

## Curriculum Vitae

# Dr Robert Reid PhD

DrRob@televisionisfurniture.com.au

## Career Summary

Dr. Robert Reid is a Ballarat based freelance playwright, director, game designer, critic and academic. They were Artistic Director and founder of the independent theatre company Theatre in Decay and the Australian live games company Pop Up Playground. Dr Reid's plays, "The Joy of Text" and "On The Production of Monsters", were produced by Melbourne Theatre Company in 2011 and 2012 respectively. They were also a co-founder and co-editor of Witness Performance with Alison Croggon. Their most recent production was "Between Us, Ballarat" for the 2025 Ballarat Heritage Festival.

With Pop Up Playground they directed the Fresh Air International Games festival at Federation Square for three years and created games for the White Night Festival, the State Library of Victoria, The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Bell Shakespeare, Melbourne Football Club and the City of Melbourne. Their most recent durational immersive performance was Outside The Cloud, a two month long digitally directed adventure of weekly instalments played all across the City of Greater Melbourne, supported by VicHealth. They were also Experience Director for Pop Up Playground's fully immersive live experiences, Small Time Criminals and Room Service. Pop Up Playground's work has been presented at w00t festival in Copenhagen and Come Out and Play in New York.

In 2024 they were the Artistic Director of the inaugural Festival of Australian Queer Theatre in Ballarat. They also produce the Television is Furniture podcast and YouTube channel, as well as the Theatre Ballarat podcast and blog.

Their play "The New Black" was shortlisted for the Kit Denton Award in 2009, presented at the PWA National Play Festival in 2010 and work shopped by the High Tide Festival in the UK in 2011. Their play "Portraits of Modern Evil" was shortlisted for both the Wal Cherry Award and the Griffin Award and was performed by Black Swan Theatre Company BSX in Perth. Their play "Eating Alone" was shortlisted for the Griffin Award in 2013. They were given the R.E. Ross Trust Playwright Development Award for their play "A Mile in her Shadow" in 2005. Their play "Sad Bird Boy and the Scalpel Fingered Girl" won both the Best Independent Theatre Company Prize and the Best Overall Performance Prize at Short and Sweet Melbourne 2005. Their play, "Empire", was given a special commendation by Melbourne Fringe in 2004 and their play "Pat Sabatine's Eighth Birthday Party" was given the St Martins Playwright of the Year Award in 2000. Robert was Artistic Director and a founding member of the independent theatre company, Theatre in Decay. Robert's works produced by Theatre in Decay included "The New Scum", "Screaming in America: The Bill Hicks Project", "All of Which are American Dreams", "A Mile in Her Shadow", "Sweet Staccato Rising" and "Empire".

Dr Reid was co-editor and co-founder of WitnessPerformance.com with Alison Croggon and have written freelance on theatre, immersive performance, games and comics for Meanjin, The Saturday Paper, and the Australian Book Review. They have been a Creative Fellow of the State Library of Victoria and an Honorary Fellow of the Victorian College of the Arts School of Production. They published "Hello World! Promoting the Arts on the Net", a Platform Paper for Currency House in 2011. They also published "Making the Improbable Inevitable" a history of the Malthouse Theatre Company and "A City this Size Should have So Many Theatres" a history of The Church Theatre, in the Australasian Drama Studies Journal and "The Theatre of Rehearsing for Life", "Come and Play" and "The Art of Escapology" on the emergence of New Games as performance in RealTime Magazine. Most recently they were lead researcher and author for

Malthouse theatre's archival website, "Stories of M".

## **Qualifications**

### **PhD**

**After The Pram: A survey of independent theatre in Melbourne.**

*Latrobe University – 2016*

This thesis presents a study of the main theatre companies in the Melbourne theatre community in the years 1980 to 2010. It is presented in two parts, with conventional scholarship supported by a complete creative work, a play text and its production by a major theatre company. The thesis presents a chronological account of independent and mainstream theatre in Melbourne over three decades. It identifies important companies, artists and artworks of the period and places them within the context of infrastructure and institutional change during these three decades. Its chapter on the Playbox/Malthouse Theatre's history was published in issue 60 of *Australasian Drama Studies* (ADS) and a case study of The Church Theatre conducted for the thesis was published in issue 64 of ADS. The play text was published as part of the Australian Script Centre State of Play Series and the research component of the thesis is currently in development for publication by the Script Centre in 2017.

