

# Education and Community Engagement Plan for 'Shadow Boxing'



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## OUR MISSION

Feet First Collective (FFC) is an award-winning, critically acclaimed theatre company founded in 2015. FFC specifically makes uncompromising high quality independent theatre. Our goal is to tell brutal and beautiful stories that engage our audiences with provocative form and content. Since our studio opening in 2021, FFC has been active philanthropically, offering mentoring and in-kind rehearsal space to emerging and mid-career artists. To date, we have supported 18 productions/companies. Additionally, our training arm, Feet First Collective Training, has been engaged to direct and movement coach as well as delivering hundreds of workshops to school students, educators and artists. This included performing 'This Is Where We Live' and 'Shadow Boxing' in school environments, linked with workshops and Q and As. We have run workshops in Mandurah, Bunbury, Denmark and Sydney. 'Shadow Boxing' is a gutsy and edgy show that epitomises our artistic mission in a distilled form. An outer metro and /or regional tour would give us the opportunity to integrate audience engagement and educational offerings more directly within a performance season. We are happy to add some activities, such as Q and As after evening performances or workshops for schools' audiences, to a performance in order to make the night more satisfying for audience members travelling a long way.

## WHY THIS SHOW NOW?

'Shadow Boxing' by James Gaddas is a challenging solo work that tells the story of a young boxer who makes the courageous decision to take back the respect society robbed from him, when he was brutally outed. Spotlighting 'othering' is important and relevant right now in combating the rise of anti-inclusive rhetoric. 'Shadow Boxing' punches way beyond the ring and will impact communities provoking conversations about tolerance, inclusion and the kind of world we can create together.

'Shadow Boxing' connects with audiences due to powerful messages about personal identity, masculinities and inclusion. It is a show for audience members who like being challenged and engrossed by a physically impressive performance that sees Samuel Addison embody 15 characters whilst telling Flynn's story. The show's accessible, intimate nature, and empowering ending, offers the potential to develop new audiences and start important conversations. Perhaps people who wouldn't normally come to the theatre will come to see boxing on stage, or be fascinated by the physical feat of a show that is not just a work out for the soul, but for the performer himself.

We made this show for people who have experienced 'othering' or exclusion as well as those who have 'othered' and excluded. Also, for people who have experienced an identity crisis, and have struggled with self-acceptance. We believe that 'Shadow Boxing' creates a potent container for conversations around these key themes in outer metro and/or regional WA. Our LGBTQIA+ advisor Donald Woodburn believes the play is important, in a time of culture wars, for both straight and LGBTQIA+ audiences. With major sporting bodies advocating inclusion and the up surge in hate rhetoric it feels timely. Our ADHD performer Samuel is a strong advocate for this play's humanity. His experience with neurodiversity aligns him strongly to issues of exclusion. He provides an empathetic conduit for these conversations.

We will have appropriate content warnings displayed and a foyer display with images and information about support services such as Rainbow Door, MensLine and 1800Respect. We will also have feedback activities, such as offering audience members the opportunity to write 'three words that best describe the show / your experience' and an announcement at the end of the work mentioning support services and inviting the audience to give feedback.

The target audience we are focussing on includes:

16–29-year-old demographic, those who identify as LGBTQIA+, people interested in socio-political debate, young men's groups, those interested in contemporary and physical theatre, audiences interested in inclusion, boxing and sport.

## **WHAT CAN WE OFFER YOUR COMMUNITY?**

FFC's 'Shadow Boxing' touring team (Teresa Izzard and Samuel Addison) are experienced facilitators and have been running Feet First Collective Training together since 2021.

"Sam and Teresa are great collaborators ... and should be your "go-to" when you want to transform your acting or theatre-making." (Andrew O'Connell, Artist, Perth)

"Feet First are by far the best group to bring in." (James Dove, Teacher, Perth)

"Thank you for this workshop... it has reshaped my attitude around acting." (Jacob, Actor, Sydney)

They have run hundreds of workshops together, are happy to engage in 'slow touring' and whilst particularly keen to connect with young people and the LGBTQIA+ community, want to develop engagement activities for all community members to connect, engage with the themes and start conversations that could lead to ongoing change.

Examples are:

- Movement, boxing and physical theatre workshops.
- Post-show Q & A's and Community Morning Teas.
- Offerings for local businesses, outreach organisations, theatre and community groups, sports clubs (e.g. talks, panels, one on one 'Coffee Dates').
- Mentoring sessions in acting, producing, directing for local artists.

We can offer workshops (and accompanying resources, including an education pack if requested) linked to SCASA curriculum such as:

- Viewpoints
- Frantic Assembly
- Laban
- Devising
- Directing
- Acting
- Physical Theatre

## **AUDIENCE FEEDBACK**

We have had so much amazing feedback so far from our post show activity. Here are our top ten comments so far:

"Electric in every sense. Never have I felt such a physical reaction in myself from a show."

"It was great to see some queer rage. It felt powerful."

"Phwar! What a weapon! Beautiful. Relentless."

"Love all the boxing metaphors! Made it accessible and relatable to non-boxers."

"Addison navigates the highs and lows with all the grace of the dancer he claims not to be."

"Powerful performance, powerful play, great time."

"You had me wanting Flynn to fight his demons. Vulnerable and strong at the same time – incredible."

"A non-stop barrage of physical exertion, all while delivering the text with clear intention and magnetic energy. A must see."

"Energetic. Absolutely gripping. Masculinity and queerness in a way never seen before."

"Flynn's world and the people he surrounds himself with are so cleverly explored, I almost forgot it was just the one man on the stage. Unmissable!"

**WE ARE OPEN TO IDEAS AND MAKING A 'SHADOW BOXING' TOUR WORK FOR YOU AND YOUR COMMUNITY! 😊**