

state ed

# Gorgon

by Elena Carapetis



**STATE SA  
THEATRE  
COMPANY**

ROAD SAFETY PARTNER



REGIONAL TOURING PARTNER



CORPORATE PARTNER



SUPPORTING PARTNER



**DURATION APPROX: 1 HOUR (NO INTERVAL)**

**SUITABLE FOR** *Years 10 - 12*

*DWS performance followed by a 20 - 30 min Q&A session*

# Index

---

Index.....	3
Cast & Creatives .....	4
Plot.....	5
Synopsis.....	6
Writer .....	8
Director .....	11
Actor Profile.....	12
Characters.....	14
Themes.....	15
Metaphor.....	17
Language .....	18
Interesting Reading.....	19
Designer.....	23
Design .....	25
Music .....	27
Essay Questions .....	28
Performance Elements .....	29
References .....	31

# Cast & Creatives

---

## **CAST**

Lee	James Smith
Maz/Lola	Chiara Gabrielli

## **CREATIVES**

Writer	Elena Carapetis
Director	Nescha Jelk
Designer	Kathryn Sproul
Lighting Designer	Chris Petridis
Composer	Will Spartalis
State Manager	Hollee Gunter

# Plot

---

Meet Lee and Maz. Best mates, invulnerable. It's summer, their last year of school and they are going to go off. They are young and beautiful, tanned and strong. On one fateful night they are drunk and high, driving down the highway. Life shatters and only one is left to pick up the pieces.

Meet Lola. She looks exactly like Maz. Makes sense; she's his sister. His twin. In the face of tragedy she's looking for answers.



Rehearsals: Chiara Gabrielli & James Smith

# Synopsis

---

## Prologue

*Dark. Like the inside of a cave. The music of an angry young man. Something bounces furiously up and down to the beat. It is him. Wearing the clothing and culture of his day. His dance has no joy. It serves to renounce whatever gods have brought him to this and spurn their attempts at mercy.*

*Sounds start to rumble from a world below ours. A loud knock, as if on a door, as if from a terrifying monster, stills him. Another knock. He places his hands over his mouth to suppress a scream. The rumbling gets louder. The monster knocks again. He crouches, makes himself very small.*

*The monster starts to sound her terrifying cry, all the while knocking, demanding to let him in. The young man erupts, faces the sounding fury head on with a cry of his own, as his attempt to spurn the monster.*

*The noises of monster and the man join together to make a wall of chaotic sound, the light quickly grows, fills the world and becomes a blinding crescendo as a girl's voice desperately says 'Let me in.'*

## PART ONE

We meet Lee and Maz, best friends, engrossed and laughing about a conversation where Maz 'sharted' in his pants.

Night-time. Lee is playing a video game of racing cars and talking to Maz on the phone. Lee's dad bangs on his door and growls at him to take the bins out. Lee is angry.

Maz's birthday. Lee and Maz are riding in Maz's new car. Maz talks about his sister Lola; how she didn't get a car, how she gets into trouble and how since puberty she has become a monster. Maz thinks that Lee likes his sister and disparages, before bringing in the 'bro-code' over Lola, where mates don't date sisters. They continue to drive through McDonalds and cruise down Hindley Street. Here they see people who have been drinking and on drugs and who to them, all look the same. Lee says, "Why they gotta look so freaking sad all the time? We're all sad...I'm trying to make sense of stuff I don't understand."

Maz lets Lee drive his car. Lee picks up speed after Maz teases him for going too slow, "This ain't a Ferrari, but she handles pretty well, and I take control. Me, the car and the night road. We dance together in the pale moonlight."

Lee begins to feel all the bitterness inside go as he picks up speed to navigate a bend. The car drifts sideways. Maz freaks out and demands that they swap back. Maz drives again, but gets a text on his phone. **Disaster. Loud horn, bright lights rushing towards them. Blinding light, a wailing car horn and the roar of the end of the world.**

## PART TWO

One Year Later.

Lola turns up at Lee's house, holding a 'Happy Birthday' balloon. Lee is now living alone in a tiny apartment, filled with old chip packets, pizza boxes, bottles, stained couches and lots of books. Lola tries to talk to Lee, but doesn't get any response. She tells him that she saw his mother at the cemetery and that she's been looking for him for a long time. She misses him, "I got nowhere to go, I got no one else." Lola discovers that Lee has become a recluse, with no television or computer games, only books. She also finds out that Lee has also built a shrine to Maz in his bedroom.

Lola has been desperately lonely without Lee or her brother and has struggled to move past the guilt of her final harsh words to Maz. She also lives Maz's shadow, feeling that her parents wanted her dead instead of Maz, *"I'll never be enough and you're an angel. Well played Maz, you win."*

Lee has struggled to cope, locking himself away from friends and family and reading books about death. He feels guilty for what happened to Maz, but also guilt that he got so angry with his mother, *"The way she looked at me...it turned the sadness into this ugly feeling, like I hated her, and all I wanted to do was get her off me.....so I stood up and I pushed her."*

Un-bottling all of his feelings releases Lee from his prison and Lola helps him to leave the apartment and face the world.

# Writer

---

## ELENA CARAPETIS

Since graduating from NIDA, Elena has worked extensively in film, television and theatre. Elena Carapetis' first play *The Good Son* premiered at Bakehouse Theatre in 2015 for which she has been nominated as Emerging Artist by the Adelaide Critics Circle. Her second play *Helen Back* was shortlisted for the 2012 Adelaide Festival Jill Blewett Award for Playwriting.



In 2014 Elena directed second year actors in her own adaptation of Euripides' *The Bacchae* at the Adelaide College of the Arts. In 2007, Elena wrote an episode of *Marx and Venus* titled *Bedroom Therapy*, for SBS TV. Elena was commissioned by State Theatre Company to write a play for State Theatre Company's 2016 education program. The result is a new play *Gorgon* will premiere at the Space Theatre in May 2016 ahead of an extensive regional tour, performing for school and community audiences throughout South Australia.

Elena Carapetis' credentials as a playwright came later in her career; she has long been an on-stage favourite at State Theatre Company, recently appearing in *Machu Picchu*. Her other acting credits for State Theatre Company include *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, *Othello*, *Between Two Waves* our 2014 State Umbrella production, *The Comedy of Errors*, *When the Rain Stops Falling*, *Features of Blown Youth*, *This Uncharted Hour*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Hot Fudge*, *Central Park West*, and *The Things We Do For Love*. Having enjoyed the process of creating the blueprint from which the performance comes, Elena was encouraged to pursue her writing.

