

JUDITH WRIGHT CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS

Media Release
Friday 27 November 2009

CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED PLAY UNFOLDS WITHIN INTRICATE PORCELAIN SET

Judith Wright Centre and Blue Moon Theatre present

THE FLOWERING
STARRING DONNA CAMERON
INSTALLATION BY JULIE SHEPHERD
DIRECTED BY SUE RIDER

“... a must –see production” *The Examiner*

“...Donna Cameron’s performance is gripping” *Courier Mail*

Unfolding within an intricate porcelain set, Donna Cameron’s critically acclaimed theatre work **The Flowering** will return to the Brisbane stage when it plays Judith Wright Centre from Tuesday 9 – Saturday 13 February, 2010.

Award winning ceramic artist Julie Shepherd has created a 26-piece porcelain installation for **The Flowering**, which pushes the boundaries of theatre and visual arts, says acclaimed actor and playwright Donna Cameron.

“Julie’s porcelain set is delicate, magical and really pushes the boundaries of theatre and visual arts,” Cameron said.

“Under Sue Rider’s deft direction, the characters of the play seamlessly interact with the porcelain landscape,” she said.

“The fact that the porcelain could at any moment shatter like glass gives the show an extra edge,” she said.

The Flowering tells the story of what happened to a girl, Chloe, the year she vanished.

Many years after her return, Chloe is compelled to reveal what happened during the time of her disappearance and, through this retelling, the mysteries of the past begin to come together.

Acclaimed actor and playwright Donna Cameron says she was inspired to write the one-woman-play after seeing a circus of girl performers in India.

“The inspiration for Chloe’s story came while I was travelling through India, where I saw a circus of girl performers who had obviously been stolen or kidnapped,” Cameron said.

“I’ve never forgotten the incredible mix of beauty and terror of seeing those girls; the experience made me think of the Greek myth where Persephone is stolen away from her mother Demeter to live in hell,” she said.

Set in the present, **The Flowering** is a multi-layered performance that weaves ancient myth and non-linear narrative devices including flashback.

The Flowering sees Cameron play all five characters including two men, a spectacle that “can be very funny”, says director Sue Rider.

“Donna has an amazing ability to switch character, and that can be very funny,” Rider said.

“The comedy of the show often takes audiences by surprise; it’s a serious story, but there’s a delightful playfulness about Donna’s performance and when certain characters clash there are some genuinely hilarious moments,” she said.

Back by popular demand, **The Flowering** debuted at Metro Arts in 2004 and toured to Tasmania in 2008.

-ENDS-

Date	Tue 9 – Sat 13 February 2010
Time	Wed – Sat 7.30pm + Sat 2pm
Venue	Performance Space, Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts
Tickets	Full \$30, Concession \$25
Bookings	07 3872 9000 or judithwrightcentre.com

For further information, images and interview opportunities please contact
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BIOGRAPHIES

DONNA CAMERON – PLAYWRIGHT, ACTOR

Donna Cameron is a graduate of the NIDA playwright's studio and holds a BA in Theatre from the University of Southern Queensland. She recently completed a Masters in Playwriting at the Queensland University of Technology. In 1999 she was the Australian Writers Guild/Queensland Theatre Company Mentorship recipient and was a member of the Queensland Theatre Company's Playshop from 2000 – 2002. After graduating as an actor from USQ (DDIAE) in 1989 she toured QLD with La Boite Theatre in their Theatre in Education ensemble before moving to Sydney, where she worked as an actress for the next ten years. Some of her acting credits in which she played the female lead include *When the World Was Green* for Company 2A at Belvoir St Downstairs (Sydney); *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* a Look-out Theatre production at the (now defunct) Look-out Theatre (Sydney); *The Big Funk*, a Pilgrim Theatre Production at The Pilgrim Theatre (Sydney); *Antony and Cleopatra*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Merchant of Venice* and *Macbeth* for Troubadour Theatre - a group of TIE shows which toured NSW, ACT and SA; Roslyn in *As You Like It* for Shakespeare By The Sea (Sydney); *Cold Hands* for Harlos Productions, funded by the Austrian Embassy at the Lighthouse Theatre; *The Look*, at Adelaide Fringe Festival (1992) and The Stables Theatre (Sydney) (1993), and; *The Flowering*, produced as part of the Metro Arts (Brisbane) Independent season for 2004 (which brought Donna back to the stage after a six-year break from performing). In April 2008, Donna performed *The Flowering* for Mudlark Theatre Company (Launceston).

