

# MEDIA RELEASE

Melbourne  
Fringe



17 August 2011

## At the Sans Hotel Presented by La Mama Theatre

**Loosely about, yet having nothing to do with a schizophrenic German woman who arrived at a hotel in the middle of the desert, At the Sans Hotel is an investigation into indecision and loneliness, presence and absence.**

**Premiering at Theatre Works in 2010 and nominated for 4 Green Room Awards, At the Sans Hotel has toured to Sydney, Toronto, Victoria (Canada) and Edinburgh.  
Created by Nicola Gunn, the work is reinvented at La Mama Courthouse.**

An unreliable narrator called Sophie pulls together threads of story, seen and unseen about a German woman lost in the desert. It's the accumulation of these moments that result in disjointed, tender and at times confusing submersion into the unstable mind of a mentally ill woman.

At the Sans Hotel is an intimate and moving performance combining a dramatic visual and physical language with multiple characters, audience participation and humour to create the experience of a mental breakdown.

At the Sans Hotel is contemporary theatre that blends performance art with live art to make a theatrical experience for participatory witnesses. It is not so much about a story, as it is about a feeling – creating a sense of dread, anxiety, longing and hopelessness. And it is both funny and sad. The audience becomes involved, not by being emotionally manipulated, but rather in a most authentic way, in the private perception of the fragmented life of one who is abandoned.

The work takes its initial inspiration from the Cornelia Rau affair, an Australian resident and German citizen who was wrongfully incarcerated as an illegal immigrant in the Baxter Detention Centre. Nicola says, "I was interested in the personal/political ramifications of her plight: who she is and what compelled her to do the things she did - to run away and pretend to be someone else." Borrowed facts from Rau's plight have been blurred with autobiographical stories and imagined events to tell the story of a Woman lost wandering in the desert, who pretends to be someone else, losing her self in the process.

"Monumentally original work. We're brought to care most skillfully by a stunning level of performance, a rare thrill in theatre...different, really funny, authentic and astute, and honestly, honestly, marvelous." - Liza Dezfouli, AUSTRALIAN STAGE

"A gift to its audience." - John Bailey, REALTIME

"This is the theatre event thus far of 2010." - Tony McMahon, INPRESS

<http://www.nicolagunn.com>

<http://www.vimeo.com/nicolagunn>

### At the Sans Hotel

#### VENUE

La Mama Courthouse  
349 Drummond St  
Carlton, Victoria 3056

DATES: 21 - 25 Sept

28 Sept - 2 Oct

TIME: Wed and Sun 6.30pm, Thur and Fri 8.00pm, Sat 2.00pm and 8.00pm, (75min)

#### TICKETS

Full: \$25

Concession: \$15

TO BOOK visit [melbournefringe.com.au](http://melbournefringe.com.au) or call (03) 9660 9666

#### SHOW PUBLICIST

Maureen Hartley

For all media inquiries please contact Melbourne Fringe's Publicist:

Katrina Hall Publicity

M 0421 153 046

E [kathall@ozemail.com.au](mailto:kathall@ozemail.com.au)