



THE TALK

MISH GRIGOR (AUSTRALIA)

My brother came out after an episode of 'The L Word'.

As the credits closed on Carmen going down on a leggy blonde in a nightclub, he said, "I'm like that. I do that."

My mother and I looked at each other, confused.

"Cunnilingus?" I offered, and laughed.

"No!" He said, standing up and rolling up his blanket. "Gay. I do gay. I'm gay. I do gay sex."

CONTACT

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SYNOPSIS

In 'The Talk', I read transcripts of interviews that I have undertaken with my family about their sex lives. I begin by asking the audience to perform, to act as my family. I tell them that my family asked me to change their names to protect their identity (I haven't). I tell them that my family asked me to take out some of the more intimate details of the interviews (I haven't). I tell them that my family finally requested that I send them a final draft of the script for their approval before performing it in front of anybody (I haven't). I then ask them to raise a glass of lukewarm overpriced champagne and say 'cheers' to my family, and to all the things I haven't done for them. Then, we read.

Together we enact their sex stories, my sex stories, and conversations about our sexuality.

We play out the first time that my father told me how sex works, awkwardly explaining that ba-bies are put into vaginas with penises. Then we play out sex conversation that changed my family, when my brother told us that he was HIV Positive. As his sex life and diagnosis is discussed in more detail by my family, I step outside of the action, directing the audience participants to become more and more theatrical in their portrayal of my family. The questioning becomes pushier and pushier, before finally I playing them an audio tap of myself having sex, calling it one last attempt at an even playing field.



“Australian Mish Grigor’s The Talk foregrounds the artist’s heterosexual exploits while telling an achingly personal story of a family member’s coming to terms with HIV. Grigor’s reliance on the audience as actors is tricky but skilfully handled, paying off with a huge sense of camaraderie.”

Megan Garrett-Jones, REALTIME



“A wonderfully entertaining hour in which Grigor gets the audience to play members of her family talking about sex. The script is apparently based on interviews with her family and on her re-creation of family events. It includes her own personal sex tape and her mother talking about the size of her former husband’s penis. It is funny, toe-curlingly frank, immensely insightful about family dynamics, and it makes you think about your own family and what you do and don’t talk about.

During the show, Grigor tells us that she assured her family that she would give them script approval and change their names, but in fact has done neither. Of course, she may be lying. She may have made up every word. Part of the pleasure of *The Talk* is that we will never know what’s true and what’s not, and that it’s up to us to decide whether it matters.

Lyn Gardner, *The Guardian* (UK)

“It’s unexpectedly loving and generous and as funny, embarrassing, awkward, dangerous and brilliant as sex.”

Anne-Marie Peard, *Sometimes Melbourne*

“The work uncovers something surprisingly profound about shame and fear, and a part of our emotional lives we feel unable to share. It’s also constantly asking questions about what should be kept private, and how drawing that line can undermine our closest relationships. It’s surprisingly gripping, very funny, refreshing and, as I said earlier, quite an emotional experience.”

Ben Neutz, *Daily Review*

Marketing outline

Mish Grigor's 'The Talk' is a terribly undomesticated evening. It's one account of what happens when you start talking about sex with your family, what 'the talk' is, and what it shouldn't be.

'The Talk' is performed solo, with the audience. Spectators are asked to volunteer and given scripts, to read cold, in front of their fellow audience. They play the role of brother, mother, etc; and together we en-act the interviews. The structure is like a rowdy family dinner: the interviews are woven together, interrupt each other, stories left unfinished as a new, funnier or more interesting topic comes up.

'The Talk' is not about living with HIV, but rather about what kind of dialogue a Positive status has opened up within one family. It is about discussing taboo subjects. The piece evokes the awkwardness, the ner-vous giggles, the difficult moments and the frustrating arguments that come when the topic of sex arises amongst family members.

Artist Bio

Mish Grigor is an artist based in Sydney engaged in an ongoing examination into the intersections between populist entertainment and experimental performance practices.

Mish is one third of the collaboration POST, formed in 2003, in collaboration with Natalie Rose and Zoe Coombs Marr. POST have been described as having 'a seriousness about silliness' (The Australian), as creators of 'biting Australian satire' (REALTIME), and "whose performance art often pokes fun at its very existence" (The Age).



The Talk: Production Information

PRODUCTION HISTORY

2017

The Marlborough Theatre, Brighton: April 6 – 7

Battersea Arts Centre: April 12 – 13

Cambridge Junction: April 19

2016

Liveworks Festival, Performance Space, Sydney

Metro Arts / Brisbane Festival, Brisbane

Forest Fringe, Edinburgh

Buzzcut Festival, Glasgow

2015

SITE IS SET – FIELD THEORY, In a domestic house in Melbourne.

AWARDS

Nominated for Best Contemporary Performance, Green Room Awards 2016

DOCUMENTATION

<https://vimeo.com/195746065>

password: champagne

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:

- Standard rig or room with adequate lighting and rigging point for one special (or provided disco lighting)
- 1 x table, strong enough to hold the weight of performer
- 6 x Chairs (any)
- Sound system with headphone jack for laptop
- 1 x Technician to operate basic sound cues.

CONSUMABLES:

- 2 bottles of warm Champagne per show, glasses.

