

All About Women: Actually Autistic

Teacher Resources

Years 9-12



Welcome

Sydney Opera House is one of the indisputable masterpieces of human creativity and has long been a place for learning and sharing knowledge.

The land on which Sydney Opera House stands was known to its traditional custodians, the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, as Tubowgule, meaning “where the knowledge waters meet.”

A stream carried fresh water down from what is now Pitt Street to the cove near Tubowgule, a rock promontory that at high tide became an island. The mixing of fresh and salt waters formed a perfect fishing ground. Middens of shells were a testament to Tubowgule’s long history as a place where the Gadigal gathered, feasted, sung, danced and told stories.

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Did You Know...?

Sydney Opera House is home to eight flagship Australian performing arts companies which bring art to life every day beneath the famous shells. We are proud to partner with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Bangarra Dance Theatre, Bell Shakespeare, Opera Australia, Sydney Theatre Company, The Australian Ballet, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and the Sydney Philharmonia Choirs.

130,000 people attend performances at the Sydney Opera House, for young audiences annually. Since 2014, one furry guest has caught the attention of locals and international visitors alike. The northern VIP steps of the Opera House, otherwise unoccupied for the majority of the year, is the favourite sunbathing spot of a wild long-nosed fur seal, affectionately called 'Benny' (named after Bennelong Point).

You can now experience the Opera House, as never before, on Google's digital museum platform with 1270 digital artefacts and 50 interactive online exhibits; the Sydney Opera House's presence on the Google Cultural Institute allows people everywhere to experience the symbol of modern Australia.

The Creative Learning Journey

Before the Event

Begin your Creative Learning Journey

Have your students think about the themes of the talk with information and activities in these Creative Learning Teachers Resources. Check out the video and links page to initiative topics of discussion and dive into the recommended reading list written by experts in these areas.

After the Event

Continue the Creative Exploration

Follow up the event with the Post talk activities and continue the conversation with your students. What questions did they feel weren't asked? Where could they go to get this information? What did they think were the biggest learnings from the session? Can you develop any projects out of the learnings?

Sign up for another Free Event

We offer an annual program of performances, workshops and talks to further extend the learning journey of your students. Free for all Australian Schools and offered throughout the year.

Listen and Watch

Explore the other resources and activities on our website that could support your classroom learning

program. See here:

www.sydneyoperahouse.com/learn/schools/resources.html

About the Resources

These Creative Learning Resources have been prepared to help you get the most out of the All about Women 2023: Actually Autistic event. These resources have been collated to help prepare your students to unpack the content, think deeply about it and apply it to their continued learning.

You should use and adapt these Resources to suit the student age and stage of your class and the curriculum foci and outcomes used in your school. These resources are written as a creative document for you to bring to life. If you have questions about exercises or provocations please feel free to make contact to talk it through. We are always open to feedback, comments and working with you to assist and learn from you. Contact details are on the back page.

Some websites are suggested throughout this resource. It is recommended that you first review the sites and assess the suitability of the content for your particular school environment before setting the activities based on these.

Sydney Opera House has a bank of Creative Learning Resources for you to access and use. Please have a look around our website for other resources and activities that could support your classroom learning program.

Acknowledgements

Grateful thanks are extended to all the artists and educators who have generously allowed their resources to be included in this document.

Sydney Opera House Creativity Framework

These Creative Learning Resources have been written using the Sydney Opera House Creativity Framework as the pedagogy. The Framework aims to define the creative process in a way that educators can use to teach and be inspired by.

At a glance this Creativity Framework is:

Prepare

Tools and Pathways

Preparing mind, body, space, materials and time

Buy in

Presence and Enthusiasm

Convincing students that they want to be there

Imagine

The Fertile Unknown

Exploring a subject through arts practice. Using form to uncover content. Allowing uncensored expression to reveal new ways of seeing a subject

Question

Analysis, investigation and revelation

Creating new understanding by analysing what just happened when honing the imagination

Make

Forging form from content

Putting shape to content and moving towards a project; scripts, composition, choreography, project design

Show

Commit, frame, judgement

Performing and presenting the work

Reflect

Remembering, Processing, Exiting

Creating understanding and healthy memories from the creative process and product.

Whilst written as a sequence, the Sydney Opera House Creativity Framework is not a method or system but a way of articulating the creative process. As the Framework is applied it becomes apparent the sequence dissolves and many of the specific sections live in one exercise. These resources have been written with this in mind.

This Framework underpins the Sydney Opera House Creative Leadership in Learning program that sees schools partner with the House for three years of teacher professional learning, student projects and performances. For more information please see the Sydney Opera House website.

About All About Women

Sydney Opera House's All About Women (AAW) celebrates extraordinary thinkers, writers and artists, and poses vital questions about gender, equality and justice.

