

Runt - Children's Theatre Promotional Package

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My client, Slingsby Theatre Company, required me to design a marketing package and style guide for their upcoming production "Runt" based on the novel *The Boy Who Talked to Dogs* by Irish author and Australia's acclaimed 'dog man' Martin McKenna. My initial research consisted of reading McKenna's memoir, as Slingsby was still developing their stage adaptation and were therefore unable to provide me with a script. Nonetheless, McKenna's writing is filled with vivid imagery, similes and metaphors which allowed me to develop an artistic vision for my marketing package. Moreover, I researched Slingsby's previous marketing package for productions such as *Emil and the Detectives* and *The Young King*. I found these packages to be diverse in their content, featuring several different illustrations, yet incredibly cohesive. Often a single motif, such as a hat or a crown, would connect all the various posters and logos. Therefore, I implemented the same approach when designing my illustration and logo. Although the first is a colourful, detailed collage and the second a simple black and white symbol, both designs are connected by the over-arching motif of dogs, which is what *Runt* is all about.

My research and inspiration also extended to other Adelaide-based children's theatre companies such as Windmill Theatre Co. The Windmill designs allowed me to appreciate the importance of simplicity and bold colours when targeting a young audience. Thus, every interactive page of my program has been designed from the point of view of a child who is excited by things that are bright, straight forward and fun. Despite my detailed and intricate design aesthetic, I have ensured that all of the activities (eg origami and colouring-in page) are simple to understand and complete. After resorting to outside sources for inspiration from previous marketing packages, I went back to my primary source, *The Boy Who Talked to Dogs* novel, to see how I could apply my newly gained knowledge. I selected the most important quotes I was inspired by, such as McKenna's assimilation of a dog's ears to origami, and explored them further through my sketches. Through this experimentation, I was able to bring McKenna's words to life and Slingsby's intention of an immersive experience by creating interactive pages such as the origami dog.

Overall, I have been able to efficiently meet all the aspects of the design brief by creating an illustrated poster, an interactive program with information about the performance, a logo and colourful merchandise like stickers and colouring pencils. I have been able to adapt Slingsby's originally diverse style of marketing into a package that is simple, colourful and most importantly appropriate for the company's target audience. The design attracts not only kids through its playful aesthetic, but also their parents, grandparents and loved ones who are moved by a touching story about courage, friendship and perseverance in the face of adversity. Furthermore, I have been able to design a style guide distinguished by my bold colour scheme, variety of textures and mediums and eye-catching illustrations. This style is present in every aspect of my package, resulting in a cohesive and professional aesthetic.

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