## INTERVIEW WITH ELENA

### **Why is the play called *Gorgon* and what references to the Greek mythology have you made?**

In Ancient Greek mythology Gorgons were female monsters with snakes for hair. Their gaze could turn you to stone. They were terrifying and powerful, fascinating and dangerous. Robert Graves (*Greek Myths*, 1958) believes that, "*The myth of Perseus and Medusa (where he cuts off her head) preserves the memory of the conflicts which occurred between men and women in the transition from a matriarchal to a patriarchal society. Perseus cuts down female power which is depicted as monstrous; look at her and you become stone.*"

This play is called *Gorgon* because it explores the idea of females as 'the other'. And because males are conditioned to deny and cut down the feminine parts of themselves such as grief, sadness, joy, compassion and vulnerability - and express everything through the very shallow palate of anger, rage and pride. Because of this, we live in a society where angry boys are knocking each other out with 'coward punches', where one woman a week is killed in Australia by domestic violence and girls are taught tips to avoid being raped. How could a man hurt a woman when she looks him in the eye to the core of his soul - unless he turned himself into stone?

### **What inspired you to write this story and how did you find the voice for the teenage storytelling?**

I'm really tired of hearing about how girls should learn to protect themselves from boys. I'm really tired of hearing about the high suicide rates amongst young men. These things tell me that we are living in a society that places unfair expectations on our young people, according to their gender and this affects the way they relate to each other. We all suffer for it - males and females. What do boys do with their 'forbidden feelings'? When they push them down they don't go away. The feelings morph into

something dark and destructive. This can lead young men to drug and alcohol abuse. They may start to act out violently. They hurt others because they are hurting, or they hurt themselves until they stop hurting.

I wanted to write a piece that explores what happens when boys are taught to 'man up' - when they shut down their vulnerability and are shamed for being weak if they express their feelings. Males experience emotions just as intensely as females, so why are they taught to 'be a man'? What does this mean? We make enemies of each other, we allow our boys to turn to stone. Instead we need to teach boys and girls to always respect one another and that boys do, can and should cry, without being accused of weakness. True strength comes from vulnerability, and that to be called 'a girl' is an enormous compliment, because girls are amazing.

I remember what it was like to be a teenager, I remember it very clearly and I miss it. I try to hold on to that part of myself because it's thrilling and fearless and adventurous. To be on the brink of adulthood and have your whole future sprawled out in front of you, where possibilities are endless, is scary - but you don't know any better just yet so you take risks. Some good, some bad. I like talking to young people because they are cultural game changers and really shape society, especially the way we use language. I'm close to my nephews George and Elia who are really cool guys and who are teenagers. They've given me lots of pointers. I also got some great advice about the use of language from a guy called Joseph- also in his teens - who is a talented young theatre practitioner.

### **What are the challenges of writing a piece from a young person's point of view?**

I've found it really liberating - I remember watching theatre when I was young and knowing when I was being talked down to, or when the audience was treated as not very smart. This really irritated me and still does when I see it in any kind of theatre. Young audiences are far smarter than they are given credit for.

I was worried that this piece was too dark, but then I realised that just because you're young that doesn't mean that you don't experience the dark sides of life. Being young doesn't protect you from bad experiences and I think we need to honour the resilience of young people more in society.

### **What are the main themes in the play?**

Vulnerability is strength. The female as monster. The inarticulacy of male rage.

### **What advice do you have for young writers?**

It's really easy to be crap at something. There will be lots of times where you just want to stop and give up, where you get to the end of a sentence or a thought and have no idea where you're going next. Where you hit a block. Really great artists constantly battle those blocks every single day that they are creating something. The key is not to give up when you hit those challenges, keep going. Work through the block, it will be really hard but it will come. You must be resilient. As Patti Smith says, "*If you hit a wall just kick it in.*" I'd also tell them that they are completely unique and they are the only person in the world who can tell stories with their voice and their perspective, so don't try to mimic anyone else.

### **Each scene has text that appears. What is the purpose for using this in your writing?**

This text appears mostly in the first half of the play, before Lee's life changed. I wanted to signal an exciting time, full of colour, movement and pace, like a video clip or game. The titles create a filmic quality while adding subtle narrative.

### **Could you explain your style of writing? It starts with short lines between Lee & Maz, but also has the punchy descriptive style of explaining what he's seeing.**

That kind of back and forth banter shows that these guys have known each other for a long time, because they are hanging on each other's every word and can't wait to hear the next bit of info. They

finish each other's sentences too. They are super close and have been for ages. It's also how boys talk when they are excited or telling a great story.

When Lee goes into the world he names it and describes it as it happens. The language needs to honour his character (who he is, what he wants, how he's feeling) but also use the words he's chosen to create the environment, characters and events around him.



Rehearsals: James Smith

# Director

---

## NESCHA JELK

Nescha is the Resident Director at State Theatre Company. She graduated from the Flinders Drama Centre directing course in 2010 with First Class Honours and a University Medal. In 2010 she won Helpmann Academy's Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Award.

For State Theatre Company, Nescha has directed *Krapp's Last Tape*, *Othello*, *Jesikah*, *Random* and *Volpone (The Fox)*. Other directing credits include *Alice and Peter Grow Up* (Milk Theatre Collective), *Hamlet* (The Actor's Folio), and *Sepia* (RiAus) which was awarded the 2012 Adelaide Fringe Tour Ready Award.

Nescha has worked extensively as an assistant director for numerous companies including State Theatre Company, Eleventh Hour, Brink Productions, Belvoir, Bell Shakespeare Company and Sydney Theatre Company. She assistant directed *Masquerade* (STCSA/Griffin Theatre Company) which premiered in the 2015 Sydney Festival and featured in Adelaide's 2015 Come Out Festival.



## INTERVIEW WITH NESCHA

### **Why do you think *Gorgon* is an important story to tell?**

We live in a patriarchal society, in which males hold primary power and dominate in roles of leadership. They are told from a young age not to be vulnerable and express their feelings, not get too close with mates for fear of being called gay and to compete against each other.

