

# ARTOUR

My Life in Boxes  
By Gravity Dolls



*Photo by Aaron Walker*

## PRESENTER'S INFORMATION

# GRAVITY DOLLS

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## **COMPANY PROFILE**

Gravity Dolls is a new collaboration between circus performer, Tim Rutty (2013 recipient of the Circus Oz Graduate Award) and actor/writer, Tarah Carey (QNFA nominee for best actress). The pair was first introduced in 2012 when mutual work and study place, NICA, brought them together. After developing respect and appreciation for each other's work, the pair investigated the possibility of collaborating to blend their passions for theatre and circus. This passion sparked a vision to create stories that encompass the entire performance space, challenging the laws of gravity and invoking a sense of magical realism in their play, and thus, Gravity Dolls was born.

As a company, Gravity Dolls is gaining momentum and rapidly developing a high reputation for their unique brand of physical theatre. At the core of their creative process co-founders Tim Rutty and Tarah Carey look to move away from the traditions of circus that use tricks to impress the audience. Their work looks to push the relationship between circus and theatre, where the performers' movement fosters a visual score for the subtext of the script.

## **ABOUT THE SHOW**

### SHOW SYNOPSIS

Comforted by the all too realistic memory of her late husband Teddy, Elise continues life like he never left, until, he suggests a deadly truth: either ghosts exist or there is something wrong with her. She then must choose, receive treatment and lose Teddy forever, or hoard her memories, hoard their love, and let her illness consume her.

My Life in Boxes is a bittersweet journey; Elise and Teddy's love and interactions so endearing, their fights so humorous. It is a beautiful, fragmented story explored both through text and circus, expertly woven throughout this bittersweet journey.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Written by Tarah Carey

Directed by Maude Davey

Performed by Tarah Care & Tim Rutty

Composer/ Sound Design by Ian Moorhead

### BIOGRAPHIES

Maude Davey

Maude Davey trained at VCA and has worked as an actor, director and writer for more than 25 years, her primary focus being new work. Her most recent work was a solo retrospective, called My Life in the Nude at La Mama Theatre, which will tour in 2014. Recent directing work includes Evolution, Revolution and the Mail Order Bride by Zulya Kamalova (fortyfive downstairs) Just an Old Fashioned Grrr! By Danielle Asciak and Herstory for Imogen Kelly.

Much of her work has a community focus. Although based in Melbourne, she has an ongoing relationship with Vitalstatistix Theatre Company in Adelaide, with whom she has produced such events as Second to None, an Indigenous and Maritime history of Port Adelaide, and the Cutaway series (2011 – 2013). She has collaborated often with Finucane & Smith as a member of The Burlesque Hour ensemble, touring nationally and internationally for the last ten years. Other collaborations with F&S include Carnival of Mysteries for the 2010 Melbourne Festival, The Flood by Jackie Smith and several seasons of Salon de Dance.

Tim Ruddy

Starting out in gymnastics at age six, Tim's love for physicality has seen him graduate from the National Institute of Circus Arts (NICA) as well as perform circus internationally and regularly around his home city, Melbourne. During his final year of study at NICA, Tim performed in the opening ceremony at the 34e Festival Mondial du Cirque de Demain in Paris, Made To Fit in Auch, regularly performed in productions at Red Bennies and was hand picked to compete in Australia's first ever national aerial competition where he placed 2nd Runner Up.

Attracted to merging the extreme physical nature of circus with the artistic story telling of theatre, Tim was inspired to take his circus career in a different direction. Upon graduating, it was this creative thinking that led Tim to co-found Gravity Dolls with Tarah Carey in 2014.

His recent credits include the Circus Oz NICA Graduate Award; Gravity Doll's debut work My Life in Boxes (The Substation, Melba Spiegel tent and Lotus Palace and winner of Original New Circus Award – Melbourne Fringe and Runner Up - Gasworks Circus Showdown), the Asia Cup Opening Ceremony as well as being a resident performer at Pacha, The Ivy in Sydney.

