

RED  
STITCH

THE  
ACTORS'  
THEATRE

EDUCATION PACK



GRACE

by Katy Warner

1 FEB - 27 FEB 2022

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# WELCOME



Welcome to Red Stitch Actors' Theatre,  
Australia's leading actors' ensemble.

We at Red Stitch acknowledge and pay our respects to Australia's First Peoples and Elders past and present, and offer our gratitude to the Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation, on whose unceded lands we work.



Cover photo by Robert Blackburn,  
Black Photography

RED  
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THEATRE

## CONNECT WITH US



Red Stich Actors' Theatre



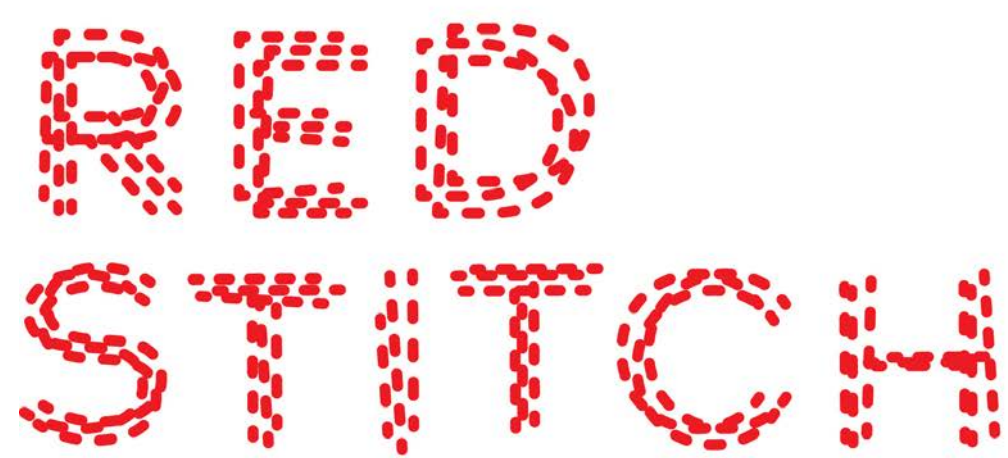
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Red Stitch Actors' Theatre by night



**Australia's leading actors' ensemble.**

## ABOUT

Established in 2001, Red Stitch is a creative hub, offering scope for artists to make work they are passionate about in a sector where such opportunities are limited. We provide a platform where leading practitioners can hone their craft and take risks, and emerging artists can work alongside mid-career and seasoned professionals. We play a vital role in the development and presentation of new Australian works through our INK playwriting program, promoting local voices alongside acclaimed contemporary international work which may not be otherwise seen by local audiences.

## VISION

We create bold, ambitious theatre at the forefront of contemporary writing. We nurture artists and apply rigour to everything we do.

## MISSION

We are an actor-led ensemble, enriching our community by empowering artists as cultural leaders. We inspire audiences with compelling contemporary theatre that engages with the complexities of humanity and reveals us to ourselves. Our organisational model nurtures artistic vibrancy and growth.

# CAST, CREATIVES AND PRODUCTION



**Sarah Goodes**

Director &  
Production  
Dramaturg



**Kate Cole**

Emma



**Jillian Murray**

Beth



**Mia Tuco**

Grace



**Ella Caldwell**

Dramaturg &  
Assistant  
Director



**Harrie Hogan**

Lighting  
Designer



**Sophie  
Woodward**

Set and  
Costume  
Designer



**Jacob Battista**

Set and  
Costume  
Designer



**Grace Ferguson**

Sound Designer



**Natasha Marich**

Stage Manager



**Holly Anderson**

Assistant Stage  
Manager



**Paul Jackson**

Lighting Mentor

# ATTENDANCE INFORMATION

This production contains strong language and mature themes including; estrangement, adoption, abortion and loss. Teachers are advised to read the script and consult with school leadership regarding potential impacts of studying this work on individual students in their class.

## SEASON

PREVIEWS

1st - 4th FEB

SEASON

5TH FEB - 27TH FEB

## SCHOOL BOOKINGS

Ticket reservations are processed during Box Office hours: Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm

All ticket reservations must be finalised 7 days prior to the booked performance.

