



Sophie Austin

Theatre & Film Director

Summary

- ✚ I am a freelance director and producer specialising in site-specific, interactive and immersive theatre.
- ✚ I am Creative Associate at international arts organisation Dash Arts.
- ✚ I am director of SHH Productions, a female led, female focused film production company.
- ✚ I am a member of the board for Rewrite, a charity that brings together young people from different backgrounds to fight prejudice and injustice, through the power of drama and creative writing.

I am passionate about telling stories that challenge the way we see the world and I am committed to making work that explodes the traditional to reach a wide and diverse audience.

Education

2017 Raindance Film School

Virtual Reality Training

2006 – 2007

Richmond Theatre, Script Writing Course with Emma Rosoman

2003 – 2004

National Theatre Business Course: Enterprise & Business Skills

2001 – 2004

2:1 BA in Theatre Directing

Rose Bruford College, London

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EXPERIENCE



Teatro Vivo, 2004 - 2019

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Teatro Vivo transforms much loved stories into theatrical adventures; collaborating with communities and audiences to turn everyday environments into brave, new worlds.

I set up Teatro Vivo in 2004 to make thrilling and imaginative, high quality theatre that would be performed in public spaces in culturally deprived neighbourhoods by a mix of professional actors and local people. Over 15 years I am proud to say that the company thrived. During that time I conceived of, produced and directed 24 projects - from pop-up theatre in public parks, plays in libraries, museums and houses to large-scale high street adventures, where audiences are guided around spaces and streets and the show unfolds around them.

- I led a small team of three Associate Producers who supported the everyday running of the company and the producing of each project.
- I was lead producer on every project; overseeing budgets, schedules, contracts and marketing.
- I was responsible for all artistic programming generating ideas for each project, commissioning writers, engaging the creative team, casting, contracting and directing the majority of the work.
- I drove the strategic direction for the company including preparing and overseeing funding applications both project funding and core cost funding successfully raising over £150,000 from Arts Council England for projects and a 4 year grant from Lewisham Council. During my tenure I developed strong relationships with a number of trusts and foundations.
- I successfully built strong and productive professional relationships with venues and project partners including securing Teatro Vivo's status as Associate Artists at the Albany Theatre for the last 6 years and at the Watermill Theatre in Newbury for 4 years.
- I oversaw the budget management, reporting and evaluation of every Teatro Vivo project and managed the annual reports and accounts for the company.

I worked closely with the board of trustees to ensure we were demonstrating to funders and supporters that our work was of high quality and I am pleased to say that we frequently generated exceptional responses from funders, audiences and project partners.

"Almost anywhere is a possible stage for this most creative of theatre groups. The challenge they set themselves is to break free of tradition, reinterpret the classics and collaborate with their audience. Absolutely not the West End." The Guardia





EXPERIENCE cont.

Dash Arts, 2006 – Present



CREATIVE ASSOCIATE - Dash Arts creates artistic experiences that change the way we see the world. Founded in 2005 by Josephine Burton and Tim Supple, Dash has rapidly emerged as a unique international creative force, producing new theatre, dance, music and art events in collaboration with exceptional artists from abroad.

Dash Arts Highlights include

- **One Thousand and One Nights** – Working as Associate Director on this epic international project. Supporting Tim Supple in the creation and delivery of a six hour production of the One Thousand and One Nights with a cast of actors and musicians drawn from across the Arabic world. Casting and research over three years, travelling internationally to countries such as Syria, Lebanon, Morocco and Egypt, working in translation with a cast of 25 actors, 10 musicians and an international production team.
- **Dash Café Producer** – produced free, monthly events since 2007. Featuring live music, film, performance, readings and discussion at venues across London, Dash Cafés are intimate and informal: a chance to encounter new ideas, surprising perspectives and unusual artists. From a pop-up dinner with a Moroccan Women’s group in Trellick tower, to an evening inspired by Soviet Necrorealism, the Dash Cafes have allowed me to work with a variety of artists and cultures and present a fascinating conversation between our diverse audience and artists from across the world.



Freelance Director, 2004 to Present

Over the last fifteen years, as well as running Teatro Vivo, I have established myself as a freelance director working across the subsidised and commercial sectors. I specialise in making large scale work in non-theatre spaces and community settings and have begun to work in film, setting up SHH Productions, a female led, production company specialising in telling female focused, international stories.

Highlights Include:

- **The World We Made, Change Festival**

This is an urgent new play by Beth Flintoff and inspired by leading environmentalist Jonathon Porritt’s seminal book. The play shows a glimpse of how our lives could be in the future, if we pull together and change now...before it’s too late. This production has been staged at festivals, in village halls, lecture halls and board rooms with the aim of igniting a sense of fierce hope in all who see it. It will be touring across the UK in 2020.