Tarah Carey

Growing up in the small town of Maryborough, QLD, Tarah spent most days in a gymnastics leotard. Competing at a state level, Tarah continued training until Theatre Residency Week with QLD Theatre Co redirected her passions towards a career in the performing arts. During her final year of the USQ acting program, she was cast in her first feature film Girl Clock, playing the daughter of Queenie Vanderzant alongside Veronica Neave and Jamie Dunn. In the same year she received a nomination for 'Best Actress' in the Queensland New Filmmakers Awards for her role in The Last Breath.

After graduating Tarah rekindled her love of all things upside-down and began training with Vulcana Women's Circus in Brisbane and performed the principle role in their production called Grave Effects of Notable Women, a promenade theatre piece performed in the Toowoong Cemetery.

In December 2011, Tarah relocated to Melbourne and began working with the National Institute of Circus Arts (NICA) in arts management. Since moving to Melbourne Tarah has performed at La Mama in Tying Knots and Outside

the Box, Revolt in 4.48 Psychosis and Water Torture and Red Bennies for the Brass Bear Cabaret and Neighbours.

## **PERFORMANCE SPECIFICS**

### DURATION

60 min no interval

### SUITABLE VENUES

Black Box, Cabaret, Town Hall, Pros Arch

Show is flexible and can be adapted to suit most venues

### MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PERFORMANCES PER WEEK

6 performances

### MINIMUM BREAK BETWEEN PERFORMANCES

120 minutes

### LICENCING AGREEMENTS

N/A

### APRA OBLIGATIONS

N/A all original music used

### TOURING PERSONNEL

The touring party consists of 4 people.

Name	Role
Tarah Carey	Performer
Tim Rutty	Performer
TBA	Tech
TBA	Tour/ Stage Manager

### PERFORMANCE HISTORY

Year	Venue	Number of performances
2014	The Substation	6
2015	The Melba	4
2015	The Lotus Palace	12

## **AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT**

### OVERVIEW

The cast are available for post-show Meet and Greets, mingling and photo opportunities with audience members.

Treasured possessions / hoarders board: Set up a corkboard or blackboard that allows people to contribute by writing down something that they are holding onto. For example, a blackboard with the prompt “I can’t let go of...” or “I’m holding onto...” that patrons can write on and build in the lead up to the show.

#### COST

Stationary for the hoarders board, chalk or pens for eg.

#### TARGET AUDIENCE FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Activity is suitable for people of all ages.

### **MARKETING**

#### MARKETING COPY

##### *One line*

The story of a hoarder and the things she’s lost.

##### *Short*

Comforted by the all too realistic memory of her late husband Teddy, Elise continues life like he never left, until, he suggests a deadly truth: either ghosts exist or there is something wrong with her. She then must choose, receive treatment and lose Teddy forever, or hoard her memories, hoard their love, and let her illness consume her.

My Life in Boxes is a bittersweet journey; Elise and Teddy's love and interactions so endearing, their fights so humorous. It is a beautiful, fragmented story explored both through text and circus, expertly woven throughout this bittersweet journey.

##### *Extended*

My Life in Boxes is the story of Elise, a hoarder coming to grips with everything that she has lost.

Elise welcomes us into her life near its end; as council workers, sent to clean up the hoarded relics of her short, 35 year life, and the memories her dead husband, Teddy.

Before this reality is even allowed to sink in, the story relocates to Elise's mid-twenties, where she and Teddy fall in love. Teddy is a doctor and Elise an epidemiologist (she analyses the patterns and causes of diseases), passing time as a barista. When Elise scores a dream job researching birth deformities in a remote mining community, Teddy asks her to marry him and accompanies her for the adventure.

Their love is overwhelming, but their dreams are in contention. Teddy longs to start a family, a proposition Elise likens to a prison sentence. Fate will not

let them resolve their differences; Teddy dies of a heart attack and Elise is left to carry on her journey alone. But she is not alone.