## TIMES

Season Wed - Sat at 8pm

| Sun 6.30pm | Wed

Matinee at 1pm 16 Feb |

Sat Matinee at 2pm

19 Feb

## ENQUIRIES

Phone:  
03 9533 8083

Email:  
[boxoffice@redstitch.net](mailto:boxoffice@redstitch.net)

## DURATION

APPROX  
1 hour and 45 mins

## ACCESS

Red Stitch partners with Auslan Stage Left to offer an Auslan interpreted performance of Grace on Thursday 17th February. Interpreters will stand to the left side of the stage as you are facing the stage.



# ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

## KATY WARNER

Katy is a playwright and writer, living and working in Naarm (Melbourne). She studied at the Victorian College of the Arts, receiving a Master of Writing for Performance in 2012. Her plays have been presented across Australia, New Zealand and the UK. She is an AWGIE winner (Best Children's Theatre for Reasons to Stay Inside), recipient of the Melbourne Fringe Award for Best Emerging Writer (These are the isolate) and two-time nominee for a Green Room award for new writing (A Prudent Man and Spencer). Her play, nest, was long-listed for Theatre503 Playwriting

Awards (UK) and premiered at London's 2018 Vault Festival (Small Truth Theatre). Her plays have enjoyed national tours with Lab Kelpie and ArTour. Katy is a writer with the Red Stitch Actors' Theatre as part of their INK Program through which she wrote the play Grace. She was a participant in the Besen Family Artist Program (Writers) at Malthouse Theatre and Melbourne Theatre Company's Women in Theatre Program. In 2018, she presented a new work, K, as part of the MTC Cybec Electric Readings season. Her fiction has received the Rachel Furnai Prize for Literature (Lip Magazine) and Overland Magazine's Neilma Sidney Short Story Prize. Her writing has been shortlisted for awards including the Lord Mayor's Creative Writing Prize and Grace Marion Wilson Emerging Writers Prize, and has been featured in Best Summer Stories (Black Inc.), The Slow Canoe and Overland. Katy's debut novel, Everywhere Everything Everyone, was published in 2019 by Hardie Grant and was shortlisted for the Readings Young Adult Book of the Year Award. She is currently working on her second YA novel, Triple Threat, to be published by Hardie Grant in 2022. Katy is a proud member of the Australian Writers' Guild.



## What impact has Red Stitch's INK program had on Grace?

The INK program has had a huge impact on Grace. I was accepted into the program with an entirely different play. That one was about three sisters, gathering at the family home and sorting out their mother's funeral. I remember having a really great discussion with Ella about that play and it was on the back of that I was accepted into the INK program. But Ella knew, before I did, that there was something I was holding back from in that original piece. And she gave me the permission I think I needed to explore it.

That's what I loved about being a part of INK. The time and space it allows for deep thinking, exploration and experimentation with the work. There was no deadline. When the play was ready, it was ready. So, this one has been in the works for a number of years now. I don't usually take so long on my plays so I had to get used to this change in pace, and give myself permission to slow down and let ideas marinate for a while.

I was also incredibly lucky to work with some amazing, talented, generous actors in the workshop room. Their voices, discussions, questions and stories have absolutely impacted the work. As has the guidance, prompting and feedback from Ella and director Sarah Goodes. Wow. I think Sarah has pushed me further than I would have been able to go myself with this piece. The chance to work with people who are just so good at what they do, the chance learn and develop with them and, in the long-term, create a better play from it is a dream come true. It is also a hell of a lot of work, and late nights, and crying over those lines you were desperately in love with but know, deep down, really should be cut!

## What are you binge-watching or reading right now?

I have been watching too much TV at the moment because, well, we all know why ... I am about to embark upon the final season of the wonderful Search Party and have recently finished Issa Rae's Insecure (and cried my eyes out in the season finale), and will be jumping back into Total Control (ABC) and can't wait to get started on Nakkiah Lui's Preppers (I love her writing).

Reading-wise, I have been reading a lot of contemporary Japanese literature - Breasts and Eggs by Mieko Kawakami and No Such Thing as an Easy Job by Kikuko Tsumura. I also have a decent TBR pile with some wonderful Australian authors in there – One Hundred Days by Alice Pung is on the top of that pile, followed by Emily Bitto's latest novel, Wild Abandon.

## What inspired Grace?

I had (and still have) big questions about motherhood. I didn't know if it was right for me. But I also knew that it was something I'd never get to try and see. You don't get a practice run and then decide, nope, don't want to do this after all. And, for a whole variety of reasons (age, health, financial situation) you also can't do the reverse. Not do it and then decide, hold up, I'd like to have a child now. Because sometimes it is too late. (And I am aware this is in and of itself a privileged position to be in as many people don't have a choice at all. That the choice, either way, is made for them.)

