

The British Council and Diversity Arts Australia announces knowledge exchange programme - INTERSECT

For immediate release: 13 June 2018

Six British and Australian arts professionals from culturally diverse and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds will be selected to travel to each other's countries as part of the innovative mutual exchange programme [INTERSECT](#), set up by The British Council and Diversity Arts Australia and supported by Creative Victoria.

INTERSECT enables influential curators, producers, programmers, publishers and artistic directors to connect, peer mentor and collaborate with international colleagues. In the first year of the programme, the focus will be on people from the performing arts, visual arts, literature and screen sectors.

INTERSECT participants will develop valuable international networks that they can draw upon during their careers, including access to the British Council's extensive global alumni network.

INTERSECT was developed from stakeholder consultation which began with workshops facilitated by DARTS and Footscray Community Arts Centre. The Advisory Group includes leading Australian and British arts practitioners of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, culturally and linguistically diverse and minority ethnic backgrounds.

Director of the British Council in Australia Helen Salmon says INTERSECT epitomizes the British Council's key values of diversity and inclusion, strengthening relationships and creating opportunity.

"The arts sector in the UK and Australia are aligned in so many positive ways, but we also share similar structures and barriers. INTERSECT seeks to strengthen diversity and opportunity in a place where power lies – among those who decide whose work is seen, what is seen, how it is seen and who sees it." said Salmon.

The most recent Census data shows that while Australia is increasingly diverse with almost half the population first or second-generation migrants, the arts sector does not reflect this. According to the Australia Council for the Arts' 2017 *Making Art Work* report, artists from a non-English speaking background account for only 10% of the arts workforce compared to 18% within the general workforce.

Executive Director from Diversity Arts Australia (DARTS), Lena Nahlous says "The UK and Australia share similar barriers to inclusion in the arts, yet these countries have not widely shared leading practice. We are excited to be working with the British Council to support access and networks that will benefit both countries," said Nahlous.

The Arts Council of England reports that in the working age population, 16% of people are from a minority ethnic background, while only 11% of staff at their National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) and 4% of staff at Major Partner Museums (MPMs).

DARTS' Lena Nahlous says culturally and linguistically diverse artists often struggle to get a foot in the door, so the INTERSECT programme will affect change where it counts, at the institutional level.

“The under-representation of cultural diversity in the arts is not only an attitudinal issue but also institutional and structural, and things can only shift when all of these elements change.”

Australia is the third biggest market for British culture after the USA and Europe but touring productions often do not reflect the diverse make-up of the contemporary UK.

Helen Salmon says the British Council is actively addressing this lack of diversity by promoting the work of British minority ethnic artists. In the UK they have specific initiatives to attempt to redress the balance of representation by UK artists / companies travelling abroad with support from the British Council, such as programmes for minority ethnic artists to build international networks at the Edinburgh festivals, and bursaries to attend the Information European Theatre Meeting.

“In Australia in 2018 we have to date supported The Barber Shop Chronicles at Sydney Festival, Nassim at Arts Centre Melbourne and Perth International Arts Festival, authors Yrsa Daley-Ward and Angela Saini at Sydney Writers' Festival, Not Today's Yesterday at Adelaide Fringe, SALT at Arts House Melbourne, and publishing legend Margaret Busby OBE at Brisbane's Women of the World 18.”

By also connecting programming decision-makers who have growing power and influence in the UK and Australian arts through INTERSECT, the partners hope to support platforms for art that reflect, resonate with and enrich our whole society.

The British Council is also developing a digital platform for knowledge and resource sharing in the area of arts cultural diversity in partnership with the Institute of Creative and Cultural Entrepreneurship, Goldsmiths, University of London, Western Sydney University and DARTS.

Expressions of interest for the INTERSECT programme open on 13 June 2018 and close 02 July 2018 23.59 UK Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). For more information go to [INTERSECT](http://www.britishcouncil.org.au/intersect) www.britishcouncil.org.au/intersect

Key dates:

- 13 June – 02 July 2018 (EOI's open)
 - 10 - 15 September 2018 (UK visit)
 - Early 2019 (Australia visit)
- The INTERSECT programme is open to people who identify as being from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, culturally and linguistically diverse or minority ethnic background* with at least 5 years' experience in the creative sector* as a programmer, producer, curator, publisher, or artistic director.
 - Expressions of Interest open June 13 and close July 2, 2018 23.59 UK Greenwich Mean Time (GMT)
 - For more information about applying for INTERSECT please contact: Anna Hay, Arts and Programme Manager, anna.hay@britishcouncil.org.au

* For the purposes of this programme we will use the terms Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, culturally and linguistically diverse and minority ethnic. We understand and acknowledge that many people choose to self-identify differently.

*For the first year of the programme the creative sector will include performing arts, visual arts, literature and screen.

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About the British Council

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