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# THE ADVENTURES OF ALVIN SPUTNIK: DEEP SEA EXPLORER



**BY TIM WATTS**

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## EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE

Edited and written by Libby Klysz

This educational resource was produced and commissioned by Perth Theatre Company.

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# BACKGROUND INFORMATION



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## ABOUT THE LAST GREAT HUNT

The Last Great Hunt is a collective of artists that create, produce and tour new innovative theatre. The Last Great Hunt artists have a combined 52 years of experience in making theatre and have received critical acclaim both at home and abroad. Operating out of Perth, Western Australia, these artists prove that living in the most isolated capital city in the world is no limit to creating great theatre.

## ABOUT THE SHOW

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The Adventures of Alvin Sputnik: Deep Sea Explorer is a multi award-winning one-man micro-epic puppet show that melds technology and multimedia into a touching story of enduring love and the end of the world.

The seas have risen, billions have died and those who are left live on farms atop skyscrapers, atop mountains. The scientists have tried everything. Floating islands sank, space probes found nothing, and the giant sponges, visible from the moon, are now rotting icons of failure. Now science and humanity are turning to the oceans themselves. A last ditch effort to save the human race requires journeying down through the mysterious depths of the deep blue sea to find a new place for us to live.



Alvin Sputnik, who has just lost his wife, accepts this perilous mission so that he may follow her soul down to the underworld so that they can be together again once more.

Created by Tim Watts, who employs a unique blend of puppetry, live and recorded music, and animation to present an exploration of the next and oldest frontier: the deep blue sea.

## History of the Show

The show was created as part of the Blue Room Theatre program in Perth, Western Australia. It was made by Tim Watts in collaboration with Arielle Gray. It was created through many experiments and showings to friends and fellow artists in Perth.

It debuted in May 2009 at the Blue Room Theatre where it received rave reviews, performed to sell out crowds, and won awards for "Best Production", "Best Production Team" and "Members Choice". Since then, with the support of Perth Theatre Company, it has toured all over the world to more sell out crowds, rave reviews and awards. In August 2009 it won an award for Outstanding Solo Show at the New York International Fringe Festival, it won "Best Puppetry" at the 2010 Adelaide Fringe Awards, and "Best Theatre" at the Auckland Fringe in 2011. The show has toured to New York City (USA), North Carolina (USA), South Carolina (USA), Auckland (NZ), Delhi (India), Geoje Island (South Korea), Busan (South Korea), Seoul (South Korea), extensive regional and national touring all over Australia including the Sydney Festival 2011, and the Darwin Festival 2010. In the second half of 2011 it toured to Edinburgh, Bristol, Oxford, Dublin, Hong Kong, Melbourne, New Zealand, and back home to Perth. In October 2013, Tim Watts, and six other West Australian artists, founded their own company, The Last Great Hunt. This new company is now producing The Adventures of Alvin Sputnik: Deep Sea Explorer.

# ABOUT THE SHOW



## ARTISTIC TEAM

**Tim Watts (Creator/ Animator)** Tim is a performer, deviser, director, producer, puppeteer and animator. He is a founding member of Weeping Spoon Productions, and is the artist-in-residence at Perth Theatre Company. He has created and toured theatre all around Australia and the world, winning numerous awards and critical acclaim along the way. Since graduating from Notre Dame University, Fremantle with a Bachelor of Performing Arts in 2005, he has participated in workshops all around the world, including studying clown and physical comedy with Dell'Arte International in Blue Lake California, as well as Puppetry workshops with Spare Parts Puppet Theatre in Fremantle, Western Australia, and Blind Summit in the UK. In 2009 he created *The Adventures of Alvin Sputnik: Deep Sea Explorer*, which has since toured all over the world.

In 2012 he co-created *It's Dark Outside*, which was commissioned by Perth Theatre Company. Most recently presented at the 2013 Sydney Festival, *It's Dark Outside* received its US premiere in Pittsburgh at the Festival of Firsts.

Other creative credits include co-creating and performing in *The Wives of Hemingway* (Fringe World 2013), *Deathtrap* (PICA, Perth) *The World In spite of Itself* (China), *Greed* (Canada Fringe), *Hope is the saddest* (Brisbane Festival), *Duck Duck Goose* (The Blue Room, Perth), *Oscar* (Perth) and *Heart of Gold* (PICA, Perth), as well as directing *Pollyanna* (Fringe World 2012) and *Red Lashes* (UNIMA 2008). Tim currently lives in Perth, Western Australia.

**Arielle Gray (Collaborator)** Arielle Gray graduated in 2005 with a BA (Contemporary Performance) in Perth. She is a performer/theatre-maker/puppeteer/improviser. Arielle's theatre credits include creating and performing in *It's Dark Outside* in Perth 2012 and at Sydney Festival in 2013, devising and performing in *Pollyanna*, a large scale interactive, promenade work first performed at FringeWorld 2012, performing in *They Ran 'Til They Stopped* with The Duck House, Black Swan State Theatre Company's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* directed by Kate Cherry, *Hope Is The Saddest* for Mythophobic Productions at the Brisbane Festival 'Under the Radar', *Duck, Duck, Goose!* (Winner 'Member's Choice' at The Blue Room Theatre Awards), & solo show *Nobody Cares But You* at The Blue Room Theatre & Adelaide Fringe Festival (for which she was nominated 'Best Actress' at The Actor's Equity Guild Awards).

