Welcome to the introductory notes for **EXXY** by Dan Daw Creative Projects, co-directed by Dan Daw and Sarah Blanc.

From the show website:

“How do you continue to value yourself when society doesn’t value you?

EXXY (Aussie slang for, ‘that’s expensive, mate’) takes us on an epic and tender journey back to where Dan Daw began – working class, with very little.

Join Dan: A Queer crippled artist on the rise, as he transports us to the Australian outback to talk about his imposter syndrome and fluctuating self-worth.

Told through a combination of remarkable stagecraft, movement and storytelling, EXXY propels Dan into the spotlight on an audacious and vulnerable quest to live in the world fearlessly.

Joined on stage by three performers who walk and talk like him, watch as Dan finds comfort in the possibility of finally blending in, after a lifetime of standing out.”

The Australian outback is conjured up with a striking rear wall about 8 metres wide and 3 metres high. It is a patchwork jumble of rusty red corrugated iron sheets of different sizes, some set vertical and some horizontal, with rusty square ventilation panels cutting in. A tall double door is created with two vertical panels slightly left of centre, and a single door with another vertical panel on the right end. Other panels can flip open as hatches or windows.

Stark thin strips of LED light edge the top of the wall, drawing a line down each side and around the edge of the rectangular black dance floor which lies 8 metres wide and 3 metres deep in front of the wall. The LED strips change colour, framing the space in vibrant neon tones or stark white.

Three small scrubby islands of Australian Saltbush plants are scattered around the periphery of the glossy black dance floor. The plants erupt in clumps of foot-long stems, sprouting coin-sized dusty pale green leaves all the way up. Each island is roughly a metre to a metre and a half wide, all organic curvy shapes holding two or three bushes. The earthy bases are coated with copper coins that give a warm shine and glimmer in the lights. At times the plants sparkle with little lights embedded in the bushes.

There are four deckchairs present in the space, initially set out one in each corner of the dance floor. They are classic 80s, metal framed, folding style chairs with fabric seats patterned in brown and cream floral print, and beige plastic arms.

Dominating the right side of the space is a billboard about 5m wide and 2m high, within a rusty red metal frame. Four slim horizontal rusty lamps arch out from the top of the frame, directed down to light the screen, and more LED strips run around the inside rim, casting a glow around the edges.. The whole billboard hangs at an angle diagonally, with the right end a metre higher than the left. The bottom left corner of the frame touches the ground, giving the appearance that the whole structure has fallen from its fixtures. The billboard image is a white background with the word EXXY in big black block capital letters taking up three quarters of the right side. A photograph of Dan Daw fills the left quarter. Dan lounges on blue sheets, propped up on his right arm, his left draped loosely over his left knee, which is drawn up to his chest. Dan is wearing a silver satin dressing gown open to reveal bare legs, a dark patterned top and peek of his black underpants. Dan looks out to us, an intense, serious expression on his face.

Captions are projected onto the billboard, and later onto the rusty corrugated iron wall, throughout the show. The captions are playful, sometimes telling the audience a joke behind the performer’s back or adding extra details. When this happens, the through-description will let you know what’s being said.

As well as captions throughout, there is projected video content on the billboard and later on the rear wall. Content includes close ups of performers faces, outback landscapes passing by or effects such as rippling water or smoke.

At the start of the show, a curtain of black tennis net - a square open weave - hangs in front of the whole performance space. The space behind is visible through the slight haze of black lines.

The 4 Performer/Collaborators all appear as themselves. The movement style often involves acts of endurance and physical exhaustion, alongside contemporary dance styles where each performers’ natural movement qualities affect and disrupt the composure and rhythms of the choreography.

The performers all wear clothing made of gun metal grey fabric, coated with a light silver sparkle which shimmers under the lights. They wear chunky black Nike trainers with glossy black soles, and black socks.

They are going to introduce themselves and tell you a bit more.

I’m **Dan Daw**, a white, disabled, heavily tattooed man. I have pale skin with a pink hue. I’m 5 feet 9 inches tall with a slim, muscular build; my shoulders are wider than my waist. I have tattoos all over my torso, arms and neck. I have a visible disability. I have cerebral palsy and I walk with my pelvis leading and my upper body leaning slightly back. I personally like to think of my physicality and my speech pattern as resembling someone who is two gins in!

I have short brown hair and a ginger goatee, and intense dark brown eyes, almost black. My gaze is quietly intense and direct.

