

PREPARED BY KATIE FLETCHER AND CLAIRE CHRISTIAN

LA BOITE PRESENTS

# A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE

BY TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

EDUCATION NOTES



LA BOITE  
THEATRE COMPANY



Art Series Hotel Group



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# FEATURE TEACHER



## KATIE FLETCHER

Theatre Teacher  
Queensland Academy of Creative Industries.

### YOUR FAVOURITE PLAY AND WHY?

One of my all-time favourites is The Danger Ensemble's *Hamlet Apocalypse*. Steven Mitchell Wright's bold direction of such beautiful chaos and the heartfelt and authentic performances from some of the most amazing actors I know.

I absolutely love the American company, Rude Mechs and was lucky to see their performance of *The Method Gun*. This piece was inspired by Stella Burden, particularly her actor training *The Approach* and the last months of her company's rehearsals nine-years-in-the-making of a special version of *A Streetcar Named Desire*. The show explored the inherent frustrations that actors can feel in the process of creating meaningful work.

Another memorable piece was *God Squad's Kitchen* from the British company Gob Squad who created a piece loosely inspired around Andy Warhol's film – *The Kitchen*. Their set was an interactive playground – a mock up of Warhol's Factory where film after film were made. It reflected on the idea of how much (or how little) of a real experience can be captured and preserved on film. I have never seen a show integrate live film projection and audience interaction so well and in such a clever way with the most cheeky sense of humour. By the end of the show, the entire cast was replaced by audience members acting in the films.

### YOUR GO-TO WARM UP GAME?

A while ago I did a show at the Brisbane Powerhouse - *Ivy Shambitt and the Sound Machine* by the amazing Daniel Evans and for this show the audience had to wear blindfolds at one point in the play. Basically we were sponsored many airline blindfolds and since then I have modified, invented many blindfold Drama games!

Probably my favourite is *The Hunter and the Hunted* where you have everyone form a big circle around two students who are blindfolded. One of these students has a pool noodle. The objective of the game is for the student with the pool noodle to tap the other student (gently :P) with the pool noodle while the other person tries to not get touched. This game can be focused on exploring lots of different ideas and skills like mood, tension, and going for your objective.

### WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT BEING A TEACHER?

Teaching Theatre is so incredibly rewarding and often in really surprising ways. I am constantly inspired by the incredible spirits and minds of my students. I feel very privileged to work with such creative and intelligent young people.

### WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU WISH YOUR STUDENTS KNEW?

I wish that my students really understood, by which I mean, knew the power of their own voices and how they can transform people on a very profound level.

# ABOUT LA BOITE

## ARTISTIC VISION

### “Theatre That Matters”

La Boite holds a unique place in the hearts and minds of artists and audiences in Brisbane. For the past nine decades La Boite has represented the adventurous and alternative. There has always been a strong focus on the development of new work and artists, and today it is no different.

The stories, ideas and voices of our city and country are many and varied and as such La Boite seeks to represent and engage in this beautiful and rich diversity; the diversity of form, of ideas, ethnicity, gender – of identity.

## HISTORY

La Boite is a story of people, passion, purpose and place.

People like Barbara Sisley, who in 1916 found herself stranded in Brisbane when her theatrical touring company unexpectedly disbanded. She along with literature academic J. J. Stable formed the Brisbane Repertory Theatre Society in 1925 in response to the public's growing appetite for high quality, locally-produced theatre. For twenty years, Sisley and Stable reigned supreme in Brisbane's theatrical community.

After decades of moving between large venues such as the Theatre Royal and Albert Hall, in 1967 the company finally found a home of its own. Company members converted an old Queenslander in Hale St, Milton into a theatre-in-the-round. Hollowed out, the house had the appearance of a box and the name 'La Boite' was born. In 1972, the company moved next door to the Blair Wilson designed theatre, which so many remember with such fondness. This remained home for three decades, before the move to our current Roundhouse Theatre in Kelvin Grove in 2003.

90 years of existence takes resilience and ingenuity. La Boite has survived two World Wars, censorship, public outrage, politically-charged programming, changing tastes, floods and the constant flirting with failure that comes with walking the tightrope between risk and certainty.

Ultimately, La Boite's history is your history. Whether you have been with us for years or are new to the fold, we welcome you to join us as we move into our next 90 years.

## THE ROUNDHOUSE THEATRE

La Boite's Roundhouse Theatre is an epic-intimate space and Australia's only purpose-built theatre-in-the-round. It's also flexible enough to be used as a thrust stage with the audience on three sides. This 400-seat home stage offers a distinctive theatre experience.