Arielle also assisted in the creation of *The Adventures of Alvin Sputnik: Deep Sea Explorer* with Tim Watts. In 2009, Arielle was a part of The Black Swan State Theatre Company's HOTBED program, performing in *Pool [No Water]* by Mark Ravenhill & *The Darkroom* by Angela Betzien (nominated 'Best Supporting Actress' for both shows at the Actors Equity Guild Awards). Arielle is also a member of THE BIG HOO HAA improvised comedy group, and has been a proud member of equity since 2007. Arielle lives in Perth, Western Australia.

**Anthony Watts (Set and Gadget Construction)** Anthony is primarily an Engineer, but he likes building gadgets because it makes him feel like MacGyver. He is a wiz kid with the soldering iron and he built the set and all the gadgets instead of doing his real job. He likes flying aeroplanes and surfing. He lives in Perth, Western Australia and is proud of it.

# ABOUT THE CREATOR



## AN INTERVIEW WITH TIM WATTS

### What was the inspiration behind the show?

Many different things. The puppet (Alvin Sputnik) came first. About a year and a half before we made the show I made the puppet at a puppet workshop with Spare Parts Puppet Theatre in Fremantle. I wanted to make a very tourable solo show to tour internationally. Some friends suggested I use the puppet. So the Alvin puppet inspired a lot of the elements within the story. He had to be a deep sea diver, so the story was about the ocean.

Arielle Gray (who helped me make the show) and I went snorkeling at Great Barrier Reef, which was a huge inspiration for us. I will never forget looking out into the crystal clear blue water, into the endless nothing and being absolutely terrified! We felt so small and vulnerable in the face of the deep unknown. Humans have still have explored so very little of the ocean, which is so exciting and inspiring. It's full of so many possibilities... it is a creative goldmine! Every time they do exploratory dives they find new and absurd species that you couldn't dream up.

Also the ocean is one of the big players in the whole climate change thing that's going on. I love the ocean and it is so tragic that so much sea-life is being destroyed. I wanted to make a show that in some way acknowledged the environmental situation. But I didn't want to make it an educational show, or a show to make the audience feel guilty or apathetic. They feel that already; I know I do. What I need is to feel hopeful and empowered. So I wanted to make a show that was set in an environmental apocalypse (in the face of foreboding doom) but that was lots of fun, full of joy and hope.



I did a whole lot of research, watching deep sea documentaries, TED.com videos, scientific theories, crackpot theories, literary theories, environmental theories. Then we just started mucking about with puppets, lights, animation and music.

We did a whole lot of experiments with the Alvin puppet and other assorted props and lights. We performed showings to friends of little scenes. The feedback from those scenes inspired large chunks of the story; and piece by piece, we put it all together frantically before the first season at the Blue Room Theatre in Perth.

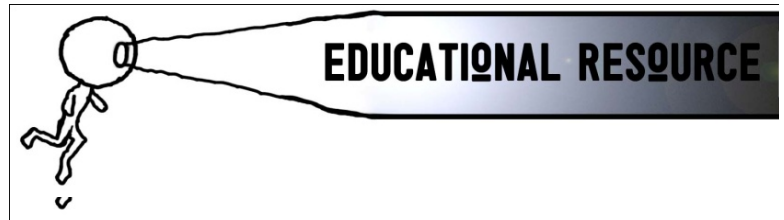
Also Pixar, Tim Burton, Charlie Chaplin and Jim Henson are huge inspirations for me as an artist in general.

### Why is he called Alvin?

The name Alvin Sputnik is in fact a very blatant smushing of the name of the main deep sea submersible, ALVIN, which they still use today for all the main dives, and obviously Sputnik1 which was the first ever space probe sent into orbit. The intention was to reference (quite blatantly) these two modern vessels of exploration, and adventure into new frontiers. Also Alvin is a name that suited his personality in my opinion, and his head really does look like the Sputnik probe. What was UNINTENTIONAL is that apparently Sputnik in Russian means 'companion' (which was pointed out to me in a review one time). I think it's a pretty great fit with a story about loneliness and loss.

# ABOUT THE CREATOR

## Continued



### **You've travelled the world with Alvin. What has that been like?**

One highlight that still really sticks with me was the success in New York City. It was so overwhelming and meant so much to me that in the theatre capital of the world. I was getting rave reviews, sold out, lines around the corner and I won an award. It was surreal. I'll never forget walking around Times Square, just feeling like I was in some glorious dream, walking on sunshine...well, neon.

I also love being in Australia. It's my home, and so as much as I love travelling overseas, and experiencing different cultures, it's great to feel at home and discover more about my own culture and country.

### **The story seems to draw from Greek mythology, was this a deliberate choice and if so, is this something you're interested in?**

A bit of both. There was a bit of research done in many different areas. Story structure is certainly something we researched and considered. For example, we looked at the difference between, say, *The Odyssey* as a "quest" plot and *Alice in Wonderland* as a "journey and return" plot. But we tended to keep a lot of that research in the background and not let it dictate things too much. Most of the time I just play around, see what works, then wrap it all up into a (hopefully) satisfying story. There is something so profound about those classic stories. Often great movies, or stories, borrow from these classic myths.