Comforted by the all too realistic memory of her late husband Teddy, Elise continues life like he never left, until, he suggests a deadly truth: either ghosts exist or there is something wrong with her. She then must choose, receive treatment and lose Teddy forever, or hoard her memories, hoard their love, and let her illness consume her.

My Life in Boxes is a bittersweet journey; Elise and Teddy's love and interactions so endearing, their fights so humorous. It is a beautiful, fragmented story explored both through text and circus, sequences on trapeze, aerial rope, and adagio expertly weaved throughout the story. You will laugh, you will cry, you will love My Life in Boxes.

### MARKETING SUMMARY

<b>Audience Segment</b>	<b>Ideas on how to activate them</b>
<b>Young adults 18 - 35</b>	Run a ticket giveaway on social media encouraging people to post images and/or stories about their most treasured possession.
<b>Older adults</b>	Contact planned activity groups through local Council and offer group rates. Send posters and flyers to local Senior Citizens centres, neighbourhood houses, Probus groups and Rotary Clubs. Invite group bookings from local retirement villages. Consider offering seniors discount ticket prices.
<b>Women</b>	Promotion of the show for a 'Girls Night Out' or mum/daughter date night. Fans of <i>The Notebook</i> , <i>Titanic</i> , <i>The Fault in Our Stars</i> - appeal to broad themes of romance, love, comedy, tragedy and relationships.
<b>Health care workers</b>	<i>My Life in Boxes</i> explores several health related themes and issues including clinical trials, sudden and prolonged illnesses, and mental health. It has appealing subject matter for nurses, doctors, health care professionals, and those working in hospice or home care. Contact these groups through posters/flyers/emails to local hospitals, GPs, medical centres, and nurses unions.
<b>Socially conscious</b>	Local volunteer groups, environmental groups (for example, 'Friends of' parklands support etc.) would engage well with the subject matter. Consider promotion through fair trade / organic grocers and cafes.
<b>Lovers of circus and physical theatre</b>	<i>My Life in Boxes</i> melds traditional theatre, circus and physical theatre elements. It is an atypical circus show, so is not to be promoted as a juggling/clowns production, but is more akin to production such as <i>If These Walls Could Talk</i> .
<b>Community theatre groups</b>	As the production explores and thwarts interesting theatrical devices and conventions, it would be of interest to community theatre groups, local amateur dramatic societies and drama schools as it challenges traditional theatrical expectations while telling a unique story.
<b>Not for profit health support organisations</b>	<i>My Life in Boxes</i> explores living with illness, and would be of interest to people living with illness and their friends and family. Support groups such as Canteen, Cancer Council, Headspace and more would be potential partners for reaching these audiences.

### MEDIA QUOTES

"Told through text, movement and circus, My Life in Boxes has an strong emotional range, beginning with a charming meetcute between Elise and

Teddy. While parts of the performance are raw, Maude Davey's direction feels wise, expressive and yet restrained. The result is a work that is the nugget of something special that deserves to have a life beyond the Fringe.”  
Jordan Beth Vincent, The Age

“A stunning act of a woman’s collection of memories while she struggled against the reality of her future. A definite must see for theatre overs.”  
Alexzandra Barilla, TREv

“My Life in Boxes is an absolute gem. It reminded me of all the things I love about live performance. It had me entertained and intellectually stimulated, the hour passed before I knew it. As a piece of theatre, ‘My Life in Boxes’ capitalises on the talents of its creators and performers. It uses every element of production (circus, script, sound track, performance, set) to tell a heartfelt and important story in an extraordinary way.” Nina Barry-Macaulay, theatremaker and dramaturg

“Unexpected, distinctively unique, and layered with joy, comedy, love, grief and loss.” Cordelia Woods, Rip it Up