Donna is also a published and produced playwright. Some of her plays include *The Fantasy Factor*, produced by deBase as part of their 2000 Sheila's Shorts season; *The Melon Meets Botticelli*, co-written as a theatre in education play which toured NSW, ACT and SA by the Troubadour Theatre Company for four years; *Valerie and Munro*, first produced as part of the 1996 Sydney Short Play Festival, received development through La Boite Theatre in 2000 and later produced by deBase as part of their 2001 *Sheila's Shorts Festival*; *Ruby's Moon*, which received a public reading and development by Queensland Theatre Company and was later produced by the Bundaberg Players; *The Salt Maiden*, written for and received a public reading by the Queensland Theatre Company's Playshop, produced by deBase as part of their 2002 *Sheila's Shorts Festival*, awarded (and published by) the Glen Eira Literary Awards. In 2002 Donna was commissioned by Playworks to write and perform a monologue for the *Brisbane Writer's Festival*. This monologue became the seed for *The Flowering*. In 2004 *The Flowering* was produced as part of the Independent Season at Metro Arts (Brisbane) with the generous support of Arts Queensland. Last year it toured to Tasmania to open Mudlark Theatre's, *Full Moon Series*.

Donna's radio play, *Bringing Down the Moon*, was produced and first broadcast by ABC Radio in June 2007. Donna's newest radio play, *Water Scabs*, will be broadcast by ABC in 2010. Her short play *Bangers*, a piece that recently won the Central Coast *Short and Sweet Festival*, will be produced as part of the Sydney *Short and Sweet Festival* in 2010. Donna is currently a private acting tutor and the Artistic Director of Blue Moon Theatre, in which she has developed and written a plethora of one act plays devised by young people to be performed by young people in the Redland Shire where she resides, often working with the Redland Shire Council and the Redland Arts Council on community theatre projects.

JULIE SHEPHERD – CERAMIC ARTIST

Julie Shepherd is an acclaimed and self employed Studio Artist specialising in very fine translucent and pierced porcelain. Regularly exhibiting work in Art Awards and Art shows around Australia, Julie has won numerous ceramic awards and ten of her works have been acquired by public gallery collections in Queensland. Julie's solo work has been exhibited at the Redland Art Gallery, Robyn Bauer Studio Gallery, Brisbane, 2008 and Fusions Gallery. Julie graduated in 2006 with a Bachelor of Visual Arts in Fine Arts from the Qld College of Art at Griffith University, and prior to this obtained an Advanced Diploma of Arts, Ceramics at the Southbank Institute of TAFE. Some of Julie's art prizes include:

2008 Sculptors Queensland Highly Commended
2008, 2005, 2004, 2003, 2002 Ipswich Annual Art Awards 3D prize.
2005 Memento Awards, Distinction for Memento of Qld.
2004 Ergon Energy Central Qld Art Awards, first prize Ceramic Section.
2004 Martin Hanson Memorial Art Awards, 3D prize, Gladstone Regional Art Gallery.
2004 Society of Sculptures Qld Annual Exhibition, peoples choice award.
2003 Pine Rivers Art Award, Major overall prize.
2003 Society of Sculptors Qld Annual Exhibition, Ceramic Prize.
2003 Sydney Royal Easter Show- Miniature Sculpture [highly recommended], Figurative Sculpture [highly recommended], Non-functional Ceramics[highly recommended].
2002 Ergon Energy Central Qld Art Awards, First Prize Ceramic Section
2002 Memento - Qld Merchandise Awards, Lord Mayor's major prize for best entry.
2002 Stanthorpe Arts Festival, acquisition prize.
2001 Memento - Qld Merchandise Awards, Lord Mayor's major prize for best entry.