### **MA (Creative Industries: Scriptwriting)**

**Acts of Dissension**

*Queensland University of Technology - 2007*

This theses explores how political theatre has been presented in the past and what strategies the playwright can employ to make issues of radical or alternative politics more accessible to a mainstream audience. This thesis is comprised of a full-length play script as a major creative work and an accompanying exegetical commentary.

### **Grad. Dip (Directing)**

*Victorian College of the Arts - 2000*

### **BA (Theatre and Drama)**

*Latrobe University – 1999*

## **Selected Publications**

*Stories of M* [https://  
stories.malthousetheatre.com.au/](https://stories.malthousetheatre.com.au/) Malthouse  
Theatre, 2021

A complete history of the Malthouse Theatre, commissioned by the Malthouse and presented online as a stand alone website. This website includes a history of the company written by Dr Reid, and a range of focus articles about specific performances, to which Dr Reid contributed several of the first.

*Hello World! Promoting the arts on the web.*  
Platform Papers; No. 27  
Strawberry Hills, N.S.W. : Currency House, 2011

Discusses the emergence on the Internet of self-broadcasting websites and individual blogs as performance spaces. This book also highlights emerging areas of conflict such as copyright and intellectual property legislation, issues of site administration, privacy and quality control, and discusses opportunities for the arts with leading experts in the field

*Making the Improbable Inevitable: A History of the Malthouse Theatre*  
Australasian Drama Studies #60 April 2012

Charts the history the Malthouse theatre from its beginning in the 1970s as Hoopla!, through the 1980s and 90s as The Playbox and into the 2000s as The Malthouse. The paper highlights key moments in the company's artistic development, Artistic leadership changes and landmark works.

*A city this size should have so many theatres: The Church Theatre 1983 – 1989.*  
Australasian Drama Studies #64 April 2014

Charts the history or the Australian Contemporary Theatre Company and The Church theatre. The paper highlights the development of the company from the Rusden College Dance and Drama course, the early establishment of links with the community theatre companies and the strains that resulted in the closure of the company.

## **Selected Arts media writing**

Clock Watching and Other DC Marvels, *Meanjin*, Winter 2020.

Reviews, articles and editorial, *WitnessPerformance.com*, 2018 - 2021

*The Theatre of Rehearsing for Life*, *RealTime*, Issue 115

*Come and Play*, *RealTime*, Issue 117

*The Art of Escapology*, *RealTime* Issue 123

Reviews, *The Conversation*, 2014 – 2015

## **Employment History**

*Research Assistant 2017 - 2018*

**Flinders University (Adelaide)**  
2017 - 2018

### **Online Research Assistant - Ausstage**

Research includes – Lost Australian Theatre buildings, Theatre Royal Melbourne, The Bland Holt Popular Dramatic Company, The Brough Boucicault Comedy Company, ADSA journal articles and publications.

*Sessional Teaching 2010 - 2020*

**Federation University (Ballarat)**  
2018 - 2019

### **Bachelor of Performing Arts –Critical Studies in Theatre 2**

(First Year Acting and Musical Theatre)

*Lecturer and Tutor*

Subjects include – Australian theatre history, indigenous theatre, convict theatre, musical theatre, commercial theatre, First and New Wave theatre, government funding, critical appraisal of contemporary industry, close reading and analysis of Australian theatre texts and practical career pathways.

**Deakin University**  
2018 - 2020

### **Bachelor of Communication and Creative Arts – Art and the Politics of Censorship**

(Second Year, on campus and online)

*Lecturer and Tutor*

Subjects include – Close analysis of visual and performing arts, cultural theory, Aristotle and Plato, Hobbes and Locke, Barthes and Foucault, and contemporary art practice.

### **Bachelor of Communication and Creative Arts – Practical Approaches to Dramatic Text**

(First, second and third Year)

*Course development*

Subjects include – Dramaturgy, classical dramaturgical structures, Naturalism, Expressionism, Epic Theatre, Theatre of Cruelty, Post Dramatic Theatre, New Media and Queer Theatre.

**Witness Performance (online)**

2018 - 2020

**Course development and presentation – Australian Theatre History**

(Open course – supported by Creative Vic, Ozco and The Malthouse Theatre)

*Writer, presenter, editor*

Subjects include – Australian Theatre history, Indigenous Theatre, Convict Theatre, Commercial Theatre, First and New Wave Theatre and contemporary theatre.