# CAST & CREATIVES

Director **Todd MacDonald**

Lighting Designer **Ben Hughes**

Set and Costume Designer **Vilma Mattila**

Design Consultant **Kevin O'Brien**

Sound Design and Composer **Guy Webster**

Accent and Dialect Coach **Melissa Agnew**

Cast includes **Bridie Carter, Alexander Forero, Travis McMahon, Ngoc Phan, Parmis Rose, Colin Smith, Guy Webster** and **Kristal West**

# THINGS TO PONDER

## THE TITLE

Tennessee Williams lived and wrote among the artists and working poor of the French Quarter, New Orleans in a neighbourhood where the streetcars had names. Starting in the 1920s, the New Orleans Railway & Light Company built streetcar lines. In the 1940s, they started switching to buses. The Desire Line ran from 1920 to 1948, at the height of streetcar use. Williams turned this streetcar named “Desire” into one of the most famous plays in 20th century American theatre, winning a Pulitzer Prize. ([http://www.todayinliterature.com/stories.asp?Event\\_Date=12/3/1947](http://www.todayinliterature.com/stories.asp?Event_Date=12/3/1947)).

**The word desire. In what ways are we a culture of desire? What do we desire? What are we taught to desire? What do we believe is desirable?**

In the play *Blanche* mentions the desire twice. First, in Scene One, she tells Eunice that “they told [her] to take a street-car named *Desire*, and then transfer to one called *Cemeteries* and ride six blocks and get off at—*Elysian Fields!*” (1.16). Later, she berates Stella for her obsession with Stanley and mentions the streetcar again.

BLANCHE *What you are talking about is brutal desire—just—Desire! The name of that rattle-trap street-car that bangs through the Quarter, up one old narrow street and down another...*

STELLA *Haven't you ever ridden on that street-car?*

BLANCHE *It brought me here. (4.104-106)*

Blanche is literally brought to the Kowalski place by “Desire,” but she is also brought there by desire; her sexual escapades in Laurel ruined her reputation and drove her out of town (<http://www.shmoop.com/streetcar-named-desire/title.html>).

## REALISM

Read the following article by Nick Maclaine contextualisation of *A Streetcar Named Desire* in American Theatre. (<http://www.bsstc.com.au/assets/Uploads/Files/Programmes/Streetcar-ProgramV6-FINAL.pdf>)

*“What is straight? A line can be straight, or a street, but the human heart, oh, no, it's curved like a road through mountains.”* – Tennessee Williams

*“Tennessee Williams' remarkable success made obsolete the past before him... You can't have a theatre based upon anything other than a mass audience if it's going to succeed. The larger the better. It's the law of the theatre.”* – Arthur Miller

In 1947, the first ever Tony Award for Best Play was awarded to *Mister Roberts*, a likeable and reassuring wartime comedy based on a collection of short stories. It was a serious error of judgment. 1947 is now seen as a watershed year in American drama, with the opening of a very different type of play on Broadway.

The premiere of Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* revolutionised American theatre. It was gripping, sensual and shocking, and the opening night audience applauded for a full half hour at its conclusion. An electrifying victory for writing and acting grounded in gritty realism, it also made the careers of *Streetcar's* author (Williams), director (Elia Kazan), and star (Marlon Brando).

### ENTERTAINMENT AND AGONY

The early twentieth century American theatre had traded in melodrama and farce. Few of its playwrights – and none of its popular ones – sought to emulate European realists like Ibsen (*Ghosts*), Strindberg (*Miss Julie*) or Chekhov (*The Seagull*), whose plays had brought flawed, ordinary human beings to life.

Things began to shift in the 1920s; Eugene O'Neill notably won a slew of Pulitzer Prizes for plays that were full of fury and grief. But musicals and social comedies remained Broadway's staples, especially during the Depression and World War II. Arthur Miller argued that by the late 1940s, there remained a gulf between audiences who wanted to be entertained, and audiences who craved “agony”. It was Tennessee Williams who bridged the gulf. *Streetcar* – a ‘serious’ drama that pulsed with sex and violence – seared itself into the collective consciousness, winning a mass audience for works of American realism in the process. But what made *Streetcar's* realism so compelling? First, it was psychologically truthful. The characters in *Streetcar* have complex and relatable inner lives, and their fears, hopes and desires are what drive the action. For audiences who had only ever seen working-class characters portrayed as one-dimensional vessels for social commentaries, this was a revelation. Second, it was emotionally truthful. Williams showed audiences the world as Blanche DuBois experiences it, allowing them to see and hear what she sees and hears, even though no one else in the play can. Depicting a character's mental world onstage became a hallmark of American realism; much of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, for instance, takes place inside the doomed salesman's mind.

