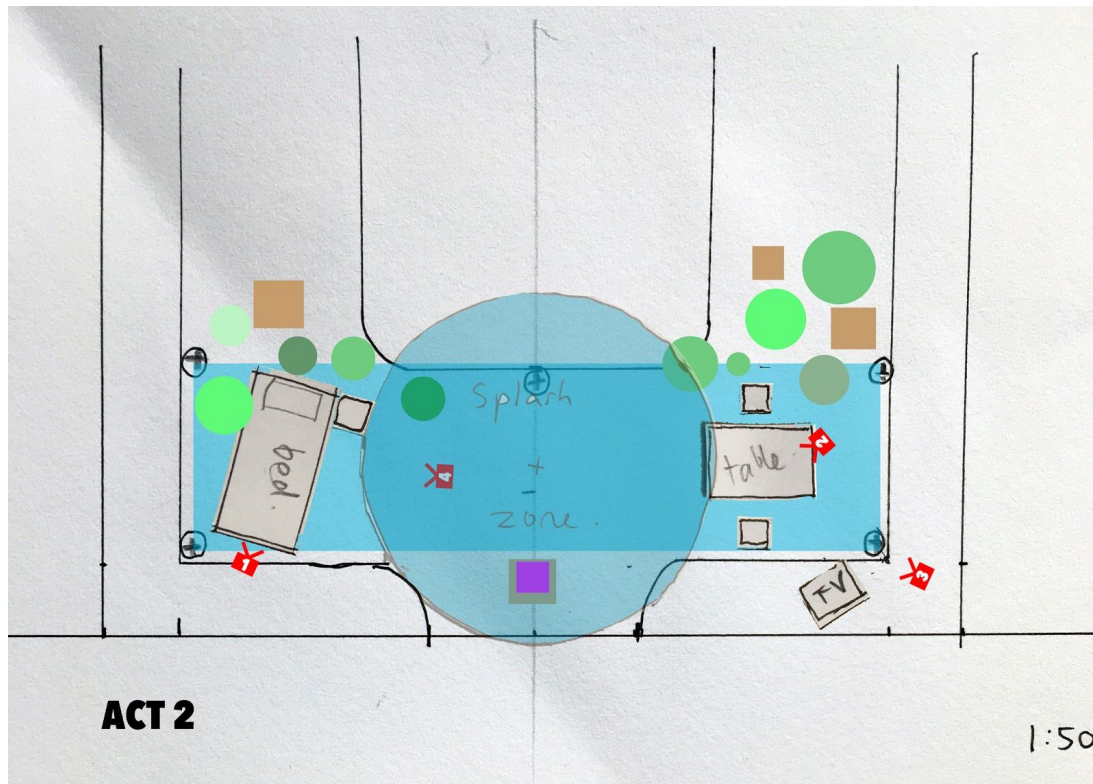
Covid Management Plan:

Audience members will need to complete Contact Tracing check-in, there will be a QR code which you can scan with your device to bring up the digital form. You will need to wear a mask and stay 1.5m apart, in line with current Covid restrictions. The windows will be wiped down in between sessions.

There will be a cordoned off section in front of the conservatory. A limited number of audience members will be allowed in at any one time to ensure physical distancing. You may need to queue up and wait. If it is busy you may be asked to move on after 10 minutes so that someone else can watch. You are welcome to line up again. You may like to watch the live stream from your phone while you line up or go and picnic for a bit and come back at a less busy time.

