

## David Pledger Biography

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**David Pledger** is an award-winning contemporary artist, curator, cultural commentator and thinker working within and between the performing, visual and media arts. He makes digital art, television documentaries, live performances, site-specific festivals, locative installations, discursive events and interactive artworks for broadcasters, theatres, galleries, arts centres, museums and public sites in Australia, Asia and Europe. His practice interests include the body, the politics of power, the digital realm and public space. He is founding Artistic Director of not yet it's difficult (NYID), one of Australia's seminal interdisciplinary arts companies.

**Making** A recipient of the Sydney Myer Performing Arts Award and the Kenneth Myer Performing Arts Medal for his work as a director, actor and teacher, David has received fellowships from the Churchill Memorial Trust, the Australia-Korea Foundation and Asialink and numerous grants and commissions from local, state, federal and international arts agencies for his creations, touring, residency and pedagogy.

In the first wave of Australian artists to engage in Asia, David's work, particularly in Japan (Gekkidan Kaitaisha) and Korea (Wuturi Theatre), is distinguished by a collaborative practice that has garnered international recognition and is considered seminal in the field of international co-production. In Europe, he has been invited by the Berlin International TeaterTreffen (Workshop Leader), ZKM Centre for Media and Art (Artist-in-residence) and Liverpool Capital of Culture. He is the first independent Australian artist whose work opened a major European arts festival (Vienna Festwochen, 2003) and closed a major Asian arts festival (Seoul Performing Arts Festival, 2005).

A prolific and respected writer, he has been commissioned by Sydney Opera House, Playbox Theatre, Theatreworks, Circe Films, SBS Independent, NYID, Currency House and Melbourne Festival (MFI). His play *Blowback* was short-listed for the 2005 Louis Esson Prize for Drama for the Victorian Premier's Literary Awards as was his screenplay for the interactive film *Eavesdrop* for the Inaugural New Media Writing Award (2005, AWGIEs).

2019 projects include *David Pledger is Running for Office* which creates interventions in real and speculative public and political office; *The Things We Did Next* (with Alex Kelly) a multi-platform interrogation of futures affected by climate change and *Meaninglessness* (with Susan Cohn) about the symbiotic relationship of Australia and Denmark's asylum seeker policy through the politics of jewellery.

**Curating** David has a dedicated curatorial practice that focuses on developing optimal conditions for artistic production in which exhibition and programming ambitions can be realised. In this space, he works closely with artists to develop new languages around their practice and with organisations and agencies to embed the arts at the centre of their conversations. He has initiated and curated artist development programs at local, state and federal levels in Australia, Asia and Europe. These include *R and D Cubed* (Arts Victoria, 1996-1998), the *PAML Pilot Project* (DOCITA, 1998-1999), *How To Make Art in the 21<sup>st</sup> C* (Australian High Commission Malaysia, 2007), *Making Performance* (European Capital of Culture, Liverpool, 2008) and *Meetings and Conversations* (Arts Victoria, 2008).

A strong advocate and driver for the internationalisation of the Australian arts scene, from 2009-2011 David lived in Brussels where he established the IETM-Australia Council of the Arts Collaboration Project as its Inaugural Director, curating two seasons of first-contact,

development and presentation projects with a view to increasing Australian presence and knowledge of Australian work across Europe. The influence of this project is longstanding.

In 2012, he organized the forum *Asia + Europe = Australia* (Arts House, Melbourne) as part of *Ampersand et al.* In 2013, he curated *The Art of Sport* at the Australian Institute of Sport, Canberra. In 2015, he instigated and co-curated *Monsoon Australia*, an Asian-Australian-European interdisciplinary performance platform with Margie Medellin (Critical Path) and Arco Renz (Kobalt Works). In 2016, he delivered the national dance platform, *Strange Attractor*, with his *make-think-speak* methodology designed to increase the social and political agency of artists. In 2017, he co-curated the Singapore-Australia Meeting of the Asian Dramaturgs Network for Centre 42 and the National Arts Council of Singapore.

Between 2014-2018, he established an ongoing curatorial practice on the City of Gold Coast around four programs *YARN*, *UberMentor*, the site-specific art series, *Hoteling*, and *2970°*, an international art and ideas event that attracted a broad church of speakers including Julian Assange, Hiroshi Ishiguro, Stelarc, Liam Young, Mara Bun, Kyle Slabb and Robyn Archer.

In 2019, he has selected clients for whom he consults in a curatorial capacity including Tarrawarra Museum and philanthropic maverick, Igniting Change.

**Thinking** David is a graduate of the National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA, Acting). He holds a BA (Politics, Cinema) and an MA (Asian Studies) from Monash University, Melbourne. In 2017, he completed a PhD in the Spatial Information Architecture Lab (SIAL), School of Architecture and Design, RMIT University, Melbourne. *Wall of Noise*, *Web of Silence* investigates the effect of 'noise' on our social, cultural, corporeal and political systems and is published online in the form of a concept album.

He has twice held the position of Visiting Lecturer at the Korean National University of Arts (1994, 1997) and, in 2002, was commissioned to develop a whole-of-college interdisciplinary program for the Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne University. From 2012-2015, he was a member of the Research Unit in Public Cultures, Melbourne University. Most recently, David's industry ideas have generated two discrete Studio projects, *Architecture of Air and Water* at the School of Architecture, Bond University (2017), and *re:designing democracy* at the School of Design, RMIT (2018).

He is published widely in books, magazines and journals including *The Conversation*, *Artlink*, *Dancehouse Diary*, *Arts Hub*, *The Daily Review* and *Platform Papers* on matters of artistic practice, cultural policy, social commentary, arts activism and international cultural relations. His 2013 Platform Paper, *Re-Valuing the Artist in the New World Order*, is enjoying a second print-run. In 2019, he will be published in *The Routledge Companion to Theatre and Politics* and *Intermedial Theatre* (Palgrave).

**Speaking** David is regularly invited to speak and present at conferences, industry events, and universities. In Australia these have included dancehouse, Dance Massive, Asian Dramaturgs Network, Festival of Live Art, RMIT University, Melbourne University, Deakin University, SEAM Symposium, Australian Theatre Forum, National Dance Forum, M-Pavilion, NAVA, The Korean Cultural Centre, Arts Front 2030, Ian Potter Museum of Art and the prestigious Alfred Deakin Innovation Lecture Series.

Internationally he has been invited by IETM, International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts (Bulgaria 2014, Greece 2013, Croatia 2012); the Association of Asia-Pacific

Performing Arts Centres, (Korea, 2013), TPAM (Japan, 2017), Asian Dramaturgs Network (Singapore, 2016, Jogjakarta, 2018): Nordic Performing Arts Days, Denmark (2014); Seoul International Dance Festival (2014).

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