

# “ARTIFICIAL THINGS”

CHOREOGRAPHED BY LUCY BENNETT  
PERFORMED BY STOPGAP DANCE COMPANY



# CHOREOGRAPHER

## **Lucy Bennett**

Previously a dancer and has been with the company since 2003.  
Became the Artistic Director of the company in 2012.



# COMPANY

## **Stopgap Dance Company**

This choreographer-led company employs disabled and non-disabled artists who find innovative ways to collaborate.

“Difference is our means and our method”





# FIRST PERFORMANCE AND DURATION

Premiered in the UK on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2014

**20 minutes** in duration



# DANCE STYLE

The main styles of the piece is **inclusive contemporary dance**

# DANCERS

There are **4 dancers** that perform in section three of Artificial Things. **2 female** and **2 male** dancers perform.

In previous scenes there is a fifth dancer (male) but he is not seen in scene three.



# STIMULUS

The embryonic image for Artificial Things as a whole was a **snow covered urban landscape with an isolated figure perched on a collapsed wheelchair.**

**This figure is being observed from afar as if through a snow globe.**

The mysterious paintings by the Serbian artist Goran Djurovic also influenced the design, costume and choreographic images within all the scenes.

The dancers' personal experiences provided inspiration for the choreographic tasks.



# CHOREOGRAPHIC APPROACH

Lucy Bennett uses a **collaborative approach** within her choreography.

Stopgap's dancers are encouraged to **actively contribute to the process through choreographic tasks** that Bennett initiates.

Much of the material from scene three has been **driven by Laura Jones' movement in her wheelchair** and has been translated by the standing dancers David Willdridge and Amy Butler.



# CHOREOGRAPHIC INTENT

Scene three is the final scene of Artificial Things.

The undertone of the scene is about the **characters coming to terms with life's limitations** - we all **live within certain confinements**, and we are **subject to the gaze of 'the other'**.

The characters acting out this sorrowful but peaceful scene are still **constricted within a snow globe that signifies these ideas**.

Within the scene however, the characters find a **resolution by coming together**, and as the scene comes to a close, they surrender to the fact that we all have to live with individual regrets.

# STRUCTURE

*“The way in which material is organised to create the whole”*

Artificial Things consists of three scenes.

The first scene depicts the between the characters.

The second scene is exciting but violent, where the characters seek liberation from the suffering austerity.

This leads to a **tragedy**, and scene three is its **aftermath**, where the characters are more **pensive**.



## STRUCTURE

Scene three opens with two duets. The first is **ground-based contact work involving a dismantled wheelchair**. The second duet was **influenced by the dancers improvising around the idea of inviting touch, and leading and following**.

The group then **unites and use ground-based contact work to stay connected whilst manipulating the dismantled wheelchair**. The trio of Amy, David Willdrige and Laura begins to **find harmony** whilst dancing with one another and Laura's wheelchair. Following Laura's lead they explore the movement of the chair, and each dancer takes responsibility for the wheelchair.

# STRUCTURE

The trio eventually gathers around David Toole, who has been watching from the vitrine (glass display cabinet), and they **re-enact portraits of past family photos influenced by the paintings of Djurovic.**

They find **stillness as if frozen in the snow globe.** David Toole leaves the group as the music 'The Sunshine of Your Smile' begins and finds a lonely spotlight. He dances a **simple solo focusing on facial expression and physical storytelling** to the song that his father used to sing when he was young. This solo is a tribute to his father. David returns to the group and is **frozen in time with the other characters as the scene comes to a close.**

# FEATURES OF PRODUCTION

LIGHTING, SET, PROPERTIES, COSTUME AND AURAL SETTING.



# AURAL SETTING

*“An audible accompaniment to the dance such as music, words, song and natural sound (or silence).”*

For scene three Andy Higgs wanted to create a **futuristic atmosphere** acknowledging that **time had passed** and that the **old ways had broken down**.

He used the **whole of the piano** both inside and out to create a **cold, ambient** sound.

He also used the **sound of the paper snow** and incorporated other sound effects such as a **distant rumble, wind and footsteps through snow**.

Elements of the song ‘The Sunshine of Your Smile’ were mixed into the atmosphere often sounding distorted or as if drifting in on the wind.

The final section uses the full version of the song.

# COSTUME

*“Clothing worn by dancers in performance”*

Designed by Anna Jones, the costumes are a **wash of blue and green, merging with the backdrop.**

It looks as if **paint is running from the garments,** which is a reference to **being stuck in one of the paintings** by Djurovic.

Outer garments worn in previous scenes, such as jackets and jumpers, are **removed in this scene to depict that time has moved on.**



# LIGHTING

*“The illumination of the performance area”*

Designed by Chahine Yavrovan.

For much of the piece the **lighting focuses in on one or two spots.**

It opens out in the middle, with a **blue wash and warm and cool side lighting** before closing down to another **spot for the final solo.**





# PERFORMANCE ENVIRONMENT

*“Different settings for dance”*

Proscenium arch stage.

*The arch or opening that creates the effect of a picture frame and separates the stage from the auditorium.*

## STAGING/ SET AND PROPS

*Staging/set: “The presentation of dance in the performing space”*

*Props: “A portable object that is used in a dance, for example a suitcase.”*

The set is **influenced by several paintings** by Goran Djurovic.

It consists of a **crudely painted heavy backdrop** in which **paint looks as if it is running down the canvas**. In scenes one and two this is painted with brightly coloured strips, which are removed for scene three to create calmer visuals. This scene change signifies the **change of mood**.

## STAGING/ SET AND PROPS

*Staging/set: “The presentation of dance in the performing space”*

*Props: “A portable object that is used in a dance, for example a suitcase.”*

The vitrine is on its side with a snowdrift inside the cabinet. Paper snow is scattered on the ground in a diagonal from the vitrine to Laura who is downstage right. In front of the vitrine there are two stools and a headless suit on mannequin legs perched on a third stool. The dance floor is a light grey and around the edge is a wooden frame reflecting the colour, shape and restriction of the vitrine. This emphasises the fact that the audience is looking into the snow globe of artificial things.