

SUPERFAN

Nosedive

Start Time: 7.45pm

Duration: 1 hour/no interval

Age guidance: 8+

Access performances: 13 November (captioned / relaxed performance), 15 November (audio described performance)

Welcome

Welcome to the Barbican and our new co-production *Nosedive*, which is brought to you by the physical theatre and circus company SUPERFAN, co-directed by Ellie Dubois and Pete Lannon, winners of the 2019 Oxford Samuel Beckett Theatre Trust Award. When we first read their proposal and saw an early version of *Nosedive*, we were struck by the affinity between the show and the aims of the Award, namely to create bold, innovative and challenging work. We are fascinated to see the fruition of the company's hard work over the past year and thrilled to share this exciting piece with you, which looks to a future in which young people are demanding to be heard. We'd like to thank the Trustees of the Award for their continued commitment to supporting new creative talent.

We hope you enjoy the show.

Toni Racklin, Head of Theatre and Dance, Barbican

We wanted to create a space to see things magnified – a place where all the performers have is each other, where we can see their different bodies and relationships in close-up. We are interested in the politics of how adults and children move together, and in the pressure we put on children to be the saviours of our future. We wanted to explore how this group of people at different ages might work together, move together, and play together. We don't think we have necessarily answered our question, but maybe we've discovered something about how we pass things on and learn from each other.

Huge thank you to the Trust and the Barbican for giving us the chance to make this piece of work.

Ellie, Kim and Pete - SUPERFAN

barbican

About The Oxford Samuel Beckett Theatre Trust Award

The Oxford Samuel Beckett Theatre Trust Award aims to help the development of emerging practitioners engaged in bold, challenging and innovative performance and to encourage the new generation of creative artists. It is awarded annually to a company or individual to create a show either for The Pit or a site-responsive show to take place in east London.

Performers and Creative team

Ellie Dubois & Pete Lannon Creators & Directors

JD Broussé, Albie Gaizely-Gardiner, Lachlan Payne, Michelle Ross, and Nikki

Rummer Devisers & performers

Holly Middleton Additional Devising

Kim Moore Composer & Sound Designer

Michaela Fee Lighting Designer & Light Wall Programmer

Rachel O'Neill Scenographer, Light Wall Design & Costume Designer

Isabelle Ferger Costumier

Nicola Lawton Producer

Michaela Fee Production Manager

Special thanks to **Holly Middleton** for creative input.

Thanks also to: **Kim Donohoe, Gary Gardiner, Lucy Gaizely, Diane Thornton, Rikki Payne, The National Theatre of Scotland, the team at Platform (especially Matt, Chris, Kat and Laura), Ruari Lambert, Jassy Earl and Brian Hartley** for documentation, **Creative Scotland** and **Arts Council England**

About SUPERFAN

SUPERFAN is a new contemporary performance company comprising of Ellie Dubois, Peter Lannon and Kim Donohoe.

This Scotland-based company makes compelling, thought-provoking work that takes a playful approach to exploring complex ideas. Current productions include: *Like Animals* and *Stuntman* which will both tour Scotland in 2020, as well as *Little Top* - a circus show for babies 0-18 months and their adults (in association with *Starcatchers*) which will also tour in 2020.

Work in development includes *FEELS*, a performance for ages 10+ about identity, dancing, and school discos, and *Salt of the Earth*, a circus show made in

collaboration with Scottish folk musician Sarah Hays created to tour around village halls in Argyll.

About *Nosedive*

A child climbs onto an adult's shoulders and they look out. They see hope. They see destruction. One generation after another reaches higher, sees further, hurtling toward a future they can't control.

Pushing themselves to the limit, dancing with abandon, colliding into each other, children and adults perform feats and leaps that grow ever bolder, ever riskier, revealing an intricate bond of fear, resilience and recklessness. As their roles are subtly reordered, this intergenerational show becomes an unlikely metaphor for how we consider age, pitting our instinct to protect against wild abandon.

Mark Fisher talks to directors Ellie Dubois and Pete Lannon about the creation and challenges of *Nosedive*

It all started with *Bird Bones*. That was a show Ellie Dubois directed in 2014 with a cast comprising Pete Lannon and two children aged 9 and 11. "It was the start of us working with adults and children together as equals, thinking about how adults treat children, and how adults and children can play together and learn from each other," says Dubois. "We probably learned more from the children in *Bird Bones* than they learned from us."

The cross-generational circus games of *Nosedive* continue where they left off, asking not only how young and old can share a space but how they can forge a sustainable future together. "We're interested in how each generation climbs on the shoulders of the one before (literally in the case of this show) and what happens when the fearlessness and nimbleness of youth meets the technique and experience of adults," says Lannon, now working with Dubois as co-director. "When the future feels fragile, intergenerational co-operation feels more necessary than ever."

