

DAREBIN ARTS SPEAKEASY

PRESENTS

THE BLOK!

A DAYLIGHT CONNECTION



**Darebin
Arts**

WELCOME TO DAREBIN ARTS SPEAKEASY'S 2025 SEASON

CR KRISTINE OLARIS OAM
CITY OF DAREBIN MAYOR

As a long-time supporter of the arts, the City of Darebin is proud to once again present the award-winning Darebin Arts Speakeasy program.

Since 2013 this theatre program has been partnering with small and medium arts organisations, companies and independent artists to generate thrilling, innovative and quality performances for audiences to enjoy.

With a focus on presenting a variety of voices and encouraging everyone to engage with the arts, this unique program champions new Australian works produced to interrogate our society and celebrate cultural diversity.

In 2025, Melbourne's leading performance artists return to Northcote Town Hall Arts Centre and Darebin Arts Centre to present cutting-edge shows.

Congratulations to all involved on producing this thought provoking and inspiring program. I look forward to enjoying these incredible performances with you.

DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL ACKNOWLEDGES THE WURRUNDJERI-WOI WURRUNG PEOPLE AS THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS OF LAND IN WHICH DAREBIN STANDS. WE RECOGNISE THEIR CONTINUING CONNECTION TO LAND, WATERS AND CULTURE. WE PAY OUR RESPECT TO ELDERS PAST, AND PRESENT.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

KAMARRA BELL-WYKES
DIRECTOR & CO-DEVISOR

THE BLOK! IS THE THIRD WORK FROM A DAYLIGHT CONNECTION

as we once again attempt to poke the stick at the terror that quietly waits at the edges of our existence.

THE BLOK! is the perfect container to interrogate the absurdity of being a professional artist or just a human in a neo-capitalist world where everything is exploited and on the verge of being perfected by AI — a world where our ego, privilege and pride keep us trapped in a reality we collectively created but never consented to.

Societal collapse. Genocide. Mass extinction. Where do we look in in the face of collective global suffering?

What do we say when everything has already been said?

What do we do when nothing changes?

How do we continue to function under the weight of our looming destiny and the guilt of survival?

Who is coming to save us from ourselves?

What is the roles of arts in this reality: to process, provoke, entertain or distract?

In such desperate chaos, where do we turn for answers, inspiration, hope?

We have no idea! But we ask these questions to try and make sense of the global colony in which we reside, to break down and remake the matrix, to play it back to ourselves in some way that makes sense for a moment or make us laugh for a little while. During this hour, on this stage, in this ceremonial circle, we get to determine the lores of creation; make-believe, magic and mayhem. We get to build and destroy the universe.

ABOUT THE BLOK!

RADICAL, BLAK, AND FUNNY AS HELL

A Daylight Connection, led by Kamarra Bell-Wykes and Carly Sheppard, make work that bucks theatre convention. Hilarious and irreverent, this motley crew of visionary renegades are hell-bent on reimagining what First Nations performance can be.

THE BLOK! is a wild, satirical battle for creative control. An artist known as The Master, drowning in spiralling ego and crushing writers block (Carly Sheppard), hits rock bottom, and is visited by a divine Blak Creator (Alexis West). The Creator unravels the myths of artistic genius, white patriarchal supremacy, and the singular notion of God.

Constipated by pressure and fame, The Master must confront the limits of their genius and surrender to a force bigger than themselves. As we rapidly hurtle towards our collective extinction, how do we separate the false gods from the real?

THE BLOK! is a spiritually rogue theatre experience that exploits classic genres, pop culture, modern-day tropes, and mythical iconography, to create a sublime feast of divine revelation and ego-fuelled chaos. It is performance as rebellion; creation as disruption - radical, Blak, and funny as hell.

CREATIVE TEAM

Devised by: Kamarra Bell-Wykes and Carly Sheppard with contributions from Alexis West and ChatbotGPT

Directed by: Kamarra Bell-Wykes

Co-directed by: Carly Sheppard

Performed by: Carly Sheppard and Alexis West

Set Design by: A DAYLIGHT CONNECTION

Sound Design by: small sound

Lighting Design by: John Collopy

Stage & Production Management by: Holland Brooks

Produced by: Performing Lines

THE BLOK! is presented by Darebin Arts Speakeasy and Melbourne Fringe and produced by Performing Lines. This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through Creative Australia, its principal arts investment and advisory body. This project has been Fringe Funded, as part of Deadly Fringe, with thanks to the Sue Beeton Fund, Julie Kantor and Craig Semple.



Australian Government
Indigenous Languages and Arts



Running time: approx. 75mins, no interval.
Show warnings: This production contains coarse language, theatrical haze, strobe lighting, and references to suicide, drug use, sexual content, genocide, extinction, and the end of the world.

