

RED STITCH ACTORS' THEATRE PRESENTS

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND

MONUMENT

BY EMILY SHEEHAN

20 February - 10 March 2024



CAST

Sarah Sutherland Edith
Julia Hanna Rosie

CREATIVES

Ella Caldwell Director
Sophie Woodward Set & Costume Design
Amelia Lever-Davidson Lighting Design
Danni Esposito Composition & Sound Design
Ibrahim Halaçoğlu Assistant Director
Harriet O'Donnell Makeup Advisor
Blake Barnard Director Intern

PRODUCTION

Charlie D. Production Manager
Finn McLeish Stage Manager

THANKS

Lucy Ansell, Bridget Balodis, Jacob Battista, Clearlight Show, Sam Diamond, Tahlee Fereday, Hahnie Goldfinch, Andrew Gray, Tom Healey, Spencer Herd, Jennifer Medway, Melbourne Theatre Company, Cybec Electric, Olga Makeeva, Joanna Murray-Smith, Maddie Nunn, Rising, Laura Tingle, Keziah Warner & Jamaica

This play was developed through Red Stitch's INK program.



PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

Monument is a play about a world leader and her makeup artist and that uniquely intimate relationship. Before I'd written a word of dialogue, I had a very clear stage image in mind of an extraordinary woman having her makeup done. And I knew I wanted audiences to watch this in real time over ninety minutes.

We so often correlate beauty with competence. So to participate in beauty culture is non-negotiable if you're in the public eye. Conversely, hyper-feminine spaces are often seen as unserious, and so with this play I wanted to use the intimacy of the makeup chair as a space capable of anchoring a global, political narrative.

I'm excited to bring Red Stitch audiences this Trojan horse of a play. A play that's easy on the eyes, at first, because the packaging matters. A play that is on the surface is about makeup, image and persona. But as the plays go along, we explore the blurring line between the role of a politician and the influence of a celebrity. What are the ethical dilemmas present in this fusion?

As I began writing and researching, inspiration revealed itself as I leaned into this phenomenon. While listening to Hillary Clinton's autobiography I hear her say that during the 2016 presidential campaign she spent 600 hours getting hair and makeup done. The equivalent of 25 days. And that's just during the campaign.

A statue of Princess Diana is unveiled to mark what would have been her 60th birthday. Twitter is ablaze with critics slamming the statue's outfit as ugly and outdated. This is a statue they're talking about.

At a Christmas party, a woman tells me she trains hairdressers to respond to disclosures of family violence. In fact, a large number of programs have emerged in Australia like this one, as research has consistently found that hair salons are unique spaces of what they call 'touch and talk'.

As New Zealand prepares for lockdown, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern goes live on Facebook from her bedroom, wearing a well-worn sweatshirt and no-makeup makeup. A defining moment, to be sure. But why?

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez makes history as the youngest woman elected to US Congress. A fan on Twitter asks what lipstick she was wearing during the debate. She tweets back. It's Stila Stay All Day Liquid in Beso. It sells out at Sephora the same week.

This play is curious about why people say, 'I don't really follow the news', or 'I don't think that much about what I wear, or 'I don't find politics very interesting'. If you've ever divulged a dark secret or the latest family drama to your hairdresser, then you will understand what this play is getting at.

Thank you to the artistic team Ella Caldwell, Sarah Sutherland, Julia Hanna, Sophie Woodward, Amelia Lever-Davidson, Danni Esposito, Ibrahim Halacoglu and Harriet O'Donnell.

Your vision for this play has broadened the horizons of what was possible. Thank you also to Joanna Murray Smith, Laura Tingle, Bridget Balodis, Tahlee Fereday, Tom Healey and the Red Stitch ensemble for their advice and input in the dramaturgical wrangling of this play. I hope audiences feel empowered to take the play as seriously as they might take selecting the perfect shade of lipstick. That it is frivolous, of course, and hopefully fun, but at the same time worthy of serious discussion and capable of withstanding meaningful critique. Whether you prefer to express yourself through words, or aesthetics, or art and metaphor, it's between these two poles (frivolity and seriousness) that many meaningful insights in life and in art might be uncovered.

Emily Sheehan



A CASE FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

BY **SAMUEL D. HUNTER**

DIRECTED BY GARY ABRAHAMS

13 APRIL - 12 MAY 2024

Red Stitch would like to thank the following supporters who generously contribute to our INK program.



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