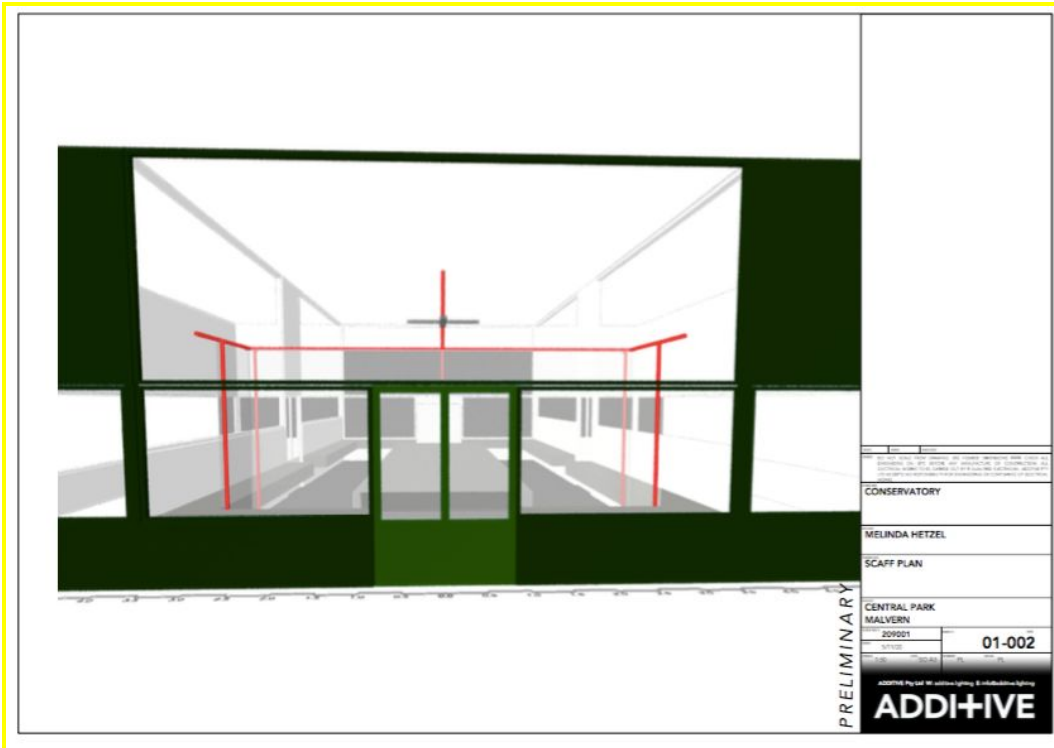
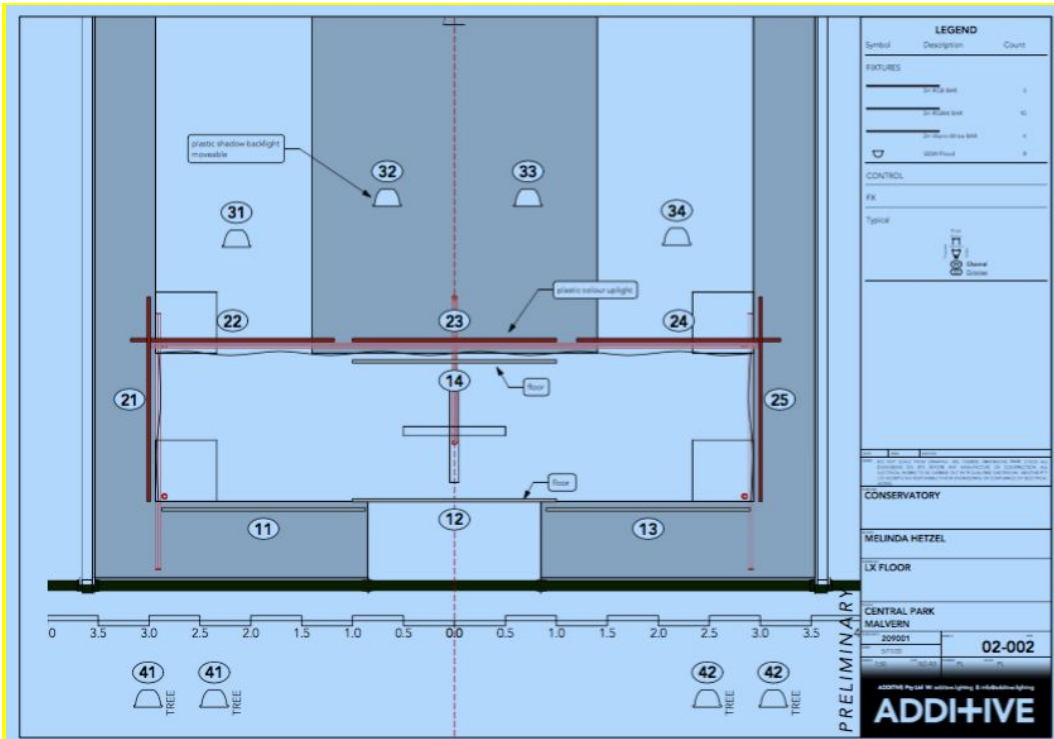
The Set

The set changes throughout the performance. It starts with semi-opaque plastic curtains as 'walls' at the back and sides of the performance space. There are several cardboard boxes containing props, multiple potted plants and a bed, a table, a TV, two side tables and two small chairs. These are rearranged throughout the performance. There is also a special wading pool underneath the furniture for when it 'rains' in the space and the pool fills up with water 'flooding' the performance area.



