

Embargoed Friday 5 October 2018

Cultural sectors must act to reflect Australia's diversity – new report

A report produced by Diversity Arts Australia (DARTS) has highlighted barriers within the arts and cultural sector to broader representation of Australia's cultural diversity that include systemic discrimination, tokenism and misrepresentation.

The report compiles issues, direct experiences and potential solutions to entrenched barriers that were identified in key-note industry addresses and expert forums at a symposium hosted by DARTS last year.

DARTS, in partnership with Create NSW and supported by the National Theatre of Parramatta, will launch the report this week (Friday, 5 October) at Riverside Theatres Parramatta. Guests from across NSW's creative sectors will be called on to support actions leading to a more inclusive, culturally diverse and relevant arts and screen sector.

Titled "**Voice, Agency and Integrity**" the report calls for actions to improve the current under-representation of people from culturally diverse backgrounds at all levels of the creative sector:

- Making culturally diverse artists and creatives more visible
- Measuring diversity to increase diversity
- Taking affirmative action
- Creating an enabling environment
- Supporting the role of DARTS
- Make our own art

Executive Director of Investment and Engagement at Create NSW, Elizabeth W. Scott, will speak at the launch, followed by dynamic 'TED-style' talks by creative leaders. Speakers at the launch will include:

- **Patrick McIntyre**, Executive Director, Sydney Theatre Company
- **Winnie Dunn**, writer; editor and manager of Sweatshop Western Sydney Literacy Movement
- **Esther Anatolitis**, Executive Director, National Association for the Visual Arts
- **Roanna Gonsalves**, Author; Winner, NSW Premier's Literary Awards (2018)

DARTS' Executive Director Lena Nahlous said, "We need to move the conversation from simply talking about the merits of diversity to creating concrete actions and steps that will shift the sector. The time for change is now."

Executive Director of Investment and Engagement at Create NSW, Elizabeth W. Scott, said “this report documents important discussions at this point in time, when a focus on inclusion and cultural diversity - across programming, audience and leadership - is key to our continuing success for a vibrant and sustainable arts, screen and culture sector.”

Roanna Gonsalves, Author and participant in the initial symposium from which the report is derived said, “We must be able to take all kinds of selfies, not just visual, to tell our own stories, to self-represent on the page, on the canvas, on the screen, on the airwaves. This means moving beyond the tired and condescending argument of ‘giving voice to the voiceless’ and actually creating pathways and access for diverse writers, artists, performers, storytellers to tell our own stories,” said Roanna.

Diversity Arts Australia has taken vital steps towards this call through platforms to uplift storytellers with their stories and create spaces for collaborations with such artists. In particular, The Beyond Tick Boxes symposium led to the creation of The Colour Cycle Podcast, which was shortlisted for an Australian Podcasting Award and was also featured on Virgin Inflight Entertainment in 2018.

Season One of the podcast captures many of the panel discussions and undertakes follow-up interviews with some of the attendees and speakers. “Friday’s launch will also be live-streamed, and audio recorded so that the reach of the discussions is beyond the closed room,” said Lena Nahlous, DARTS.

“The structural change of power within society is the change that needs to happen. Every system has a crack. We need to find the cracks and fill them with colour,” said artist and facilitator Dr Paula Abood.

The report and launch are supported by Create NSW, Australia Council for the Arts, National Theatre of Parramatta. Diversity Arts is supported by Information and Cultural Exchange.