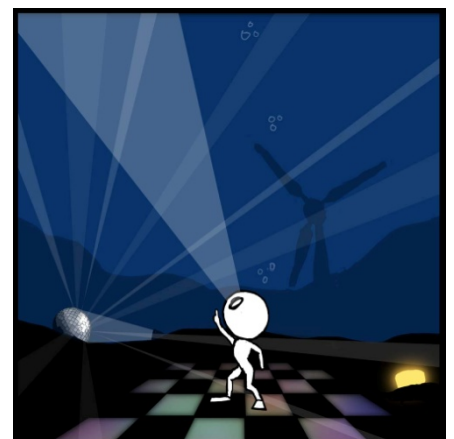
The one that there is the most comparison to is the "Orpheus and Eurydice" myth, where he follows his love's soul down into the underworld. There are some similarities, but it is also VERY different.

### **Alvin's world is very bleak; was it a trying process to find hope in his story?**

The reason I made the show was because I was becoming so overwhelmed with the very bleak future we will all face. My most powerful and inspirational revelation came from watching (and researching) deep sea documentaries. Even in the most toxic, desolate, freezing, boiling, and unstable environment, life not only exists but flourishes. Life will continue.

So really the point of the show (if there is one) is that even in the most bleak of circumstances, we will find a way. We will survive. It is not easy, and requires a lot of diligence and self sacrifice, but there is a way. The show is also about grief. The loss can be unbearable, but hopefully in the end you work through it, and life goes on.

Also Alvin (the puppet) is just too cute and innocent to be filled with anything but hope.



# ABOUT THE CREATOR

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### **Was the show created with children in mind?**

No, not at all. Up until opening night we were still working on the show. I was reserving the right to swear, have a sex scene, or include something inappropriate for a young audience. But as it turned out, it didn't need any of those things. So it was appropriate for children to come along with their parents.

So it was made for adults and I think adults like it more than kids do. The jokes, themes and the story structure are designed for an older audience. I always get better responses from an adult audience. That being said, kids do like the show too, which is great. Over about 12 years old they start to get it. Also my oldest audience member is 96 and she loved it. So it accidentally is an all ages type deal.

### **Why do you think audiences engage with puppetry?**

Because it's fun and a little bit magical. You get to pretend that a collection of dead things are alive. And the most fun thing about a puppet is that it thinks it's alive, which is a game that they get to play with me. Let's pretend that I'm not just waving some things about in the dark, let's pretend it's a little person with a big head who is under the sea. It's fun and when an audience is imaginatively engaged, as opposed to just intellectually engaged. They seem to become more emotionally engaged. So you can give them a really rewarding experience by taking them through all sorts of emotions. The human imagination is such an amazing thing. I am still amazed that a foam ball and a glove can make people laugh and cry. It's one of the most amazing and mysterious things about us and should not be forgotten.

### **What were your overall hopes for this show?**

It's about grief, loneliness, self sacrifice, love and the end of the world. But mostly it's about hope, and the belief that life will go on. The show is lots of fun and that is my primary motivation: to entertain my audience. To make them laugh, cry and punch the air with joy like Bastian riding Falcore in *The Never Ending Story*.

### **What are the difficulties involved in a one-man show with puppets, live music, and mime?**

The main difficulty is if anything goes wrong while performing, I have to deal with it. There is no one to cover for me. I am the only one telling the story. That includes lighting, sound, AV, props, set and performing. Most shows have a stage manager, or lighting operator but for my show I decided to do it completely solo (which is difficult, and asking for trouble). It would be easy to get someone to operate any of these other elements, or puppets but then it would be a completely different show. There is a different relationship with the audience when there is only one person telling the story and keeping all those balls in the air.

Also as Alvin is a two handed puppet, it was difficult to have him interact with any other puppets, as there was no one else to operate them. This is one of the main reasons the animation became so important, as it was so useful in advancing the story. It was because of this that the animation is so integrated into the storytelling. Plus, Alvin's journey to the bottom of the ocean is lonely. Therefore it seems only appropriate that the storyteller should be alone too.

# ABOUT THE CREATOR



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### How do you run all the gadgets so smoothly by yourself?

With a lot of practice. Everything in the show has to be treated like a puppet: with precision, focus and timing. I have to operate lights with my feet, trigger sound and animation cues from a Wiimote on my waist, puppeteer with my head, and puppeteer with my hands all at the same time. The set and electronics are all built by myself and my dad Anthony Watts (who is just awesome).

### How did you build them?

All the lights in the show are LED lights, built into the set that run off rechargeable 12V batteries. They are operated onstage via foot switches and the batteries can be charged by a solar panel. There are many benefits to designing the lights in this way. Firstly they are very small, durable and light weight which is great for touring (as we can bring them with us). Secondly the lighting is very specific and the dim, precise lighting is all the show requires. The lighting isolates the action, resulting in a scene that 'floats' in the black backdrop of the space. Also, these lights have a very small carbon footprint compared to normal theatre lights, especially if we can recharge them with green energy. One of the main reasons that I use LED lights is so that I can operate them myself onstage. The entire show is operated by me. This was initially to reduce touring costs, so that I could tour the show by myself if need be. But that got lonely, so now I always have at least one other person on tour to help set up and travel. What I learnt from having control of all these elements is how important they are to the entire show, and how the pace and timing is so important to the storytelling.



