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Finalists announced for the Queensland Premier's Drama Award 2016-17

Three finalists for the Queensland Premier's Drama Award 2016-17 have been announced and sees an all-female list for the first time in the award's history.

Queenslanders **Kathryn Marquet** for her work *This Furious Sea*, and **Suzie Miller** with *I Looked Up And There You Were*, along with Melbourne writer **Michele Lee** with *Rice*, have been chosen as the finalists and will work towards taking out the title for this playwriting award that guarantees a professional production of the winning entry within two years.

Premier of Queensland and Minister for the Arts, Annastacia Palaszczuk, said the Queensland Government had maintained its serious and ongoing commitment to the arts through the Award, one which this year saw critical acclaim for a winner's work.

"Congratulations to Kathryn, Suzie and Michele for their excellent works and for making the shortlist," Ms Palaszczuk said.

"Each should be proud of this achievement and for their commitment to developing new works for Queensland theatre audiences.

"Since its inception in 2002, Queensland Theatre Company has developed 24 plays as part of this award, employed more than 160 actors, writers and directors, and generated audiences of more than 26,000 to new and emerging Queensland work.

"Daniel Evans won the last award with his modern Australian-suburbia-meets-Greek-tragedy *Oedipus Doesn't Live Here Anymore*.

"The play opened this year as part of Queensland Theatre Company's Season 2016 to standing ovations and much acclaim, testament to the richness and depth of writing this Award uncovers and nurtures," Ms Palaszczuk said.

The Queensland Premier's Drama Award covers a two-year cycle.

In the first year, three finalists are selected and their works undergo creative development with industry professionals prior to judging and the announcement of the winner.

The second year involves further development of the winning play followed by the professional world premiere production and the publication of the script.

Kathryn Marquet, Suzie Miller and Michele Lee will develop their works throughout the coming year with Queensland Theatre Company, until a winner is selected in July 2016.

Queensland Theatre Company will then produce the world premiere of the winning work in the 2017 season, curated by new Artistic Director, Sam Strong.

"I'm thrilled to announce the shortlist for the QPDA. QTC is committed to being the national leader in the development of new work and the creation of pathways for artists and the QPDA is central to this ambition. I was privileged to engage with all the long-listed writers and I'm looking forward to working with the finalists to



develop great new Australian stories that we will premiere in Brisbane before taking them to world”, Strong said.

The Queensland Premier’s Drama Award is an initiative of the Queensland Government, delivered in partnership with Queensland Theatre Company.

THE 2016-17 FINALISTS:

Kathryn Marquet: In 2014, Kathryn Marquet’s debut play, *Pale Blue Dot*, was produced by La Boite, published by Playlab Press and nominated for five Matilda Awards, including Best New Australian Work. As an actor, she has worked extensively for La Boite, Queensland Theatre Company, Bell Shakespeare and many independent companies and, in 2016, will complete her Masters of Philosophy (Playwriting) at UQ, while now, also working on her screenplay.

Her work, *This Furious Sea*, is based in Southwest Tasmania, where a Bulgarian drug cartel with curious links to Canberra plans to destroy the old-growth forest. Local scientist, Alek, decides to take matters into her own hands, but her only ally is a marsupial with a tiger-ish behind that’s been dead for 80 years. *This Furious Sea* is a black comedy about extinction, environment, and the tastiest nuggets ever tasted.

Michele Lee: A playwright and writer working across stage and audio, Michele’s current projects include an Arts House digital theatre commission, *The Naked Self* (co-created with Tanya Dickson); a commission for a new play *Going down* (Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne via the Malcolm Robertson Prize); and a commission for a short plays project, *Power plays*, with Sydney Theatre Company. Michele is the 2016 WRICE Early Career Fellow and resident at the Playwrights Centre, Minneapolis in 2016.

Her entry *RICE* is the story of two women – Nisha, the right-hand woman to the CEO of Australian rice company, Golden Fields, which is poised to seal a contract for rice distribution to the Indian government; and Yvette who is working as a cleaner in the Golden Fields office, cleaning up the food scraps from Nisha’s table and bins. This is a fluid two-hander play where women topple women and women rescue women.

Suzie Miller: Already a multi-award winning Australian/international playwright, Suzie has recently been in residence with, amongst others, Ex Machina & Robert Lepage (2012), National Theatre London (2011/2009), National Theatre of Scotland (2013) and Griffin Theatre, Sydney (2012). She has had over 30 productions of her works at international festivals and on stages around the world and has won and been shortlisted for numerous awards including the National Kit Denton Fellowship for writing with courage; Australian Writers Guild Awards; State Premier’s Awards, Irish Times award, and the New York Fringe Festival ‘Overall Excellence Award for Outstanding Playwriting’.

Her entry *I Looked Up And There You Were* is the story of an unexpected passion that drags two people through something they don't fully understand. Deliberately experimenting with different forms and concepts, the work looks at the vulnerability of lives, and about how, for women, autonomy and responsibility are always in a state of flux.

PREVIOUS QPDA WINNERS:

2014-15 Daniel Evans for OEDIPUS DOESN’T LIVE HERE ANYMORE

2012-13 Maxine Mellor for TROLLOP

2010-11 Marcel Dorney for FRACTIONS

2008-09 Richard Jordan for 25 DOWN

2006-07 David Brown for THE ESTIMATOR



2004-05 Adam Grossetti for MANO NERA
2002-03 Sven Swenson for ROAD TO THE SHE-DEVIL'S SALON

For further information, imagery or interviews and more, please contact Kath Rose & Associates 0416 291 493