It's such a huge decision and I didn't know how to make it. I think that was the impetus for the play. I think what inspires a lot of my plays is a question – something I am trying to grapple with!

The play isn't an attempt to find answers. I don't even think it's about that, to be honest, but it is the spark that got me into writing this piece.

I also need to be very clear that this is not an autobiographical play AT ALL however, I was inspired by the women in my own family – my Nan, my Mum, my sisters and nieces.



## GET TO KNOW KATY

## Do you have a play that changed your perspective?

I was 12 when I started acting with my local, community theatre. My sisters and I performed in pantomimes and musicals. But then ... when I was about 14 ... I was cast in a production of The Children's Hour by Lillian Hellman. It was my first 'serious' role (and I took it very seriously) however, looking back now it was also the first play I'd been a part of that had a predominately female cast and was written by a woman. Look, it is a very old-fashioned play (written in 1934) but it is still pretty powerful and it made a huge impact on me as a kid.

As young adult, I (unsuccessfully) auditioned for a production of Love by Patricia Cornelius.

That piece has stayed with me and definitely changed my perspective. It spoke to the people I grew up with and the places I grew up in. It put those stories on stage. And it sounds ridiculous, but I suppose I hadn't thought it worthy – where I grew up didn't belong on stage. Patricia's play showed me otherwise.

## For those students who aspire to be writers, what piece of advice would you offer them?

Read widely. Go to the theatre. Write every day – even if it is just for three minutes before you fall asleep at night.

If you are writing plays, hand them over to your friends and hear it out loud. Plays are meant to be seen and heard. So hear it. See it. It's tough but it's worth it.

Write and then rewrite. And rewrite some more. That's tough, too, but it's worth it.



# SYNOPSIS

Three women. Three generations. One long weekend in Copenhagen.

Emma has finally ‘made it’. A successful children’s author she is about to receive the Hans Christian Award – the Little Nobel Prize they call it – for her body of work. It’s a big deal. She brings her mother, Beth, along to share the moment. But an unexpected visitor disrupts Emma’s plans and, potentially, her future.

In the land of fairytales, three women discover the power of stories – the stories we tell ourselves and the stories that make us who we are.

Developed through the Red Stitch INK new writing program, Warner’s stunning new play shimmers with deeply revealing observations about family, womanhood and the vital and universal power of story.

Grace brings one of the country’s most sought-after directors, Sarah Goodes, to Red Stitch for the first time, accompanied by an extraordinary design team. Grace brings the highly-anticipated return to the Red Stitch stage of ensemble member Kate Cole and the incredible Jillian Murray, and introduces Mia Tuco in the title role.

Grace was developed through Red Stitch’s INK program.



# ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

## SARAH GOODES

For the past 4 years, Sarah Goodes has been the Associate Artistic Director at Melbourne Theatre Company. Before this, she was a Resident Director at the Sydney Theatre Company for 4 years. She is an award-winning theatre director recognised for bringing over 15 new Australian works to the mainstage. She has worked with many of Australia's leading actors including Helen Morse, Pamela Rabe, Sarah Pierse, Jacqueline McKenzie, Marta Dusseldorp, Mark Leonard Winter, John Gaden, William Zappa and Catherine McClements; and Australia's major theatre companies. She was Resident Director at Sydney Theatre Company from 2013 to 2016. In 2018, Sarah won the Helpmann Award for Best Direction of a Play for her work on Lucy Kirkwood's *The Children* which opened at Melbourne Theatre Company and transferred to Sydney Theatre Company. *The Children* won 3 Helpmann Awards – Best Direction of a Play, Best Play and Pamela Rabe won Best Female Actor. Sarah Pierse received a Helpmann Award nomination for Best Female Actor for her performance in *The Children*.

Sarah directed the award-winning production of the world premiere of Joanna Murray Smith's *Switzerland* for Sydney Theatre Company which toured to Melbourne Theatre Company the following year. She received Best Director nominations for both the Helpmann and Sydney Theatre Awards for her work on *Switzerland*, a production which was nominated for 3 Helpmann Awards and 6 Sydney Theatre Awards. Her production of *The Hanging* was nominated for Best Mainstage Production at the Sydney Theatre Awards. Sarah's production of *Golden Shield* for Melbourne Theatre Company received 7 nominations at the 2020 Green Room Awards. Other productions Sarah has directed for Melbourne Theatre Company include Laura Wade's *Home I'm Darling* starring Jane Turner, Louis Nowra's *Cosi* in a co-production with Sydney Theatre Company, the Helpmann Award-nominated production of *JOHN* by Annie Baker; the Australian premiere of Lucas Hnath's *A Doll's House, Part 2* starring Marta Dusseldorp; and the world premiere productions of Anchuli Felicia King's *Golden Shield*, Stephen Sewell's *Arbus and West*, Albert Beltz' *Astroman*, and Joanna Murray Smith's *Three Little Words*.