The entire set packs down into two suitcases that can go on an aeroplane as excess baggage (each case can be no more than 32kg to be allowed on the plane). This makes the show very cheap to tour (and minimises the carbon footprint too). In designing the set we looked at camping products for inspiration in compact engineering. The sets and props have been improved over time, getting more and more efficient and durable. We now have an entire set as a backup in case the set gets lost in transit or in a fire.

### One reviewer likened your show to a theatrical production of Wall-E – does the comparison make sense to you?

In a sense yes. They do both share a context of an environmentally bleak future; they share a similar sentiment of hope and love guiding the way. But the show is very different from Wall-E. It has a very different plot, and is about different things.



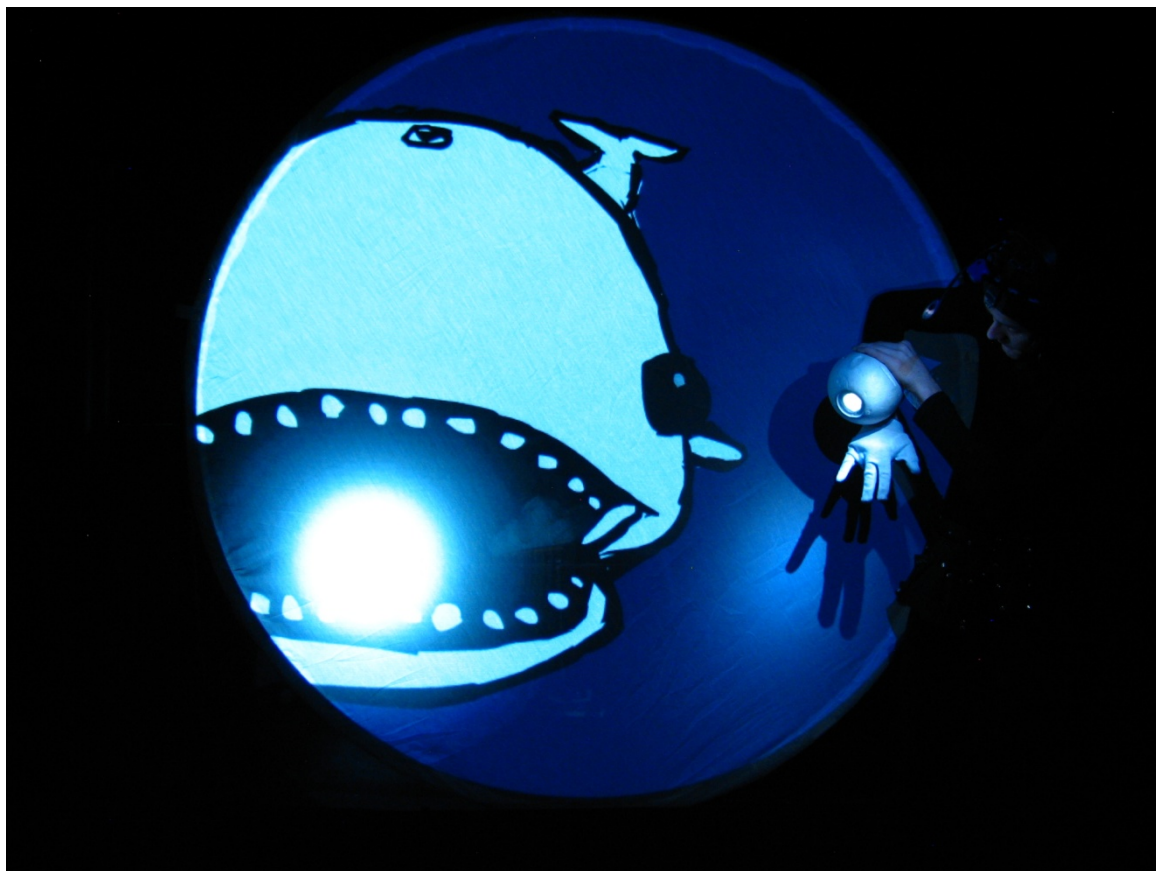
# ABOUT THE CREATOR



## Continued

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Pixar are a huge inspiration for me. There is another Pixar quote about my show that says something like "if Pixar had a theatrical division one would hope they would create a show like this one". These quotes about the show are my favorite, as I am such a huge fan of Wall-E. I aspire to make theatre with as much joy, innocence and humanity as Pixar films. The other day, I watched a Pixar documentary in which Walt Disney said something like (and I paraphrase) "We don't make movies for kids, we don't make them for adults either. We make films that appeal to that special, pure, innocent part inside all human beings". This blew me away because, even though they were talking about animation, that quote managed to define why I love puppets, Jim Henson and Charlie Chaplin films.



# CREATING THE SHOW

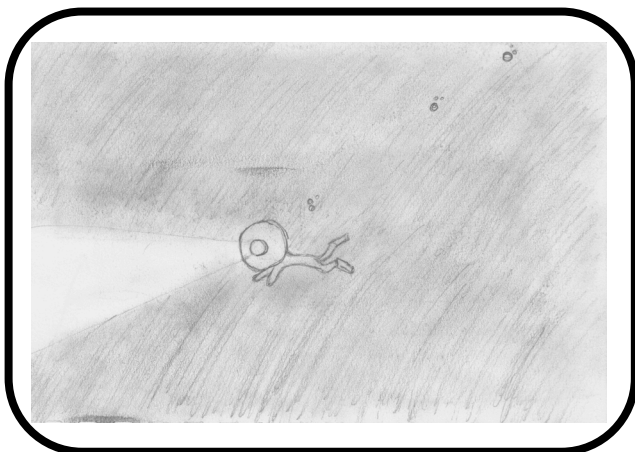
## Activity 1: Inspiring talks



During the process of devising the show, the collaborators looked at a range of source material. Creator Tim Watts says:

