



art AND SOCIAL CHANGE

DUST: A CASE STUDY

MEDIA RELEASE

Media Release Wednesday, 11 May 2016 – for immediate release

Creating social change through arts practice

Book launch: *Art and Social Change – Dust: a case study*

A creative motivator and provocateur who initiates social change through large-scale participatory arts projects, Dr Donna Jackson will launch her new book – ***Art and Social Change – Dust: a case study*** – that highlights the processes and resources required to create *Dust*, a collaborative production that increased participants and audiences understanding and perceptions about asbestos-related diseases.

Art and Social Change – Dust: a case study documents the genesis of *Dust* including Dr Jackson's methodology and creative collaborations with approximately 475 participants (including actors, singers and dancers) that resulted in seven successful seasons throughout Victoria, South Australia and Queensland from 2008 to 2013 with audiences of over 5,250 people who viewed the work, enjoyed the show and learnt more about the issue of asbestos.

After completing a Doctor of Philosophy at La Trobe University in the making of large-scale arts projects beyond the main stream and following the five years of touring *Dust*, Dr Jackson wanted to ensure that her process and the *Dust* resources could continue to be presented and studied in schools and also performed by choirs and community groups.

Dr Jackson explains that she wanted to create a much-needed resource that captured her approach to influence social change, "***Art and Social Change – Dust: a case study*** highlights a provocative arts practice that initiates greater awareness by engaging large teams of community participants – it's a simple methodology that can be applied to arts projects across all aspects of government, education and advocacy groups."

"I'm not interested in creating theatre as light entertainment – I want to make works that are useful and utilitarian, both in the processes used to create it and in the finished work. To create *Dust* seven times in seven different locations, I used a process of working with local participants and artists to find relevant and specific stories about asbestos that would resonate with those communities," Dr Jackson said.

Incorporating reflections from a wide range of protagonists and participants, ***Art and Social Change – Dust: a case study*** is a stimulating resource that examines a large-scale arts project from conception to execution – it contains the *Dust* script and score, articles by practicing artists, educational learning resources, evaluation of how arts does affect social change, a recording of the *Dust* songs by Mark Seymour and a copy of the ABC documentary about the making of *Dust* by Malcolm McKinnon.

Featuring performances by the *Dust* composer and rock legend Mark Seymour with a choir and hosted by Australian arts advocate Robyn Archer, ***Art and Social Change – Dust: a case study*** will be launched as the feature festival closing event of the Williamstown Literary Festival at the Williamstown Town Hall on Sunday, 19 June 2016.

With support from the Hobsons Bay City Council and through her company Hubcap Productions, Dr Jackson is currently the initiator and artistic director of the new Art & Industry Festival based in Melbourne's western suburbs of Melbourne.

The inaugural Art & Industry Festival will be held in November 2016 and will include Dr Jackson collaborating with a range of artists and trades people to create work using her methodology for large-scale arts projects which influences awareness and change.

Book launch: *Art and Social Change – Dust: a case study*

Date and time: Sunday, 19 June 2016 from 6pm – 7.30pm

Location: Williamstown Literary Festival Hub, Williamstown Town Hall, 104 Ferguson Street, Williamstown

Information: <http://willylitfest.org.au/event/art-and-social-change/>

Art and Social Change – Dust: a case study is available for purchase for \$44 at www.paperbackbooks.com.au/books/162623/Art-and-Social-Change--Dust--A-Case-Stud



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DUST: A CASE STUDY

MEDIA RELEASE

Dr Donna Jackson

Dr Donna Jackson is a director, writer, teacher, consultant and arts practitioner who focuses on the area of democratic art making. She has been awarded a Fellowship from the Australia Council for the Arts and inducted onto the Victorian Honour Roll of Women. In 1991 she founded and was the artistic director of the Women's Circus. Through performing her one-woman shows, *The Baby Show* and *Car Maintenance Explosives and Love*, Dr Jackson communicates provocative ideas. This practice and research-led way into making art democratically has been further developed by academic study. Dr Jackson completed a Master of Arts at La Trobe University on processes of making arts projects involving social change and used the production of *Dust* as the focus of enquiry. Her PhD, *Illuminating Arts Practice: Making Large-Scale Projects beyond the Mainstream* more extensively interrogated practice-led research. Through her company Hubcap Productions, she is currently the initiator and artistic director of the Art and Industry Festival which is based in the western suburbs of Melbourne. As part of this festival Jackson is collaborating with a range of artists and trades people and developing her processes of working further.

Art and Social Change – Dust: a case study

Dr Donna Jackson has practiced as a director throughout Australia and overseas for over 28 years working across many artforms, including circus, site-specific installation, fashion, machine ballet and pyrotechnics. This book documents one of her many theatre projects, *Dust*, which was developed over eight years. Join the artist on her creative journey as she crafts a large-scale arts project on the theme of asbestos. Follow her as she unravels the history of this 'wonder product' in building our post-war suburbs and its many other uses including in cigarette filters, mattresses and even condoms. Share her horror at its deadly legacy – just one fibre of asbestos can result in illness and death. Learn from Dr Jackson as she shares the secrets of her well-honed method of practice to weave all these threads into an entertaining yet compelling theatre work. Meet her many collaborators including rock legend Mark Seymour and filmmaker Malcolm McKinnon. *Dust* was presented in three states over seven separate seasons – it was performed and developed in collaboration with hundreds of people and viewed by thousands more. An evaluation of the last two seasons examines how Dr Jackson's method of working actively provokes a heightened sense of collective social responsibility in many collaborators and audience members. This book will be of great interest for people engaged in theatre, community development or those interested in provocative arts making.

Sections of the book include:

- **The journey to *Dust*** – highlights the *Dust* inspiration, influences and methodology.
- **Creating *Dust*** – articles from *Dust* collaborators about their approach and experiences on the project.
- **The impact of *Dust*** – evaluation prepared by Lindy Allen about *Dust* and evidence of social changes
- **The script** – the *Dust* script.
- **Resources for use** – comprising the *Dust* song book, educational learning resources and lessons plans by Meg Upton, a recording of the *Dust* songs by Mark Seymour and a copy of the ABC documentary about the making of *Dust* by Malcolm McKinnon.

Dust

Dust is a peek into Australian homes from the not too distant past, when families were overtly exposed to asbestos through domestic products like toothpaste, playdough, hair dryers and cigarette filters – all made with asbestos. This fast-paced multi-media large-scale theatre production takes its audience on an almighty journey. Set in two parts, *Dust* delivers a roving performance incorporating sideshow, rock 'n' roll, film and a vortex of dust. A traditional approach unfolds for the second half, featuring a musician, storyline and a choir. *Dust* incorporates local stories and experiences with asbestos within each town the production is performed. Far from depressing, *Dust* is joyous, touching and inspirational. Like the people who battled James Hardie Industries and won compensation, *Dust* represents guts, determination and the Australian fighting spirit. In a review *The Australian* newspaper described *Dust* as "Without a trace of earnestness, but plenty of anger and grief, *Dust* relates the corporate scandal and individual tragedy of the history of asbestos manufacturing. It's straight-up, moving and enormously entertaining. Community theatre at its very best."

Media resources

eBook > *Art and Social Change – Dust: a case study* <http://bit.ly/1YiX1iE>

Images > *Art and Social Change – Dust: a case study* <http://bit.ly/1OI7fJK>

Images > Donna Jackson <http://bit.ly/1YiXdOT>

Music > *Dust* (Composer – Mark Seymour) <http://bit.ly/1TyH8kc>

Hubcap
PRODUCTIONS



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