LAUNCH OF “VOICE AGENCY AND INTEGRITY” REPORT

1.45pm, Friday 5th October 2018

Raffertys Theatre, Riverside Parramatta

MEDIA INQUIRIES

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“Voice, Agency and Integrity” Report

You can access the Report, videos and podcast in this dropbox folder:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/eq15sjuxqeq0sg1/AAC91KXwqemx0DDASVEJILt8a?dl=0>

Contains:

The Voice, Agency and Integrity Report; 7 video clips (8 mins in total)

2 Colour Cycle Podcast clips (1 min in total) with actor/writer Benjamin Law and media personality Sunil Badami.

LAUNCH - SPEAKER PROFILES

L-R: Winnie Dunn, Patrick McIntyre, Elizabeth W. Scott, Esther Anatolitis, Roanna Gonsalves

Elizabeth W. Scott; Executive Director Create Investment & Engagement, Create NSW, is a global arts and culture policy specialist with over 25 years' experience advising cultural organisations across the USA, UK and Australia. Elizabeth currently serves as Board Treasurer of the U.S. artists' peak body, Fractured Atlas, and as an International Councillor for the UK peak body, Creative Industries Federation.

Winnie Dunn, Writer and Editor; Manager, Sweatshop Western Sydney Literacy Movement, is a Tongan-Australian writer and community arts worker from Mt Druitt. She is the manager of Sweatshop: Western Sydney Literacy Movement and the literary editor of *The Big Black Thing* and *Bent not Broken: Ten Years of Creative Writing* from the City of Canterbury Bankstown. Winnie's essays and short stories have been published in *The Lifted Brow*, *Sydney Review of Books*, *Meanjin*, *The Griffith Review* and *SBS Life*. She completed her Bachelor of Arts degree at Western Sydney University in 2017.

Patrick McIntyre, Executive Director, Sydney Theatre Company, graduated from the University of Technology Sydney with a Bachelor of Arts (Communications). For 20 years, he has worked extensively across the Australian arts scene in managerial, marketing and business development roles. He works with the Board of directors and artistic directors in leading and developing one of the world's busiest theatre organisations. Prior to joining Sydney Theatre Company, he was associate executive director of The Australian Ballet. Other key positions held include CEO of Sydney Film Festival and marketing manager of Sydney Opera House Trust and Sydney Dance Company. In addition to his arts career, he has briefly worked in the community sector, for a dot com start up business and has served on non profit boards. He is also a freelance writer, published in many Australian magazines.

Roanna Gonsalves is the author of *The Permanent Resident (UWAP)*, winner of the NSW Premier's Literary Awards Multicultural Prize 2018, and longlisted for the Dobbie Literary Award 2018. It is on several lists of must-read books, and on the syllabi of university courses. Her work has been compared to the work of Alice Munro and Jhumpa Lahiri. Roanna is a recipient of the Prime Minister's Australia Asia Endeavour Award, is co-founder co-editor of *Southern Crossings*, and has a PhD from UNSW. *The Permanent Resident (UWAP)* is published in South Asia as *Sunita De Souza Goes To Sydney (Speaking Tiger)*. She sits on the Board of Writing NSW, and is currently the UNSW Copyright Agency Writer-in-Residence.

Esther Anatolitis, Executive Director, National Association for the Visual Arts, fosters local, regional, national and international perspectives on contemporary arts issues as one of the nation's leading advocates for the arts. Her practice rigorously integrates professional and artistic modes of working to create collaborations, projects and workplaces that promote a critical reflection on practice. With a strong background in visual arts, design, architecture and media, Esther has held leadership roles including Craft Victoria, Melbourne Fringe, SBS and Express Media, and most recently with Regional Arts Victoria. She is Deputy Chair of Contemporary Arts Precincts and has served numerous board, policy, advisory and juror roles. Esther is a former curator of Architecture+Philosophy, Digital Publics and Independent Convergence, and has taught into the studio program at RMIT Architecture, as well as at UNSW and the University of Sydney.

Lena Nahlous, Executive Director, Diversity Arts Australia (MC)

Lena became Executive Director of Diversity Arts Australia in 2016. She has over 20 years' experience in arts, cultural and media organisations, and has managed screen and digital media-based initiatives that have engaged thousands of people, particularly women, refugees, migrants and young people. Lena was formerly the Executive Director of Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE) in Western Sydney for over 10 years. Under Lena's leadership ICE grew tenfold financially and in terms of projects and scope. Lena established Artfiles, an employment and engagement program for artists, the Switch Digital Arts Centre and co-founded the Arab Film Festival. Other roles include Manager of Auburn Community Development Network and Social History and Exhibitions Curator at Fairfield City Museum and Gallery.