Lee has a difficult time dealing with his emotions from the beginning of the play. At first he is angry, at his father, his mother's illness and at life. He wants to break free and can't wait to have this freedom. Once his friend dies, he isolates himself, shutting himself away from the world and agonising over his guilt and grief. It is Lola that releases him from this.

It is important that people can embrace both sides of themselves – the feminine and masculine side.

### **Why do you think it's important to develop new Australian work?**

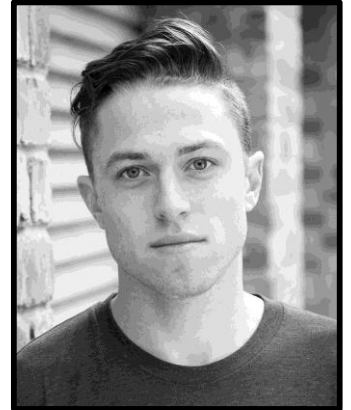
It is important to tell our own stories and explore the ideas that are relevant to us as teenagers and young adults. By doing this, we can keep sense of our developing culture and reflect on the society around us.

# Actor Profiles

---

## **JAMES SMITH - Lee**

James is an acting graduate of Flinders Drama Centre. For State Theatre Company, James has appeared in *Neighbourhood Watch*, *Othello*, *This is Where We Live* and *Volpone*. His studies at Flinders Drama Centre and time spent working at State Theatre Company have given him a good foundation and the chance to play many challenging and rewarding roles as well as the opportunity to work with respected directors and teachers including David Meador, Rosalba Clemente, Tom Healy, Alirio Zavarce, Renato Musolino, Nescha Jelk, Julian Meyrick and Jon Halpin.



In 2014, James was awarded the Bendigo Bank Helpmann Award for emerging artist and has received a SASA award for Best Performance in Aaron Nassau's *Birdbath*.

## **INTERVIEW WITH JAMES**

### **What do you think is the appeal of *Gorgon* for a younger audience?**

*Gorgon* is a play about young people. It's brash and funny with the boring bits left out. It's the theatre equivalent of a Chinese burn, a noogie and a punch in the wall!

### **Describe your character?**

Lee is angry, smart, quick and sad.

### **What are the changes that occur for your character between Part 1 and 2 - and what do you do to embody these changes?**

In the first half Lee is vivacious, quick, and rough and although he has trouble at home, he is generally happy. This is played natural and more playful.

In the second part, Lee has been devastated and struggling with the aftermath of trauma and not dealing with his grief. He also doesn't speak as often. I use a different physicality to differentiate between the two halves of Lee. I also try to completely shift my psychology from Lee and Maz, trying to imagine how a person changes through trauma and after a year of isolation.



## **CHIARA GABRIELLI - Maz/Lola**

Chiara is an Adelaide artist and actor. This is her first production for State Theatre Company.

She has recently graduated from Flinders University Drama Centre (Acting) where she was able to participate in an international exchange study program at Columbia College in Chicago, Illinois. This allowed her to study further playwriting and physical theatre. Chiara has enjoyed performing such roles as Michelle in 'A single Act' directed by

Sarah Dunn, Puck in a *Midsummer Night's Dream* directed by David Meador and Tania in 'The Art of War' directed by Tom Healey. In 2015 Chiara started her YouTube project, 'The F Word' looking into people's perception and identity around gender politics. She plans on developing the videos into an interactive theatre piece in 2017. Chiara is currently being involved in a number of developments for new theatre works and excited about becoming a collaborative theatre maker in Adelaide.

## **INTERVIEW WITH CHIARA**

### **What do you do physically and vocally do to convey the role of Maz?**

Playing Maz is more about trying to portray him as a character, not just him as a male. Of course, however, this had a lot to do with this physicality and voice. Vocally, Maz's voice is obviously lower than mine, so I lower my voice slightly. Maz is also very confident, so everything he says is very matter-of-fact, meaning that a lot of his statements end with a downward inflection.

Physically, Maz just spreads out and claims space, so his posture and movements are a lot bigger and unapologetic. He also enjoys to strut. Maz's confidence is a defense mechanism, however he wouldn't see it or know it as one. If he believes and acts that he is an amazingly great guy, others won't be able to attack and hurt him. Therefore his strut is another way of just claiming the space he is in.

### **How difficult is this to achieve?**

In some cases this wasn't so difficult. I have known many guys who have some or many of Maz's attributes, and treated my technique how I would any other character. However, putting them into practice did take some work. Since Maz is very different to my own personality and physicality, I wanted to make sure the character didn't come across as a caricature but still as a real, relatable person.

### **What are the differences between the two characters you play?**

The differences between the characters are really interesting. Both Maz and Lola had almost the exact same upbringing except for one difference, their gender. So while Lola and Maz are similar in many ways, how their parents and society reacts to them are different. While Maz is praised for having a very large, boisterous personality and saying what he thinks without much of a filter, Lola is often punished for this. This causes Lola to repress a lot of her first impulses, and while she is still a very loud, and captivating character, she has much more of a filter than her brother.

Also while Maz's desire to be liked by his peers manifests in his ability to put others down and build himself up, Lola's manifests into her putting others first and hiding her bulimia. Elena has done a great job with writing the characters' language so different from each other that I really enjoyed finding their similarities as well, to strengthen their sibling connection and relationship.

### **Have you done any research for this play? If so, what have you done?**

Yes there was research involved for preparation for this play. However, I have had a long personal interest in gender and the social and emotional politics that surround it, so the many things I have read and watch just for personal interest have certainly influenced and assisted my portrayal of these characters. I did do some extra research into masculinity specifically and how our current cultural idea of "man" is damaging both men and women emotionally and physically.

# Characters

---

## LEE

Is 17 years old and Maz's best friend. He is an only child and feels that he is on the cusp of freedom, ready to move out of home and start life, *"The future is here and it is our b\*tch."* He is a teenager, doing chores, hiding away in his room playing video games and fighting with his Dad. His mum isn't well, and he having a hard time understanding why things happen, making him angry with the world. Lee is also quite sensitive to other people's feelings and gets angry with Maz for how he talks to and treats other people.

Lee doesn't deal well with the car crash and barricades himself in a cold, isolated world, cut off from family and friends and in particular, Lola. He reads stories about grief and agonises over what he could have changed, with his family and with Maz.