## EXPLORING THE THEMES:

### THE HOTTEST TREND IN DRAMA

But what also made *Streetcar* so compelling was its ground-breaking style of acting. Prior to its premiere, most American actors emoted – that is, they demonstrated their character's feelings to the audience. Elia Kazan's production, and Marlon Brando's performance as Stanley Kowalski, ended this; in Tennessee Williams' words, Brando was "acting from the inside out." Virtually overnight, Method Acting became the hottest trend in drama: it exploded out of the fringe, into the mainstream, and onto stages (and later screens) across the country.

The Method was an American adaptation of Konstantin Stanislavski's 'system' that trained actors to experience the part during performance. The great Russian's teachings took decades to reach the United States, finally reaching its shores when two of his disciples visited New York in the 1920s. This inspired the foundation of the Group Theatre (1931-41) and the Actors Studio (1947-), both of which evangelised a new American acting technique that was real and raw.

Kazan had acted with The Group before co-founding and teaching at the Actors Studio; Brando, then an unknown, was one of Kazan's brightest pupils. (Among the Studio's other graduates: Dustin Hoffman, Robert De Niro and Al Pacino.) Both men found *Streetcar* to be the perfect vehicle for their craft – and crucially, each proved that his craft was equal to the power and passion of Williams' play.

### A PERFECT STORM

*Streetcar*, then, was realism's perfect storm. The union of Tennessee Williams, Elia Kazan and Marlon Brando was instrumental in making social and psychological truth the dominant and defining features of twentieth century American theatre. And when Elia Kazan staged the premiere of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* a mere two years later, realism's triumph was complete.

This play is still highly relevant today exploring themes of sexuality, violence, madness, and masculinity.

As a class discuss our ideas of masculinity as young people today, our parent's ideas, as a female, as a male, the media, other cultures ideas of it...

Is masculinity partly seen as aggression, control, physical dominance, and even violence? A lack of refinement, manners, and sensitivity? Is this primitive or sexually appealing?

Explore these ideas physically by playing with different statues of masculinity. Form a gallery of statues.

Play with the different ideas of masculinity by going from one construct of masculinity to another. From past to present, Australian to American...

**Questions to ponder during the show:** *Does the play condemn or condone Stanley's type of masculinity? What or whom does the play hold up as an ideal form of masculinity?*  
(<http://www.shmoop.com/streetcar-named-desire/men-masculinity-theme.html>)

## SETTING

The play is set in a tiny apartment in the low-income area of the French Quarter in New Orleans, May-October 1947 (the same year as the play was written) two years after World War 2.

### The French Quarter:

The French Quarter is one of the oldest part of New Orleans (a port town). Founded as *La Nouvelle Orléans* in 1718, it was basically made up of the *Vieux Carré* (Old Square). It's the only grid layout of the city, planned by French Canadian naval officer Jean Baptiste Bienville. This housed a lot of the workers of the port. As Spanish and English populations rose, the name French Quarter referred to the decidedly French city-planning of this section. But the majority of the buildings were built by the Spanish.

The 1803 Louisiana Purchase transferred the colony to the US. The arrival of 10,000 refugees of the French and Haitian Revolutions and Napoleonic wars added to the culture of the space. The 1815 Battle of New Orleans, won by Andrew Jackson (future president) fixed loyalty of the people to America. "The French Quarter's golden era followed as cotton, sugar, and steamboats poured into the city. American, Irish, German, African, and "Foreign French" immigrants swelled the population, creating a heterogeneous matrix of culture, language, religion, and cuisine."

The tug of war between reform and machine happened during Civil War and Reconstruction. Creoles moved to Esplanade and later Uptown, and famine-driven Sicilian immigrants slept in the grand spaces of French Quarter mansions of the 1890s. 1900 saw the birth of jazz music. By 1920, writers flocked to the French Quarter due to the urbanism, quaint surroundings, and creative stimulus. (<http://ucstreetcar-dramaturgy.tumblr.com/post/101200779003/the-french-quarter>)

The Simpson's did a parody musical of the play in Season 4, Episode 2 where they include the song. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVmBtNaDXQg>)

*New Orleans!*  
*Stinking, rotten, vomiting, vile!*  
*New Orleans!*  
*Putrid, brackish, maggoty, foul!*  
*New Orleans!*  
*Crummy, lousy, rancid, and rank!*

This episode caused a bit of controversy in terms of its depiction of New Orleans however it was pretty close to the kind of perceptions Blanche would have had on the new town compared to Belle Reeves.