“My Life in Boxes is dark, soulful, uplifting theatre that held me captivated from beginning to end” Justin Boden, Dirt & Candy

## AUDIENCE REVIEWS

Audience Feedback from Adelaide Fringe (via ‘Talk Fringe’):

“A very moving performance! An emotional ride that will tug at your heart strings. There are good acrobatics that build up as the story progresses these are also suited to the story being told and performed so subtly that they really are part of the dialogue, rather than a time to stop and clap. The story itself will leave you wondering what was actually happening as the actors take you through a very important period in their lives. There is audience participation but it is very engaging and does not require anything more difficult than standing where asked, this only adds to the story being told (got kissed twice!).” Tom B.

“My Life in Boxes was an amazing piece of work to get to see today! Such wonderful talented engaging performers, and an intriguing and powerful story. I was trying not to cry at the end! Thank you for such a wonderful show Gravity Dolls!” Sarah A.

“As someone who knows a hoarder or two, I was intrigued to see My Life in Boxes. You never know what has influenced them to be who they are. This was a very touching mix of theatre and circus taking the audience through a range of emotions from hope and inspiration to sadness and reflection. The acrobatics were seamlessly woven into the storyline, adding physical depth. The performers engaged well with audience members, getting many involved



in different aspects of the show, but always making people feel comfortable. A unique and thoughtful piece from the talented Gravity Dolls!" Amy I.

"The best thing I've seen at Fringe this year. A wonderful, thoughtfully crafted piece presented with tremendous sensitivity. I'm in agreement with all the reviews above. I'm glad they enjoyed the show as much as I did." Bob E.

#### VIDEO LINKS

<http://www.gravitydolls.com/projects-3/my-life-in-boxes/>

*30 sec broadcast quality clip available*

#### IMAGES

<http://www.gravitydolls.com/gallery-2/my-life-in-boxes/>

Web and hi-res production and publicity images available here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/iutfoa7agjv3e5o/AACHNxftg0yy2vnEnZOgM09qa?dl=0>

#### MARKETING MATERIALS

Generic poster and DL flyer design  
30 sec edited teaser (suitable for broadcast)  
Publicity and production images  
Q&A with cast

#### CONTENT WARNINGS / AUDIENCES TO AVOID

Mild coarse language  
May be unsuitable for young audiences, parental/ guardian discretion recommended

#### SPONSOR OR OTHER ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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## PRODUCTION DETAILS

### TECHNICAL SUMMARY

The production is designed to activate the whole space – the performers interact with audience directly, sometimes drawing the audience up on stage and sometimes with the performers continuing the performance as they move through the audience. Because of that, it is best staged in the thrust, however, the design is flexible and can be adapted to end on venues. Tested and compliant aerial points (2 minimum) are required as the aerial work is critical to the performance. If rigging is not possible the show can tour with a freestanding rig with adjustable heights. Venue rigging is preferred for aesthetics. There is no need for a curtain or drapes to be rigged but the performance can work around any drapes or curtains that are already in place.

### EXAMPLE SCHEDULE

1200	Arrive at venue. Toolbox talk and induction (OH&S requirement) and cast induction	1x MX, Touring Crew, Cast
1215	Bump in set and free standing rig (if required)	Cast
1215	Commence lighting focus, sound setup and rigging (if using venue rigging)	1x MX, Touring Crew
1415	15 min break	All
1430	Continue lighting focus and sound setup	1x VT, 2x LX, 1x SX, Touring Crew
1530	Rehearsal/walk through	Touring Crew
1630	Dinner	All
1730	Show Call	Touring Crew
1930	Performance #1	Touring Crew
2100	Bump out	Touring Crew
2200	Finish	

### CREW REQUIRED FROM VENUE

1 x multi-skilled tech required to assist with lighting and sound during bump in.

### STAGE

Set is a modular design made up of individual origami inspired cardboard boxes. The boxes are moved into different configurations throughout the show. The boxes flat pack and are assembled by the cast during the bump in. Only other set piece is a medium size table (90cm W x 160cm L x 75cm H).