In 2023, AAW enters its second decade with a program co-curated by Jamila Rizvi (she/her), Dr Amy Thunig (she/they), Jane Caro (she/her), and the Sydney Opera House Talks and Ideas team, led by Chip Rolley (he/him). Together they have created a lively and inclusive program to engage the curiosity of AAW's audience of women and gender diverse people, and their allies.

The 11th festival honours women and girls who fight to be heard – from protesters in Iran, to pro-choicers in the US, to advocates everywhere who defend the silenced. We'll explore friendship, family, and romance. We'll cross cultures, genders and generations to learn what community means. We'll find our voice, but we'll also learn to listen. The line-up features a mix of international and local speakers, appearing in person on the stages of the iconic Sydney Opera House.

Experience the festival in person at Sydney Opera House, or join us online via our livestream program.



About Actually Autistic

Chloe Hayden, Grace Tame & Jac den Houting
Curated and moderated by Amy Thunig

Nearly 80% of autistic women are mis- or un-diagnosed - but every day we're learning more about this disability. Join our panellists to hear what it's actually like to be autistic.

We live in a society that is only just beginning to recognise neurodivergence in women and non-binary people. So how does it feel to be misdiagnosed for years? Does greater public awareness lead to acceptance and inclusion when it comes to socialising? What are some strategies to cope with ableist systems? And what stereotypes do we really need to put in the bin?

In a world where we often hear about autistic people, this panel of actually autistic high achievers tells us about their own lives, on their own terms. They'll be sharing about navigating social scenes and professional settings, and what masking and mimicry mean. This will be an essential session exploring how everyone can be part of a world that is inclusive, accessible and full of support.

Recommended Years: 9-12

Duration: 60 Minutes

Dates: Available until 31 March 2023



Meet the Speakers

Dr Amy Thunig

Dr Amy Thunig (B.Arts, M.Teach, PhD) (she/they) is a Gomeroi/Gamilaroi/Kamilaroi yinarr (woman) and mother who resides on Awabakal Country. A full-time academic in the field of education, Amy is also an author, with her first book *Tell Me Again* released in November 2022 via UQP. Amy is a Director at Story Factory in Redfern, on various committees and councils including the AECG, and a media commentator and panellist, regularly appearing on television programs such as ABC's *The Drum*.



SPEAKERS

Chloé Hayden

Chloé Hayden (she/her) is an award-winning actor and disability advocate, motivational speaker and social media influencer whose story of being 'different, not less' has attracted a worldwide following. She stars as Quinni in *Heartbreak High*, the Netflix remake of the iconic Australian series. Her first book is *Different, Not Less: A neurodivergent's guide to embracing your true self and finding your happily ever after*.



Grace Tame

Grace Tame (she/her) is a leader of positive change. She is a survivor-advocate for victims of sexual assault, particularly those who were abused as children.

In 2019 Grace was assisted via the #LetHerSpeak campaign who obtained a court order on her behalf, so she could speak out publicly, under her real name as an abuse survivor.



Grace Tame Cont..

Now 27 and based in Hobart, Grace is a regular guest speaker for high-profile events and television programs. She uses her media profile to advocate for other vulnerable groups in the community. She is also a passionate yoga teacher and visual artist, having toured the United States with John Cleese in 2018 (Monty Python) as his personal illustrator. Grace is also a champion long-distance runner, winning the 2020 Ross Marathon in a female course record time of 2:59:31.

On the 30th of October, 2020, Grace was named Tasmanian Australian of the Year for 2021.

On the 25th of January, 2021, Grace was named Australian of the Year. This award has supported Grace in advocating for, and bring awareness to, survivors of child sexual assault, empowering individuals to come forward with their stories after years of silence and pain.

Grace has since started The Grace Tame Foundation, which is a not-for-profit philanthropic organisation that campaigns for and helps to fund initiatives that work to prevent and respond to sexual abuse of children and others.

In 2022 Grace wrote and published her memoir, *The Ninth Life of a Diamond Miner*.

Dr Jac den Houting

Dr Jac den Houting (they/them) is a research psychologist and autistic activist working in pursuit of social justice. An emerging autism research leader, Jac is committed to creating real-world change that benefits autistic people, in the areas that matter most to the autistic community. Jac believes that autism research can be most meaningful and impactful when it is conducted by and with those it is intended to serve – autistic people.

Jac trained and worked as a psychologist in Brisbane, Australia, before completing their PhD and venturing into an academic career. Currently, Jac is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Macquarie University in Sydney. In late 2019, Jac made their TEDx debut with a viral talk that has attracted more than 1.2 million views to date. Jac is proudly neurodivergent and queer, and shares their life with their equally-neurodivergent partner; an enthusiastic Labrador; a Deaf rescue cat; and a disgruntled bearded dragon.



