

**SPEAKSY**

proudly presents

# Arterial

by Na Djinang Circus



Darebin  
Arts

# Darebin Arts Speakeasy: Celebrating 10 years of supporting local art

Darebin is thrilled to celebrate 10 years of supporting local artists through the Darebin Arts Speakeasy program. Since 2013, the program has been an influential hub for performing artists to develop and present innovative new work across contemporary dance, circus, theatre and multi-disciplinary work that speaks to issues that matter to the community and celebrates cultural diversity.

As we celebrate 10 years of the Darebin Arts Speakeasy program, it is with great pride and joy that I reflect on its impact and success. Over the past decade, Darebin Arts Speakeasy has supported over **1,500 artists** to create over **150 original works** presented to over **75,000 patrons**, receiving **40 creative industry awards** and a further **116 nominations**. It has been a highlight of our cultural calendar and has brought people together in a way that has enriched our city and our lives.

The Darebin Arts Speakeasy is not just a program, but a reflection of the vibrant arts precinct that exists across our suburbs. It showcases the rich talent and creative energy that we are so lucky to have in our community.

I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the artists, partners and patrons who have made this program a resounding success!



Cr Julie Williams

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## Director's Note

I normally have a kind of tortured relationship with the shows I direct – but *Arterial* is different. I love it; it's a work that embodies a special sense of connection that I've often cherished, lost, and craved throughout my life.

*Arterial* was born into a world that was going through radical change, at a time when we all felt particularly starved of community. In response to that isolation, I wanted to create a show that could help us all stop and feel present and connected – connected to story, to country, to the people on stage and to the people sitting next to us. It's a show that celebrates connection, and that reminds us all to resist the forces that pull us apart and to treasure the things that bind us to one another, and to this place.

I like to think that while the individual heartbeats of the acrobats and those in the audience may be following slightly different rhythms at the start of the show, by the time *Arterial* comes to an end, those rhythms have come to synchronise, and are now beating as one.

Harley Mann  
Director

# About the production

A moving acrobatic performance linking people, Country and culture, where the unseen bonds between the body and the land become beautifully visible.

This award winning Na Djinang Circus performance explores the ancient connections tying First Nations people together, strong through bloodlines but damaged through colonisation.

Four performers connect with each other physically and spiritually in a display of breathtaking acrobatics, scored by avant-garde sound designer Danni Esposito.

*Arterial* will both excite and move you as the performers celebrate what it means to be First People—the lifeblood of this country. The land, its beating heart.

Suitable for ages 12+

**Show warnings: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are advised that the work contains voices of people who have passed away.**

## CREATIVE TEAM

**Directed by:** Harley Mann

**Originally devised by:** Maggie Church-Kopp, Harley Mann, Dylan Singh and Jada Narkle

**Commissioned by:** YIRRAMBOI Festival

**Performed by:** Jonathon Brown, Tamara Bouman, Maggie Church-Kopp and Dylan Singh

**Costume Design:** Emily Barrie

**Sound Design:** Danni Esposito

**Lighting Design:** Gina Gascoigne

**Lighting Design Adaptation by:** Harrie Hogan

**Production Manager:** Harrie Hogan

**Cultural Consultant:** Dan Mitchell

**Na Djinang General Manager:** Steph Cox

**Producer:** Dans Maree Sheehan

**Executive Producer:** Lauren Eisinger

**Image by:** Cecil Martin

*This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body and by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria.*



# Artist Bios



**Harley Mann (Director)** is a Wakka Wakka man from Queensland, founded Na Djinang Circus in 2017, drawing on his Aboriginal heritage for inspiration. With experience in leading contemporary circus companies, Na Djinang has achieved success with shows like *Common Dissonance* and *Arterial*. Harley's leadership secured multi-year funding for Na Djinang, and his talent has been recognised with awards including the Melbourne Fringe Award for Best Emerging Circus Artist. He contributes to the industry as a CaPT Advisory Group co-convener, Circus Oz Fellow and Australia Council for the Arts Future Leaders Program participant.



**Johnathon Brown (Performer)** Johnny's journey is a testament to the power of determination and passion. His success in the performing arts industry, despite the obstacles he faced, is an inspiration to aspiring artists everywhere. Johnny's commitment to representing his culture through his work is especially important, as it helps to preserve and celebrate the rich diversity of First Nations people in Australia. His performances not only showcase his incredible talent but also serve as a reminder of the resilience and strength of Indigenous communities.