“Arielle Gray (who helped me make the show) and I went snorkeling at the Great Barrier Reef, which was a huge inspiration for us. I will never forget looking out into the crystal clear blue water, into the endless nothing and being absolutely terrified! We felt so small and vulnerable in the face of the deep unknown. Humans have still explored so very little of the ocean, which is so exciting and inspiring. It’s full of so many possibilities... it is a creative goldmine! Every time they do exploratory dives they find new and absurd species that you couldn’t dream up... I did a whole lot of research, watching deep sea documentaries TED.com videos, scientific theories, crackpot theories, literary theories, environmental theories.”

*Early development sketches By Tim Watts*



Below are some of the videos that helped inspire the show. Watch the video’s to see where Tim Watts gathered his inspiration (and hopefully you will also be inspired!).

Most influential talks:

[http://www.ted.com/talks/sylvia\\_earle\\_s\\_ted\\_prize\\_wish\\_to\\_protect\\_our\\_oceans.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/sylvia_earle_s_ted_prize_wish_to_protect_our_oceans.html)

[http://www.ted.com/talks/david\\_gallo\\_on\\_life\\_in\\_the\\_deep\\_oceans.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/david_gallo_on_life_in_the_deep_oceans.html)

[http://www.ted.com/talks/david\\_gallo\\_shows\\_underwater\\_astonishments.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/david_gallo_shows_underwater_astonishments.html)

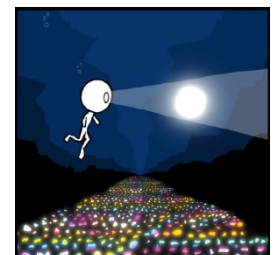
[http://www.ted.com/talks/robert\\_ballard\\_on\\_exploring\\_the\\_oceans.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/robert_ballard_on_exploring_the_oceans.html)

Tech inspiration:

[http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/johnny\\_lee\\_demos\\_wii\\_remote\\_hacks.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/johnny_lee_demos_wii_remote_hacks.html)

Also:

[http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/james\\_cameron\\_before\\_avatar\\_a\\_curious\\_boy.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/james_cameron_before_avatar_a_curious_boy.html)



David Attenborough's documentary 'Deep Blue' was very inspiring to the show, as was James Cameron's 'Volcanoes of the Deep'. The creators also looked at the work of Jacques Cousteau (on which many samples can be viewed on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com))

# CREATING THE SHOW Activity 1:



## Documenting Inspiring Information

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Document your video research using the table below.

Step 1: For each video that you watch, take note of the five most important points that each of the speakers make.

Step 2: Once you have seen Alvin Sputnik: Deep Sea Explorer, revisit these notes and see if you can understand how they inspired the show.

Name of the video	Five main points of the speaker/narrator.	Links to <i>Alvin Sputnik: Deep Sea Explorer</i>
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# CREATING THE SHOW

## Activity 2: Junk Puppets



Warm up activity: Props game!

The prop game is a fun and easy way to start students thinking about objects imaginatively. Collect 3-4 items of differing sizes and shapes- for example, a long piece of fabric, an empty classroom bin and a broom. Students take turns to come up with and demonstrate as many alternative uses for each item as possible.

For example, a bin could become a hat, a well bucket, a dog muzzle... This activity can be easily turned into a competition with the additional of groups and time limits.



"I made [Alvin] at a Puppet Workshop with Spare Parts Puppet Theatre Company. We had a puppet and perform a little scene. I grabbed a Styrofoam ball and a white glove, put my hands together and instantly there was an adorable, deep-sea diver in front of me. He has a tiny body, a big head and one big eye (reminiscent of the old diving bell outfits) so he is, by nature, a wide-eyed, innocent and curious adventurer".

Alvin was first created in a puppetry workshop. Creator Tim Watts says: Puppets can be made of anything and everything. You can make amazing puppets from stuff lying around your home or school.

Step 1: Collect an assortment of "junk". Here are some suggestions listed for you to start collecting!

Paper cups and bags  
Straws  
Pop sticks  
Milk cartons and bottles -  
always washed out and dried!  
Egg cartons  
Shoelaces  
Paper bags  
Bamboo skewers  
Aluminium foil

**Also useful...**  
Glue  
Masking tape  
Hot glue guns  
Double sided tape  
Split pins  
Pipe cleaners  
Googly eyes



Step 2: Look at the "junk" you have collected. Is there anything that looks like it could be a head? A body? Legs? What if you cut it in half? Are you making a human puppet? An animal? Or a strange new creature never seen before?

Step 3: Using tape or glue, assemble your junk puppet. Don't forget to allow for movement of parts- can you create joints from split pins, or pieces of string? How else can you make movable parts?

Step 4: How will your puppet be manipulated? Is there a part in which you insert your hand? Or is it in two parts, like Alvin?



Step 5: Operate your puppet. Give your puppet a name and a way of moving. Introduce your puppet to other puppets in your class!

