



<http://concreteplayground.com/sydney/event/this-house-is-mine-milk-crate-theatre/>

## This House Is Mine - Milk Crate Theatre

Thursday, March 12 - Sunday, March 22

Eternity Playhouse  
39 Burton Street  
Darlinghurst  
[Visit website](#)

Milk Crate Theatre shines the spotlight on mental health and homelessness in *This House is Mine*.

Milk Crate Theatre is turning the gaze of society onto those who are usually invisible: the homeless. *This House Is Mine* is both lovely and confronting theatre, staging addiction, abuse, mental illness and poverty. It exposes real stories of homelessness that make us squirm in recognition of our potential proximity/hypocrisy.

Writer (Milk Crate's artistic director) Maree Freeman and her many collaborators explore two relevant issues: domestic abuse and mental illness. In line with Milk Crate's philosophy, each ensemble member has experienced disadvantage in some way at some time. It's refreshing to share time with untrained, uncertain, un-typical actors. They guide us to a more open, progressive way of dealing with demons.

The Eternity Playhouse becomes the least judgemental space in the city, where “sanity is an elastic word”. The cycles of abuse and affliction are described with logic-defying complexity. It’s clear that no one type of person falls into the ‘vortex’ of depression, self-doubt or addiction. The ‘homeless’, who are just our fellow humans, confide their hopes of changing the future with *This House Is Mine*. They’ve accepted it’s impossible to change the past.

I’m by no means saying it’s an *easy* show to watch, because it’s not. Your ‘theatre’ expectations are smashed when these voices erupt — with their far-from-perfect diction and pitch. But then these stories wouldn’t sound so good in affected accents, nor would dejection look good in someone toned, tanned and well-versed in quinoa salad. The pulling point of *This House Is Mine* is its uncontrived, unattractive authenticity, which in my mind is why we should go to the theatre anyway. To be unsafe.

A modest TV set remains onstage the whole show, blasting out the faces of those living tough. This filmed footage is perhaps the show’s great genius and victory. Over 75 minutes, it determinedly undermines our household TVs — emulating the news we watch, the sanitisation we enjoy. But the usual safe distance is destroyed by the sweating, breathing actors mere metres from this screen. The point is, we can’t change the channel, or ask for parts to be edited out. It’s beautiful to see oft-overlooked faces staring at us, still and serene. The invisible made visible and given dignity.

The digital art and projections, created by the non-performing contingent of Milk Crate Theatre, are created with low-tech materials like cardboard and twine, paints and crayon. They show that beauty can arise from poverty and that truth is the vital ingredient to magic.

Published on March 18 , 2015 by [Catherine McNamara](#)