The Lighting:

The lighting will also change throughout the performance and be largely improvised to accommodate changing light in the conservatory by the designer, Paul Lim, who will also be operating the lights.



The People -



Front of house – Emily O'Brien

Emily O'Brien will be greeting audience outside the conservatory. She will be the main person to speak to if you have any questions. She is also the production manager and safety officer on the project. Emily will be wearing her face mask and black clothes and will stand at the entrance to the performance space.

Security – there will be two guards on site. One will stand near the conservatory and one near the Kingston St gate. They will be wearing hi-vis and will be helping people remember to social distance.

Council Safety Officer – the council will provide an additional safety officer to help manage Covid safe requirements.

The creatives (visible) -

There will be a single live performer visible the whole time.

Live Performer : Niow



This role is played by Niow (*Cirque du Soleil, Polyglot*). The performer will perform the whole piece by themselves. They will be visible throughout almost the entire performance. There may be some short moments where they disappear from view, for example hiding under the bed, but they will reappear before too long.

The performer will start the performance dressed as a person-in-a-cat-suit and will change costume several times including into: nurse dress-ups, a giant pink bunny suit, pink frilly party clothes, tulle 'cloud' costume, white playsuit, plastic party clothes, cellophane and sticky tape, metallic blue leotard, plastic plant costume with leaf-wings and a fish-bowl-helmet on their head. It will often not be clear whether they are dressed as 'animal' or 'human', 'male' or 'female', 'old' or 'young', these are deliberate choices by the creative team.

The Creatives (invisible):

There will be some creatives who are 'back stage'. You may see them at some times, but you do not need to look at them. They are doing the music, lights and stage management. They will be wearing face masks and black clothes. These 'invisible' creatives include:

Live Sound Artist : Sharyn Brand

Lighting Designer/ Livestream support: Paul Lim

Stage Manager: James Lipari

Director: Melinda Hetzel

Audience permissions -

In person (audience permissions):

If you are attending in person you will stand outside the conservatory and look in through the windows at the performance. The performer will know that you are there but will not interact with you unless you are there at the very end of the performance, where the performer will exit the conservatory.

- o What you can do:
 - You can come and go as you please!
 - You can make noise!
 - If you need to make comforting noises, those are permitted
 - You can eat food!
 - The drinking restrictions are that of the park
 - Standing only, within COVID requirements
 - Be nice to people

- o And what you can't do:
 - You may not enter the conservatory / the set
 - No interacting with the performer
 - You may not push ahead of other people in the queue
 - If someone is making noise, you don't need to tell them to stop.
 - Be not nice to people (the performer, staff, other audience members)
 - Breach Covid restrictions

Live Stream (audience permissions):

If you are attending the live stream you will stream it via the Fringe website on your own device with an internet connection (see attending sections for details). The live stream will show all four camera angles simultaneously in a screen 'split' into four quarters like this:



The performer will move and adjust the cameras themselves as part of the performance. Sometimes you will not be able to see anything from one or more of the cameras, but this is ok and will probably change again before too long.

- o What you can do:
 - Choose to start or stop watching whenever you want
 - Watch with sound on or off, alone or with friends, wherever you happen to be
 - Watch whichever of the four camera angles is most interesting to you at any one time
 - Attend in person and watch the live stream on your own device at the same time!
 - Screen grab is fine!
 - Share on Social media #conservatory2020 #melbfringe :)
 - Comment in the Fringe chat in the 'digital foyer'

The Content -

The Form:

This is an image-based piece, there will be no words spoken. There may be some words in the music used in the soundtrack, but these won't be important to the meaning of the piece.

This is a durational piece. The idea of durational pieces is to make it possible for the audience to choose when and how long they want to access the performance. You are not required to attend the full performance to have a valid experience, both short and long experiences of the work are awesome! In this way you can choose your own start and end time and create your own narratives from the bit of the work that you experience yourself.