Sarah's productions for Sydney Theatre Company include: the Australian premiere of *The Children* by Lucy Kirkwood (with Melbourne Theatre Company); the world premiere of *The Hanging* by Angela Betzien; the Australian premiere of *Disgraced* by Ayad Aktar; *Orlando* by Sarah Ruhl starring Jacqueline McKenzie; *Battle of Waterloo* by Kylie Coolwell; the Australian premiere of *The Effect* by Lucy Prebble (with Queensland Theatre); the world premiere of *Switzerland* by Joanna Murray Smith; *Vere* by John Doyle (with South Australian Theatre Company); the world premiere of *The Splinter* by Hilary Bell; and *Edward Gant's Amazing Feats of Loneliness* by Anthony Neilson (with La Boite). Other directing for theatre includes: for Belvoir, the world premiere of *The Sugar House* by Alana Valentine; *The Sweetest Thing* by Verity Laughton, *The Small Things* by Enda Walsh, *Black Milk* by Vassily Sigarev, *Elling* by Axel Hellsteius and *The Italian American Reconciliation* by John Patrick Shanley; for the Old Fitzroy Theatre, *The Schelling Point* by Ron Elisha, *Vertigo* and *The Virginia* by Sven Svenson, *Hilt* by Jane Bodie, *What Happened Was...* by Tom Noonan; for Darlinghurst Theatre, *The Unscrupulous Murderer Hasse Karlson Reveals The Gruesome Truth About The Woman Who Froze To Death On The Bridge* by Henning Mankell; for NIDA, *Scorched*; and for Sydney Opera House, *The Colour Of Panic* by Nicholas Hope. Sarah is a graduate of both the University of New South Wales with majors in Literature and Theatre (final year at San Diego at UCSD where she performed with San Diego Rep) and the Victorian College of the Arts (University of Melbourne) in Directing. Sarah has taught and directed at the Australian Theatre for Young People and the National Institute of Dramatic Art.

# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Ella approached me to direct a workshop and reading of Katy Warner's play *Grace* at the beginning of this year. Or was it last year? Some time, somehow, during the slippery past year, in a brief opening we got together for a workshop and reading of this new work. Ella had organised the reading to take place at the Danish Club in the city. Seated on Danish chairs complete with sheepskin rugs draped over the backs, the audience enjoyed a traditional Danish meal of smoked fish and pumpernickel bread. While we made final tweaks to the script in an adjacent room we looked up to see a large, framed painting of Hans Christian Andersen quietly and patiently looking down on us. It felt fortuitous. Afterwards, the audience stayed much longer than expected engaged in a fascinating and moving conversation about motherhood and how society treats women who choose not to have children or leave children. When the work was programmed, I was in.

For a long time, I have thought about why there are certain stories we rarely tell- women who choose to not have children or relinquish their roles as mothers are harshly judged and you are hard-pressed to find many stories that touch on the subject. So I was captivated by Katy's play that touches so beautifully on the defensive armour that the character Emma has spun around herself to protect herself from judgment and how this has had such a huge impact on her life and relationships. During the design and rehearsal process, we often spoke of the spiral-like feeling to the piece and about the cycles of motherhood and how it is common for a grandmother and granddaughter to enjoy intimacy and warmth that has, for complex reasons, always eluded the grandmother and her own daughter. At times our society seems to project endless expectations around parenting- the bar always being set higher and higher on what children expect from parents and what parents expect of themselves and harsh judgment of others parenting techniques and outcomes. The thing that struck me most about this piece was the idea that story can sometimes be enough. That the family dynamics Katy has captured through these beautiful characters demonstrates how we blame, exaggerate, lie, love, and annoy each other in attempts to get what we want and need but most importantly we tell each other stories- that stories are sometimes all we have to reach other each across seemingly impassable conflicts - that they are sometimes the only fragile vessel we have to navigate our way back towards each other.