**Tamara Bouman (Performer)** is a 24-year-old Birripai/Wiradjuri contemporary dance artist and performer, is currently based in Melbourne and Sydney. She began her training at the age of three and has experience in various performance modalities, including contemporary dance, ballet, performance art, circus, film, and physical theater. Tamara graduated from the Victorian College of the Arts in 2019 and has worked with several artists and companies, including Sydney Dance Company, Stephanie Lake, and Na Djinang Circus. She is passionate about cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural collaboration and using dance to connect with her culture, land, and audience.



**Maggie Church-Kopp (Performer)** is a proud Arrente multidisciplinary artist whose practice combines circus, theatre, and dance. Maggie has performed in various shows, including *Arterial*, *Whose Gonna Love 'Em. I Am That I Am*, and *Get Your Geek On*. Maggie has trained and worked with Circus OZ, Ilbjerri Theatre, The Flying Fruit Fly Circus, and received TNA's EFNC&PTA Mentorship in 2022. She believes in performance as a collective mechanism for truth-telling and aims towards creative innovation encompassed by cultural respect.



**Dylan Singh (Performer)** is a proud Wiradjuri man and second-generation circus performer, who weaves his culture into his performances using circus as a medium. He explores the meaning of Dreaming and its modern-day relevance. Dylan has captivated audiences for over a decade, working with leading Australian circus companies such as Company 2, Circus Oz, and Casus. Growing up in the Flying Fruit Fly circus, Dylan aims to inspire and nurture the next generation of black performers while reflecting his connection to the community.



**Harrie Hogan (Production Manager)** began her training at Newtown High School of the Performing Arts before completing a BFA in Production at the Victorian College of the Arts (2019). Her recent design credits include *Nothing* (A Ry Presentation, 2022) and *Sirens* (VIMH, 2022), *Wolf Play* (Red Stitch Actors' Theatre, 2023). Harrie was the 2022 Malthouse Besen Placement in lighting and has been nominated for three Green Room Awards (*Kerosene* 2022, *Sirens* 2023 and *Grace* 2023).



**Daniel Mitchell (Cultural Consultant)** Daniel's artistic practice traverses a diverse creative field, from circus, physical theatre, street theatre, performance art, festivals and events and public art. His practice has evolved over 30 years and is focused very much on cultural protocol through thorough connection to country/site/location and community engagement. This approach is further informed by his own Whadjuk Nyoongar (Derbil Yerrigan - Swan River Mob) and his Anglo-European cultural heritages.

Daniel has worked as Director, Creative Producer, Performer and Creator with companies including, Footscray Community Arts Centre as Due West Arts Festival Executive Producer, Circus Oz (Vic), Ihos Opera (Tas), Bizircus,(W.A.), Melbourne Fringe Festival, QuarterAcreBlock Street Theatre (W.A.), Theatre De La Unity (France), Antic Disposition (U.K.), Dislocate Physical Theatre (VIC), Flying Fruit Fly Circus (NSW), Ran Dan Club (W.A.) and various others. In 2003 he held the position of Guest Director with the Melbourne Fringe Festival where he developed the Fringe Shrouds public art project.



**Emily Barrie (Costume & Set Design)** is a Set and Costume Designer living in Narm. A graduate of the Victorian Colleg of the Arts., her designs for multi-disciplines of the performing arts spans across theatre, circus, physical theatre, parades, installations and events, with her work touring widely.

Companies include Melbourne Theatre Company, Malthouse Theatre, Belvoir Street Theatre, Ilbjerri Theatre Company, Rawcus Theatre, & Circus Oz.

Most recently Emily designed *Glass* (Rawcus), *Here We are Amongst You* (Rawcus), *Gene Tree* (St. Martin's), *Heart is a Wasteland* (Ilbjerri), *Goodbye Aunty Flo* (Ilbjerri) and *Jacky* (MTC).

Emily's work has been recognised with many industry association nominations and awards, including The Green Room Awards and Helpmann Awards for Design and Best or Outstanding Production.



**Dannie Esposito (Sound Design)** is a non-binary composer and sound designer from Naarm, working across theatre and film. They are a recent graduate of Victorian College of the Arts and hold a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Production.

Danni was sound designer for *The Sound Inside* at Melbourne Theatre Company directed by Sarah Goodes. Other credits include sound design and composition for: *Stay Woke* (Malthouse Theatre/Darlinghurst Theatre Company); *Overflow* (Darlinghurst Theatre Company); *Hydra* (Darebin

Arts Speakeasy); *Fast Food* (Red Stitch); *Slutnik*, *Guerilla Sabbath*, *Adam* (Midsumma Festival); *Cactus* (La Mama); *Punk Rock* (Patalog Theatre); *Slut* (The Burrow); *The Dream Laboratory* (Essential Theatre); *Treats* (Fever103 Theatre); *Land* (Three Fates Theatre Company); *Never Said Motel* (Melbourne Writers Festival); *Tram Lights Up* (Bighthouse Arts). Danni was nominated for a Green Room Award for their work on *Hydra*.