## MAZ

Is 18 years old and Lee's best friend. They play video games, talk on the phone and cruise Hindley Street together. He gets given a car for his eighteenth birthday and is ecstatic. He has a twin sister, Lola, who he used to be close to, but now he constantly fights with her and doesn't understand her now, particularly now that she's going through puberty. Lee mentions that Maz and Lola used to be close.

Maz is loud and boisterous, saying what he thinks without filtering, including dismissing other people to build himself up. He acts as though he knows things, about women, puberty. He is proud of his wisdom, but this is a mask, hiding his vulnerabilities and trying to get respect from his mates.

## LOLA

We see Lola when she is 19. She is Maz's twin sister. Lola is bold, determined and talkative. She doesn't understand why Lee has cut himself off from the world, she misses him and the connection that Lee had to her brother, Maz. She lost her twin, a brother that she thinks hated her and she feels rejected by her family, *"The way mum and dad go on, 'oh he was so wonderful, he was so special,' I will never make up for the fact that you died...I'll never be enough and you're an angel."*

Whilst her brother Maz was praised in the family, Lola often got into trouble and she still lives in his shadow even though he's gone. She struggled through puberty, fighting with her brother, dating Lee for a short while and suffering bulimia. She lost both Maz and Lee at the same time and continues to struggle with her eating disorder. She feels alone, isolated and angry.

# Themes

---

## **FRIENDSHIP**

Lee and Maz are best friends. They do everything together, as normal friends do. They muck about, play video games, listen to music and pay each other out, particularly about girls. There is even a bro-code, where they look out for each other, but stay away from some topics such as; Lee liking Lola and Lee's family. Maz doesn't want Lee to hook up with his sister, but we discover later that Lee and Lola were seeing each other.

The close friendship of Maz and Lee is something that Lola has missed. She too, was close to Lee, but she lost that friendship when Maz died and Lee took off and hid himself away.

## **GENDERED EMOTION**

One of the themes that underlies the play's writing and direction relates to the way society views emotion differently between men and women. Women are allowed to show varying emotions of grief; vulnerability, joy, happiness and sadness. Men on the other hand, are taught to lock away their emotions, with acceptable emotions being; anger, pride and contempt, but not vulnerability.

The first part of *Gorgon* is about male energy. As Lee and Maz talk they demonise females, talking about them as cougars, how they become monsters during puberty and they tease each other for 'being a girl.' Lee gets angry with Maz who, when mucking about calls him and then his Mum, delusional. This hits close to home and he describes his anger; *"I feel pissed off. Like my whole body has become a fist. I'm made of fists, all of me, ready to smash something."*

In the second part, Lee has a very difficult time processing his guilt and anger and instead locks himself away, building a cold shell that protects him and others from him. *"You can expect me to spill my guts all over you about my feelings and my life while you get to sit there and bullsh\*\*."*

Lola displays anger, guilt and disappointment. She's angry that two people in her life left, she feels guilty because she was fighting with Maz before he died, and she's angry at how she can't live up to Maz in her parent's mind. She is determined to confront Lee and break him out of his cold shell. In this way, she represents the Gorgon, releasing him from this isolation and allowing him to grieve openly. When she pretends to be Maz she tells Lee, *"I love you too. You're my best friend, Lee. Loyal beyond the end. Who else would make this kind of sacrifice? Grieve so completely, stop their whole life for me? You don't have to do this anymore. I know you love me. But it's time to stop this now. I set you free. I set you free."*

## **FAMILY**

Lee is a typical teenager, staying in his room and playing video games, but there is a sadness in his family. When his father asks him to take out the bins, Lee is angry, *"He stands there growling at me to do what he says....'Stop sulking, don't' look at the floor.' So I bend my gaze up to meet his twisted face and my jaw becomes steel. Push it all down into the pit of my guts and swallow the bitter water forcing up my throat."*

He takes out the bins and sees his mum spaced out, she sits in the kitchen, not doing anything, just sitting. He blames his dad for the way his mother is, for the way the family is. His dad used to sit on the couch with his arm around his mum, they were nice to each other. Now his father is inarticulate and angry at his ability to help his wife. Not understanding this response from his dad, Lee gets angry saying, *"Stop speaking to us like that. Not scared of you mate, do it yourself for once. Should stood up to him. But then he woulda...And I mighta...I was gonna do it."*

Lee's mum has Delusional disorder (somatic type). *"Her brain tells her stuff that isn't real."* He once found her washing her hands with bleach and boiling water to get rid of the germs, but in fact, burning her skin. After Maz died, his anger resulted in him pushing his mother, and guilt made him leave home and his family.

There is plenty of sibling rivalry between Maz and Lola. Being twins, they were fairly close, however since puberty Maz says, *"She's a monster,"* she's become moody, cries and takes his stuff. He's happy that she only got an iPad mini for her birthday, while he got given a car. In part two Lola reveals that she's angry with Maz for the way he treated her, and for her angry last words to him.

## **GRIEF**

Lee struggles to exist after the death of Maz. He lives in a tiny apartment that is littered with rubbish and books about grief and death and how to make sense of being a survivor. *"When you're dead, they really fix you up. I hope to hell when I do die somebody has sense enough to dump me in the river of something. Anything except sticking me in a goddam cemetery."*

He doesn't look after himself or leave the apartment and keeps his room as a shrine to his mate Maz. He hasn't seen his family since the crash and has cut himself off from his friends.

Lola too has struggled and missed seeing Lee. She tells Lee that she visits the cemetery at different times of the day and night in the hopes of seeing him, only discovering where he was when she bumped into Lee's mum. *"I missed you. Did you miss me, even a little?"*

She needs to express her hurt and anger and gets Lee to pretend to be Maz, yelling to him, *"Why do you hate me, Maz? What did I ever do to you, except live in your shadow? Well I can never live up to you now. You've magically become perfect. They way mum and dad go on, 'Oh he was so wonderful, he was so special'... I'll never be enough."*

## **ADOLESCENCE**

*Gorgon* displays Lee and Maz caught between the awkward years of puberty and on the cusp of adulthood. They use tools such as; insulting people, disparaging one another, metal music, drugs and alcohol to mask their emotions of embarrassment, shame and vulnerability instead of confronting them. They also talk big - demeaning women and puberty, belittling the kid at McDonalds, and dejecting a homeless man. But they are also confused by the same issues of homelessness, abuse and puberty.

