



restless

DANCE THEATRE

Seeing Through Darkness

by Michelle Ryan

I carry within myself an infinite depth of suffering and melancholy, which life has only served to develop and of which my paintings, if God allows it, will only be the flowering and imperfect expression.

Georges Rouault



Photography: Matt Byrne



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About the work

Seeing Through Darkness is an evocative 17-minute dance work directed by Michelle Ryan, for six Restless dancers. The work presented in an art gallery or black box space is inspired by the art works of French Expressionist, Georges Rouault. Alongside the work is an immersive lighting experience for all ages to enjoy.

The creative team includes Geoff Cobham, one of Australia's most celebrated lighting designers with music by Hilary Kleinig and Emily Tulloch.

Seeing Through Darkness has a broad appeal, especially for audiences interested in visual arts, dance, and inclusive work. The work appeals to all ages. For the Adelaide season we had children aged 3 who sat spellbound during the performance and then played for an hour afterwards in the installation dancing with their own shadows. The Adelaide season's lighting installation attracted 20,000 people over the course of 2 months.

This work is a great introduction to dance. Being only 17 mins long and with an interactive component the work captures audiences who do not usually go to dance shows.

Throughout the season Restless were tagged in multiple social media posts of audience members dancing with their own shadows.

Michelle Ryan

Artistic Director

"There are many facets that create the human experience. Some are vibrant flashes of joy and achievement while others are the lingering remains of pain and loss. But ultimately, what do we leave behind?"

There is an unusual beauty to the work of Georges Rouault. The imperfect form of the body and the troubled soul of the work, resonates with how people with disability can feel and how they can be perceived by others. Some may be confronted while others may see beauty in difference."

Creative Team

Director

Michelle Ryan

Assistant Director

Larissa McGowan

Lighting Design

Geoff Cobham

Musical Score

Hilary Kleinig and Emily Tulloch

Costume Design

Meg Wilson

Dancers

Jianna Georgiou, Michael Hodyl,

Alexis Luke, Maddy Macera,

Michael Noble and Charlie

Wilkins

Tech Specs

(Please see attached)

Seeing through Darkness was made with touring in mind. Bump in takes approx. 4 hours. It's just the floor lighting track and one overhead light. This work is suitable for a black box space or gallery that has a performance area that is 10m deep x 10m wide. We require 4-6 m high white walls on three sides which could be a hung white cyclorama or white cloth.

Light Installation

Geoff Cobham, created the lighting and installation using a bespoke Danish tracking system. He was inspired by the diverse palette of Rouault's charcoal and vibrant coloured works. By using just 3 floor lights on a curved moving track, (the lights move along the track, like a children's train set) he was able to multiply and dissolve the dancers multi coloured shadows. The shadows become an extra performer in the work, dancing around the walls during the show.

When the dancers are not performing, the gallery/performance venue goes into installation mode and audiences can enter the space, stand where the dancers perform and experience their own shadows on the wall as well as seeing a beautiful 8 min projection of the live work on one of the walls. Having both the live work and the installation means audiences can witness the work at any time of day.



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Additional Experiences

Projections of Rouault's

In addition to the live work, the Art Gallery of SA hung 9 of Rouault's charcoals in a darkened space to create a moody antechamber prior to audiences entering the performance.

For Touring Restless have permission to project a selection of Rouault works at a small cost if requested.

Chromatopia

In Adelaide the gallery also curated *Chromatopia*, a room of vibrant coloured works from their collection that worked in direct contrast to the moodiness of the Rouault's.

The venue may be interested in curating their own version of *Chromatopia* with coloured art works from local artists.

The dance work/installation does stand-alone if you don't have additional spaces in your venue.

Education

Restless can provide detailed Education Packs created by Assistant Director Larissa McGowan, and can teach workshops aligned with the work for both trained dancers and untrained people (who like to move).

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Seeing Through Darkness

George Rouault's Work



Media & Reviews

Video Links

Seeing Through Darkness – 8 min edit

<https://youtu.be/kHeHztpK6lc>

Seeing Through Darkness - Teaser

<https://youtu.be/F-sAuvy2Emk>

Audience Reviews

“This highly emotional and utterly superb performance left me delighted, but drained, and with a tear in my eye”

- **Broadway World**

“*Seeing Through Darkness* is a show that makes the heart sing”

- **InDaily**

‘*Seeing through Darkness* is a moving response to Rouault’s somewhat despairing vision, echoing it at times but also transcending it to find beauty and brightness in the human predicament. It has to be said that never have the Restless dancers looked so good’

- **Dance Australia**



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Restless Awards

- ***Special Commendation** Ruby Award 2022 - Best Work or Event Within a Festival *Guttered*
- ***Winner** Ruby Award - Sustained Contribution by an Organisation 2019
- ***Winner** Ruby Award - Artistic Innovation and Enterprise 2017 *Intimate Space*
- ***Winner** Adelaide Critics Circle Award - Group Award (Professional Theatre) *Intimate Space*
- ***Nomination** Ruby Award – Best Work or Event outside of a Festival *Seeing Through Darkness*
- ***Nomination** Helpmann Award - Best Dance Production 2017 *Intimate Space*
- ***Nomination** Helpmann Award - Best Dance Production 2018 *Intimate Space*
- ***Nomination** Ruby Award - Best New Work 2017 *Intimate Space*

For more information please contact:

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Website/Socials

Restless Dance Theatre website: www.restlessdance.org

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