# CREATING THE SHOW



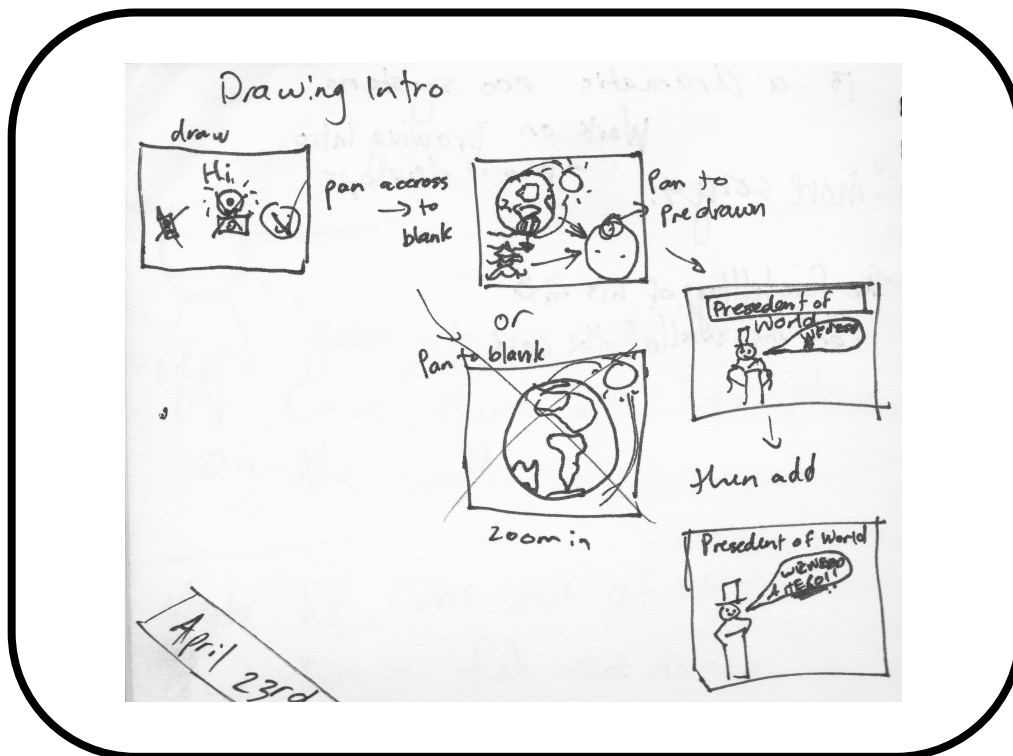
## Activity 3: Creating basic animations

*The Adventures of Alvin Sputnik: Deep Sea Explorer* makes great use of projected backgrounds and animations. There are lots of great programs you can use to develop your animation; creator Tim Watts used one called Flash.

Let's look at using Microsoft PowerPoint (found on most computers) to create a background for a puppet show. The first step is to plan your animation. Many cartoon writers use storyboards to plan how their work will look.

A storyboard is a like an annotated comic strip. It shows what each "shot" of your animation will look like, with a brief description below it outlining movement, or specific details.

Here is an early draft storyboard Tim Watts created for the opening sequence of the show:



Using the following worksheet, outline a basic sequence for your animation.

1. By making copies of slides, and moving the objects within them, you can create a frame-by-frame animation using Microsoft PowerPoint. It's like making a digital version of a flip book. There is a simple explanation of this process at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=02A\\_-3ZwE6w](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=02A_-3ZwE6w) and also at <http://www.wikihow.com/Make-Animation-or-Movies-with-Microsoft-PowerPoint>.
2. Challenge: Can you make a clip that is set to music? Go to the Insert menu and select Sound. Choose the track for which you want to make a clip. Click on OK and see if you can get your animation timings to match the song!

# CREATING THE SHOW



## Activity 3: Storyboarding your animation

Step 1: Briefly describe what will happen in your short animation.

*Example: A polar bear sits on an iceberg that is slowly melting, until it falls into the water.*

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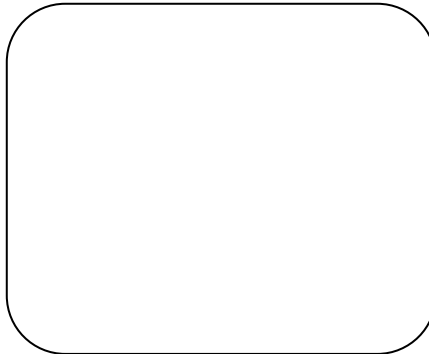
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Step 2: Use the storyboard panels below to explain (visually and with brief notes) what will happen “shot by shot” in your short animation.

Example:

