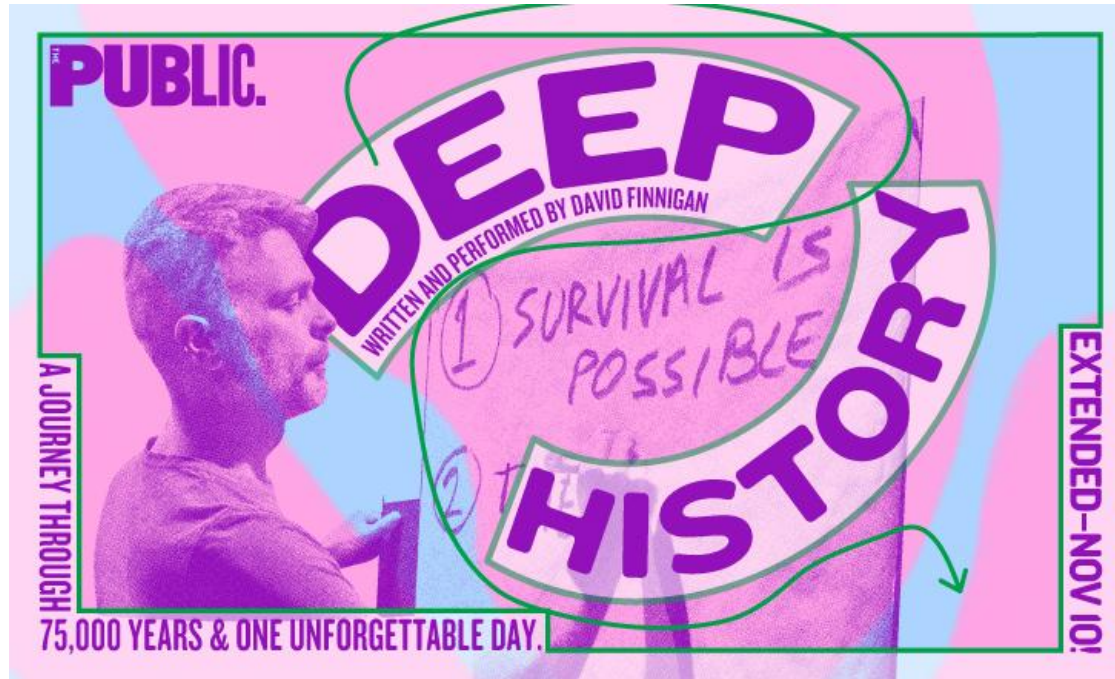


# What to Expect at Deep History



**A Sensory Adapted Performance  
Social Narrative Guide**

We are happy that you are joining us for the Sensory Adapted performance of Deep History!  
This guide is designed to outline what to expect in terms of the performance, plot, and characters.



To learn more about the team visit [thepublic.nyc/deephistory](https://thepublic.nyc/deephistory) or scan the QR code

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## About Sensory Adapted Performances at The Public.

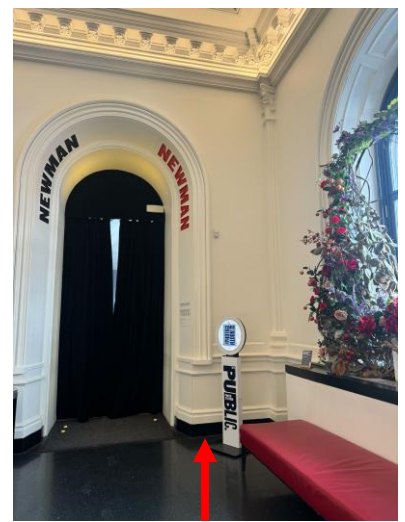
Sensory adapted performances are designed to welcome neurodivergent audience members, including patrons with autism or sensory sensitivities. These performances feature technical adjustments, preparatory materials, sensory supports, and flexible, relaxed expectations for audience members.

People may have different reactions and ways of expressing themselves, including making sounds and moving around. This is exciting and is welcome.

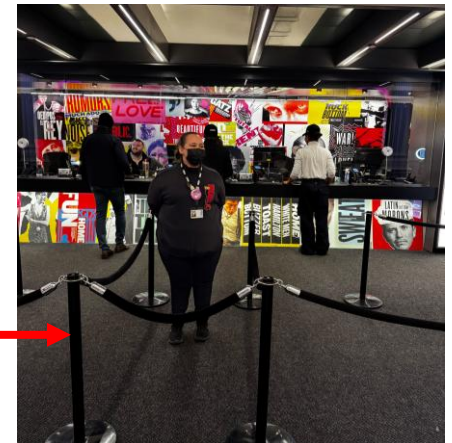
There is a movement area on both sides of the theater. You may also exit the theater and visit the Newman Theater for more space to move, while still being able to watch a live video of the show on the TV. You may stay as long as you like.