When confronted with reality (eg. girl getting beaten up) they don't know what to do – do they yell out, *"Leave her alone"*, call the cops or just drive on? However, they see the signs of drugs: *"Flesh the colour of ash, yellow teeth hanging from receding gums, something dying inside."* For all of their bravado and confidence, they just don't know what to do.

# Metaphor

---

Gorgon is used as a metaphor through the play to represent the cold, harshness of locking oneself away, the demonisation of women and the inability to express emotion, remaining cold.

## GORGON

In Greek mythology, a Gorgon, meaning 'dreadful', is a female creature. Gorgons were three sisters, whose hair was made of living, venomous snakes and their powerful gaze could turn anyone to stone. Because of this legend, images of Gorgons were put upon objects and buildings for protection.



Two of the sisters, Stheno and Euryales were immortal, Medusa, the best known of the three Gorgons, was not and was slain by Perseus.

Perseus was armed with a scythe and a mirror, cutting off Medusa's head without turning to stone, by looking only at her reflection in the shield. The blood that dropped from Medusa's head was said to have produced two creatures - the winged horse Pegasus and the giant Khrysaor, and the innumerable serpents that infest Africa. Perseus placed Medusa's head, which retained the power of turning people into stone, on the shield of Minerva. This shield was later used to turn Atlas into stone.

Medusa is characterized in terms of the actual mythical stare, which turned men to stone, and in the interpretations that have been given to it. Here are some of what Medusa's head/mask has said to represent:

- A mask or talisman, which both killed and redeemed
- Enemy and death
- The full moon
- A mask worn by young maidens to ward off male lust
- The face of the warrior possessed by battle frenzy
- Guardian of the doorway to the world of the dead, preventing the living from entering
- The Devil
- To keep men at a safe distance from the sacred ceremonies reserved for women
- Fear to men.

# Language

---

*Gorgon* is divided into three chapters. Each of these have a distinct writing style that pertains to the themes of the production. The Prelude, heralds the *Gorgon* coming. Written only in stage directions, the storytelling is achieved through music and movement.

Part 1. Friends Lee and Maz are enjoying life. The writing gives a filmic quality where the language portrays clipped conversation, rhythmic pulse and finishing each other's sentences. These depict a close bond between the two friends. Lee also uses descriptive narrative that is poetic and rhythmic as he describe the events around him.

## Example #1

*Crank up the beats and bounce in my seat  
Wind down the window, sip my arm out  
And make my hand surf the warm summer air like water.*

## Example #2

*Maz pulls over, double parks and runs into a pub.  
Feel the bitter water coming up to my throat from my guts,  
Push it back down.  
Old bloke in a dirty suit sits in a doorway, rubs his crinkly eyes and talks to himself.  
Picks a dead cigarette off the ground and puts it in his pocket.*

## Example #3

*Blood dripping down her t-shirt as she looks at him, her eyes like a little kids.  
Rage twists his face as he shouts it's her fault.  
Her fear bounces off him, cos he's made of stone and she'd better stop crying or she'll cop another one.  
Spits on her. She collapses – all tears, snot and hair  
With him still yelling at her on the street.  
Lights go green. And we leave them there.*

Part 2. The language becomes cold naturalism, echoing the shift in emotion. The conversation is empty, dark and dingy, reflected in the one-sided conversation of Lola and the tension that this creates.

# Interesting Reading

---

*"Young drivers are at a transitional stage of life – from adolescent to adult. At this time many adopt a fast, risky style of driving which pushes them beyond their abilities." - Megan Wood*

---

## YOUTH CAR CRASH STATISTICS

Driving seems to be a 'rite of passage' for teenagers turning 18, who are on the cusp of freedom, their 'adult' life. A devastating car crash is one of the major themes in *Gorgon*, where the hopes and dreams of both boys are destroyed in an instant. Unfortunately, the reality of youth deaths in road crashes is all too high, with the following headlines all too common:

- *Police allege youth sped at 132km/h before crash that killed – Jan 2016*
- *Two cars collide in serious crash amid heavy Easter traffic delays – March 2016*
- *Horror start to Adelaide Cup long weekend with serious accidents – March 2016*
- *SA man, 26, dead, and 17-year-old critical after crash between 4WD and truck – Feb 2016*
- *A 20-year-old man is in a critical condition after a car in which he was a passenger crashed into a tree – Feb 2016*
- *Young driver killed in car rollover in Adelaide foothills – Oct 2015*
- *16-year-old died when he was thrown from a car in which two other young members of the football club's Under 18s team were also travelling – Aug 2015*
- *Six dead in horror stretch on SA roads – June 2015*

---

## *SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ROAD CRASH STATISTICS 2010-2014 (provided by RAA)*

---

The following statistics on road crashes with either fatality or serious injury are for young people from 16 – 24 years old. These stats are taken from a 5 year period of 2010 – 2014.

- 1) During this time there were a total of 91 young people killed in South Australia as a result of a road crash.
  - 45 of these were drivers,
  - 27 were passengers,
  - 12 were riders (cyclists/motorbike)
  - 7 were pedestrians
  - 73% were male and 27% female
  - 44% occurred in Metropolitan Adelaide
  - 56% occurred in regional SA
  - 31% of fatalities occurred between 9pm and 3am

Fatalities involving 16-24 year olds represents 18% (almost 1 in 5) of the overall road toll for South

Australia, despite the fact that young people make up only 12% of the states' population.

When looking solely at driver fatalities, 29% were not wearing a seatbelt and 27% of all young drivers who were killed on our roads registered a blood alcohol reading of 0.05 or above.



- 2) During this time a total of 8,320 young people were injured as a result of a road crash.
  - 2,223 that were treated privately e.g. by a doctor
  - 5,051 who were treated at hospital
  - 955 who were admitted to hospital with serious injuries
  - Of those presented for injury 49% were male and 51% were female.
- 3) The costs of a crash can be significant including; emergency service attendance of the crash and subsequent investigation if needed, insurance costs, repair and towing costs, rehabilitation costs, loss of output from that person either in the workplace or in the household, legal costs and quality of life costs.

Every fatality is thought to cost the state \$8m, every serious injury \$365k and every minor injury \$80k. Based on these figures between 2010-14 it has cost the state in the region of \$1.6bn

---

## *ROAD SAFETY*

---

Young people are particularly at risk when driving with friends, at night or on country roads. Driving at high speeds as an inexperienced driver can lead to road crashes.