We chose to make this piece a durational performance also to capture the slowing down of life experienced by many people during lockdown in 2020 and to create space to appreciate the little moments in this one character's life. **Content discussion -**

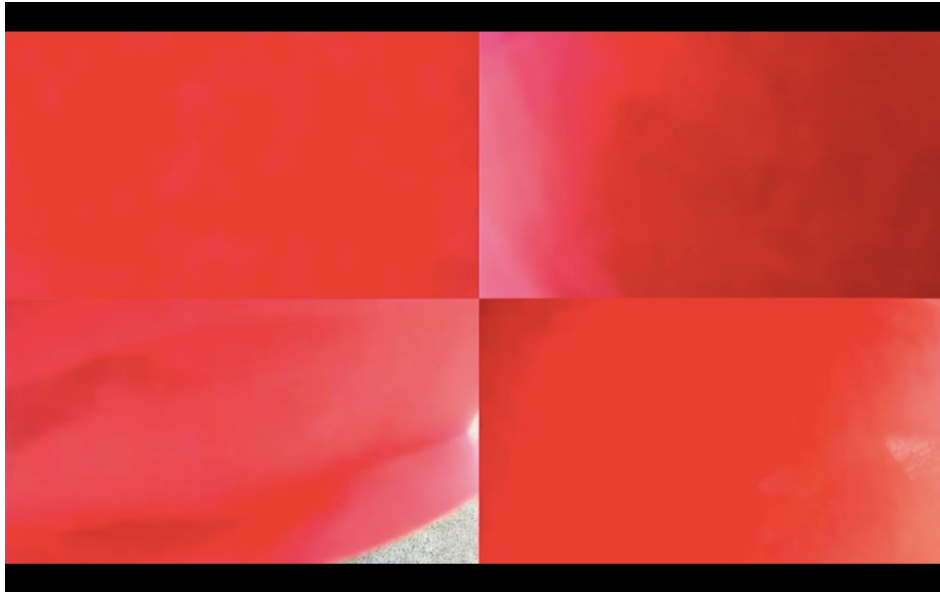
How this performance will work:

This is a semi-improvised, durational, performance installation. This means that there are items and activities that will happen, over a set amount of time. Some of these are known and some of these are 'made up' by the performer during the performance itself.

Below is a summarised running list of some of the events in the performance. We have chosen the key events, which we feel are important for the audience to be aware of in advance. This list represents all significant events that will take place.

Session 1 - birth - play - creativity - discovery - boredom - routine

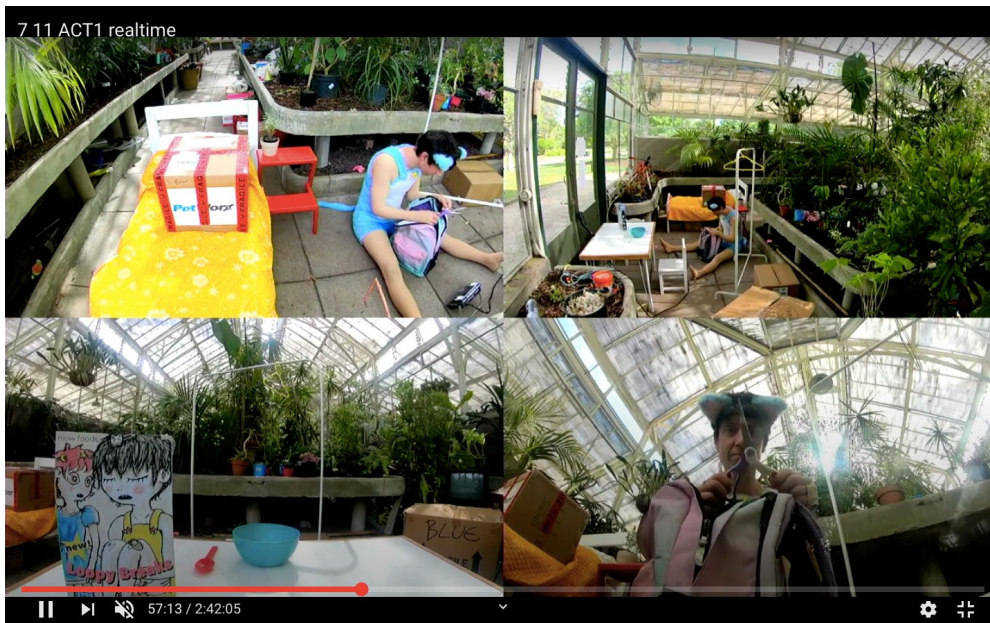
When the performance begins the cameras will be covered by pink paper and the performer will be hidden behind a wall of props, furniture and cardboard boxes. It may take a few minutes before you can see them.