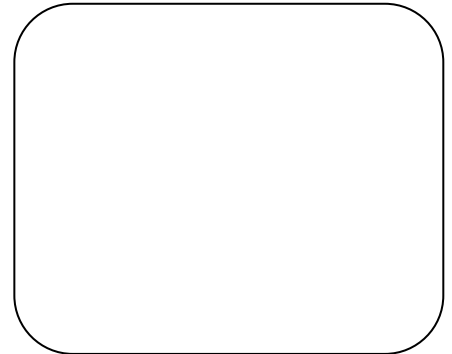


*A polar bear sits on an iceberg that is slowly melting*



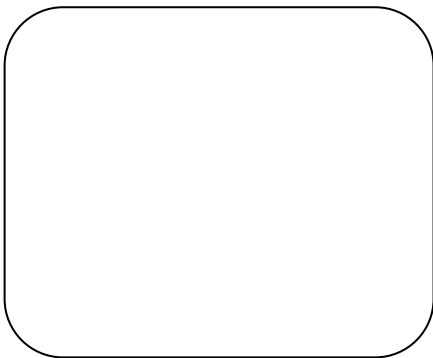
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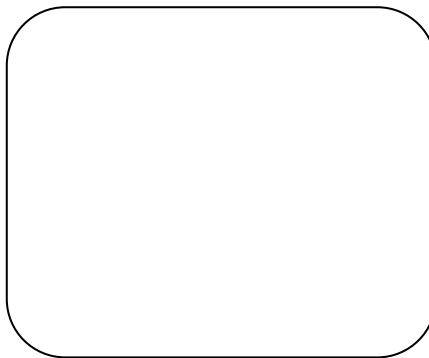
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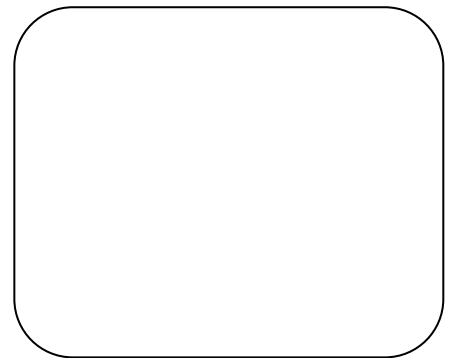
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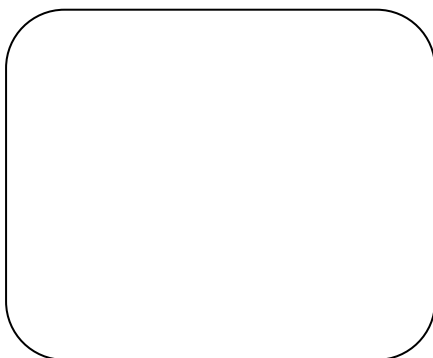
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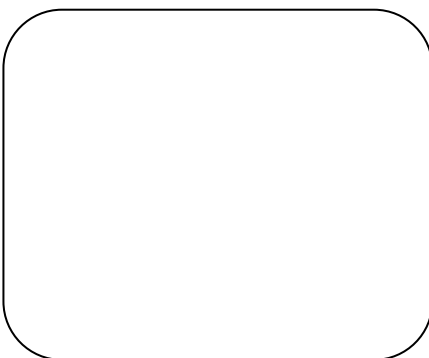
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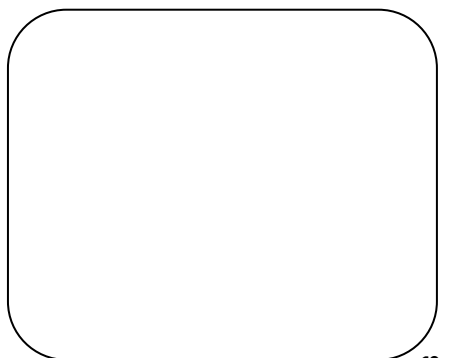
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# ANALYSING THE SHOW

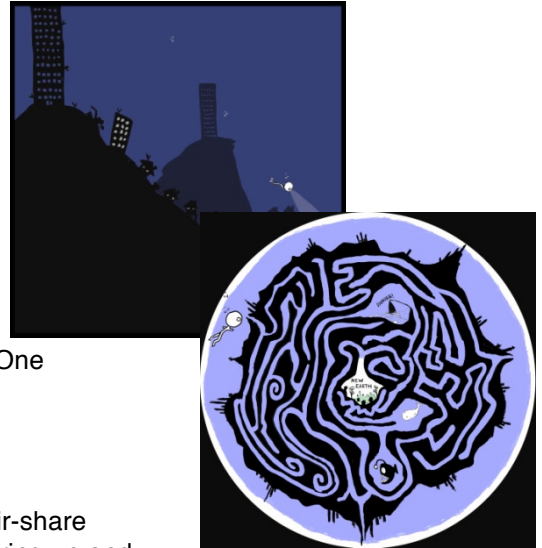


## Activity 4: Exploring themes through play building

Working in small groups, you will develop a short narrative performance based on themes from the show.

Some suggestions include the themes of:

- Isolation
- Hope
- Exploring ancient mythological stories (such as Orpheus and Eurydice from Activity 5)
- Ideas generated through the research completed in Activity One



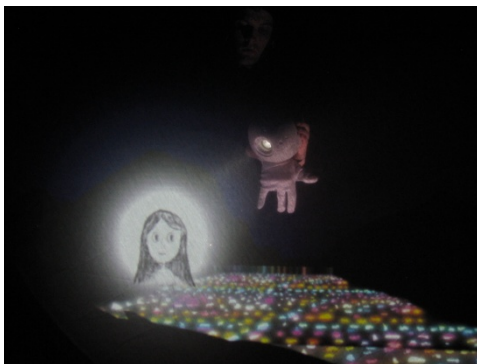
Step 1: Brainstorm ideas.

An easy way to gather ideas for a given theme is to use the think-pair-share technique. Think about your prior knowledge of the theme before pairing up and sharing their ideas.

Step 2: To help organise your thoughts at the beginning of the process, you may wish to express this narrative in comic book form. Stick figures are sufficient, with a short explanatory sentence below. The storyboard worksheet from Activity Three might be useful.