A survey performed by RAA at its youth road safety event, Street Smart High, found that;

- Only 55% of teenagers would ask their friends to stop if they were driving dangerously
- Only 52% of teenagers said their friends drive safely on the roads.

There are many factors that contribute to the high accident rate involving young drivers, the most common are: passengers, speeding, inappropriate risk-taking and fatigue.

- **Passengers:** Young or inexperienced drivers can't afford to divide their attention between the road and their passengers. Passengers may also encourage the driver to show off and take risks.
- **Speeding:** Almost all young drivers admit to speeding. They do not understand the extent to which the risks of accident are increased even by a slight speed increase.
- **Inappropriate risk taking:** Young drivers continue to drink drive, drug drive or not wear seat belts.
- **Fatigue:** Young people are often out late and they do not understand the warning signs or the risks of driver fatigue.

### **WHAT YOU CAN DO TO IMPROVE YOUR DRIVING SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE**

- As a learner driver, get as much supervised driving practice as possible. Learner drivers who have around 120 hours of supervised practice (more than the 75 hours required to get your P plates in South Australia) have been shown to have substantial crash reductions - up to 35%.
- Look out for your mates, encourage your friends to drive safely. You can choose the risk but you can't choose the consequence.
- Ensure you know and adhere to the conditions, and other laws, that apply to your licence. They are there to protect you

For more information visit: <http://www.mac.sa.gov.au/>

## GENDER STEREOTYPING

*Gorgon* looks at the expectations on young people's emotions, according to gender and what happens when they are suppressed.

Gender socialisation is the tendency for boys and girls to be socialized differently, raising them to conform to the gender behaviors, attitudes, and personality characteristics expected and encouraged of a person based on his or her sex. Gender socialisation begins the moment we are born, from the simple question "is it a boy or a girl?" Examples of this include; the color pink for girls and the color blue for boys; boys are encouraged to go into careers requiring maths and science; girls to go into nursing, social work, or teaching.

Society has recently been examining gender marketing, gender equality and Gender socialization as something that needs changing.

---

### *WE ARE FAILING OUR YOUNG MEN BY NOT HAVING RITES OF PASSAGE*

*By Arne Rubinstein 26 OCT 2015*

---

According to Beyond Blue, 26.4 per cent of Australian males aged 16 to 24 have experienced a mental health disorder in the last 12 months. That means more than one quarter of the entire population of our young men, our sons, are struggling with either anxiety, depression or a series of other issues that severely impact on their lives. Suicide is the biggest killer of young Australian men and accounts for more deaths than car accidents.

In my 20 years working in emergency departments, I have also seen way too many of the tragic results when young men self-destructed with either drugs, alcohol, cars or violence. I firmly believe that the issue is not in fact that our teenagers themselves have a problem, the issue is the environment they are living in simply doesn't work for so many of them.

There is enormous pressure on our teenage boys to conform, to be a certain way and for so many to pretend to be something they are not. We still get fed the story that real men don't cry, drink lots of alcohol, have multiple beautiful girlfriends and love playing football.

Men not only need to be seen and accepted for who they actually are, but they also need on a deeper level to transform from basic boy behaviour, which has them at the centre of the universe, taking no responsibility and looking for a mother, to healthy man behaviour where they realise they are part of a community, their actions affect others, they have gifts to contribute to the community and to be able to form healthy and real relationships.

In every indigenous community all around the world a boy would go through a coming of age rite of passage ceremony after he reaches puberty. They did this firstly to acknowledge and celebrate the transition from boy to young man and secondly to recognise and name the unique gifts and talents that are in each of the young men as well as recognizing their genius and spirit.

Our lack of formal rites of passage run by the elders of our communities has meant that generations of young men are learning how to be a man through the media and the internet, they are engaging in increasingly dangerous risk taking behaviours and they are feeling unseen and lost.

We have the ability to create contemporary rites of passage where teenage boys can hear the stories of older men, are challenged to think about what sort of men they are going to be and what childish behaviours they need to let go of, and are publically acknowledged for their individual gifts and talents.

Therefore, properly facilitated rites of passage would be a highly effective form of preventative medicine that would significantly impact on levels of depression, anxiety and other mental health conditions in this country and they should become a normal part of our education system.

[www.sbs.com.au/news/insight/article/2015/10/26/comment-we-are-failing-our-young-men-not-having-rites-passage](http://www.sbs.com.au/news/insight/article/2015/10/26/comment-we-are-failing-our-young-men-not-having-rites-passage)



## WATCH THE FOLLOWING TED Talks

### ***Unmasking masculinity -- helping boys become connected men* - Ryan McKelley**

Emotions that are culturally acceptable for men: anger, contempt and pride. For women: Joy, compassion, sympathy, fear.

Everyone is born with full range of vulnerable emotions; humiliation, embarrassment, powerless, ashamed, fearful, abused, lonely, regret, hurt, angry. But over time, we teach boys to re-channel them into anger and aggression and we tolerate and even accept this emotion in young men. Instead, we should focus on the moment before they feel anger – what is that moment of vulnerability?

As a society we need to eliminate phrases like; ‘man up’, ‘boys will be boys’, ‘stop acting like a girl.’ Instead we should re-define what it means to be courageous – be open and vulnerable, no matter what the outcome.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=LBdnjqEoiXA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LBdnjqEoiXA)

### ***A Call to Men* – Tony Porter**

Men were brought up to be tough, strong, courageous and dominant, feel no pain and no emotions, with the exception of anger and fear. They are in charge, women are not. Men lead and women should follow. Men are superior, women are inferior. Men are strong, women are weak. Women are less value and objects. This is the collective socialization of men.

*“Go in your room, sit down, get yourself together and come back when you can talk to me like a man.”*

We need to challenge, look, deconstruct and redefine what we know as manhood.

[http://www.ted.com/talks/tony\\_porter\\_a\\_call\\_to\\_men?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/tony_porter_a_call_to_men?language=en)

# Designer

---

## KATHRYN SPROUL

Kathryn's recent projects include design for *Sons & Mothers* (No Strings Attached); *Muckheap* (Polyglot Puppet Company, touring Shanghai & Australia); *The Flood* (Finucane & Smith/Critical Stages national tour); Costume Designer for *Maria de Buenos Aires* (Leigh Warren & Dancers/Vic Opera); *True West* and *The Dark Room* (Flying Penguin Productions); *The Art of War*, *Arden versus Arden* and *Punk Rock* (Flinders University SA, director: Tom Healey). *An Evening with Annabel Crabb*, (Annabel Crabb: Adelaide Fringe Festival 2016).