## CONTEXTS

### Research

As the play is set at the same time as it was written, it would be helpful to research some of the socio-historical contexts of New Orleans in the 1940s:

- Anti-polish sentiment
- Engineers Corps
- The Depression and Working Women
- Work and Married Women
- Poor Working Conditions
- Difficulty Getting Relief Jobs
- Miscegenation
- Napoleonic Code

## ARTIST CHECK IN



### INTERVIEW WITH LA BOITE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND DIRECTOR OF A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE, TODD MACDONALD.

**Q1. What interested you initially about this classic play? And, what do you think resonates the most in this play for a Brisbane audience at this point in time?**

Domestic violence and mental health issues are still hugely problematic in our society. They cross socioeconomic boundaries, cultural and age demographics – they are issues we have yet to find strategies to cope with as we skirt around their edges, unable or unwilling to acknowledge them. Williams wrote this work to shine a light on these issues and when I re-read this play I was shocked at how relevant it felt. Williams's voice and the way he constructs the characters and situations in the work keep this play completely compelling and relevant.

**Q2. What has been your directorial process from the text to concept to staging to the play?**

In the first place finding an approach to the issues and style of the writing. Initially I decided that a live music component was vital. In the play music has a huge presence and I have always loved live music in theatre so the challenge was to find musicians who can act. The next major consideration was putting the work in the round- this is a big challenge and one that makes a huge statement and creates a very specific experience for the audience. As we are The Roundhouse Theatre I am always trying to make work in the round (although it's not always possible). The next big concept for us was to actively pursue a

## ELEMENTS OF DRAMA

colour blind casting approach with the work – this speaks to making the work relevant, culturally accessible and more connected to the diverse contemporary audience of 2016. This leads to casting. Finding the right combination of artists to work together who have the skills and connection to the material. If you get this right 80% of your work is done!

My process is quite fluid so once these basic questions are dealt with then I move into a completely collaborative process working through the various design approaches of set, sound/music and lighting to develop an creative ensemble approach to the making of the work. This is reflected in my process with the cast and developing an ensemble feel devoid of ego and full of respect. The rehearsal process is one of unearthing the play, finding an overall style and weaving all the elements together- that's a short answer to a very complex question.

### Q3. What impact do you hope to make with Brisbane audiences?

Ultimately I want this work to affect the audience- stop them and make them think deeper and harder about these issues. I believe we can totally entertain them along the way and the text and structure is still so completely compelling that I think audiences will be transported by this work.

### Q4. Describe the most terrifying or exciting thing about directing *Streetcar Named Desire*?

I think the worst part is the expectation on the work – the level of fame and delivering a production to match those expectations.

### Q5. What is something that you discovered in the rehearsal room about the play?

Once you activate the scenes you really see how great the writing is. Williams will set up scenes and structure them in the most powerful way- lead you down one path and then pull the rug out from under you.

### Q6. What is the main reason for having a live band onstage? Why is it important for the piece? How are planning to integrate the live musicians and the performers on stage?

As I mentioned above – music is so at the heart of the work – as is atmosphere and I love how live musicians instantly change the vibration in the theatre.

### Q7. Can you give one piece of advice for emerging directors.

There is only one piece of advice I can give- make work that matters.

### Q8. Who is your biggest muse to date and why?

I've never had a muse as such- but a number of mentors who have shaped my practice- David Pledger and Bagryana Popov- both Melbourne based artists.

### MOOD:

How does the production incite a particular mood through the use of sight, sound and smell?

How does the live music create particular moods throughout the production? Does it complement or juxtapose the action?

How are the specific qualities of the style of Blue Piano music used to create moods? How does Guy Webster use the Blue Piano music and the Varsouviana to communicate emotions and transitions?

What kind of mood does the angled platform stage rises create? How are they used to create different atmospheres between the different rooms in the apartment and the live music space? Do the actors use these spaces effectively? How?

### ROLES AND RELATIONSHIP:

What do we learn about the characters before they speak in the play? What information do we get about them through their costumes, movement, and rhythms onstage?

What binary opposites are investigated in the actor's choices to portray the relationship between Stanely and Blanche?

What do we learn about Blanche's past? What performance skills are used to support these given circumstances?

How believable were the actors in playing their roles?

