

Brett & Wendy

A NEW AUSTRALIAN WORK

Brett & Wendy

~ A love story bound by art ~

A new project by Kim Carpenter's
Theatre of Image

Created, directed and designed by Kim Carpenter AM



ABOUT THE LIFE AND ART OF BRETT & WENDY WHITELEY

BRETT & WENDY's tumultuous life together – from when he was 17 and she 15 – is filled with incredibly stark highs and lows. It's a great love story bound by art. Brett's unique magic as an artist and charismatic personality made him a superstar public figure in his short life. Wendy, an artist in her own right, became Brett's goddess, model, muse, wife, confidante and – finally – enemy.

Together they made *great theatre* – a spectacular image in the Australian art scene 25 years after Brett's death, Wendy (now 76), represents Brett's world in her iconic tower home filled with his work she has impeccably curated around her.

She looks out onto the harbour he so sensuously immortalised in the ultramarine blue Lavender Bay series.

Below the house is her work – a large extraordinary exotic award-winning public garden (originally unused land filled with rubbish) she created on public land as a homage to Brett and daughter Arkie.

The Project

Dance and digital video will reveal the metaphysical world of Brett in his studio – capturing the immediacy of the gestured sweep of line that makes a river or a nude body in a few searching strokes of paint or charcoal.

The visually-minded creators will apply their vast knowledge and skills to a subject they are absolutely passionate about.

[Project Background \(PDF\)](#)

FROM THE CREATOR OF BRETT & WENDY

At the heart of this piece is the struggle of the artist as child/man. The painter alone, between his mind, heart and hand, searching for the god-given moments to produce pictures that we will all identify him by.

Brett Whiteley – who I met twice – and engaged in long heady conversations with, was consumed by his attraction to opposites – dichotomy.

His love of beauty and nature existed alongside his insatiable attraction to evil and violence. His desperately exhausting quest to be bigger and more illuminating than life itself through his art was both his success and his failure.

Creative Team

Kim Carpenter AM

Creator/director/designer, Artistic Director/CEO of ToI. Former Head of Design NIDA, former Co-Artistic Director Nimrod/Belvoir, winner of many awards. Worked with most Australian performing arts companies.

Peter Kennard

Composer/musician/percussionist/sound designer and highly-experienced musical director. Worked on many ToI productions including *Monkey ... Journey to the West*

Movement Director – TBC

Performers

Performers core skill-sets are either actors or dancers

Apart from Brett all performers play other characters.

Brett & Wendy is to be performed as an ensemble piece with multiple characters shared among 7 performers and one Musician – live percussion/keyboard and recorded composition.

Fabian Astore

Digital Media Artist, Macquarie University. Worked on many ToI productions. Winner of many awards including The Blake Prize.

Tom Wright

Dramaturg – playwright/director, former associate Artistic Director, STC. Currently associate Artistic Director Belvoir

Sian James Holland

Lighting Designer. Monkey...Journey To The West, Bell, Shakespeare, Sport For Jove

In context of our work

The core of BRETT & WENDY springs from ToI's history of integrating diverse disciplines and forms to tell a story. It belongs to a group of ToI works exploring an artist's life and work – *Swimming In Light ... the world of Lloyd Rees* (Melbourne Festival, Canberra, Sydney, Caracas Festival) – [see the video](#), *White Heat: Arthur Boyd Retrospective*, AGNSW (ToI patron 1994-1999); *Litte Beauty*, National Portrait Gallery 2011, reflecting the Australian identity.

This project provides the opportunity to apply the vast knowledge and skills of visually-minded creators to a subject they are absolutely passionate about.

Carpenter trained as a visual artist under John Olsen (his mentor). He was the first Australian artist-in-residence at France's Atelier de Seguret. Numerous exhibitions of his mixed media works followed. Recently his Art For The Theatre – opened by Edmund Capon at Danks St Depot Gallery Sydney.

Image: Swimming In Light ... the world of Lloyd Rees