**Dans Maree Sheehan (Producer)** has an impressive career in the performing arts, having worked with renowned companies such as Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre and Elevator Repair Service Theater. She has collaborated on large-scale productions with Back to Back Theatre and Circus Oz and has recently worked with a variety of companies, including Throw Catch Collective and Dislocate. Dans has also played a crucial role in creating a yearly festival in regional Victoria.



**Steph Cox (General Manager, Na Djinang Circus)** is a seasoned Producer, Program, and Production Manager with a background in Circus and Physical Theatre. She has worked on national and international tours for various companies, including Circa and the National Institute of Circus Arts. As the former Program Manager at Theatre Network Australia, Steph championed the Circus and Physical Theatre sector's advocacy and development. One of her career highlights was working with Chasing Smoke (*Casus*), Australia's only First Nations touring circus ensemble, from 2018 to 2020. Steph

completed a Master of Fine Arts in Cultural Leadership, where she researched Wellbeing in the Performing Arts, particularly Circus Training Institutions. Currently, she is pursuing a second Master's in Business - Arts & Cultural Management.

# About Na Djinang Circus

Na Djinang Circus is a Melbourne-based contemporary circus company that works with diverse young artists to share unique insights with the next generation's Hands & Feet. Founded by Wakka Wakka man Harley Mann, Na Djinang Circus aims to develop work that utilises the next generation's social and political attitudes and tells stories that challenge our own perceived ideas about contemporary Australian society.

Their work explores fundamental human characteristics from an Indigenous perspective, using the body to demonstrate complex human experiences of trust, connection, vulnerability, and joy.

As a First Nations-led company, Na Djinang Circus's art and ethos reflect traditional and contemporary values. They are curious, original, and unafraid to make mistakes. Na Djinang Circus believes that artists have the power to shape audiences' opinions and create change. Their work is thought-provoking and inspiring, encouraging audiences to challenge their assumptions and think critically about the world around them. With a commitment to diversity and inclusion, Na Djinang Circus is helping to create a more just and equitable society through their art.

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# About Darebin Arts Speakeasy

Darebin Arts Speakeasy is Darebin City Council's award-winning year-round independent performance and development program. For 10 years, the program has curated and invested in contemporary dance, circus, theatre and multi-disciplinary artists whose works offer audiences a dynamic and diverse mix of stories that matter to the community, celebrate cultural diversity and reflect the times we're living in.

Since 2013 Darebin Arts Speakeasy has supported over **1,500 artists** to create **over 150 original works** presented to **over 75,000 patrons**, receiving **40 creative industry awards** and a further **116 nominations**. Darebin Arts has backed many of the groundbreaking artists and companies that make Melbourne's art sector so iconic: RAWCUS, Ilbijerri Theatre Company, The Hayloft Project, Little Ones Theatre, Stephanie Lake Company, Elbow Room, MKA, Double Water Sign, and lead artists like Joel Bray, Michele Lee, Emilie Collyer, Anna Seymour, Stella Young and Sammy J.

*Darebin City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung people who are the Traditional Owners of the land on which Darebin stands. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging*

# Coming up at Darebin Arts Speakeasy



## Crocodiles by Vidya Rajan

As a migrant, Sandhya is expected to work hard.

As an aged-care resident, Helen is expected to be lonely.

As a doctor, Priya is expected to take responsibility.

And as a nation, we expect them to stay out of sight.

But now there's been an unexpected death. And we want answers. Sandhya, on the other hand, has questions - questions we might not be ready for.

Acclaimed playwright and screenwriter **Vidya Rajan** (*In Search of Lost Scroll*, *Looking for Alibrandi*) weaves a poignant, surreal story about those who exist outside the centre. Brought to the stage by award-winning Melbourne theatre company **Elbow Room** (*Enlightment*, *Prehistoric*) and featuring **Rachel Kamath** (*Shantaram*) and **Shamita Siva** (*Coconut*), *Crocodiles* is a playful and intelligent exploration of who in the age care system gets to make mistakes and who cleans up the mess.

**24 May - 4 June**

Wed - Fri 7.30pm | Sat 2pm & 7.30pm | Sun 5pm

Northcote Town Hall Arts Centre

\$38 Full | \$30 Conc. | \$33 Darebin Residents | \$20 Preview | \$15 Blak Tix

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