Questions for the Curator

We asked Dr Amy Thunig, curator of Actually Autistic, a few questions which we encourage you and your students to explore together.

You can also watch her video introduction to understand why she chose to curate this talk.



You have written about your experiences as an Autistic Person. Have you found the process of writing cathartic? What has the response to your writing been?

I always find writing to be a good way of processing my feelings and thoughts, but sharing personal writing by way of my book was a first for me. I was really nervous about it, but it has been received really well. A lot of people have reached out to say they resonated with my experiences, and that reading my perspectives helped them in some way, and that feels like a good thing to me.

What are the next steps that society needs to take to allow more acceptance and inclusion?

We need more actually autistic academics and researchers to be leading when it comes to work focused on autism and inclusion. We need more awareness and education so that more children assigned female at birth aren't ignored and misdiagnosed/under diagnosed, and we need better supports so that autistic peoples can navigate education systems and workplaces not only safely but in ways that allow them to thrive and be their best selves. This is all possible.

Do you think that there is now greater public awareness about autism for women? Has this led to more acceptance and inclusion?

I don't think there is really, not yet. We are in the very early stages of awareness growing, it is still very risky being identified as autistic, and unfortunately the conversation is still dominated by allistic people who want to speak for and or over us. That concerns me. However, what is really encouraging is that though there aren't many examples, the women and non binary people who are autistic and platform in the public space, are truly phenomenal. They are speaking up, speaking out, and calling for better treatment, inclusion, and representation. I am so inspired by the three people on this panel, Dr Jac is smashing it as a researcher in the space, Chloe is changing lives with her representation of Quinnie and the way she uses her platform on social media to advocate, and Grace has to be one of the best speakers and advocates of this generation.

Before the Event

Society and Culture

1. Students to explore the evolution of understanding autism by exploring the evolution of autism diagnosis, treatments, and societal views throughout history by creating an infographic using CANVA.
2. Students to research intersectionality of neurodivergence with other social identities, such as race, gender, or sexuality. Students could discuss how different identities can intersect to create unique experiences and challenges, as well as the importance of intersectional approaches to inclusion and support by creating an interactive presentation tool on Adobe Express.

English

1. Read "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time" by Mark Haddon, to analyse the character's behaviour and communication patterns and discuss how the author portrays autism in the story.

Extension: Students to compare this representation to other fiction texts with characters having autism i.e., Graeme Simsion's "The Rosie Project", Donna Levin's "There's more than one way home" and write an essay comparing the representation of autism in texts.

2. In Matilda Boseley's article 'It's a superpower': an autistic young woman takes her message of inclusion to TikTok writes about the experiences of Chloé Hayden:

(<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/may/23/its-a-superpower-an-autistic-young-woman-takes-her-message-of-inclusion-to-tiktok>).

After reading this article, write a reflection on your how your perspective of neurodivergence has changed.

PDHPE

1. In Jessica Horner's ABC News article Autism may be risk factor for sexual abuse, but Grace Tame considers being autistic empowering <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-01-24/grace-tame-autism-risk-factor-sexual-abuse-disability-empowering/101862328>

Tame states "Today we're seeing a lot of labels used as weapons, as absolute ways of dividing people and diminishing people" as a class debate why it is important not to label individuals with neurodivergence.

2. Students to conduct research and create a presentation on the potential impact of autism on mental health, such as anxiety or depression, and explore strategies for managing these challenges. Extension: Students to write a report on the strategies that explains the different roles and responsibilities of individuals, communities and governments in addressing this.

After the Event

In the following post-talk activities students will unpack the talk and dive deeper into the world of neurodivergence.

Society and culture

1. In a media article by Eliza Mcphee, Mcphee highlights how Grace Tame criticised the show Love on the Spectrum stating, “She criticised how the show was a 'novelty' for those without the disorder and said people's differences had been sold as a 'commercial product'. How has the media portrayed autism? Have students participate in a class debate exploring the portrayal of autism in the media and the impact that it has on the larger society.

Extension: Students to collate media portrayals such as Love on the Spectrum, Atypical, The Good Doctor, The Big Bang Theory and discuss the impact of these portrayals on screen.

2. Students to conduct research to write a report that analyses disability rights advocacy movements, such as the neurodiversity movement, and their impact on social and cultural attitudes towards neurodivergence in Australia. Extension: Students to explore how disability rights and advocacy vary in different countries.

English

1. Ask students to reflect on what they learned from the panel discussion and share their thoughts and insights with the class. Encourage them to ask questions and engage in a respectful and empathetic dialogue about the different experiences and perspectives presented. From this discussion and the panel discussion students are to write a personal essay, reflecting on their own experiences or perspectives on autism.