Fidgets, headphones and sunglasses will be available outside of the theater, at the box office and with ushers.

Masks are encouraged for this performance



Newman Theater



Public Theater Front of House staff wearing a black shirt or sweatshirt that says "Public Theater Staff"

## About DEEP HISTORY

DEEP HISTORY is a show about climate change and climate crises, especially the Australian bushfire of 2019. The show explores six major turning points in history spanning 75,000 years. The performer guides the audience through these moments to see what lessons we might learn about the world and climate today.

The tone of the show begins as optimistic, transitions to hopelessness and frustration, and ends with questioning what the future will entail.

[Click here to view the trailer](#)



Photo credit: Sarah Walker  
This picture is not from the play

## **Considerations for DEEP HISTORY**

- There is a portion of the show where the performer goes into a panic spiral about climate change. He experiences intense emotions, raises his voice, and gives detailed warnings of current climate dangers.
  - Example: The performer says “not everyone will make it...Every single one of us in the this room is going to lose years of our lives to dealing with shocks and crises...And some of us, particularly those already facing disadvantage will lose their life...”
- There are detailed descriptions of the harmful impact of wildfires. There are several vivid videos of bushfires.
  - Example: There is a video taken from a first-person perspective inside a vehicle traveling down a highway surrounded by fire. No humans or animals are shown being harmed but many trees can be seen in flames.
  - If you would like to see an image before, please ask Front of House staff who has a copy of the image.

DEEP HISTORY is a dialogue heavy play.

The production contains minimal light and sound effects, for this performance they will be adjusted. The house lights will remain on and dim throughout the performance.

As you walk into the theater, you might see David near the entrance. He might say hi to you. You can choose to say hi back or not.

90's pop music plays in the background at a medium level. You may also hear some sound effects like seagulls squawking.

You will know that the play is starting when the house lights dim a little bit. They won't turn off completely.

David will walk onstage to give An introduction and then the play will start.



Here is a picture of The Shiva theater. You will sit in one of these chairs looking at the stage.

Here is a picture of where to enter the theater.

## Format of DEEP HISTORY

DEEP HISTORY is a 65 minute play with no intermission.

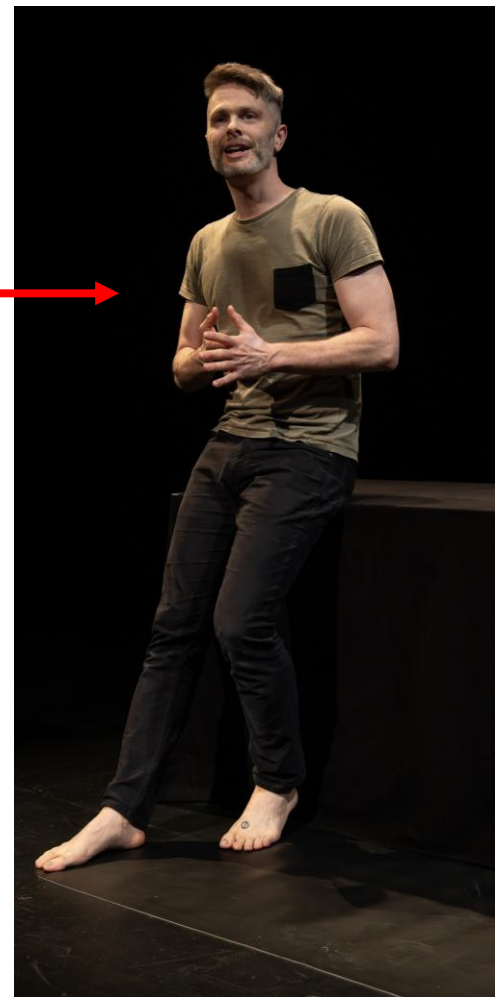
It is a one-person show performed by David Finnigan. David (seen in the picture) is an Australian performer and writer who creates theater about science and art. He speaks with an Australian accent.

Throughout the show, David speaks quickly and paces around the stage. He often looks and speaks directly to the audience and sometimes makes eye contact with different people. It might feel like he is speaking directly to you, but he's speaking to everyone.

He speaks to the audience in different ways. Sometimes he is speaking as though he is giving a history lesson or lecture, sometimes he chats casually, and other times he speaks with great and intense emotion.

Occasionally while David speaks atmospheric soundscapes or music will be playing in the background. Sometimes David talks over the music and there is overlapping sound.

He created this piece in 2019 over the course of 72 hours and has made very little changes to the piece since then.





During the show, David skips back and forth between time a lot.

Throughout the piece there is a lot of information, facts, and dates about human history. David uses projected images and videos and music to illustrate and deepen his points.