In what ways does the actor playing Stanely foreshadow his potential for violence and rape?

What differences are explored between the two sister's worlds - Blanche's Belle Reeve and Stella's urban living?

How does Blanche threaten Stanely's power in the home?

Write down everything you know and that can be inferred about each character. Create a series of freeze frames that depict the major transformations of the characters.

# PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES

*"I don't want realism, I want magic."* – Blanche Dubois



Watch the trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1J1VuFbz5yo>

## ACTION AND OBJECTIVE GLADIATORS

Each student is given a secret objective where that they must get the other person to do something. The focus is on the act of doing. Give the students a scenario. In this scenario they must achieve their objective as soon as possible. They must also accept offers from the other person they are working with in the scene. Example objectives could be- to say the word "sorry", to say the word "stop", to sit, to jump etc. As soon as someone achieves their objective they win.

## MUSIC AND SOUND

Guy Webster will head the live band on stage with music inspired by William's references to two types of music The Blue Piano and The Varsouviana (a polka tune).

In the description The Blue Piano is described as sounding like a tinny piano in the style of the Blues expressing the spirit of life. Some say it represents the present. In contrast The Varsouviana which is a tune that is repeated as a loop representing the past (the death of her husband) in Blanche's head. During the show think of each instant that either music plays.

### What is happening in that moment and why does the music play?

#### The Blues:

New Orleans, Louisiana was known as the "The Melting Pot of Sound," well renowned for its diversity in its culture, festivities, and music since the early 1900's. However, the different cultures and festivities are what gave rise to the success of the music it produced, specifically Black American music such as jazz and the blues. New Orleans was home to the blues. This in turn resulted into the evolution of music and made New Orleans home to the blues. Within this diversity the city had an abundant African American population.

Born in the south, the blues is derived from African American music and expressed pain, lost love, and/or injustices experienced by the Black Americans. It tends to be depressing sounding and has a slower tempo. (<http://blogs.longwood.edu/lublogging/2012/03/07/what-made-new-orleans-unique-in-the-history-of-black-american-music/>)

#### RESEARCH AND COLLECT

Research some examples of different Blues music and write a description of the types of moods it evokes.

#### DESIGN

In small groups pick one major scene from the play and mix these blues sounds to create a soundscape to capture the inner experience of the characters. The music might be juxtaposed, contradictory or supportive of their inner experience.

## STYLES

The play has both realistic, and even naturalistic, as well as expressionist and symbolist elements. Some people would say the style could be called Poetic Realism.

#### RESEARCH

In order to understand this style it is important to note the stylistic influences on Williams at the time when he was writing his plays research a main conventions of Expressionism, Realism, Naturalism and Symbolism.

# SET DESIGN

After studying some of William's stylistic influences of Realism and also Symbolism and Expression, you are to design the set piece for a production of *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

1. Choose your venue and consider the existing architecture in the space
2. Consider how can your design create the environment for the emotional world of the play?
3. Use the stage directions at the start of the play as stimulus