Preparing for an unknown future was a theme that emerged in the rehearsal room. Dubois and Lannon had a broad idea of the direction they wanted to take the show, but their ideas could take form only in the presence of others. "At the start we just started to play and move and create together," says Dubois. "We obviously had some ideas – images we wanted to see, early ideas for moments that might happen. But it's not until you are all in a space together that you realise what works and what won't. Often things that seem to be a great idea in theory don't work in practice and, on the other hand, things that start as a warm-up game or just come out of people messing around in a break can become key parts of the show."

Creating the show together in this way allowed everyone to have a voice. The directors wanted to sidestep the usual power dynamic between adults and children by giving the young performers their say. "We just try to really listen to them and give them the chance to respond authentically to the ideas we bring in so they have agency," says Dubois. "That means treating the whole cast, whatever their age, with respect. It helps that our process is embedded in playing lots of games and setting lots of tasks for each other."

"We're interested in seeing people's unique ways of moving and being," says Lannon. "So with the young cast we tried especially hard not to have a predetermined idea of how they would or should perform."

Keeping open like this yields the most unexpected results. "Lachlan has an incredible encyclopaedic knowledge of flags of the world, so we all know much more about geography than when we started," laughs Dubois. "The most surprising things feed in to the show. The best ideas in the room haven't always come from us, and if it's a genuine collaborative process they shouldn't."

Of course, in 2019, you can't talk about young people and the Earth's precarious future without Greta Thunberg coming into the conversation. "Even if we hope the work can be read in many ways and not explicitly about climate emergency, the big things that are happening in the world always find their way into the rehearsal room and that includes Greta Thunberg and the climate strikes," says Dubois. "It feels so important to listen to children and to not just treat them as adults-in-training. We place a weird pressure on the next generation to save the world from our mistakes. But it feels as if attitudes are shifting and maybe younger people are being listened to in a way that hasn't happened in the past."

Lannon agrees: "We've talked a lot about the way we treat children in society, about intergenerational inequalities and our different relationships to the future. Ellie has two children under the age of four which means she has a different link to the future than me because I'm a son but not yet a father. For some of *Nosedive's* younger cast their future stretches out in front of them, while some who are older are thinking about shifts in career or personal relationships, pondering responsibilities to ageing parents or even their own mortality."

If that sounds grim, working on *Nosedive* has only given them hope. "It's hard to not have hope when you are working with people who are so playful and generous and caring with each other and who can be so creative," says Dubois. "There is an infectious joy and optimism in the laughter of people swinging each other around in circles and throwing and catching each other before they fall. There is a metaphor in that from which we can all learn and take hope."

Biographies

Ellie Dubois – Creator & Director

Ellie Dubois is an award-winning artist whose work, combining contemporary performance and circus, is reinventing traditional notions of what circus can be.

Her most recent work is *Nosedive*, a circus show performed by adults and children which won the Oxford Samuel Beckett Theatre Trust Award.

Other recent work includes *Little Top*, a circus show for 0-18 months and their adults which was presented as part of the Made in Scotland showcase at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2019. Named as one of the British Council's 'Artists to Watch' her previous work includes *No Show*, an all-female feminist deconstruction challenging expectations of female circus performers which was winner of a Herald Angel Award and nominated for a Total Theatre Award, and *Ringside*, her circus show made for one audience member at a time, winner of the Autopsy Award for experimental performance. She is one third of SUPERFAN with Kim Donohoe and Pete Lannon.

Pete Lannon – Creator & Director

Pete Lannon is a performer and director based in Glasgow. He creates playful, often highly physical performances for adult and young audiences. He is a current Imagine Accelerator Artist and an associate artist at Platform. He was previously a BBC Performing Arts Fund theatre fellow with Imagine and Catherine Wheels.

Recent work includes *Like Animals*, a show inspired by true stories of female scientists doing language experiments on male animals, performed by a real couple, which premiered at Summerhall during the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2019. Other upcoming work includes *Stuntman*, a visceral, funny and moving duet between two men who wrestle with their relationship to violence, action movies, and each other which will be touring in 2020.

He is also co-director of KOR! Records, an independent record label that creates projects for young musicians with additional support needs and releases their output.

Kim Moore – Composer & Sound Designer

Kim Moore is a sound artist working across artforms creating sound in theatre, dance and film. Alongside collaborating for stage and picture. Kim has a dark ambient electronic project called WOLF and is developing new ideas for instrumental and installation work. She has worked on several award-winning theatre shows and work that has toured internationally. Kim is currently working on an album and developing

new instrumental work for strings and electronics as Chamber Music Scotland artist in residence. In 2020 alongside this and other collaborations, Kim will travel to Japan to explore new music and develop an intergenerational dance and music performance.

