

Polyglot Puppet Theatre The Big Game

“Board game and theatre, sculpture and soccer, dominos and painting, children and curators – The Big Game brings together elements of culture that are not usually on speaking terms. And it’s absolute, knock you for six, raucous fun.” (Director - Sue Giles)

Polyglot Puppet Theatre in association with **Melbourne International Arts Festival** and **National Gallery of Victoria** presents **The Big Game**, a free, giant, interactive play space, performance and public artwork for families.

One of the best things about childhood is the freedom to muck around and make stuff up. **Polyglot** makes an art out of it with **The Big Game**, a larger-than-life interactive performance and play space. Participants are enclosed in a gigantic visual, physical environment. Kids participate as pieces in a huge board game, rolling enormous dice, stepping on game tiles, undertaking hilarious tasks and facing an interactive terrain of sculptures, puppets, live music, hazards and rewards, on a quest to reach the end.

As a beautiful and deeply engaging play space, children and adults can play the game with their own dice and their own teams, guided and helped along the way by Games Masters. In this form **The Big Game** is an adventure in which children can totally immerse themselves, making up the rules and their roles as they play.

The game also operates as a performance at specified times, with children as tokens and the audience as cheer squad. The Games Masters are over-the-top characters who rule **The Big Game** world, dividing the audience into spectator teams to support players. Live music underscores the action as participants accept tasks and battle through the hazards of the board. **The Big Game** combines sport and art to invoke the kind of passion and spectator participation rarely seen in the theatre.

The Big Game has been created in collaboration with children from the Carlton high-rise commission flats. They are from a highly diverse and economically disadvantaged community, with many Horn of Africa families. The kids have worked with Polyglot’s Artistic Director Sue Giles, and Designer Geoff Kennedy to explore their cultural perspectives on the mechanics of uncertainty.

The Big Game draws on the kids’ responses to games and art, and their interpretation of artworks from the National Gallery of Victoria, which form the basis of the visual design of the game itself. **The Big Game** reflects their lives, their stories, cheek and energy. It explores the board game elements of competition and luck as people are challenged to be satisfied with the lot the dice gives them, treading the path chosen by a random twist of fate.

A perfect amalgamation of community and mainstream art, each of the giant elements in **The Big Game** – a giant dice sculpture, oversized dominos, Scrabble tiles, green houses of Monopoly, and huge number tumblers – have different cultural and aesthetic significance. They are images we all recognise; elements of games that remind us instantly of play, of competition in families, of group times in a circle of friends. **Polyglot** transforms them from elements you can hold in your hand to gigantic sculptures that dwarf the player, exploring the idea of fate and chance in life and questioning the power of such elements.

One of Australia’s foremost puppetry theatre companies, **Polyglot Puppet Theatre** is unique in the diversity of its program, its exploration of puppetry arts, its engagement with communities and its creative processes which place children’s imaginations at the centre of a collaborative arts practice.

Celebrating its 30th birthday in 2008, **Polyglot** tours work for children aged under 12 and their families regionally, nationally and internationally, placing kids at the centre of the company’s artistic process so they become a genuine part of the playmaking; valued for their opinions, insights, art and design, as discerning audiences of today.

The Big Game will be performed at **Arts House Meat Market** from **Friday 10 to Sunday 12 October** as part of the **Melbourne International Arts Festival**. At the conclusion of the festival, **The Big Game** will transfer to the Great Hall at the **National Gallery of Victoria** performing during Children’s Week on **Sunday 26 October**.

MEDIA RELEASE

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THE BIG GAME – Melbourne International Arts Festival season

Venue: Arts House, Meat Market
5 Blackwood St, North Melbourne
When: Fri 10 - Sun 12 Oct
Fri 10 Oct: 10am (performance - 60 minutes) / 11am - 1pm (play space)
Sat 11 & Sun 12 Oct: 10am & 3.30pm (performance - 60 minutes) / 11am - 1pm & 4.30 - 5.30pm (play space)

THE BIG GAME – National Gallery of Victoria, Children's Week performance

Venue: Great Hall, National Gallery of Victoria International
180 St Kilda Road, Melbourne
When: Sun 26 Oct from 10am

Prices: Free
More info: www.polyglotpuppets.com.au

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