David uses several cues to show that time is changing, but it isn't always the same.

Here are some things that you can look for to know that time is changing :

- Sometimes David spins around to show that he is switching time periods.
- Other times, he explicitly says that the time period is changing.
- Other times, he shows an image with a year that shows us that the time period has changed.



David guides the audience through six major turning points in human history. Each turning point is formatted in the following way:

1. Introduces the turning point with a map on screen that shows where and when the turning point occurred.
2. Uses grains of sugar poured from various cups increasing in size into a funnel to represent the population of the world at the time of the turning point. He says that one grain of sugar is equal to 100 humans but the amount of sugar used is just an estimate and is not exact.
3. Tells a fictional story about “her,” an unnamed woman who would have lived during the time of the turning point. While he tells these stories there is a circle on the projector screen with a different climate depicted inside of it. There are atmospheric soundscapes in the background while he speaks. Each story uses similar language to connect them all to each other and show that humans in any time period have a lot in common.
4. Gives some historical information and describes a lesson that can be learned from this turning point. David will write the lesson down on the black panel with brown paper.



Photo credit: Joan Marcus

By the end of the play, the sugar in the funnel overflows onto the floor. The sugar may spill close to the audience and you may step on some sugar grains as you exit the theater.

## Character Synopsis

David Finnigan is the only performer. However, he references a few different people throughout the play. They might feel like characters in the performance even though they aren't physically onstage. Sometimes, we see their pictures, sometimes we just hear about them.

### **Here are the important characters:**

David's Father - David's father is a former mountaineer and a climate researcher.

Rueben - David's musician friend who is helping to create music for this show.

Jack - David's best friend from childhood. Jack and David grew up together in their hometown of Canberra where Jack still lives with his family.

Her / The Woman / The Soul - A character that David creates that he uses to tell the story of human history throughout time. We hear her stories as if it were a soul living throughout history, throughout the world.

All of these characters find themselves in dangerous situations throughout the play. For example, Jack is caught in an active bushfire and David's father is in the hospital. Everyone survives and are OK at the end of the play.



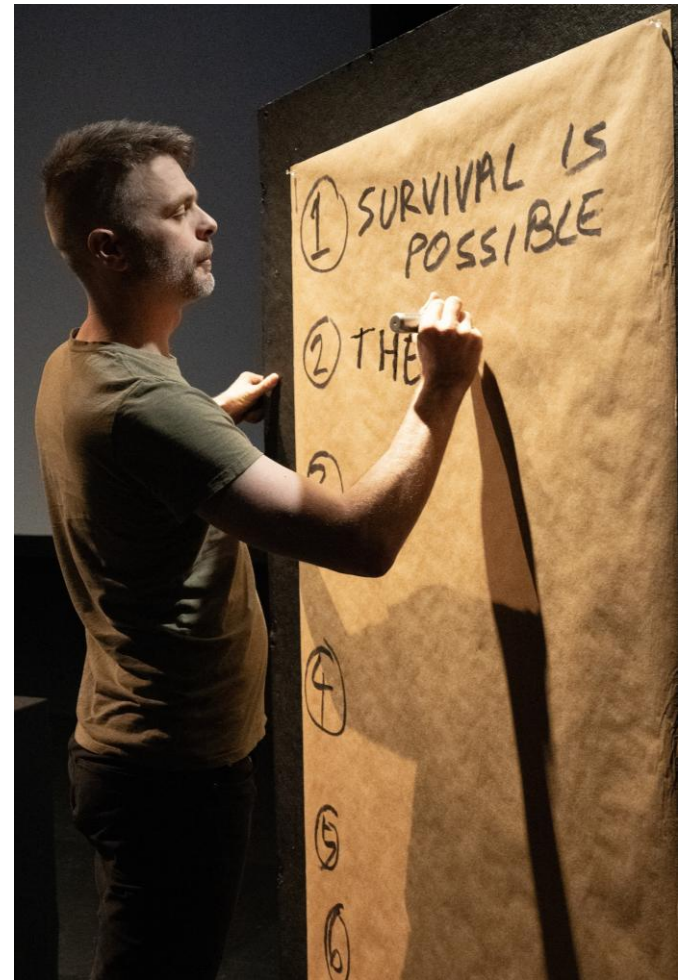
## Plot Synopsis

David starts by setting us in 2019 celebrating New Years in London when he receives a text message from Jack, his best friend from home. A wildfire has been burning since October and the smoke is at dangerous levels. David describes how Jack tries to fight off smoke that is creeping into Jack's home.

David then stops to introduce himself as an artist who works with climate researchers. He begins to address the climate crisis that he names the Climate Era. While he shares fears of the planet in this era, he shares that art can help guide us through how we got here and where we are going.

