

RISING :

THURSDAY 21 MAY 2020

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Light on the horizon – Amid the uncertainty, an ambitious new cultural festival ascends, establishing a 2-million-dollar commission fund for Victorian artists.

During this time of profound and powerful change, the promise of an entirely new arts experience stirs. Running from 26 May to 6 June 2021, Melbourne's newest annual arts festival, RISING, will invite audiences to celebrate the night with a surge of art, music and ceremony in the heart of the city.

Established as one of the world's most engaging and liveable cities, Melbourne sees artistic experiences permeate and punctuate every aspect of life. A new major event for the Asia Pacific region, RISING is set to further reflect and elevate Melbourne's status as a leading cultural destination.

RISING's recently appointed co-Artistic Directors Gideon Obarzanek and Hannah Fox have together set out a vision for the festival to be a generator of powerful artistic and social experiences and now, as the entire planet witnesses a profound disruption to modern life, the duo is even more determined to create opportunities for artists and bring audiences together.

"One of the upsides we see emerging from this difficult time is the hard proof that radical change on a monumental scale is in fact possible. This seems fertile ground to be working with artists to build something new for Melbourne," says Fox.

"This moment has forced us to think deeply about the future of festivals and about how we can build greater sustainability. It challenges us to champion local artists without being parochial and to find new ways to stay connected internationally. It insists that we accurately gauge the public mood and ask: 'what will the community want and need 12 months from now?'"

As the world enters a period of recovery and regeneration, RISING – which will take the place of Melbourne International Arts Festival and White Night Melbourne in Victoria's events calendar – will look to play a vital role in helping to re-stitch Australia's cultural landscape with a grand vision that will bring the best of Victorian talent to audiences across the city.

To support this vision, Fox and Obarzanek have this week announced a major and immediate investment in Victorian artists. RISING – the inaugural event of which was planned for 2020 and is now scheduled for winter 2021 – will invest \$2m in local artists to develop shows, exhibitions and events for inclusion in the festival's program.

Fox and Obarzanek, themselves practising Melbourne artists, said that the funding represents a substantial investment into Victoria's creative sector and will help shape the outcomes of future festivals.

Obarzanek explains: "Victoria is home to some of Australia's most notable artists, musicians and performing arts companies, along with some of the country's most adventurous audiences. We draw great inspiration from the state's vibrant arts community and are excited by this chance to provide new opportunities and possibilities. With the festival now having the benefit of extra time to develop distinct artist-led projects, we invite artists to submit ideas that can reach new audiences and capture national and international attention."

"Rather than prescribing specific outcomes, we are seeking ideas that are ambitious, unusual

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and that could only happen in a festival context. Whether these respond to the times or reach beyond them, we invite ideas that are radical and critical; ideas that are absurd and bombastic; ideas that are contemplative and philosophical; and ideas that are celebratory and unifying.”

Consisting of a diverse team of national and international arts professionals, RISING’s curatorial advisory group will assess all submissions for the 2021 festival following an open EOI process.

The group comprises Genevieve Lacey (Artist & Curator), Woody McDonald (RISING Music Curator), Amrita Hepi (Artist), Jeff Kahn (Artistic Director, Performance Space), Daniel Browning (Artist & Curator), Kimberley Moulton (Curator), Michael Morris (Co-Director, Artangel, London), Stefan Schmidtke (Artistic Director, Theater der Welt, Düsseldorf) and Rachel Chanoff (Director, The Office, NYC).

Not only will the panel look to identify new Victorian work to premiere at RISING 2021, it will also facilitate co-investments and future iterations for these works to be shown in other parts of Australia and abroad.

“RISING is set to play an important role as we emerge from this crisis, reigniting the exciting creative offering Victoria is known for and rebooting our visitor economy,” said Minister for Creative Industries, Martin Foley. “While this festival will be global in its ambition and scope, Victorian artists and creativity will be at its heart.”

Fox concludes: “As we navigate the ever-changing landscape, the one thing we are sure of is that art will endure and defy all notions of what is deemed essential and non-essential by rising up regardless.”

PRINCIPLE PUBLIC PARTNERS



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NOTES TO THE EDITOR

- RISING will take place in Melbourne from 26 May to 6 June 2021
- Please see the RISING Media Centre for more information, images and video
- Please see www.rising.melbourne for more information on the application process

A CALL TO ARTISTS

- RISING is calling for artists of Victoria to respond to this with ambitious ideas for art that could only happen in a festival context
- RISING encourages applications from First Nations artists and collectives
- An advisory group comprised of the RISING national and international curatorial team will decide on successful applications

RISING will be considering a number of different (and somewhat contradictory) things in the selection process:

- Ideas that can only be realised in a festival context as opposed to year-round cultural institutions
- Ideas that are generous, celebratory, of the moment and for the community
- Ideas that are radical and ambitious
- Ideas that could apply to multiple cities and festivals, that present opportunities for co-commissioning and future presentation
- Ideas that are specific to Melbourne, our time and place

Individuals, companies and collectives who fit within the following criteria will be considered eligible to apply:

- Any artists or creatives who live in Victoria
- Artists or creatives whose practice or body of work over the last five years has primarily taken place in Victoria
- Victorian-based, artist-led collectives and production companies
- Artist-led collectives and production companies that include key artists who meet the Victorian selection criteria can also apply