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SUE RIDER – DIRECTOR

Sue is a director, writer, dramaturg and actor based in Brisbane, Australia. She has worked in Australia, New Zealand, Vietnam, Nigeria and the UK in opera, mainstream theatre, community theatre, theatre for young people and theatre in galleries. From 1975 Sue worked in South Australia with The Stage Company, Patch Theatre, Elder Conservatorium, SA Film Corporation, ABC, and Black Women in Focus, as well as lecturing at tertiary institutions. From 1980 to 1984 she was founding director of The Acting Company of South Australia, a company dedicated to the provision of quality theatre for young people. Sue was twice named Best Woman Actor and in 1986 her production of *Ring the Bell Softly, There's Crepe on the Door* won the Advertiser Fringe Critics' Award for Excellence.

Sue moved to Queensland in 1986 and acted and directed with Queensland Theatre Company, La Boite Theatre, Queensland Art Gallery, Queensland Museum, Queensland Performing Arts Trust, KITE, Street Arts, Brisbane Theatre Company, QUT, USQ and Griffith University, winning Matilda Awards for writing and directing *The Matilda Women*, *Dancing on the Walls of Paris* and directing *Mrs Klein*. Her production of *The Soldier's Tale* won a Special Matilda Commendation for QPAT.

From 1993 to 2000 Sue was Artistic Director of La Boite Theatre, Brisbane, leading the company with a distinct focus on the development of local artists and programming a mix of radical classics and contemporary Australian works, including award-winning world premieres by Philip Dean (*Long Gone Lonesome Cowgirls*, *After January*), Margery and Michael Forde (*X-Stacy*, *Milo's Wake*), Michael Fitcher and Helen Howard (*A Beautiful Life*). In 1994, Sue received a Matilda Award for her 'strong and visionary creative steering of the company'. La Boite's development of new Australian work was recognised through Special Matilda Commendations in 1995 and 1998, a Perform/4MBS Award in 1999 and the 1999 Playlab Award. In 1996 Sue was finalist in the 'Executive Woman of the Year' Award and received the Glugs of Gosh Award for 'Excellence in Theatre'. Her work at La Boite was recognised by a Special Matilda Commendation awarded in 2001 for sustained contribution to Queensland theatre.

Sue's freelance directing and dramaturgy since 1998 includes work with Hochiminh City Drama Theatre; Opera Queensland; Black Swan Theatre Company and Rick Watson-Heath; Willow Productions, NZ; Court Theatre, Christchurch; Circa Theatre, Wellington; Wellington Summer Shakespeare; JUTE, Cairns; Strut and Fret; Queensland Arts Council; Blue Moon Theatre/Metro Arts! Independents; Mudlark Theatre, Launceston; ThreeSisters Productions; aSpire Theatre Arts; St John's Cathedral, Brisbane; Brisbane Canto Coro; Flamenco Fire; USQ; UQ; GU; ECU and two community performance events in Ipswich. Awards include a Perform/4MBS Award and two Helpmann nominations for *Così fan tutte*; NZ Listener Best Production for *Vincent in Brixton* and *Long Day's Journey into Night*; NZ Listener Best New Play for *Meeting Karpovskiy*; Best of Adelaide Fringe and nomination for Best of Edinburgh Fringe for *The Secret Death of Salvador Dali*; Matilda nominations for Best Direction, Best Independent Production for *Brontë*; and the 2009 Playlab Award for outstanding contribution to the development of new work for performance in Queensland. Sue pursues new writing through independent projects, including Donna Cameron's *The Flowering*, which has played in Brisbane and Tasmania. From 2002-5 a QTC Regional Initiative enabled her to work as dramaturg with writers in Far North Queensland through JUTE's Enter Stage Write Program. Sue completed an Arts Queensland Creative Fellowship in 2007 to research and write *The Pink Twins*, which she produced with QPAC/Queensland Music Festival in 2009.

Sue is a full member of the Australian Writers' Guild and has received eleven writing commissions. Other writing credits include *Freedom Ride*, *Bumpy Angels*, *Federation Ragtime* and four youth opera libretti, including *Sid the Serpent Who Wanted To Sing* and *The Silence Tree* (composer Malcolm Fox). She has served as committee member of the Literature Board of the Australia Council, member of the Queensland State Arts Advisory Committee and External Examiner in Theatre and member of the Faculty of Arts Advisory Committee for USQ. Sue was Chair of Magdalena Australia 2003 Women's Theatre Festival, has been an Adjunct Professor at UQ School of English, Media Studies and Art History since 2002 and regularly teaches at tertiary level. She is currently Chair of Backbone Youth Arts.

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