



Haircuts by Children

a Mammalian Diving Reflex production

Haircuts by Children is exactly what it sounds like. We train children to cut hair, then they offer free haircuts to the public at a salon in the city. Haircuts is a performance about insane haircuts, power and trust; we challenge our audience to set their vanity aside, relinquish control, and trust that a 10-year-old has the creative ability, dexterity and responsibility to command a sharp pair of scissors. Ultimately it is also a performance about the intimate and rare moments shared between two very unlikely strangers - a child and an adult.

Haircuts by Children involves children between the ages of 8-12 who are trained by professional hairstylists, and then paid to run a real hair salon, offering members of the public free haircuts. The performance invites the consideration of young people as creative and competent individuals whose aesthetic choices can be trusted. While providing atypical entertainment, *Haircuts by Children* also shifts traditional power dynamics between young people and adults, creating a safe social space where children and adults who live in the same community can meet and share a unique creative experience together. The idea that kids should be allowed to cut our hair evokes the same leap of faith, courage and understanding required to grant children deeper citizenship rights. For many it is actually less terrifying to contemplate allowing kids to vote. While *Haircuts by Children* is a performance with kids, it's actually for the benefit of who they will become; for the adults who have to deal with the consequences of eighteen years of political disenfranchisement.

Mammalian Diving Reflex's work occurs in public, collaborates with non-artists, and attempts to create unusual social contexts and situations that bring children and adults together as well as individuals from different socio-economic, geographic, cultural, and racial backgrounds who wouldn't normally have the opportunity or reason to spend time together. We engage our audience members as active participants and as willing collaborators in all of our work. We have made strangers slow dance with each other; eat meals together; interview one other on stage in front of hundreds of other audience members; share drinks with octogenarians while discussing various positions on sex; and we have held all night dance parties DJed by 10-year-olds.

"In the future, every child will be given a pair of scissors and invited to shape our destinies. In the future, every child will be granted full citizenship rights; encouraged to vote, run for office and drive streetcars. In the future, children will teach and adults will learn; a playground will be built on every battlefield; and candy will be free. In the future, children will be powerful creatures able to cross the street without looking both ways, and hold their breath underwater forever and ever and ever."

- Darren O'Donnell, Artistic and Research Director

About



Norfolk and Norwich Festival
<http://youtu.be/ljKEShEa75o>



Cork Midsummer Festival
<http://youtu.be/GSGZ0nkPD10>



London International Festival of Theater
<http://youtu.be/76KpaBT66IY>

Videos

It's about trusting our future generation with not just the hairs on your head but about understanding young people are capable of much more than we give them credit for.

- *Chris Burns, Australian Education Minister*

Usually adults are the boss of us and we don't get to do much of that kind of stuff because we are little kids and we have to wait until we're older. It is really surprising that adults will let us do that to their hair.

- *Aiden, 10 years old*

The show has commandeered barber shops on three continents, mesmerizing audiences and media wherever it goes. The immediate appeal, of course, is the possibility of a trainwreck—of vainglorious tonsorial disaster. But because the children are given a few styling lessons and take their responsibility so earnestly, major mishaps have been rare among the hundreds of haircuts so far. The deeper thrill is in the carnivalesque reversal of power, and the rare, almost taboo encounter between a child and a grown-up who isn't their teacher or relative.

- *Carl Wilson, Toronto Life*

The Advertiser asked Glover if he was happy sporting his new multi-coloured "do". 'Why wouldn't I be? It's the look I've been searching for. My own hairdresser just isn't courageous enough to try this sort of thing.

- *Richard Glover, ABC Radio host*

Quotes

2006

Harbourfront Centre
Milk International Children's Festival
Toronto, Canada

Outpost for Contemporary Arts
Los Angeles, USA

2007

Fierce Festival
Birmingham, UK

Portland Institute for Contemporary Art's
TBA Festival
Portland, USA

Dublin Fringe Festival
Dublin, Ireland

Art in General at Performa 07
New York, USA

2008

Sydney International Arts Festival
Sydney, Australia

PuSh International Performing Arts Festival
Vancouver, Canada

International Festival of Performance Art
Bologna, Italy

Es-Terni Performing Arts Festival
Terni, Italy

Arts Council Norway
Theatre Avant Garden
the Showbox Conference
Trondheim and Oslo, Norway

2009

At the Spark Festival
Theatre Skam and Belfry Theatre
Victoria, Canada

UOVO Performing Arts Festival
Milan, Italy

Context Gallery
Derry, Northern Ireland

Galerie B312
Montreal, Canada

Wunderbar Festival
Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK

2010

Perth International Arts Festival
Perth, Australia

Curtain Razors, The Movable Feast
Regina, Canada

Norfolk & Norwich Festival
Norwich, UK

Cork Midsummer Arts Festival
Cork, Ireland

London International Festival of Theatre
London, UK

Arts Australia, Junction Arts Festival
Launceston, Australia

2011

Festival des arts vivants
Nyon, Switzerland

Grenswerk Festival
Enschede, Netherlands

MOTUS, Alfred Ve Dvore Theatre
4+4 Days in Motion
Prague, Czech Republic

Fusebox Festival
Austin, USA

2012

Behaviour Festival
The Arches
Glasgow, Scotland

Darwin Festival
Darwin, Australia

2013

Possible Futures Festival
Kunstencentrum Vooruit
Campo
Ghent, Belgium

2014

Live Art DK
Copenhagen, Denmark

ANTI Contemporary Art Festival
Kuopio, Finland

2015

Pivot Festival
Whitehorse, Canada

2016

High Performance Rodeo
Calgary, Canada

Hat Fair
Winchester, UK

Presented

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