I’m wearing a heavy, gun metal grey coloured kilt which comes down to just below my knees; and a skin tight sleeveless polo neck top of the same colour; with black socks and trainers.

The way that I move is quite changeable. I stumble and I also sweep and almost soar. I am sometimes very rhythmic and at other times unpredictable. My moments of stillness are powerful and striking and my repetitive movements are mesmerising.

I’m **Joe Brown** and I’m a Scottish gay man.

I’m a white man with pink tinged pale skin, short salt-and-pepper hair and short beard, and dark brown eyes. I’m 5 feet 7 inches tall and I have a bit of a Dad bod but I’m not actually a father so I like to use the phrase suitably cuddly!

I’m wearing wide legged, calf length long shorts and a loose fit t-shirt in gun metal grey. And black socks and trainers similarly to the others.

I have cerebral palsy, which affects all four of my limbs, but my right side more than my left, resulting in a fucking fabulous limp!

The way I move in Exxy is pretty high energy. I have moments of calm and stillness but I often throw myself around and there’s an intensity to my movements as well as my gaze, which is often very focussed.

Through the show, I return to a signature movement where I step from one foot on tiptoe into a stumble, catch myself in a crouch, spring up and launch forwards. We’ll call this ‘fall and catch’.

I’m **Tiiu Mortley** and I’m a criptastic brown woman!

I’m a woman of mixed heritage. I’m descended from a White Cornish mother (and the Cornish is important!) and a Black Caribbean father. My skin is a light brown, caramel colour and I have milk chocolate chip freckles. I’m 5 feet and 1 inch tall and have a curvy build, with thick thighs and strong legs. I have short dark brown hair with curls on top and graduated shaved sides, which can turn ginger-y in the sun. I have brown eyes.

I’m wearing wide legged, knee length shorts - gun metal grey coloured, and a loose fit button up shirt with short sleeves in the same colour. I wear wrist supports on both wrists. And I have black socks and trainers on my feet.

I’m a stroke survivor with left sided weakness and I walk with a heavy limp. When my body is under tension my left arm can tense and jolt. The way I move feels full of determination. I am often very graceful and considered, but sometimes frenetic with anguished, exasperated tones to my movements. I have a signature movement in the show which we’ll call ‘scrubbing’. I rub my palms over my arms, body and face with sometimes-rough, sometimes-tender moves as if washing or scrubbing myself. Sofia sometimes accompanies me in this movement

I’m **Sofia Valdiri** and I’m a woman of Colombian and French heritage with pale brown, warm toned skin. I’m 5 feet 4 inches tall and have a slim, lightly muscular but petite build.

I am a stroke survivor. I have visible and invisible disability : what most people see is the way my right arm is always shaking and moving by itself.

I have big brown eyes. My hair is brown and shoulder length, in the show it’s not tied back so it moves freely. I have a piercing on the left side of my nose and I also have a tattoo on my left arm. By doing this I wanted to give a special signification to the left side of my body - because it does a lot for me.

I’m wearing stretch cycle shorts which come to just above my knees and an asymmetric waistcoat style top. The two front-side edges cross over on diagonals across my chest, giving an almost zig zag hem line at the bottom. Both are in gun metal grey and I have black socks and trainers too.

The way I move feels thoughtful and I move often slowly, with delicacy but spattered with shakes and splutters. There is an inner fizz simmering at my core which sometimes comes to the surface. In the show I try to amplify the movements of my right arm, like the reverberation of the shaking moves all over my body. At some moments my left arm tries to control my right arm, but it can’t. We’ll call this signature movement ‘grip’.

**Credits:**

Artistic Director DDCP, Co-Director and Performer Dan Daw

Performer & Collaborator Joe Brown

Performer & Collaborator Tiiu Mortley

Performer & Collaborator Sofía Valdiri

Co-Director Sarah Blanc

Lighting Designer Nao Nagai

Set and Costume Designer Kat Heath

Costume Supervisor Izzie Byers

Video and Creative Caption Design Sarah Readman

Composer Guy Connelly

Sound Design Lewis Gibson

Dramaturg Brian Lobel

Executive Director DDCP and Executive Producer for EXXY Liz Counsell

EXXY is co-commissioned by Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts, Battersea Arts Centre, Transform, Take Me Somewhere, and Tramway for the New Dimensions commission, and Battersea Arts Centre.

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