



Photo by Joel Devereux

BATSHIT

"She's off her trolley. Nuttier than a fruitcake. A couple of kangaroos loose in the top paddock".

Women have long been locked up, medicated, pathologized and silenced by a simple label - 'crazy'.

BATSHIT is a wildly theatrical, unexpectedly funny, and deeply intimate interrogation of female madness. A requiem for Leah's grandmother Gwen, BATSHIT draws on personal stories to explore the myths, fantasies and fears that keep us compliant, and the systems that let us down.

Created by the killer creative team behind BITCH ON HEAT and TERROR AUSTRALIS, this is the third solo work by psycho siren Leah Shelton, directed by Olivier award-winning performance artist Ursula Martinez (UK).

"A WORK SO INHERENTLY THEATRICAL THAT IT SHOUTS FROM THE ROOFTOPS FOR AUDIENCES TO SIT IN THEIR OWN DISCOMFORT AND PAY ATTENTION" (THEATRE HAUS)

CREDITS

Creator / Performer: Leah Shelton

Director: Ursula Martinez

Sound Design: Kenneth Lyons

Lighting Design: Jason Glenwright

Costume Design: Leah Shelton

Set Design: Leah Shelton with Freddy Komp

Video: Grace Uther (video content) & Freddy Komp (live feed,
projection, systems design)

Set & Lighting Construction: Freddy Komp & Stephen Rowan

Scenic Arting: Shaun Caulfield

Production and Stage Manager: Freddy Komp

Story Consultant: Christine Shelton

Conceptual Collaborators: Lisa Fa'alafi & Daniel Evans

Dramaturgical Consultant: Saffron Benner

Choreographic Consultant: Kate Harman

Pre-recorded vocals by Naomi Price & Hugh Parker

Voiceovers by Christine Shelton & Leah Shelton



Photo by Cecilia Martin

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Jane Shelton, Naomi Price, Nathan Sibthorpe, Tanya Martin, Chloe Greaves, Ghenoa Gela, Alinta McGrady, Jay Roberts, Helen Clifford, Celia White, Stephen Bradford, Troy Gilliland, Daniel Joseph, Ellie Ngoh, Carley Carran, Jade Wightman, Sam Butterworth; and the brilliant teams at Brisbane Festival and Metro Arts.

Thanks also to the Darebin Arts Speakeasy and Northcote Town Hall Arts Centre teams:

Programming: Stella Charls, Beau McCafferty, Mark Pritchard

Marketing & Publicity: April Erskine, Jess Bendall Publicity

Northcote Town Hall Arts Centre technical staff: Justin Charleson, Camille Bortz-Knight, Luke Ketchell

Darebin Arts Ticketing Supervisor: Chanelle Sheehan



Photo by Joel Devereux

ARTIST NOTES

BATSHIT was inspired by my grandmother Gwen's story. She was incarcerated at Heathcote Hospital in Perth in 1963, and given a cocktail of drugs and ECT treatment without her consent.

Throughout the process of researching for this show, I uncovered many pages of psychiatric reports from my grandmother's time at Heathcote. The reports were worse than I might have imagined - full of judgemental, condescending, and gendered language from Doctors and Nurses. They consistently imply that she was detained because she wanted to leave her husband - and then deemed “cured” when she returned compliantly back to her husband after treatment.

Things haven't really changed that much for women since the 1960s. Many women are still labelled with personality disorders, pathologised and medicated, for being angry about oppression and abuse. Women and girls are routinely duped into believing we are mentally ill for having normal and natural reactions to our experiences. We are twice as likely to be diagnosed with depression, anxiety, panic disorder, phobias, suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, eating disorders and PTSD; and seven times more likely to be diagnosed with borderline personality disorder. So it's fair to say it's a long-standing systemic problem.

This work asks whether we, as a society, are being let down by the medical and psychiatric systems. I hope BATSHIT will resonate with people who have similar stories to tell, and will open up conversations on how we might do things better.



Photo by Cecilia Martin

THE BATSHIT CREATIVE TEAM ACKNOWLEDGE THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS AND CUSTODIANS OF THE LANDS ON WHICH WE LIVE, WORK AND CREATE ART, THE YUGGERA AND TURRBAL PEOPLE OF MEANJIN; AND THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS AND CUSTODIANS OF THE AREA NOW KNOWN AS NORTHCOTE, THE WURUNDJERI WOI WURRUNG PEOPLE.

WE SEND OUR LOVE AND RESPECT TO INDIGENOUS ELDERS PAST, PRESENT AND EMERGING AND ACKNOWLEDGE SOVEREIGNTY WAS NEVER CEDED.

ALWAYS WAS, ALWAYS WILL BE.

BRING ME THE AXE

Batshit
by Leah Shelton



@leahsheltonlive

This project is supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland and the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body. Developed with the assistance of Metro Arts.



Darebin
Arts



Queensland
Government