There will be a sound effect of a digital alarm clock ringing. It will keep ringing until the character finds the alarm clock in a box and stops it ringing. This will happen more than once. It will not be too loud. This helps the character remember that it is time to do the next thing.



The character will unpack a backpack containing: scissors, matches, tape, bandaids, hairbrush.



The character will unpack a fish bowl with a toy fish in it. It is a robot fish. It will stop swimming sometimes and will float in the fishbowl without moving until the performer takes it out and resets it. Then it will swim again.



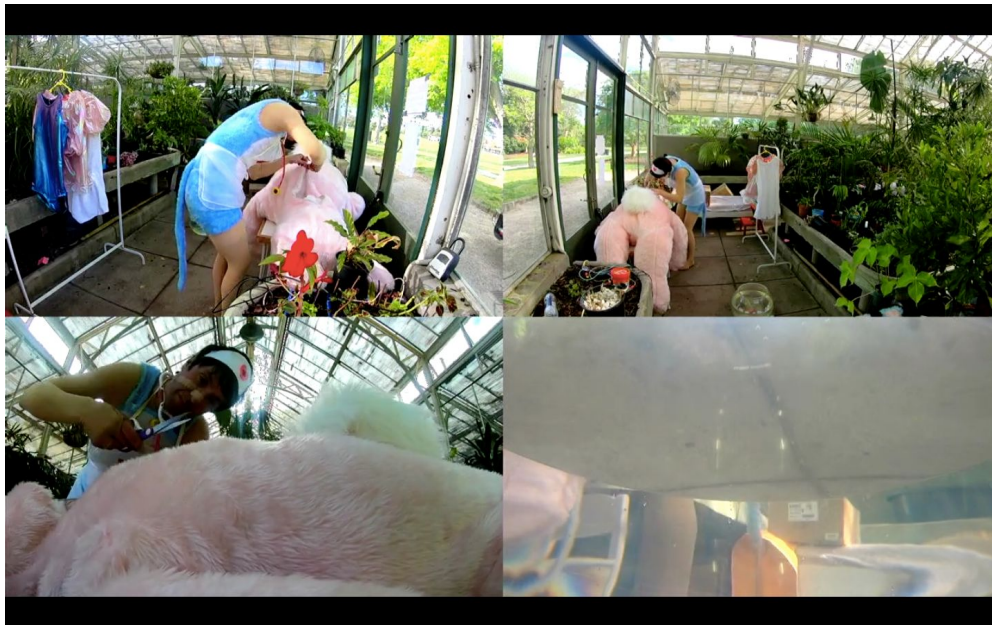
The character will pretend to prick their finger on a spiky plant and put a bandaid on it as if it is sore.



The character decides that the bunny needs an operation. They lay the bunny on the table, take scissors out of their backpack and wash their hands in the fish bowl in preparation. They pretend to listen to the bunny's heartbeat with a toy stethoscope.



The character pretends to cut open the stuffed bunny with scissors. The bunny will have a zip that the performer opens as they mime cutting near the bunny with scissors.



The character opens the zip in the bunny and pulls out the stuffing from inside.



The character moves lumps of stuffing through the air, creating shapes. They then hang lumps of the stuffing up as clouds.



The character pulls more stuffing out of the bunny and gets inside the stuffed bunny suit.



The character will start to pull the plastic 'walls' down and there will be the sounds of forest from behind the curtain. They get a little bit scared. Watch TV. Then pretend to fall asleep, cuddling their pillow.