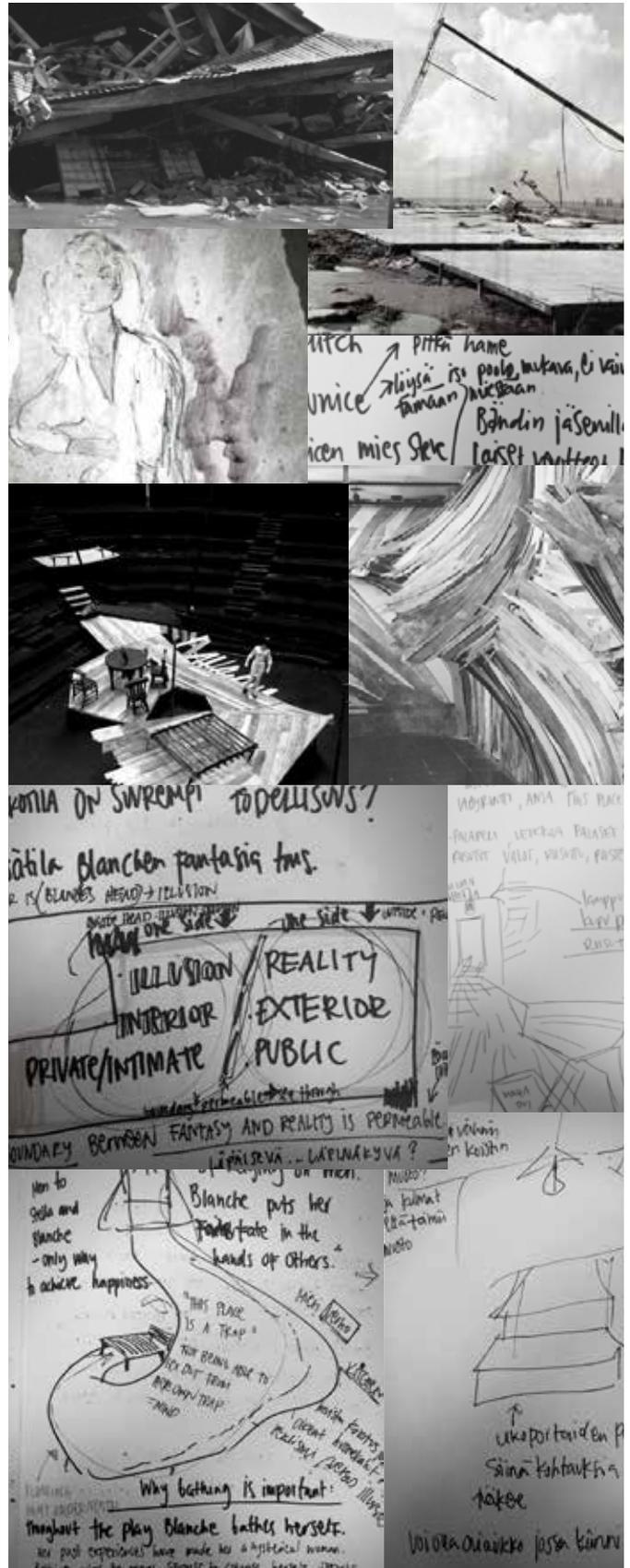
The exterior of a two-story corner building on a street in New Orleans which is named Elysian Fields and runs between the L & N tracks and the river. The section is poor but, unlike corresponding sections in other American cities, it has a raffish charm. The houses are mostly white frame, weathered grey, with rickety outside stairs and galleries and quaintly ornamented gables. This building contains two flats, upstairs and down. Faded white stairs ascend to the entrances of both.

It is first dark of an evening early in May. The sky that shows around the dim white building is a peculiarly tender blue, almost a turquoise, which invests the scene with a kind of lyricism and gracefully attenuates the atmosphere of decay. You can almost feel the warm breath of the brown river beyond the river warehouses with their faint redolence's of bananas and coffee. A corresponding air is evoked by the music of Negro entertainers at a barroom around the corner. In this part of New Orleans you are practically always just around the corner, or a few doors down the street, from a tinny piano being played with the infatuated fluency of brown fingers. This "Blue Piano" expresses the spirit of the life which goes on here.

Two women, one white and one coloured, are taking the air on the steps of the building. The white woman is Eunice, who occupies the upstairs flat; the coloured woman a neighbour, for New Orleans is a cosmopolitan city where there is a relatively warm and easy intermingling of races in the old part of town.

Above the music of the "Blue Piano" the voices of people on the street can be heard overlapping.

Look at some of set designer Vilma Mattila stimulus images, sketches and her original design to inspire you.



# POST-SHOW

## DEVISING

### COMPOSITION TASK

At the start of the play, Williams includes a poem by his favourite poet, Hart Crane.

Using this poem as a starting point, devise a short composition of roughly three short scenes between 1-30 seconds long.

Read the poem, record your initial responses, and then research around it. Form a small group. Share your findings with the rest of the group with one minute each to speak. In only 10 minutes your group must create and rehearsal your piece - so follow your gut instinct. Try to find an interesting mixture of literal versus metaphorical. Key ingredients that you must use are: a moment of physical suspension, a surprise entrance, an extreme emotion and 30 seconds of unified action.

*And so it was I entered the broken world  
To trace the visionary company of love, its voice  
An instant in the wind (I know not whither hurled)  
But not for long to hold each desperate choice*

*The Broken Tower* by Hart Crane

Research the personal contextual influences of Tennessee Williams and the content of the play.

Some points to get you started:

- When 28 year-old Tom Williams finally left his parents' Missouri home, he headed for New Orleans, for a new life as a writer, a newly-realized sexual identity as a homosexual, even a new first name: Tennessee
- Despite having places in New Orleans and Key West, he was a compulsive, hotel-room nomad
- His sister Rose spent all her adult life in a mental institution
- He suffered from being an alcoholic

After completing your research in small groups devise a two minute talk show that explores the play and the correlations to Tennessee William's life.