Kathryn designs nationally for theatre, dance and large arts events. A graduate in Stage Design from NIDA, Kathryn was Resident Designer for Magpie Theatre and State Theatre Co of SA from 1988 – 1993. Other companies include: Patch Theatre, Vitalstatistix, AJZ Productions, Cirkidz, Legs on The Wall, Playbox, Chamber Made Opera, Hothouse, Melbourne Theatre Company, Red Stitch, The Production Company, Adelaide Festival of Arts, Adelaide Fringe Festival, Brisbane Festival & Qld Music Festival. Festival Event Design includes: Adelaide Cabaret Festival 2005 – 2011; OzAsia Festival & Moon Lantern Parade 2007-2014 & Adelaide International Guitar Festival 2007-2016. Venue design includes the award winning Queens Theatre, Fringe 2012; Live from Channel 9, Fringe Festival 2014 & 2015; Live from Tandanya, Fringe Festival 2016.

Kathryn's film & television credits includes Set Design for "Talking Heads" ABC & "Poh's Kitchen" ABC; & Women & Children's Easter Appeal for Channel 9 2015 & 2016.

## INTERVIEW WITH KATHRYN

**What was the over-arching theme that lead to the design for *Gorgon*? And how have you represented this in your design?**

In discussions with the director, it was clear that there needed to be two different spaces to support the action of the two different parts of the play. The first part is open and fast-moving, technicolour and filmic in style. The second part needed to be closed in and drained of life and colour. This is both the physical and psychological space that the design creates.

The theme for me is about cracking open the emotional brick wall that the character Lee has built up around him and from that, accessing his vulnerability.

**What have been the challenges in designing this set?**

The action of the play requires some very physical elements; doors that open, slammed or shut; objects thrown and smashed against the walls. Therefore, the world of Lee's flat has to be very resilient: the actors need to be able to express the emotional struggle without worrying about the walls wobbling or the doors not working. The steel box truss is both the physical and the metaphorical bracing of the world of the play.

The other big challenge is that the play is touring all around South Australia, so the set has to pack into a truck and be assembled in an array of different spaces in a 3 hour bump-in.

**Can you tell us the process of your design, from working with the Director, until seeing it in rehearsals?**

The process initially involved long conversations with director, Nescha Jelk, about the play, exploring our responses to the ideas expressed in the play, and how best to connect the characters and the world of the play with the audience.

I also had a very strong spatial response to the play that I was able to test in the creative development week. Being involved in this process with the whole creative team, including lighting and sound designers, meant that all ideas were shared in the one space and developed together. It meant that when I was refining the design, everything had a context and was related to all the other creative components. Now that we are in rehearsals we are all able to reference a shared process that helps inform and develop our ongoing discoveries about the play.

# Design

---

*"This design is a tricky balance to convey the world needed onstage, coupled with a travelling set that needs to be set-up quickly."*

*Gorgon* essentially has two worlds. It begins with a tight frame of Lee's world. It has a filmic quality to it, with snappy scenes and text projected across the actor's bodies. Sound helps to build this world, with a soundscape of pent up anger and youth, along with stylised car sounds. The car is represented by a couch, with speakers built underneath, helping focus the sound, but also creating a physical impact for the actors.

Lee's world is stone. Drawing on the Gorgon mythology of turning to stone – the whole set has been designed to depict the texture and feel of stone and metal. We learn that Lee doesn't really connect to his own family and is often locked in his room playing video games.

The second world is after the crash. The world as Lee knows it, breaks apart. The wall from the first world breaks and turns outwards to reveal the second world, one year later. This world is still made of stone and steel, but with the ends breaking, mirroring the emotional upheaval of the characters.

Lee has barricaded himself in, hiding away from his pain and anguish, family and friends. Visually, it represents a grunge reality, complete with pizza boxes and rubbish, a well-lived in space. The books lying around the room are Lee's attempts to make sense of the world, to find ideas and solutions to his pain.

Lola breaks through the barriers that Lee has put up when she comes into this space. There is an entrance at the back to Lee's bedroom where he has made a shrine to Maz, where a light comes from. But to open the door exposes Lee's grief and whilst Lola sees inside, we can only imagine.



## **MUSIC AND PROJECTION**

Music and projection are used to clarify the storytelling process and convey the deeper emotions. The music depicts the internal struggle that Lee faces. He has an internal violence and anger and the music represents his emotions through a sound scape that is an undertone throughout the first part. This soundscape includes car, video game and street sounds.

The projections convey a filmic quality through the first half that conveys names, place and dates. Being the main sources of lighting, it also shows technicolour and fun in this fast moving world of Maz and Lee, portraying home and street scenes.

The second half becomes devoid of projection. The music is naturalistic and quieter, reflecting the internal struggle of Lee, but through music composed in a 'beat metal' style to represent his character.

## **COSTUMES**

The costumes are modern and simplistic.

Lee – basic greys and blacks, blending into the environment

Maz – red and black so that he pops out

Lola – a blue/white top – she is a strong young woman

# Music

---

## **INTERVIEW WITH COMPOSER WILL SPARTALIS**

### **Can you tell us the process of adding music to *Gorgon*, from conversations with the Director, to working with the actors?**

Development time is everything when it comes to music, especially in a show like *Gorgon*. Sitting in a room for a week with the director, writer and the actors discussing each and every theme and tone of the work is what allows me an understanding of how the show needs to feel and what I can do to elevate and support that feeling through music. I take all this information away with me and start considering how best to express it through composition, testing musical ideas and seeing what feels right.

With *Gorgon*, if I felt angry, hyper emotional and recklessly masculine while performing and recording the music, I knew I was on the right track. After laying down a bunch of musical ideas, I show them to the design team to see if works. If so, I work to make each track even better, tweaking and refining until it feels truly Gorgonic! Jimmy, who plays Lee, is a big metal fan and has so much energy, so my process has been about capturing his rhythms as Lee and satisfying his immense knowledge of Metal! I'm always looking for that moment when the actors start reacting to the music, and working it into their performances – that's when I know it's right.