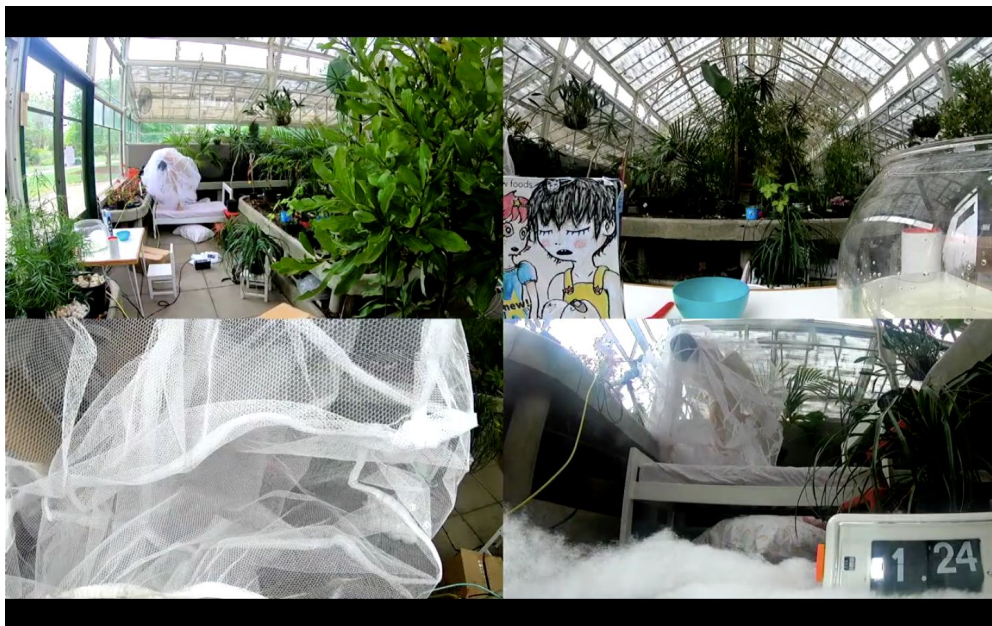
The performer will then get up and leave the space to have a break and get ready for the next session.

Session 2 - uncertainty - survival - food - shelter - the new normal

When the scene starts we see that the set has changed. The plants have crept in closer. The walls are peeling away. The world is more chaotic/ messy. The character is asleep on the bed, still wearing the pink bunny suit. We watch them sleep for what seems like a long time. They kick off the bunny suit and underneath they are wrapped in white tulle.



This unravels and they do a dance inside the 'cloud' (tulle sack), as if sleepwalking. It might look like they are stuck inside the 'cloud', but they will be ok.



The character in the 'cloud' disappears under bed. They will reappear before too long.



Alarm clock rings again and keeps ringing until the character finds it and turns it off. It is not too loud. The character stands up suddenly and gets caught in the bed slats. The untangle from the bed and undress from the cloud. They are wearing a white playsuit underneath.



The character gets hungry. The food has run out. They contemplate eating the fish, but decide not to.



The character makes a little person out of packing pellets. It falls into the fish bowl. Oh no! They scoop the pellet-person out but it is all soggy. The door bell rings. They tuck the pellet-person into a pot plant. We do not see the pellet-person again.



The character changes into pink party clothes and a party hat. They use matches to light birthday candles and sparklers.



Get cake all over party clothes. Take off party clothes and hang them up. They wear the white play suit and dance with fairy floss, which appears to come magically out of the present box.



