

QUEENSLAND THEATRE

QUEENSLAND THEATRE ANNOUNCES AN UNPRECEDENTED LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENT ARTISTS IN 2017

Friday 16 December 2016

Queensland Theatre is delighted to announce the artists and companies joining the company in 2017 as Independent Artists @ Queensland Theatre.

Queensland Theatre Artistic Director Sam Strong said, "Earlier this year we held a forum with the sector to hear what was important to independent artists. The feedback was clear - resources and opportunities offered to independent artists must be as flexible, varied and as unique as the diverse needs of each artist, and each project."

In October 2016 Queensland Theatre invited independent artists to apply for assistance in realising a particular project or creative ambition. The result was 41 applications for projects in a wide mix of genres, from artists of all levels of experience, each voicing their specific ambition for making new Queensland work. The voices were joyous, sombre, irreverent, exacting, futuristic and nostalgic.

Applications were assessed by a panel comprising of members of Queensland Theatre's National Artistic Team; Margi Brown Ash, Marcel Dorney and Lucas Stibbard along with Company staff Associate Artistic Director Paige Rattray, Programming Manager and Senior Producer Sophia Hall, and Producer (New Work and Development) Shari Irwin.

"I'm thrilled that in 2017 we will be providing artistic, financial or venue support to 10 uniquely different projects involving over 50 artists. The projects and artists are as diverse as the sector itself, ranging from young and emerging artists to stalwarts of the Brisbane stage. We have tailored our support to what the artists needed. Some are seeking public performance outcomes, some development support and a closed industry showing," said Strong.

"For others this is the chance to work with a particular artist of note. Some projects have been developed by other companies and others will have outcomes elsewhere. Investing in the independent sector and these artists is the next step in our commitment to support the whole industry and whole ecology," he said.

Artists supported include Iraqi-Australian artist Niz Jabour with his community-engagement performance *The Rain Project*; Dog Spoon (Brisbane theatre artists Andrew Cory, Leon Cain and Sue Rider) with a contemporary absurdist comedy *2 Guys In A Box*; playwright Sally McKenzie, with her new play *Belinda*; early-career writers Steve Pirie for his play *Return to the Dirt*, and Kathryn Marquet (in collaboration with Little Black Dress Creatives) for the creation of the libretto for a new children's opera *The Owl and the Pussycat*; Columbian-born actor Alexander Forero with a laboratory-theatre exploration of Dario Fo's play *Mistero Buffo* and Heidi Manche's *Room To Play* for their upcoming production of *Someone is Going to Come* by Jon Fosse, directed by Valerio Binasco.

New generation ambitious theatre-collectives Counterpilot and Your Mouth Collective will receive support respectively for the participatory audio-theatre-installation work *Spectate* and a dark adventure of make-believe *Alice is Drowning*; and emerging duo, Emily Burton and Ellen Bailey, will undertake their first devised work together using the stories of Anais Nin.

SUPPORTED ARTISTS/PROJECTS DETAIL:

- 1) ARTIST: NIZ JABOUR**
PROJECT: *The Rain Project*. 'In every drop of rain, A red or yellow colour buds from the seeds of flowers' - "Rain Song" by Iraqi poet Badr Shakir al-Sayyab. *The Rain Project* is a cross-cultural collaboration which will elaborate on the rain stories from myth to everyday life as a central theme to form a performance that will transport a community through our culturally varied, but inevitably shared and deep connection to the phenomenon of rain.
- 2) COMPANY: DOG SPOON (Andrew Cory, Leon Cain, Sue Rider)**
PROJECT: *2 Guys In a Box*. 'In a box is a box that needs to be opened to see the box' Two guys with limited skills, dubious intellects and a lot of cardboard fight an unknown supernatural force that is beyond their imagination. They succeed ... sort of! *2 Guys In A Box* is an irreverent, contemporary absurdist work about two everyman characters who live their lives in a large upright refrigerator box in the middle of an anonymous field. Their domestic world is a condensed comic cosmos.
- 3) COMPANY: COUNTERPILOT**
PROJECT: *Spectate* is a show about an audience. Set in 1926 Michigan, a room full of people watch Harry Houdini's final performance before he passes out on stage and later dies. Using theatrical conventions borrowed from participatory audio works (ie. autoteatro) the audience is enrolled as the protagonist in this story – examining what it means to be an audience and how we connect with each other in a world of spectacle.
- 4) ARTISTS: EMILY BURTON & ELLEN BAILEY**
PROJECT: This as-yet-untitled project will see the skills of two Brisbane actors Emily Burton and Ellen Bailey (last seen together on Queensland stages in *Oedipus Doesn't Live Here Anymore*) build a new work for two lead female roles inspired by the short stories of Anais Nin.
- 5) ARTISTS: LITTLE BLACK DRESS CREATIVE (Penelope Challen)**
PROJECT: *The Owl and the Pussycat* by Kathryn Marquet. An immersive theatre experience based on Edward Lear's poem, created for children aged 4+, exploring themes of adventure, love, harmony and acceptance. This adaptation will meld live performance, operatic vocals, puppetry and acoustic music with experiential theatre in an immersive landscape.
- 6) ARTIST: STEVE PIRIE**
PROJECT: *Return to the Dirt* by Steve Pirie. *Return to the Dirt* is a meditation on what it means to die in the 21st century, to lose the ones we love and the ways we try to remember the ones gone before us. In a 90-minute journey from regional and rural Queensland to the deserts of Ghana, from the Himalayas to the Orion Nebula, this work will contribute to a desperately needed discussion about something that transcends race, class, gender and political alignment, and will never fade in its relevance, or importance to its audiences.

7) COMPANY: YOUR MOUTH COLLECTIVE

PROJECT: *Alice Is Drowning* by Madeleine Lewis, Lukas Radovich and Phoebe Sullivan. Alice is half fish. She's never seen the ocean and lives thousands of kilometers inland, but she knows she's a fish because her father is one as well. When Alice was six her father went to live under the sea, and with the approach of her sixteenth birthday her marine DNA is starting to kick in. Your Mouth Collective's original work, *Alice is Drowning*, is a dark adventure of make-believe and a young woman's inability to process loss.

8) ARTIST: ALEXANDER FORERO

PROJECT: *Mistero Buffo* by Dario Fo. *Mistero Buffo*, a one man show, is considered one of the most controversial and popular spectacles in Post-War European theatre. It also holds the unique position of "most blasphemous play in history" according to the Vatican.

9) ARTIST: SALLY MCKENZIE

PROJECT: *Belinda* by Sally McKenzie. We begin with Belinda's body being found in her home a year after her death. When daughter Eliza is questioned by police, we are left to ponder how someone can die and their death not be detected until 12 months later. *Belinda* is a new work that explores the impact of technology on our mental health; IVF and, our need for companionship. What drives our need to be connected to humanity? How do electronic devices, apps, emails, etcetera impact on the way we engage with the world? How do we connect – and stay connected - to ourselves, to family, to society?

10) COMPANY: ROOM TO PLAY (Heidi Manche)

PROJECT: *Someone Is Going to Come* by Jon Fosse. Directed by Valerio Binasco, this will be the Australian premiere of *Someone is Going to Come* by Jon Fosse, Europe's most performed contemporary playwright. In a world where politicians spin stories, people wear masks, truth and lies are interwoven, Jon Fosse holds out the truth, simple, sometimes painful, yet deeply human.