This has been an extraordinary process steered so beautiful by Ella and Fiona and the wonderful Ink program at Red Stitch. The time and resources allocated to this program are so important for new work. The actors Jillian Murray and Kate Cole were involved through most of the workshops, I think and Katy has woven their voices into the piece beautifully. Both Jillian and Kate are actors I have wanted to work with for a long time and what they have brought to this piece is extraordinary. I directed newcomer Mia Tuco in her final year production at VCA in 2020 and have been looking for a production for us to work together on. The design team has been incredible: Jacob Battista and Sophie Woodward on set and costume and Grace Ferguson on composition and sound and Harrie Hogan on lights with Paul Jackson as mentor - you couldn't wish for a more dedicated and talented group of established and emerging artists. Thank you to Natasha Marich and Holly Anderson for their care and incredible attention to detail and lastly thank you to Katy Warner for trusting me with this beautiful play and for the incredible dialogue, complex nuanced characters and world you have created in this work *GRACE*.

**- SARAH GOODES**

## STYLE

### MAGICAL REALISM

Magical Realism was a theatrical style developed in the 20th century that layers a rational view of the world with a supernatural one. Sometimes magical realism is used as a device to fully explore or deepen understanding of core themes, relationships, or characters within a story.

Magic realism is a salient feature in contemporary theatre practice and a great tool for navigating topical themes in a visceral and poetic way. Katy works thematically to weave magic realism around womanhood/motherhood with uninterrupted emotional truth and uses children's fairy tales and remembrance to explore these themes.

In *Grace*, Katy uses realistic dialogue with moments of magic realism, poetics, and prose.

### NATURALISM

Naturalism is a performance style developed in the 19th century that aimed to depict ordinary people on stage in a realistic setting. It is a heightened form of realism that focusses on dissecting character, relationships and the human condition. Naturalistic plays are typically set in one place, follow a linear structure and costume and set designs are historically accurate.

## THEMES

Mother/Daughter Relationship

Womanhood

Parenthood

Motherhood

Modern vs traditional values

Career vs Family

Success

Remembrance

Loss

Generational relationships, patterns and traumas

## STRUCTURE

*Grace* is an excellent example of contemporary text-based, character-driven theatre. Using the pressure-cooker structure (one room, limited, linear timeframe) the piece focuses on the relationship between grandmother, mother, and grand/daughter: three women from three generations.

## GENRE

Dark Comedy / Drama

*Grace* explores themes and topics that that may have historically felt uncomfortable and relationships that contain conflict. Comedy is a great vehicle to alleviate the built up tension created when exploring uncomfortable topics or relationships.

# ELEMENTS OF THEATRE CONT.

## CHARACTERS

### EMMA

40's, daughter to Beth, children's author.

Emma is about to receive the Hans Christian Andersen award and has brought her mother, Beth, with her to support her.

### BETH

60's - 70's, Emma's mother, writer.

Beth was also a writer but retired from writing after she had two kids. Beth and Grace share a close relationship.

### GRACE

20's, granddaughter to Beth, writer. Beth lives in the UK and works as a teacher.

## TIME

January 2020

## PLACE

A suite in a 5-star hotel in Copenhagen. Winter.

## ACTIVITY: Finding motifs through language and symbols

Reoccurring language or symbols in writing can offer us an insight into the motifs or themes of the play. As an activity please think of your favourite or a recent play and try identifying language or symbols that repeat themselves over and over again. Write down your discoveries and discuss with your classmates any meanings or themes they elicit.

## ACTIVITY: Using conflicts to find themes

Authors rarely write stories about the mundanity of life - their stories usually always involve a situation, relationship, or issue that is irregular or heightened. We call this conflict or tension and a great story captures this conflict right when it's most juicy!

As an activity, please think of your favourite or a recent play and write down all the moments of conflict you can think of.

Conflicts can be person vs person, person vs society or it could even be a person vs themselves e.g. Macbeth vs battling his internal conflict to commit murder.

Have a go with your chosen text and when you are done, think about what themes these conflicts show us.



Photography by Darcy Kent

## What were your impressions after reading Grace for the first time?

After reading Grace for the first time, we really loved the way the script slowly built suspense until the reveal. The way the audience is left wondering who Grace is, is a really wonderful tool to keep you on the edge of your seat. The writing also has a beautiful darkness to it and uses the location of Copenhagen to really lift the world of these three writers into tension.

