



# Media Release



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## Strange magic unleashed with opening of *The Quiet Volume* at NSW State Library

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Australia's historic Mitchell Library will stage the powerful, page-turning theatre *The Quiet Volume* – a whispered, self-generated interactive piece for two people – opening at the State Library of NSW on 7 January as part of Sydney Festival 2013.

"The State Library of NSW is excited to host the first Australian performance of *The Quiet Volume*, a truly remarkable work that reminds people that libraries are amazing places and getting lost in a book is an incredible adventure," says NSW State Librarian and Chief Executive, Alex Byrne.

Created by English artists Ant Hampton and Tim Etchell and performed worldwide since 2010, *The Quiet Volume* provides two participants with an iPod and headphones, a small pile of books and a notebook. They are then seated side-by-side in the Mitchell Library Reading Room and the magic begins!

Taking cues from words written and whispered, participants follow a series of instructions to burrow an unlikely path through the books on hand. The soft voice in the headphones guides listeners to turn pages, share selected passages in the novel, to conjure images in their mind and to contemplate their surrounds.

"We've created a strange kind of magic, an intimate theatrical reading experience that bypasses pre-rehearsed actors and gives participants the alternating role of performer and audience for 30 minutes," says co-creator Ant Hampton.

"*The Quiet Volume* began with the idea that the page is a kind of performance space and when you read, there's a sense of an event taking place. A book can then be seen as the ultimate portable theatre," says Mr Hampton.

"We were also fascinated with the image of the library as a place where the solitary and immersive activity of reading is being done in a collective public space. Every single person that is reading in a library is in a sense burrowing into another world. And as the audio track in the piece says, readers are 'dreaming in public'.

"We're taking *The Quiet Volume* participant on a fast-paced journey into stories and language, and challenging them to think about the reading experience and to consider how weird it is to get lost in text when text is just ink on a page."

Applauded overseas, *The Quiet Volume* is an 'autoteatro' piece of theatre, meaning participants follow a series of instructions generally via headphones.

*The Quiet Volume* will run every hour on the hour from 10am to 4pm, 7 to 25 January (excluding Sundays) in the Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW, Macquarie St Sydney. [www.sl.nsw.gov.au](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au). Cost: \$20/\$15. Tickets go on sale 29 October 2012.

### For more information, interviews and images, please contact:

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# The Quiet Volume