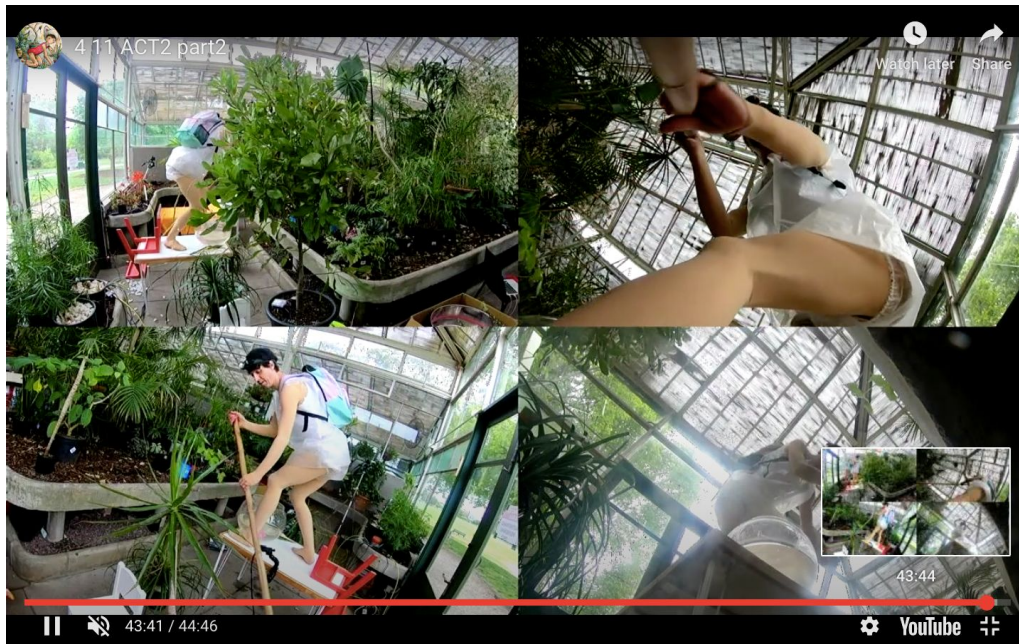
It starts to rain. The character gets cold and wet. Sad, they sink down into the water. The water level in the pool will slowly rise. The performer will lie in the pool for quite some time, but they will be fine.



After they sit up and 'wake up' the toy fish, there will be a sudden sound and change in lighting. Bright lights will come from behind the plastic curtains. This helps us to know that the character has had a sudden realisation. (nb. The plastic walls and lighting are not yet installed in these photographs.)



The character changes into a set of party clothes made from the same plastic as the 'walls'. They make a 'raft' out of the furniture and some plants. They pretend 'set sail' and mime rowing into the forest.



At the end of the session the live stream will pause. The performer will stand up and exit 'back stage' to take a break and get ready for the next session.

Session 3 - trapped - tension - escape - a journey - a transformation

The cameras and plants are much closer. The set has changed and the backdrop walls have all come down. There are forest night noises, it may feel a little bit scary. The pool is full of water, the space appears flooded. (nb. The pool and water are not yet installed in these photos.)

The character is under the plastic 'tent' on top of the table. We can only see parts of them through the plastic and the camera angles. It may feel like a long time before they come out of the tent and we can see them properly.



There is the sound of a wind storm. The character shakes the tent. It will appear windy, like the tent may blow down. The windstorm soon passes.



The character does a dance. They furniture to make a tower and do a balance on top of the tower. It may look like they might fall, they will be ok.



The character lights a series of matches and lets them go out.



The character wraps themselves in layers of sticky tape, entrapping themselves. It may look like they are stuck, but they will be fine.



The alarm clock rings for the final time, but the sounds soon stops as if the batteries have run out. The character finds and uses the scissors to cut their way out of the layers of compostable sticky tape and cellophane.



The character stands on the table in their new costume, a kind of tutu made of cellophane and stick tape. It is as if they have emerged transformed.



The character decides to 'free' the robot fish. They tip the fish into the pool. The character then makes a new costume out of leaves and prepares to leave the conservatory. [Photo unavailable.]

The character uses the last match to light some sparklers. They put the empty fishbowl on their head like a space helmet and exit the conservatory. (The fish bowl acts as a faceshield and Front of House staff will ensure that the audience keeps a healthy distance from the performer.) The character appears to walk off into the trees and the unknown. The audience watch as the character disappears into the darkness. They will be fine.

[Photo unavailable.]

THE END.

After the show:

- You may leave the performance or live stream at any time. If attending in person the Front of House staff may move you on after ten minutes if there are many people waiting to see the performance. You are welcome to queue up again if you wish.
- The performance officially finishes at 10:30pm. Following this the creative team will pack down all the equipment and pack up for the night.

Feedback:

We have striven to provide as much support as we can with the resources we have available, and we are always keen to hear back about your experience with this work.

- Was this guide made available early enough for your needs?
- What was good about this guide?
- What could have been better?
- What could we have done that might have made your experience of the work even better?

Please email your feedback to: theconservatory2020@gmail.com

We would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and True Custodians of the land where Conservatory has been created, the people of the Kulin Nation and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.