**Monash University**

2010 – 2017

**Bachelor of Performing Arts –Performance making**

(First, second and third Year)

*Lecturer and Tutor*

Subjects include – Approach to performance, rehearsal techniques, textual investigation and interpretation. Subject involves rehearsing and staging an existing text.

**BPA Honours – Rethinking Australian Theatre**

*Coordinator and tutor*

Subjects include – Indigenous theatre, Convict theatres, Establishment and Development of Australian theatre, J.C. Williamson's, the First Wave, Women in Australian theatre, the New Wave, contemporary independent theatre

**Melbourne University**

2010 – 2012

School of Culture and Communications

**Bachelor of Arts – Writing for Performance**

(Second Year)

*Lecturer, Tutor and Co-coordinator*

Subjects include – Emergence and development of contemporary approaches to performance making, dramaturgical analysis for non-traditional performances, textual analysis of non-traditional performance.

**Victorian College of the Arts**

2010 - 2018

**Bachelor of Arts - Concepts and Creativity 1 and 2**

(First Year Dance, Drama and Production, Second Year Production.)

*Lecturer*

First Year subjects include – General overviews of Ancient Greek and Roman Theatre, Medieval theatre, commedia del-arte, Elizabethan theatre and Shakespeare, ballet, Restoration theatre, melodrama, performance and

movement theory and theorists, twentieth Century dance, Naturalism and Stanislavsky, Absurdist theatre, In-Yer-Face theatre and post dramatic performance. Second Year subjects include - Physical theatre, circus, spectacle, carnival, contemporary performance and post dramatic theatre, Happenings, political theatre and community theatre, Brecht, Wagner, Live Art and Immersive theatre.

### **MA Scriptwriting – Dramaturgy**

*Tutor and Coordinator*

Subjects include – historical approaches to practical and analytical Dramaturgy, Aristotle, Lessing, Brecht, Pavis, Fuchs and Lehmann

### **MA Scriptwriting – Writing from Theatre**

*Tutor and Coordinator*

Subjects include – Adaptation, Creative responses and intertextuality, and Australian critics, Kippax, Brisbane, Croggon, Woodhead, Furmann.

### **MA Scriptwriting – Research and New Writing**

*Tutor and Coordinator*

Subjects include – Practice lead research and exegetical writing,

*Guest Lecturer 2009 - 2018*

- **University of Melbourne (MGSE) 2015 – 2018**
  - Improvisation games and play
- **Swinburne University 2014 - 2016**
  - Pervasive and Live Games
- **La Trobe University 2010**
  - Theatre and Drama – Australian Theatre
- **National Institute of Dramatic Arts 2009**
  - Satire and Playwriting

### **Conference Papers and addresses**

- ADSA 2018
  - *Play Everything: An aesthetics of play in the work of Pop Up Playground – paper presented.*
- <sup>st</sup> 1 Annual Play in the City Symposium, 2016
  - *University of Canberra, Guest Speaker*
- PAXAus 2016
  - *The Past, Present and Future of Escape Rooms, Panel Discussion*
- Melbourne Writers Festival, 2010 – 2013
  - *Meant to be Spoken: playwrights readings, host and co-director, Theatres - Paper presented*
- ADSA 2013
  - *The Performativity of Play – paper presented*
- Australian Theatre and Cultural Economies in the 1980's symposium, 2012

- Melbourne University, *A City This Size should have so many* – paper presented
- ADSA 2012
  - *Batshit Bingo* – paper presented
- ADSA 2011
  - *Making the Improbable, Inevitable* – paper presented
- ADSA 2010
  - *Everyone's a Critic* – paper presented (Shortlisted for Veronica Kelly Post Graduate Award)

