

20 January 2019

Re: Danielle O'Keefe – Venice Biennale Maddocks Art Prize

Dear the selection committee,

I am writing to give my support to **Danielle O'Keefe's** application to the Maddocks Art Prize. Our team has worked extensively with Danielle and her ensemble and throughout this time have found their work to be incredibly sincere, thoughtful and generous, privileging young, authentic female voices in a uniquely accessible manner. This is achieved through a mixture of numerous scholarship opportunities, incredible and dynamic leadership and an inspiring sense of collegiality in the young performers. This group have a remarkable capacity to find poetry and the otherworldly qualities of the domestic, transforming the everyday into the ethereal and most importantly, bringing an unapologetic and unwavering perspective to any space they occupy.

In 2018, Waverley Council supported the production and presentation of *Tender Young Creatures* by The House That Dan Built as the centerpiece to its Youth Week Program. Based on its success, we have also programmed the company to present a new Bondi inspired production for Youth Week 2019. The 2019 piece is crafted specifically to our gallery, uses local sites and is supported it through a highly competitive community grant.

We are proud to be working with the company across a program which includes a daily exhibition of installations crafted by young performers (aged 13-27), alongside a professional performance program in the evenings and workshops designed and delivered by young female voices for other young females across songwriting, performance and art making. We were particularly impressed by the quality of last year's workshop program in which teenage girls confidently ran workshops with skills, experiences and wisdom which bellies their age. Working specifically to our space, the group transform the Bondi Pavilion Gallery into a shell of social change, being a space where status quos are questioned and audiences young and old re think the paradigms of age and gender.

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Last year, this intergenerational group had a palpable impact on the broad demographic of audience's members who experienced the show. In addition to significant audience attendance, numerous groups and youth services from the region benefited from the work. To sum up this experience: at the end of this presentation a young male audience member informed his carer that he *"just didn't know girls could be that powerful"*. This sentiment sums up the brilliance of The House that Dan Built as well as their capacity for social change.

I cannot think of a more deserving organization or individual to receive this fellowship.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.



Best regards, Todd Fuller

Acting Curator and Visual Arts Coordinator
Waverley Council

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AMANDA STEPHENS LEE - SOME COMPANY

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25 January 2018

Venice Biennale Maddocks Art Prize - Danielle O'Keefe

To whom it may concern,

I write to wholeheartedly support the application of Danielle O'Keefe to be part of this program. I have known Danielle for over eight years, our paths first crossed when she was directing a show that was part of a season that I was also acting in. At that time i was impressed by her vision and ability to inspire others.

Most recently I have been seeing her work with my daughter in the Artists Collective for *The House that Dan Built*. My daughter has worked with Danielle for projects which include the installation piece *Tender Young Creatures*, *The Toy Choir*, *The Akin Project* and for the collaboration with Sydney Chamber Opera *The Howling Girls*. Her visual and sound works delight and inspire audiences of all ages. Danielle is an inspiring artist who most certainly will benefit from the opportunities and connections this project affords.

Danielle is passionate and generous in her sharing of her skills and knowledge and I have no doubt that on her return from Australia she will share the experience and the insights she gained from it with the Arts sector in Australia.. She has a particular passion and talent for working with young people and mentoring young artists. She also has an excellent skill-set which I'm sure would be an asset to the Australia Council working team in their activities at the Venice Biennale..

Sincerely yours,

Amanda Stephens Lee
MFA (Voice) NIDA

Voice Coach, Actor and Founder of Some Company Productions

20 January 2019 - Venice Biennale Maddocks Art Prize - Danielle O'Keefe

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I write in support of Danielle O'Keefe's application to attend the Venice Biennale 2019 .

I have worked on various projects with Danielle over the last 8 years in the capacities of producer, co- director and performer.

Quite frankly working alongside Danielle in a room full of young people is nothing short of inspiring. She makes every person involved in the creative process of her works feel valued, and that their ideas are valid.

Danielle expects professionalism from her young ensemble, which they delight in, ever pleased to be treated as artists. Danielle tells her young ensemble members 'You are artists now'. It is obvious to me that her young ensemble sees Danielle not just as their director, but as a mentor as well. Under Danielle's guidance The House That Dan Built delivers works of such calibre that most people would believe incapable from women of such young ages. The Howling Girls being the latest evidence of this.

For the last two years I have engaged Danielle as Director for Convict Escapades (a co-production with Sydney Living Museums). Danielle's leadership style of engaging young people and audiences (a cast of 30, audience of 200) is to give them a sense of ownership, so that they and she are all part of the same team building something together. Danielle leads from within.

Please see these links of past reviews as further evidence of Danielle's extraordinary abilities to inspire excellence from a team young people: <https://www.sydneyartsguide.com.au/midnight-theatre-the-little-mermaid-not-suitable-for-children-at-atyp-studio/>

<https://www.weekendnotes.com/tender-young-creatures/>

It only takes minutes of speaking to Danielle about her arts practice to become affected by her passionate search for stories and contemporary themes, and to be enthralled by her exploration of visual art technologies, coupled with the voice & sound melanges she's playing with, all to discover the most beautiful way in which to deliver the ideas.

Australia could not be better represented at the Venice Biennale, than by Danielle & her young ensemble at The House That Dan Built.

Yours sincerely, Natalie Richards

Festival Director
Bloodfest International Kids Horror Film Festival
www.bloodfest.co