## Jacob

Jacob is a Melbourne based theatre designer and practitioner. Jacob completed a Bachelor of Production at the VCA. Sophie and Jacob have recently co designed Iphigenia in Splott (Red Stitch) and Burn This (FortyFive Downstairs) in an exciting new collaboration. Some of his design credits include, Hand to God, You're a Good Man Charlie Brown and Bad Jews (Vass Theatre Group); Rust and Bone (La Mama); True West (Matchstick); Songs for a New World (Blue Saint); MEMBER (Fairly Lucid); Frankie and Johnny in the Clair De Lune (Collette Mann/45DS); The Lonely Wolf (Dirty Pretty Theatre/MTC Neon); Therese Raquin (Dirty Pretty Theatre); Carrie The Musical (Ghost Light); Love, Love, Love, Jumpers for Goalposts, Belleville and Out Of The Water (Red Stitch). Jacob was the Associate Set Designer on Shakespeare In Love (MTC). Jacob was a recipient of a Besen Family Scholarship at the Malthouse in 2016 working with Marg Horwell on Edward II and is also a recipient of an Australia Council ArtStart Grant.

## What do you enjoy the most about designing for theatre?

We love both the collaboration of the design process, getting to work with so many other creatives and people all towards the same goal is such a wonderful experience. We also love the way every time you start a work you can take it anywhere, you might be designing naturalism, or a heightened world, or you may be taking on something fantastical and non naturalistic, designing for theater can take you anywhere.

## What is your creative process when starting design work?

When we start our design work, aside from reading the play we look at other work, images, books, films for more inspiration, this also allows us to start a dialogue with Sarah the director where we are all able to communicate our responses to the script through other reflections and references. As we move through the design process we continue to find, reference and be inspired by more work and other images for example. For us as designers we find it super important to find a larger visual world in which the work sits full of

## What's your favourite part of the set/costume design for Grace?

The colouring. We really love the colours we have come up with for this show, and the contrast between light and dark. Hopefully it creates a little bit of magic within a naturalistic world.

## Sophie

Sophie is a Melbourne based Set and Costume designer. Sophie graduated with a Bachelor of Production (Design) from VCA in 2010 winning the Beleura John Tallis Design Award in her final year.

Sophie and Jacob have recently co-designed Iphigenia in Splott Red Stitch and Burn This at FortyFive Downstairs in an exciting new collaboration. Earlier design work from Sophie includes Hungry Ghosts (MTC), The One and Mr Burns, A Post Electric Play (FortyFive Downstairs); Those Who Fall in Love like Anchors Dropped Upon the Ocean Floor, Between the Clouds, Pyjama Girl and Letters from the Border (Hothouse Theatre); Extinction, Rules for Living, You got Older, Uncle Vanya, The Honey Bees, The Village Bike, Wet House, Love Love Love, 4,000 Miles and Day One, A Hotel, Evening (Red Stitch); Thigh Gap, A Long Day's Dying, Conspiracy, Patient 12 and The Savages of Wirramai (LaMama); Love Song (Melbourne Fringe); and The Sapphires, Glorious, Educating Rita, Shirley Valentine, Always Patsy Cline and All My Love (Hit Productions). Sophie was Design Assistant on An Ideal Husband and Twelfth Night (MTC).

**you can find sophie and jacob's design work at:**

[www.sophiewoodwarddesign.com](http://www.sophiewoodwarddesign.com) ★ [jacobbattista.com.au](http://jacobbattista.com.au)

## LIGHTING DESIGN

The beginning of every design is deciding the core themes and images of the script that are most important to the whole creative team. For “Grace” some of the guiding images were family portraits, cameo silhouettes and the art of fairy tale books.

I usually create rules or conventions early on around elements like colour and timing so that every lighting cue feels like part of a whole and not random frames from 10 different films. I also try to stay off the internet in the early stages of the design development to avoid getting pulled in too many exciting directions at once. One of the challenges of “Grace” was finding ways to subtly layer a sense of magic into what appears at the outset to be a very naturalistic piece of the theatre.

The set design and actors both do such a lovely job of sneaking wonder into the familiar and so I felt my role was just adding that final touch of magic. One of my favourite parts of lighting design is the collaboration that goes into building transitions. Having all the show elements sync up to create fluid scenes can make or break the momentum of the play.



### ACTIVITY: Using design to assist storytelling

Design for theatre is just as important as the written words or the actors who perform them. Everything from the sound, costumes, set, lighting to audiovisual effects, each build to create the world of the play and have the potential to elevate any performance. We can use these designs to assist us in storytelling or to create a form of storytelling in itself.

As an activity please think of your favourite or recent theatre production and list all the most memorable design elements. Once you have written them all down reflect on how it elevated the overall storytelling of the play.



Photography by Darcy Kent

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