## Outstanding Achievements

- Robert was the inaugural Artistic Director of the Festival of Australian Queer Theatre in Ballarat in 2024
- Robert was one of the Post Graduate Representatives to the ADSA Executive in 2010/11 and developed the Post Graduate Guide to ADSA.
- Robert was an early contributor to the Ausstage database, collecting and entering the Theatre in Decay and Wax Studios data and sourcing and scanning the complete ANTNews catalogue. They have subsequently been a Research Assistant to Prof. Julian Meyrick's Lost Theatres of the No. 1 Tram Line project and completed the ADSA journal article listings.
- Robert is a founder and Artistic Director of Live Games company Pop Up Playground. He was also Director of the Fresh Air International Games Festival from 2013 – 2015.
- Robert recently published *Hello World! Promoting the Arts on the Net*, a Platform Paper for Currency House.
- They also published a short history of the Playbox/Malthouse Theatre and a short history the ACTC at The Church Theatre in the ADS journal, along with several articles on games and play as performance for RealTime.
- They were the editor of Australian Puppeteer, the national puppetry magazine for UNIMA Australia.
- Their play *Eating Alone* was shortlisted for the Griffin Award in 2013.
- Their play *The New Black* was shortlisted for the Kit Denton Award in 2009, presented at the PWA National Play Festival in 2010 and work shopped by the High Tide Festival in the UK in 2011.
- Their play *Portraits of Modern Evil* was shortlisted for both the Wal Cherry Award and the Griffin Award and was performed by Black Swan Theatre Company BSX in Perth.
- Script development for National Trust Justice Museum project 2006 – 2008
- They were given the R.E. Ross Trust Playwright Development Award for his play *A Mile in her Shadow* in 2005.
- Their play, *Empire*, was given a special commendation by Melbourne Fringe in 2004.
- They presented his paper *Lally Katz and the Great Lallykatzathon* for the La Trobe Theatre Post Graduates in June 2011
- They presented his paper, *Everyone's a Critic: Discourse and Power in Contemporary Australian Theatre Blogs* at ADSA in 2010 and was shortlisted for the 2010 Veronica Kelly Post Graduate Award.
- They presented and coordinated the playwright reading series *Meant To Be Spoken* with Tashmadada at 45 Downstairs and the Melbourne Writers Festival.

- Their short play *Sad Bird Boy and the Scalpel Fingered Girl* won both the Best Production by an Independent Theatre Company Award and the Best Overall Production Award at the Short and Sweet competition at the Arts Centre in Melbourne. A further development of which premiered at the First International Puppet Carnival at Federation Square as *Sad Bird Boy and Other Dreams of the City* in 2006. *Sad Bird Boy* was further performed as support for The Dresden Dolls in Melbourne in 2006.

## **Immersive performance and live games produced with Pop Up Playground**

### **2017**

*Writer/Director/Experience Designer*

Outside: The Cloud – digitally supported durational street adventure  
Produced in partnership with VicHealth

### **2016**

*Writer/Director/Experience Designer*

The Cloud – digitally supported durational street adventure  
Produced in partnership with VicHealth

*Writer/Director/Experience Designer*

Small Time Criminals – immersive open world live game

*Writer/Director/Experience Designer*

Room Service – immersive open world live game

*Writer/Director*

Where in Melbourne are Carmen and Diego – durational street adventure  
Produced in partnership with Melbourne International Games Week

### **2015**

*Festival Director*

Fresh Air – International Festival of Live Games  
Produced in partnership with Federation Square

*Writer/Experience Designer*

1000 Cities – Digitally supported street adventure  
Produced in partnership with City of Melbourne

### **2014**

*Festival Director*

Fresh Air – International Festival of Live Games  
Produced in partnership with Federation Square

*Writer/Director*

Paper Orchestra – immersive experience for children



Produced in partnership with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra

Writer/Director

#TrueRomansAll – participatory street adventure

Produced in partnership with Bell Shakespeare Minds Eye

## 2013

*Festival Director*

Fresh Air – International Festival of Live Games

Produced in partnership with Federation Square

*Writer/Director*

The Whispering Society – participatory street adventure/performance

Produced in partnership with White Night Festival, State Library of Victoria and St Paul's Cathedral

*Writer/Director*

Focal Point – participatory immersive performance

Produced in partnership with the State Library of Victoria

*Festival Director*

This is a Door – Festival of Live Games

Produced in partnership with Theatreworks and Luna Park

## 2012

*Festival Director*

This is a Door – Festival of Live Games

Produced in partnership with Theatreworks

*Writer/designer*

The Curse – live game

Produced in partnership with The Village Festival

## Works produced for stage

### 2025

Napoleon in Love

Between Us, Ballarat

An Unforgivably Brief History of Theatre in Ballarat

BPAC Performing Arts Exhibition

The Motley Bauhaus

Ballarat Heritage Festival

Ballarat Heritage Festival

Ballarat Heritage Festival

### 2024

Carpet and Sand

45 Downstairs

### 2023

An Inappropriately Serious history of Australian Comedy with Dr Rob (and Elliot)

La Mama for Melbourne Comedy Festival

A Dr Rob Christmas Carol

Eagles Nest (theatre in education)