Rachel O’Neill – Scenographer

Rachel O’Neill is a visual artist and a scenographer for contemporary-performance. As a graduate from Glasgow School of Art Rachel is interested in the relationship between objects, materials, space, time and bodies and how this complex language can form meaning and experiences within the context of performance. Rachel has a particular interest in the social value of art and through her practice devises and creates work for theatre spaces and other spaces including performance, site-specific work, public works and live events. Rachel is a long-term collaborator with Glas(s) Performance and has worked with other companies and solo artists such as National Theatre of Scotland, Woman’s Creative Company, SUPERFAN, Nic Green, Peter McMaster, Michael-John McCarthy and Martin O’Connor. Rachel is also lecturer of performance aesthetics at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland where she teaches on the Contemporary Performance Practice programme.

Nicola Lawton – Producer

Nicola Lawton is an independent producer working in Scotland with extensive knowledge of circus practice. Drawing from experience working with Aerial Edge Circus School and beyond she brings excellent organisational skills, logistics and problem solving to the table bringing together an understanding of circus disciplines and their unique requirements to venues around Scotland.

Her previous work includes the award-winning *No Show* by Ellie Dubois, *Fram & Dunt* by Collectif and then..., Braw Circus Festival in association with Aerial Edge, Platform and Ellie Dubois; *Dreams of the Small Gods* by Zinnia Oberski, and *Like Animals* and *Stuntman* by SUPERFAN.

Michaella Fee – Lighting Designer

Michaella Fee is lighting designer from Glasgow. She graduated from the Royal Conservatoire Scotland in 2010 with a BA in Technical and Production Arts specialising in lighting. She then went on to work as a technician at the Arches and had her first professional taste of lighting design while working on the Arches Live Theatre Festival. Then working freelance she went on to collaborate with many Glasgow based contemporary artists and designed lights for two performances at Take Me Somewhere Festival 2018.

This year Michaella has worked with Ellie Dubois on her performance *No Show* at Soho Theatre, SUPERFAN and Starcatchers on *Little Top’s* Scottish tour and Edinburgh fringe run; and collaborated with Zerlina Hughes as her assistant lighting designer on *Them* at Glasgow Tramway.

Albie Gaizley-Gardiner – Performer

Albie Gaizley-Gardiner is ten and loves everything creative. She is passionate about dance and singing and would like to do both professionally when she is older. She has performed in *Wolves* by Barrowland Ballet and, most recently, *In the Interest of Health and Safety Can Patrons Kindly Supervise Their Children at All Times* by 21Common. Albie is fanatical about Billie Eilish and Amy Winehouse and loves riding her bike and doing cartwheels.

Lachlan Payne – Performer

Lachlan is ten years old. He lives with his parents and cat in Argyll. His hobbies include playing rugby for Greenock Wanderers, gymnastics, skiing, football and being a rookie lifeguard. Lachlan wants to be lots of things when he grows up, for example a footballer or an activist. He was one of the Dancehall Superstars in 21Common's *In the Interest of Health and Safety Can Patrons Kindly Supervise Their Children at All Times* (Tramway, Take Me Somewhere 2019). He was proud to win the 21Common Award for being the most fearless in the cast.

Michelle Ross – Performer

Michelle Ross started out as a gymnast, then a dancer and later combined these to begin her circus career. At the National Centre for Circus Arts Michelle specialised in swinging trapeze but since graduating Michelle has worked more in dance acrobatics, hair-hanging and Chinese pole.

Michelle enjoys being part of and creating work that speaks to the audience and leaves them with a lasting impression. She has worked with companies such as Acrojou, Feathers of Daedalus and, most recently, in Ellie Dubois' *No Show*.

Nikki Rummer – Performer

Nikki trained for ten years as an artistic gymnast in Washington State, USA, and has since trained in hand balancing and acrobatics at the National Centre for Circus Arts (NCCA). Working collaboratively with JD Broussé, she co-created the show *Knot*, winner of the 2019 Total Theatre and Jacksons Lane Award for Circus, a 2019 Herald Angel Award and runner-up for the Carol Tambor Best of the Fringe 2019. She has also performed with Barely Methodical Troupe and Taiwan's contemporary circus company, FOCA.

JD Broussé – Performer

Jean Daniel (JD) Broussé studied BA (Hons) degree in Circus Arts at the NCCA and began performing with the Roundhouse Circus Company in 2010. He co-created the award-winning circus and dance piece, *Knot*, which has toured internationally to the CIRCa Festival in Auch, France (Oct 2017); the 2018 Avignon OFF Festival, France; and the Seoul Circus Festival, South Korea (May 2018). In 2016, JD

performed in, and supported the creation of, Barely Methodical Troupe's critically acclaimed circus show, *Kin*. Together with Nikki Rummer, he was a finalist in 2015's Circus Maximus Udderbelly competition and became Associate Artist at Deda, Derby and Jacksons Lane, London.

Presented and co-produced by the Barbican

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