Wow! Inspiring, engaging, powerful and poignant, I cannot even begin to describe my emotions. We are all powerful agents for change! Audience Member

- **Greenham Common: 100 Years of War and Peace, Rosa Productions**

This was a large scale outdoor event celebrating 20 years of the Greenham Trust. The story of Greenham Common came alive through an amazing spectacle of performance, songs, light projections and live art. The Event was filmed for online broadcast and was covered by radio and TV. It portrayed one hundred years of history of the Common and the dramatic moments of war and peace that form part of its history.

To say it was outstanding would be an understatement. This was a grand spectacular, the like of which has never been seen in our small town. Sir Peter Michael CBE

- **Professor Vanessa’s Wondershow, The Roundhouse**

Working with circus artists, sideshow performers, cabaret artists and the legendary Roundhouse space, I directed an immersive experience that took the audience back in time to a circus world to wonder at.

“Instead of sitting passively, one wanders from intimate tent to tent, investigating whatever catches the eye. An Egyptian Mummy adds a dash of comic horror and visual trickery, while Kingdom of Shadows, is neatly enlivened by the bickering attendants.” **** Evening Standard

- **Just Gone, SHH Productions**

Shot in Morocco, my first short drama won the Prix De Jury at the Agadir film Festival





FULL DIRECTING CREDITS

- [Access All Areas](#) (Teatro Vivo/Evelyn Productions, 2020) An immersive adventure placing the audience at the heart of the music as they become a band for the night. Gig theatre at it's most epic. Shoreditch, 2020.
- [The World We Made](#) (Change Festival 2019, 2020) An urgent new play by Beth Flintoff and inspired by leading environmentalist Jonathon Porritt's seminal book. The play shows a glimpse of how our lives could be in the future, if we pull together and change now...before it's too late. This production has been staged at festivals, in village halls, lecture halls and board rooms with the aim of igniting a sense of fierce hope in all who see it. It will be touring across the UK in 2020.
- [The Hunters Grimm](#) (Teatro Vivo, 2015, 2019) The Brothers Grimm invite the audience to become Story Hunters and send them out on an urgent mission find a story of hope to cure nightmares. They come across tales of love, longing and sausages in an interactive adventure. Toured to the Watermill theatre, the Albany Theatre, Stratford Circus and Catford Broadway.
- [Evelyn's Roots](#) (Teatro Vivo, 2018) A new promenade play by Bernadette Russell and Gareth Brierly telling 500 years of history about Deptford. This was turned into a podcast which can be listened to [here](#).
- [Twistov](#) (Teatro Vivo, 2017) A site specific street theatre adventure by Michael Wagg inspired by Charles Dickens and contemporary migrant experiences in London staged across Shoreditch.
- [Greenham Common: One Hundred Years of War and Peace](#) (Rosa Productions, 2017) A large scale outdoor event celebrating 20 years of the Greenham Trust. On the evenings of the 8th and 9th September 2017 the story of Greenham Common came alive through an amazing spectacle of performance, songs, light projections and live art.
- [Arming the World](#) (Teatro Vivo and Ice&Fire, 2017) A street theatre spectacular about the Arms Trade staged across London and went on to tour to festivals across the UK.
- [Top Trumps](#) (Theatre 503, 2017) A festival of short plays responding to the Trump presidency.
- [The Residents](#) by Michael Wagg (Teatro Vivo, 2016) A site specific ghost story set in houses across South London.
- [Just Gone](#) (14min, SHH Productions, 2016) Starring Stella Gonet and Said Bey, shot by BAFTA winner Lynda Hall and with a score by Isa Suarez. A Mother searches for her missing son and discovers a terrible secret haunting the hills.
Won Prix de Jury at Agadir International Film Festival 2016
- [Kingmaker – The Musical](#) (SFTW productions 2015) A new musical by Bill Robinson starring Helena Blackman and Ben Freeman about Tony Blair and Gordon Brown set in Jacobean England.
- [In A Flash](#) (3 min, SHH Productions, 2015) Made in Fez, Morocco, In A Flash tells the story of a girl out shopping with her mother. Suddenly she spies a cat and, like Alice down the Rabbit hole, she discovers a strange and curious world. Shot by BAFTA winning DOP Lynda Hall.
- [Mother Courage and Her Children](#) (Teatro Vivo/ GLYPT, 2014) Follow Mother Courage on her epic journey as she travels through the thirty years war. Staged around the Woolwich Arsenal, this was a promenade production created in collaboration with GLYPT.
- [Whitecross Street](#) (Barbican/Guildhall, 2014) A musical portrait of an urban high street created in collaboration with 9 musicians and performed live on the street and captured in a film by Justin Jones.