### 2022

An Unforgivably Brief History of Australian Theatre with Dr Rob

La Mama

An Unbearably Earnest Account Mental Health in the Australian Theatre with Dr Rob

The Motley Bauhaus

<b>2018</b> The Bacchae	La Mama with Monash Uni Student Theatre
<b>2017</b> Odd Seas	La Mama for Melbourne Comedy Festival
<b>2016</b> Atlantis	La Mama (reading)
<b>2015</b> Workspace	La Mama/MICF
<b>2014</b> The Well (Redux) Fringe	Monash Uni Student Theatre/Adelaide
<b>2012</b> On the Production of Monsters The Well	Melbourne Theatre Company Monash Uni Student Theatre
<b>2011</b> The Joy of Text Trade (reading) The New Black (reading)	Melbourne Theatre Company Ironbark Pub Plays UK Ironbark Pub Plays UK
<b>2010</b> The New Black (reading) Trade (reading) Names of Bright Stars (reading) Owl in Spotlight Urgent Little Things Everything Will Be Okay The New Black (showcase)	MKA Theatre MKA Theatre La Mama Explorations Terrible Comfort Terrible Comfort Terrible Comfort PWA National Play Festival
<b>2009</b> Everything Will Be Okay	Terrible Comfort
<b>2008</b> Portraits of Modern Evil The Flatfoot Used Facebook	Black Swan Theatre BSX Short and Sweet (Sydney)
<b>2007</b> The Lobotomist Myrror of the World	theatre in decay State Library of Victoria
<b>2006</b> A Mile in her Shadow Portraits of Modern Evil (reading) The Taking of Ramsey Street A Mile in her Shadow (reading) Unfantastic Lives (reading)	The Storeroom Theatre Workshop Melbourne Theatre Company theatre in decay ANPC conference La Mama

Empire  
Eight Days

Theatre in decay (APAM)  
Theatre in decay /Adl. Frng

**2005**

Sad Bird Boy and the Scalpel Fingering Girl theatre in decay  
September Scribe theatre  
Cu'u Long (reading) Red Stitch Actors Theatre  
Secrets of Melbourne Serendipity Projects

**2004**

Mata Gelap theatre in decay  
Empire theatre in decay  
Sweet Staccato Rising theatre in decay/instorage  
Next Years Sluts theatre in decay  
The Battle of Bourke Street St. Martin's Scattergun Project  
The Fat Black Pussy Cat Lunchtime theatre  
Eight Days theatre in decay

**2003**

A Mile in Her Shadow theatre in decay/instorage  
All of Which are American Dreams theatre in decay  
The New Scum 2003 theatre in decay/NZ fringe

**2002**

The Man Who Had Gout Triple R  
Gone 2SER radio  
The Last Ride theatre in decay  
A Knock at Your Door theatre in decay/Krinkl theatre  
Bathory theatre in decay  
Screaming in America theatre in decay

**2001**

Kissing the Ground Goodbye theatre in decay  
Blind Girls Play ATYP  
Drops in the Ocean theatre in decay  
Pretty Vacant theatre in decay  
The New Scum theatre in decay

**2000**

Pat Sabatine's Eighth Birthday Party St Martins Youth Arts  
Kindergarten theatre in decay  
Pixels in the Picture theatre in decay  
Customers theatre in decay  
Noni Hazlehurst is Dead theatre in decay  
Tinman theatre in decay

**1999**

Garbage (reading) Wax Studios

## **Research Interests**

Australian Theatre History.  
Independent theatre practice.  
Sustainable practice for small to medium arts companies.  
New Technologies for performance.  
Non traditional performance space.  
Digitally supported performance.  
Ritual and ceremony.  
Participatory performance.  
Community theatre.  
Game mechanics and Game systems for performance.  
Participatory spectacle.  
New script development.  
Historical and contemporary dramaturgies.

## **Administrative and Organizational experience**

Founder and Editor – Witness Performance – 2018 - current

Artistic Director - Pop Up Playground 2011 - 2016

Festival Director – Fresh Air Festival 2013 - 2015

Editor – Australian Puppeteer magazine 2011 - 2012

Data Entry – Ausstage – 2011 - 2012

Post Graduate Representative – ADSA Executive 2010 - 2011

Theatre board panelist - Arts Victoria 2007 – 2011

Artistic Director – Theatre in Decay 2000 - 2007