David introduces us to his father and uses the metaphor that humans are in their "teenage years" since we have not been here on earth very long, and we have a lot of growing. His father is in the hospital and asks David to write up a rough draft from his notes about six-turning points in human history, alongside their morals.

He sets out to describe these turning points and to share their lessons in this play. To help do this, he creates a character that will be reincarnated for each era. We never meet this character but he refers to her as "The Woman" or "The Soul" or "Her" throughout each turning point.



### **First Turning Point- 75,000 years ago**

- A story of a lonely woman who finds another human after losing her family and community
- A history lesson from a massive volcanic explosion.

Back to 2019, David tells us more about his best friend Jack. He describes their close friendship of 25 years and talks about Jack's impulsive personality.

### **Second Turning Point - 68,000 years ago**

- A story of a woman at sea discovering new land
- A history lesson from the Ice Age when animals were going extinct.

Back to 2019, David receives texts from friends or and scrolls through images and messages on social media about the fires. He shows a video of many kangaroos frantically fleeing as smoke approaches them.

### **Third Turning Point - 27,000 years ago**

- A story of a woman who comes across a dead human and gives them a burial ceremony.
- A history lesson about human evolution.



Photo credit: Sarah Walker  
This picture is not from the play



Photo credit: Sarah Walker  
This picture is not from the play

Back to 2019, David finds out that Jack, Jack's partner and three children have left their home to go on a vacation. But, as they drive, the brushfires intensifies, and they must go a different route.

David also continues to follow the online conversation including messages from climate deniers. He is reminded of a video interview of his father who is preparing to face them too. David shows the video. The video can be blurry and jumpy and it can be hard to discern what he is saying at times.

#### **Fourth Turning Point - 11,000 years ago**

- A story of a couple who make love.
- They wonder if they should leave their quiet life for the city.
- A history lesson about the first image of sex through a sacred object.

Back to 2019, Jack is in even more danger now. The gas stations have run out of petrol. He is stuck, scared, and trying to help his family escape.

#### **Fifth Turning Point - 5,000 years ago**

- A story of a woman whose land is taken from her.
- She has become sick from the strangers who recently arrived on her land.
- A history lesson about colonization.

At this point in the play, David abandons finding lessons from the turning points and stories.

Instead, he enters a panic spiral where he experiences intense emotions and raises his voice.

He is angry at the situation, not the audience.

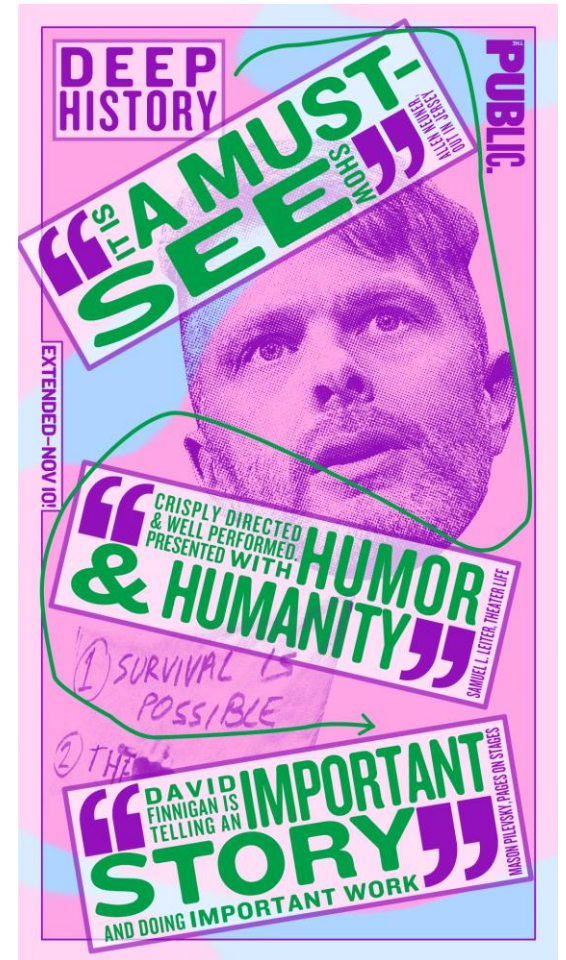
He also shows multiple videos of fires burning including one video taken from a first-person perspective inside a vehicle traveling down a highway surrounded by fire. No humans or animals are shown being harmed but many trees can be seen in flames.

Finally, he gets a message from Jack and learns that he and his family are safe.

David is relieved. He talks about a less bleak world for future generations.

He encourages us to learn from these morals and this fear. To step outside and be in community with each other, working to leave the world better.

**End of play.**



**ACTIVITY**

Do you think there are other turning points in history? What are some lessons we learned?



**ACTIVITY**

Draw your own road map. What are six big moments in your life that helped shape you?