### **What clues do you take from the character of Lee to compose the music and how does this change between part 1 & part 2?**

In part 1, Lee's biggest frustrations in life are his dysfunctional family, weekly chores and inability to always drift perfectly. These are difficult issues, no doubt, but they're nothing compared to his pained, traumatised headspace in part 2. This tells me everything about what the music needs to represent - Part 1 is teenage life as so many of us experience it; fun, exciting, frustrating, full of energy and eagerness to get loose and be awesome!

In part 2 however, Lee's characterisation expresses a far more complex headspace, one of repressed emotion and deep, unmanageable pain; roaring oceans of negative energy barely being held back. Anger and guilt and self-hatred. All his youthful male energy is distorted and directed inwards instead of outwards. His pain becomes represented in the music of Death Metal, Thrash Punk and Doom. There's a lot of fun to be had in these genres of course, but they also make for the perfect expression of inner turmoil and violent rage in so many of us every now and then.

Therefore Lee goes from a frustrated boy to a damaged man. The music must follow suit.

### **How important is music to a production such as *Gorgon*?**

The music IS Lee. It shows us his sense of self and his expression of emotion. His music becomes his escape from bitter reality as well as his only way of expressing his struggle. Music allows us to make the audience truly, viscerally feel what Lee is experiencing on the inside, so it's a key element in telling our tale.

# Essay Questions

---

## ENGLISH QUESTIONS

1. Gorgon is used as a metaphor throughout the play. By using examples, show how this metaphor directly influences the play's story line.
2. Although Lee was left unscathed from the accident, he was affected by the death of Maz. Explore the significance of this in relation to the overall theme of the play.
3. Do you think the themes within *Gorgon* are relevant to teenage society? Discuss.
4. Compare and contrast the roles of Lee and Lola with reference to their coping strategies.
5. Discuss the theme of family within *Gorgon* by providing examples.
6. Watch one of the TED talks on *Unmasking masculinity* or *A Call to Men*. Discuss these in relation to gender emotional stereotypes and the message in *Gorgon*.
7. Write a letter from Maz to either Lola or Lee explaining how he felt about them.
8. Society has recently been examining gender marketing, gender equality and gender socialisation. Choose one of these issues and research the changes being made and the reasoning behind these changes.

## DRAMA QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the use of projection. How it was used, what did it represent and what was its effect.
2. Discuss the importance of part one in setting up the characters of the play.
3. Discuss how the set relates to the themes within the play.
4. How has the director conveyed the changing of time throughout *Gorgon*? Discuss.
5. How have the actors changed their physicality through the two parts of the play? Discuss in relation to emotions and gender.
6. Choose either Lee or Maz/Lola and discuss the difference in writing styles between part one and part two.
7. Discuss how the music represents the emotions of Lee, Maz and Lola.
8. Reviewing the script, determine changes that you would make in the second part to allow for a greater closure of the grief Lola and Lee feel.

## DEBATE

*"Our social conditioning has created greater anger and aggression in men."*

## DESIGN

Design your own set for *Gorgon*. Think about themes presented in the play and how these can be represented. What would you design differently?

## WRITING

Choose an issue about gender socialisation that is relevant to you and write a letter highlighting your concerns and your proposals for change.

## OR

Using the poetic language style used in the play, (see examples 1 -3) create your own descriptive narrative. Use your observations of the school yard as your inspiration.

## PERFORMANCE

Write a monologue from Lee's point of view, visiting Maz's grave for the first time. Perform this to your class, concentrating on characterization and the emotional context of your writing.

# Performance Elements

---

	production elements	performance elements
strengths		
impact on audiences		
weaknesses		

design role	technique	what did this contribute to the performance?
lighting	<i>one</i>	
	<i>two</i>	
	<i>three</i>	
music	<i>one</i>	
	<i>two</i>	
	<i>three</i>	

# References

---

## ROAD SAFETY

RAA – thank you to RAA for their contribution to the statistics of youth fatalities on South Australian roads.  
[www.raa.com.au/motoring-and-road-safety/road-safety-programs-in-south-australia](http://www.raa.com.au/motoring-and-road-safety/road-safety-programs-in-south-australia)

[www.theadvertiser.news.com.au/print](http://www.theadvertiser.news.com.au/print)

<http://www.mac.sa.gov.au/>

[www.rta.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety/downloads/youngdrivers\\_discussionpaper\\_20\\_11\\_04.pdf](http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety/downloads/youngdrivers_discussionpaper_20_11_04.pdf)

[www.smh.com.au/entertainment/music/nathaniel-obrien-country-music-industry-pays-tribute-to-former-x-factor-contestant-20151109-gkquoem.html#ixzz3ziFKUcAn](http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/music/nathaniel-obrien-country-music-industry-pays-tribute-to-former-x-factor-contestant-20151109-gkquoem.html#ixzz3ziFKUcAn)

<http://students.adelaidehs.sa.edu.au/subjects/issues/youngdrivers.pdf>

[www.tacsafety.com.au](http://www.tacsafety.com.au)

[www.tacsafety.com.au](http://www.tacsafety.com.au) ety Bureau <http://www.atsb.gov.au>

## INTERESTING READING

[www.theoi.com/Pontios/Gorgones.html](http://www.theoi.com/Pontios/Gorgones.html)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gorgon>

[www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/a\\_f/bogan/medusamyth.htm](http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/a_f/bogan/medusamyth.htm)

[www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/features/dear-young-men-the-old-stereotypes-of-what-it-is-to-be-a-man-are-a-load-of-rubbish - Nov 2013](http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/features/dear-young-men-the-old-stereotypes-of-what-it-is-to-be-a-man-are-a-load-of-rubbish-Nov-2013)

[www.sbs.com.au/news/insight/article/2015/10/26/comment-we-are-failing-our-young-men-not-having-rites-passage](http://www.sbs.com.au/news/insight/article/2015/10/26/comment-we-are-failing-our-young-men-not-having-rites-passage)

[www.ted.com/talks/tony\\_porter\\_a\\_call\\_to\\_men?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/tony_porter_a_call_to_men?language=en)

[www.ted.com/talks/eve\\_ensler\\_embrace\\_your\\_inner\\_girl?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/eve_ensler_embrace_your_inner_girl?language=en)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=LBdnjqEoiXA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LBdnjqEoiXA)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=YH4PDQ2-qcE&feature=share](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YH4PDQ2-qcE&feature=share)