## PRE-SCRIPT

### TIMELINE

- C17-C19 DuBois family established at Belle Reve, Laurel, Mississippi (Blanche tells Stanley, 'There are thousands of papers, stretching back over hundreds of years, affecting Belle Reve.' Thanks to the 'epic fornications' of Blanche and Stella's 'improvident grandfathers and fathers and uncles and brothers', everything is lost.)
- 1917 September, Blanche born (she is 30 as the play begins)
- 1922 Stella born.
- 1933 Blanche elopes with and marries Allan Gray; he commits suicide
- 1937 Stella leaves Belle Reve for New Orleans. Stella and Blanche's father dies.
- Late 30s/early 40s Blanche left to care for everything. Mother, Margaret, and Cousin Jessie die. Blanche teaches English at Laurel High School. All that's left of the estate is the house, 20 acres of ground and the graveyard. Stella marries Stanley (he's still in uniform at the time).
- 1946 Christmas Eve, Blanche meets Shep Huntleigh in Miami (assuming this isn't a figment of Blanche's imagination).
- 1947 Spring term, Blanche is fired from her job after an affair with one of her students; Belle Reve is finally lost; Blanche moves to the Hotel Flamingo.
- End of April, Blanche is asked to leave the Hotel Flamingo.
- Early May, Blanche arrives in New Orleans.

(<http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/261575-a-streetcar-named-desire-delivery-guide.pdf>)

#### DEVISE

Choose one of the events from the timeline above and devise a small scene to further develop the given circumstances of the characters and find a personal connection to them. Write a short monologue in role as your character after the scene speaking your thoughts to the audience.

## TEXTUAL

### ANALYSIS

#### PERFORM

Practice your textual analysis by deconstructing the climax of the play, scene 10.

Firstly in pairs perform a rough reading of the scene without any analysis of it. Now go through the text and identify your character's objectives, motivations and tactics.

Break the scene up into the different units according to the changes in your character's objectives. For each line write what the subtext is. Practice saying each line while thinking the subtext. Perform the scene again. Identify how the scene improved.

## AMERICAN

### ACCENTS

#### PERFORM

Now that you have analysed the scene to perform it you will need to learn a particular accent this will depend on the character and their background. Generally speaking most of the characters will have a Southern American accent but variations of it.

For some guidance on learning this accent watch the YouTube clip to learn the basic rules of the accent. This clip is specifically that of a Mississippi Southern American accent that would be suitable for actors playing Blanche.

<http://www.howcast.com/videos/500509-how-to-do-a-mississippi-southern-accent-accent-training/>

Summary of a Southern Mississippi Accent:

- drop the "ng" sound at the ends of words
- non-rhotic accent, meaning there are no r's
- I, ih, is drawn out and lengthened to one sound
- the e sound turns into oi.

Practice your accent with a partner using some of the lines from Scene 10.

## PLAYWRITING

When writing in the style of Realism a fun challenge is to try and make the dialogue sound as realistic and natural as possible while still portraying the complexities of the characters.

Using what you know about the character Blanche, write a scene after the end of the play where Blanche is telling her doctor the story of what happened at her sister's apartment and why she left. What parts of her story does she choose to tell? How do you show her mental state and give clues to her guilt from the past?

## CHECK IT OUT

Here's a collection of articles, videos and links that you could use as brilliant starting points for exercises, conversations and classroom activities that relate to *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

This essay appeared in The New York Times Drama Section, November 30, 1947--four days before the New York opening of *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

<https://cms.springbranchisd.com/Portals/175/teachers/language%20arts/shelley/On%20A%20Streetcar%20Named%20Success.pdf?ver=2015-04-23-101258-557>

Poetic Realism in *Streetcar Named Desire*

<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.301.8533&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

Expressionism in *Streetcar Named Desire*

<https://pad.artsci.wustl.edu/getting-colored-lights-going-expressionism-tennessee-williamss-streetcar-named-desire>

Teaching Tennessee Williams's *From Multiple Critical Perspectives*

[http://www.wsd3.org/cms/lib010/CO01900798/Centricity/Domain/479/streetcar\\_named\\_desire\\_mcp.pdf](http://www.wsd3.org/cms/lib010/CO01900798/Centricity/Domain/479/streetcar_named_desire_mcp.pdf)

### YOUTUBE

The Young Vic production of "*A Streetcar Named Desire*" is one of the most visually stunning, original interpretations of this classic play.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NUiqVTYhySU>

A Q and A from this show

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NUiqVTYhySU>

Theater Talk: Tennessee Williams *Mad Pilgrimage of The Flesh*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JOac-ZgbhtA>

An interview with the man himself!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FScWlr5qZUY>

New Orleans Neighborhoods | French Quarter History

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZxtzMx0JdOU>

New Orleans in 1940: A Documentary

The Mask of Masculinity - the traditional role of men is evolving | Connor Beaton | TEDxStanleyPark

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fmkFdAMFGXo>

From the land of the sky blue water- Alma Gluck

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scfIS3pjhzw>

These Images and poems could be used as stimulus to discuss some of the themes in the play; gender, power, love and abuse.