- Old Times by Harold Pinter – (Sonia Friedman Productions, 2013) directed by Ian Rickson – Associate Director Role.
- After the Tempest (Teatro Vivo 2013) It is a year after Prospero's departure and the Spirits of the Island invite you to celebrate Independence Day. But as they stage a re-enactment of Prospero's last moments it becomes clear that as one dictator leaves, another one is never far away. Staged in parks and green spaces across London
- Life & Deaf (Queen Elizabeth Hall, Indigo O2, Greenwich Maritime Museum 2012) a performance piece written and performed by a group of young, deaf poets.
- Absent Friends by Alan Ayckbourn (Sonia Friedman Productions, 2012) directed by Jeremy Herrin – Associate Director role.
- Games and Flames (The Royal Court, 2012) A devised, promenade, site responsive play created in just five days with eight young people.
- The Odyssey (Teatro Vivo 2012) A normal high street becomes the backdrop for Homer's epic tale as the audience are whisked off on their own Odyssey, helping Telemachus find news of his father. Staged across Deptford in London. Written by Michael Wagg, Sarah Sigal and Vic Bryson.
- Professor Vanessa's Wondershow (Circus Fest, The Roundhouse, 2012) working with circus artists, sideshow performers, cabaret artists and the roundhouse to create an immersive experience for 500 audience members to wonder at.
- One Thousand and One Nights (Dash Arts, Luminato Festival, Toronto, Edinburgh International Festival 2009 – 2011) – directed by Tim Supple. Working with a cast and creative team from across the Arabic World. I was responsible for research and casting involving extensive travel throughout the Arabic world, second rehearsing during an eleven week rehearsal period in Fez, Morocco and supporting all the creative team from Choreographer to designers as well as running the technical rehearsals. I also managed the adaptation of the text in French, Arabic and English as well as documentation of the 5 year creative process. – Associate Director Role.
- The Heretic by Richard Bean (Royal Court, 2011) - Directed by Jeremy Herrin. Assistant Director Role.
- Discombobulation (Branching Out Season, Rosemary Branch Theatre, 2011) Written by Leanne Davis performed as part of a new writing festival.
- Adventures in Wonderland (Teatro Vivo 2011 - 2016) an interactive adventure that leads the audience on a journey following in Alice's footsteps. Performed at venues across the UK including The Story Museum, Watermill Theatre, Charlton House and the Catford Broadway.
- Hothouse (Teatro Vivo 2010) a devised play set in a seedy bar using musicians and a classic tango score. Touring to the Arcola as part of the Grimeborn Festival, The Bakehouse, The Horniman Museum and The Albany in Deptford.
- Here but There (Teatro Vivo 2008-2009) an interpretation of Chekhov's *Three Sisters* written by Gabriel Bisset-Smith, staged throughout the Theatre Museum, Covent Garden and in an old Manor House in South London.
- As You Like It (The Curve Theatre, 2009) - Directed by Tim Supple. Assistant Director Role.





- *The Colorado Session* (Factory Party Productions 2008) Written by Jessica Luxembourg. Staged as part of the Manchester 24/7 New Writing Theatre Festival.
- *Peter Pan* (Dash Arts, The Roundhouse, 2008) – Assisting Tim Supple on the research and development of his International Circus style production. Assistant Director Role.
- *Lovers and Liars*, (Teatro Vivo 2006) an interpretation of Twelfth Night by William Shakespeare, Manor House Gardens London.
- *Shrieks of Laughter* by Moses Raine (Soho Theatre, 2006). Directed by Maria Aberg
- *The Water Engine* by David Mamet (Young Vic, 2005), Directed by Tom Wright, Theatre 503. Assistant Director Role.
- *Three for Tea*, (Teatro Vivo 2005) an evening of three new short plays performed in a café in Lewisham throughout October written by Fiona Whitelaw, Laura Hooper and Emma Warren.
- *Doing What lovers Do*, (Teatro Vivo 2005) an interpretation of *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare, Manor House Gardens, London with writing by Vic Bryson and Emma Warren.
- *Six Week Directors Placement*, (Young Vic, 2005) under the guidance of Matthew Dunster I undertook a research project, a Restoration play reading and devised project whilst also gaining invaluable experience in the running of a building based company.
- *Dead Hands* written and directed by Howard Barker. (The Wrestling School, 2004) The Door Birmingham. Assistant Director Role.