Step 3: In groups, develop six tableaux (frozen pictures) that depict each major point of the story:

- i) Introduction to setting and characters
- ii) Subplot
- iii) Conflict arises
- iv) Conflict intensifies
- v) Resolution of subplot
- vi) Resolution of main conflict



It is important that you make full use of as many non-verbal communication techniques as possible: gesture, facial expression, levels and proximity. You need not feel restricted to depicting only humans in each tableau; try to take on more abstract roles like an emotion, or setting.

Step 4: Each tableau should then be “activated” by allowing each person in the group to add a single movement and / or line of dialogue.

Step 5: These activated tableaux will form the structure of each scene in your devised play. You can now expand these scenes and rehearse

them.

# ADVERTISING THE SHOW



## Activity 5: Mythological Stories - Orpheus and Eurydice

*The Adventures of Alvin Sputnik: Deep Sea Explorer* draws from many story sources. Creator Tim Watts says:

A lot of “There was a bit of research done in many different areas, and story structure is certainly something we researched, and considered. Looking at the difference between say *The Odyssey* as a "quest" plot and *Alice in Wonderland* as a "journey and return" plot... there is something so profound about those classic stories, often great movies, or stories, borrow from these classic myths.”

comparison has been drawn with the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice.

“The most famous story in which Orpheus figures is that of his wife Eurydice (sometimes referred to as Eurydice and also known as Agricope). While walking among her people, the Cicones, in tall grass at her wedding, Eurydice was set upon by a satyr. In her efforts to escape the satyr, Eurydice fell into a nest of vipers and she suffered a fatal bite on her heel. Her body was discovered by Orpheus who, overcome with grief, played such sad and mournful songs that all the nymphs and gods wept. On their advice, Orpheus travelled to the underworld and by his music softened the hearts of Hades and Persephone (he was the only person ever to do so), who agreed to allow Eurydice to return with him to earth on one condition: he should walk in front of her and not look back until they both had reached the upper world. He set off with Eurydice following, and, in his anxiety, as soon as he reached the upper world, he turned to look at her, forgetting that both needed to be in the upper world, and she vanished for the second time, but now forever.”

(from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orpheus\\_and\\_Eurydice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orpheus_and_Eurydice))

1. Create a movement piece in response to the Orpheus and Eurydice myth. You may wish to simply recreate the story, or use parts of it to inspire new stories. Use percussion instruments to enhance the physical performance.
2. Going on such an epic journey would require a lot of preparation. Imagine you are going on a mission of life and death.

What would you need to take with you? Orpheus needed his lyre and Alvin Sputnik needed the suit and tank of oxygen.

Draw a sketch outlining the supplies you would need to take for your journey.

You can take it in turns to “hot seat” other students. Ask each other questions of the intrepid traveller’s journey, which are answered in role.

3. Imagine the story of your journey is being produced as a fully realised play. Using a cardboard box and pieces of cardboard, create a set model to show what the stage would look like for the performance.

Don’t forget to think about the principles and elements of design!



# ADVERTISING THE SHOW



# Activity 6: New Earth



You've been hired as the publicist for New Earth! Alvin Sputnik has found an alternative living space for all humans, now that the ocean levels have risen so high.

However, it would seem that not everyone is convinced, so you have been asked to create a compelling brochure for New Earth, outlining the features and urging people to move.

Step 1: Decide what you imagine New Earth would be like. Answer the following questions within the boxes.

What kind of environment and landscape would New Earth have?

What kinds of plants and animals would New Earth have?

What kind of buildings and transport would the people of New Earth build?

What other exciting things can you imagine might be found in New Earth?

Step 2: Now use this information to create an exciting brochure advertising New Earth!

Step 3: To really seal the deal, you have been asked to direct a commercial advertising New Earth. What techniques will you use? Voiceovers? Images? Live actors? Rehearse your ad in small groups before you present it to the class.

EXTENSION: Record your advertisement and edit it using a program such as Windows Movie Maker or Adobe Premiere.

# AFTER THE SHOW

## Activity 7: Reviewing the show



*The Adventures of Alvin Sputnik: Deep Sea Explorer* has received rave reviews from around the world. You can read lots of them on Weeping Spoon's website:

<http://www.weepingspoon.com/AlvinSputnik/Reviews/Reviews.html>

**Use the following framework to help you write your own review (critique). Write your ideas in note form. Remember, the more specific details you give, the better!**

**State the name of the play, playwright, theatre group, venue, date, director.  
Briefly give the background of any relevant person and lead actor/s.**

**Brief outline of the plot (story) in enough detail for the reader to understand the story, but brief enough to avoid rambling.  
Briefly explain the initial reaction and impact upon the audience and/or reviewer.**

**State the actor's names (in order of importance or appearance) and the name of the character they played. Review the quality of each actor's performance.**

## Activity 7: Reviewing the show (Continued)



Explain the use of stage design throughout the performance. Did the play include any set design and/or props? Was the stage space good or bad for the performers?

Did the play use any lighting, sound/music, costume design or any other technical aspects which were worthy of mention?

Dramatic Structure - beginning, middle and end.  
Were some acts/scenes more interesting than others?

Were there any messages, morals or themes presented to the audience?

What is your personal opinion about the play? Do you recommend people to see the play?  
Do you have any further comments to add to your review?

Following this framework, write your notes into full sentence form, to create your review. Make sure that you start a new paragraph for each section.