Min Stage requirements:

Width: 5m

Depth: 4m

Height: 4m

Staging can be adapted to fit larger stages.

Max Stage size:

Width: 10m

Depth: 10m

Height: 10m

If venue is larger than max stage we would reimagine the space and adapt the performance to suit the venue.

## PROPS

### *Gravity Dolls to supply*

- 1 Wine Bottle (empty and covered in brown paper)
- 1 Paper Flowers
- 1 Table
- 3 x milk crate sized set boxes
- 20 – 40 folded boxes
- 1 Standing lamp
- 1 stick of red lipstick
- 1 fake blood bottle with sponge (and tissues for cleaning)
- 1 Childs Dress

### *Venue to supply*

- 1 small trestle table to pre-set props on

## RIGGING

Two aerial points and a floor point for tying off is required. Depending on the structure in the ceiling or if suitable truss is available there are a number of ways to achieve this.

### *Gravity Dolls to supply*

- 1 Licensed rigger (TBC)
- 1 Aerial Rope
- 1 Aerial Frame (trapeze type apparatus)
- 1 Lunging belt
- 1 x 30m rigging rope (12mm black spectra)
- 1 x 20m rigging rope (12mm black spectra)
- 6 x twist lock carabineers
- 1 swivel
- 1 Free standing Aerial Rig (for use in venues that are not able to supply the below Venue Requirements)

### *Venue to supply*

- Access to I-beams in the ceiling 4-8m high (minimum load rating of 1 Ton)
- Access to a I-beam close to the floor (minimum load rating of 1 Ton)
- 4 x I-beam clamps if the top of the I-beams sit flush with the ceiling (minimum load rating of 1 Ton)

Or

- Access to I-beams in the ceiling 4-8m high (minimum load rating of 1 Ton)
- Access to a floor anchor point (minimum load rating of 1 Ton)
- 5 x 1.5m round polyester lifting slings if there is space above the top of the I-beam to loop a sling over (minimum load rating of 1 Ton)

Or

- Grid access upon bump in
- 2 on stage rigging points (minimum load rating of 1 Ton)
- 1 rigging point in the wings/side of stage (minimum load rating of 1 Ton)
- 1 floor/low wall point (minimum load rating of 1 Ton)

#### RATINGS/ LOADS

- rigging points (including slings and hardware) rated to a min 1 tonne
- max load through rope – 350kg or 3.4 kilonewtons

#### LIGHTING

The production has a simple lighting plan with most states achievable with general washes. The ability to add colour (1 warm plus 1 cool) would be preferable. Some specials to pick up the detail in the aerial work would be advantageous along with some side lighting if available.

Full lighting plan available Feb 2016

#### SOUND

Show soundtrack, no mics required.

*Gravity Dolls to supply*

Soundtrack loaded into Cue Lab on touring Lap Top

*Venue to supply*

Access to in house sound system

AV

N/A

#### WARDROBE

Show costumes – clean and ironed.

*Gravity Dolls to supply*

Clean costumes and all props

*Venue to supply*

*Dressing room*

*Preferable but not essential:*

- *Iron and Ironing Board*
- *Costume rails*
- *Full length mirrors*

*No wardrobe crew required.*

#### FREIGHT NOTES

Cast and set/ props tour in a single van. Access to a loading dock is preferable but not essential. In lieu of a loading dock a ground level access point or ramp with a minimum 1m width required.

#### CRITICAL ISSUES

There are three aerial elements within the show: aerial rope, single point trapeze and counterweighting. The counterweighting is between the two performers on stage – no winch or fly operation required. If venue does not have rigging capabilities, Gravity Dolls free standing rig can be used. The rig is bumped in and out by the performers and touring crew. Technical specs of free standing rig available in early 2016.

#### **CONTACTS**

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