### Superiority

By Meghan Kirby

I concede to your superiority,

I get it you're the best.

I'm just a weak little girl,

Who can't compete with the rest.

But I'm tired of being an afterthought,

I've had it with these games.

It's your turn to bow to me,

And suffer with the shame.

<http://hellopoetry.com/words/148354/kirby/poems/?page=2>

### Power

By Amitav Radiance

Too much power

Bestowed on the unworthy

Left power powerless

Going berserk within

And causing havoc outside

Ridiculing the essence of power

<http://hellopoetry.com/words/245480/powers/poems/>

### Power

By Ryan Zabala

Ever had that feeling of,

power?

The power that swirls inside you,

at a time in your life.

Where you know when you can use it.

The power inside you,

that leaks and makes you...

unstoppable.

The power that grows, grows until.

You are human no more.

But an immortal, with ultimate

power.

You become, the one.

The one with no one to stop you.

But yourself.

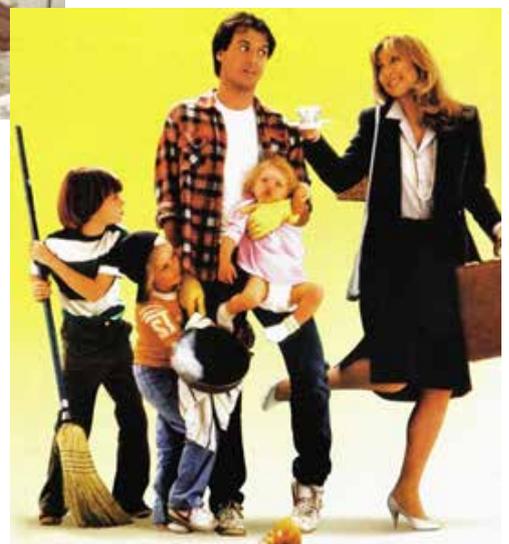
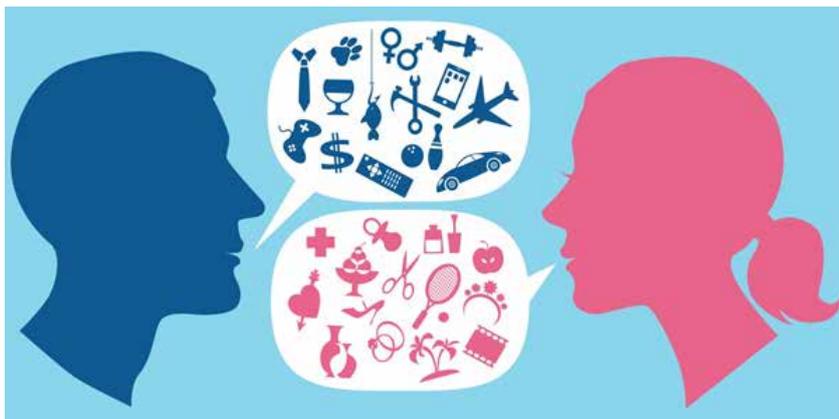
<http://ryanzabala.blogspot.com.au/2015/05/power.html>

### The Murderous "I Love You"

By Stephanie F Krulick

each night I'm slowly dying  
choking on words I can't say  
racing from my brain  
through my body until  
they reach the edges of my fingers  
the bottoms of my feet  
the tip of my tongue  
only to stay there and linger  
unable to escape  
unable to disappear from within

<http://hellopoetry.com/words/30797/inability/poems/>





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**In Person** 9am - 5pm, Monday - Friday  
La Boite at the Roundhouse Theatre  
The Works Level 5, 6-8 Musk Avenue  
Kelvin Grove Village, QLD 4059

**Mail** PO Box 212, Kelvin Grove QLD 4059

**Website** [www.laboite.com.au](http://www.laboite.com.au)

**Email** [info@laboite.com.au](mailto:info@laboite.com.au)

**Phone** (07) 3007 8600

**Fax** (07) 3007 8699

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