Launch - VIDEO DESCRIPTIONS

Beyond Tick Boxes - Overview

This video features interviews with key arts workers at the Beyond Tick Boxes Symposium, which brought together over 140 people from across the arts in Sydney to talk about critical issues around inclusion and cultural diversity in the arts and screen actors. Lena Nahlous, Executive Director of Diversity Arts Australia and Dr Tim Soutphommasane, Race Discrimination Commissioner, Australian Human Rights spoke on the need for our multicultural society to be reflected on Australian stages and screens. Magdalena Moreno, DARTS Board and Director General IFACCA and Sunil Badami, Writer, Performer, Broadcaster, Academic, and Storyteller spoke on the impact of different perspectives in storytelling.

Black Stories - Breaking The Lens

Key artists from Mooghalin Performing Arts emphasise the need for Black stories from Indigenous storytellers and creatives to be at the heart of the Australian arts industry. Ali Murphy-Oates, the Managing Director of Mooghalin Performing Arts spoke about how historically, work from First Nations artists has been viewed through a white gaze and that First Nations artists are now calling to reclaim that gaze. Lily Shearer, Performing Artist, Cultural Collaborator, Consultant and Educator, Mooghalin Performing Arts - highlights the need for change, and to engage young people in the arts.

Belonging - Human Rights in the Arts

Dr Tim Soutphommasane, Race Discrimination Commissioner, Australian Human Rights, spoke at the Beyond Tick Boxes symposium on the damaging implications of invisibility in the arts for culturally and linguistically diverse people in Australia. He addresses the disempowering consequences of being marginalised in the media and in particular, the need to push for these stories to be a part of the mainstream.

Find The Cracks - Making Space For Change

Key leaders across the creative sector spoke about what the government and public can do to support cultural diversity in the arts. Featuring interviews with Tiffany Lee-Shoy, Manager Cultural Development, Social and Cultural Development, Neil Peplow, CEO Australian Film, Television and Radio School, Grainne Brunson, Head of Strategy and Industry Development at Create NSW, Dr Michael Mohammed Ahmed, Director of Sweatshop and Author and Lisa Walsh, Director, Research and Knowledge at the Australia Council for the Arts. They touch on key areas such as data, funding and policy that can assist with increasing cultural diversity.

Making Art As A Refugee

Filmmaker and photographer Ali Mousawi talks about his work in the context of his refugee experience. In this interview at the Beyond Tick Boxes symposium, Ali traces his journey from being an established artist in Iran to the challenges he faced as he established his career in Australia. He advocates for more organisational support for artists from asylum seeker and refugee backgrounds.

Facing Barriers in Storytelling

Maria Tran, Filmmaker, Actor, Stunt Director and Community Facilitator spoke about the barriers she faced in the Australian screen industry and how she gained experience from working overseas in Vietnam and China. In her interview, she also introduces how her short mockumentary, *The Subtractor* addresses these issues.

What Do Audiences Want

Key figures across the Western Sydney arts sector call for more programming of culturally diverse artists as audiences increasingly want to see experiences that reflect their own realities and the different perspectives around them. Featuring interviews with Paschal Berry, Program Coordinator at Blacktown Arts Centre, Julianne Campbell, General Manager, Urban Theatre Projects, and Roxie Vuong, Filmmaker and Continuity Supervisor.

MAIN SUPPORTERS AND PARTNERS

The documentation of Beyond Tick Boxes was supported by Create NSW, who have also sponsored the launch. The launch venue partner is the National Theatre of Parramatta. The Beyond Tick Boxes symposium was supported by the **Australia Council for the Arts**, Create NSW, Liverpool City Council, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Arts Front and Feral Arts. Information and Cultural Exchange provides organisational support to Diversity Arts Australia.