2. From the panel students are to create a poster that showcases what students have learned about neurodivergence. Encourage students to use visual elements to represent the experiences and challenges of people with autism.

3. Have students read Chloe Hayden's "Different, Not Less, a neurodivergent's guide to embracing your true self and finding your happily ever after" and/or Grace Tame's "The Ninth Life Of A Diamond Miner", and write a book review.

PDHPE

1. Watch Jac den Houting's Ted-X Talk Why everything you know about autism is wrong (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1AUdaH-EPM>) from this discuss the importance of advocacy and awareness for people with autism.

Extension: Students to create their own TED talk inspired by the conversations from the panel.

2. Chloe Hayden shares her experiences on neurodiversity regularly on TikTok, watch her Autism Anthem: (<https://www.tiktok.com/@chloeshayden/video/6798453549836569861>) from this have students to create a health promotion campaign that raises awareness about different neurodivergent conditions and the importance of inclusion and support. They could use different social media like TikTok or create such as posters, videos, or social media campaigns, to share their messages across the school.

Additional Resources

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Boseley, M. (2020) 'it's a superpower': An autistic young woman takes her message of inclusion to TikTok, The Guardian. Guardian News and Media. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/may/23/its-a-superpower-an-autistic-young-woman-takes-her-message-of-inclusion-to-tiktok>

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<https://www.tiktok.com/@chloeshayden/video/6798453549836569861> (2020) TikTok. Available at: <https://www.tiktok.com/@chloeshayden/video/6798453549836569861>

In conversation with Amy Thunig (2023) ANU. The Australian National University. Available at: <https://www.anu.edu.au/events/in-conversation-with-amy-thunig>

Interview with different, not less author Chloé Hayden (2022) Amaze. Available at: <https://www.amaze.org.au/2022/11/interview-with-different-not-less-author-chloe-hayden/>

Jac Den Houting Macquarie University. Available at: <https://researchers.mq.edu.au/en/persons/jac-den-houting>

Tame, G. Grace Tame on how her autism has helped her survive, Refinery29. Available at: <https://www.refinery29.com/en-au/2022/10/11150105/grace-tame-ninth-life-of-a-diamond-miner>

Topsfield, J. (2022) Chloe Hayden channels her anger at Sia into scriptwriting gold for heartbreak high, The Sydney Morning Herald. The Sydney Morning Herald. Available at: <https://www.smh.com.au/national/how-chloe-hayden-became-one-of-the-first-autistic-actors-to-play-an-autistic-character-in-a-major-tv-series-20220921-p5bj6.html>

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Classroom Context and Curriculum Links

KLA	Stage 5	Stage 6 - Preliminary	Stage 6 - HSC
Society and Culture social and cultural concepts and their application		P1 identifies and applies social and cultural concepts	H1 evaluates and effectively applies social and cultural concepts
Society and Culture personal, social and cultural identity and interactions within societies and cultures		P2 describes personal, social and cultural identity P3 identifies and describes relationships and interactions within and between social and cultural groups	H2 explains the development of personal, social and cultural identity H3 analyses relationships and interactions within and between social and cultural groups
Society and Culture continuity and change, personal and social futures		P5 explains continuity and change and their implications for societies and cultures	H5 analyses continuity and change and their influence on personal and social futures
English C think in ways that are imaginative, creative, interpretive and critical	EN5-5C thinks imaginatively, creatively, interpretively and critically about information and increasingly complex ideas and arguments to respond to and compose texts in a range of context	EN11-5 thinks imaginatively, creatively, interpretively and analytically to respond to and compose texts that include considered and detailed information, ideas and arguments	EN12-5 thinks imaginatively, creatively, interpretively, analytically and discerningly to respond to and compose texts that include considered and detailed information, ideas and arguments
English D express themselves and their relationships with others and their world	EN5-7D understands and evaluates the diverse ways texts can represent personal and public worlds	EN11-7 understands and explains the diverse ways texts can represent personal and public worlds	EN12-7 explains and evaluates the diverse ways texts can represent personal and public worlds
PDHPE	PD5-3 analyses factors and strategies that enhance inclusivity, equality and respectful relationships PD5-10 critiques their ability to enact interpersonal skills to build and maintain respectful and inclusive relationships in a variety of groups or contexts	P5 describes factors that contribute to effective health promotion P15 forms opinions about health-promoting actions based on a critical examination of relevant information	H5 explains the different roles and responsibilities of individuals, communities and governments in addressing Australia's health priorities H14 argues the benefits of health-promoting actions and choices that promote social justice H15 critically analyses key issues affecting the health of Australians and proposes ways of working towards better health for all

General capabilities and cross-curriculum



Critical and Creative thinking



Ethical Understanding



Personal and Social Capability



Intercultural Understanding



Let's keep in touch

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