A DAYLIGHT CONNECTION

A Daylight Connection is Kamarra Bell-Wykes, Carly Sheppard and small sound with a dazzling line-up of special guest artists, creating work for Mob, for young audiences, and for outsiders like themselves who aren't regular theatre-goers. Based in Naarm (Melbourne), this independent theatre company offers an explosive union of equally weird and talented artists encompassing almost all creative and design roles including, dramaturgy, devising, directing, choreography, performance, set and sound design. Bound by the elusive dream of not only being independent but truly self-determined artists, the collective was formed from a shared love of high-quality, boundary-pushing performance.

Previous works include *Chase*, *A Nighttime Travesty* and *Whose Gonna Love 'Em? I am that i AM*.

THE CREATIVE TEAM WOULD LIKE TO THANK:

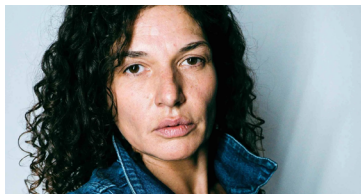
- Blak & Bright - for the original commission
- Steve Acker - honorary toilet sourcer and script assistant
- Stephen Weir - for being a legend

DAREBIN ARTS SPEAKEASY

Darebin Arts Speakeasy is Darebin City Council's award-winning year-round independent performance and development program. Since 2013, 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.

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.

ARTIST BIOS



KAMARRA BELL-WYKES

(Director & Co-Devisor)

is a Yagera/Butchulla theatre maker serving as Queensland Theatre's current resident First Nations dramaturge, ILBIJERRI's Creative Director from 2014-2019 and Malthouse Resident Artist 2020-2022. In 2021 Kamarra was awarded the Patrick White Award for her work *Whose Gonna Love 'Em? I am that i AM* (Footscray Community Arts Centre). Her other significant theatre credits include *House Arrest* (Yirramboi/Malthouse), *A Wake -A Woke Mob* (Melbourne Theatre Company/ILBIJERRI), *37* (Melbourne Theatre Company), *Romeo and Juliet* (Red Stitch Theatre), *Because the Night* (Malthouse Theatre), *The Score*, *Scar Trees*, *Viral*, *North West of Nowhere*, *Body Armour*, *Chopped Liver*, *Shrunkn Iris* (ILBIJERRI).



CARLY SHEPPARD

(Performer & Co-Devisor)

is a cross-disciplinary performance artist based in Naarm/Melbourne, working across dance and theatre making and performance, sculpture, drawing, writing, voice, and installation. Carly's career and practice have been platformed and nurtured by BlakDance, British Council, Australia Council for the Arts, ILBIJERRI and more. Carly has trained at NAISDA Dance College and Victorian College of the Arts (Dance). Some of Carly's notable performance credits include *Chase* (A Daylight Connection), *A Nighttime Travesty* (A Daylight Connection), *Set Piece* (Anna Breckon and Nat Randall), *Considerable Sexual License* (Joel Bray Dance), *Anthem* (Performing Lines and Arts Centre Melbourne) and *Love* (Dee and Cornelius).

ARTIST BIOS



ALEXIS WEST

(Performer)

is a Birri Gubba, Wakka Wakka, South Sea Islander and White Australian woman living on Kurna Country. She is a writer, director, collaborator and performer in film, theatre, poetry, dance and events. Alexis is passionate about First Nation voices, the stories of people with disability, oppression, diversity and collaboration. She has worked as an Artistic Director with Karrikarrinya Theatre Collective, co-written with Elena Carapetis for the State Theatre of South Australia, written and collaborated for Kurruru Youth Arts and No Strings Attached Theatre of Disability.



SMALL SOUND

(Sound Designer & Musician)

is the most recent creative incarnation of Melbourne-born-and-based, multi-form artist, multi-instrumentalist and Quandamooka man, Andrew James. Creating, composing and performing original music, sets and sculptural space in response to independent dance, theatre, contemporary art exhibitions and film works for over 25 years has been not just a privilege, but an inevitable evolution. Past work and collaborations include: A Daylight Connection, Malthouse Theatre, Red Stitch Theatre, Hothouse Theatre, Footscray Community Arts Centre, Melbourne Theatre Company, Ilbijerri, Farmwalker Films, Blackbox Media, Makatron, Human Sacrifice Theatre and Chimene Steele-Prior.

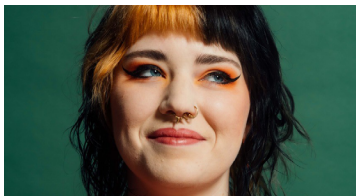
ARTIST BIOS



JOHN COLLOPY

(Lighting Designer)

is a Green Room Award-winning lighting designer who works across theatre, circus, and dance. His recent lighting design credits include: *House Arrest* (Yirramboi), *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *A Dodgeball Named Desire*, *Animal Farm*, and *Paradise Lost* (Bloomshed, Green Room Award for Best Lighting Design – Independent Theatre), *In Common*, *Sensory Decadence*, and *Kilter* (One Fell Swoop Circus), *Ballkids (or, scenes from a friendship)* and *The Grief Trilogy* (VIMH), *object-shun/SERMON* (Dancehouse, Erin O'Rourke/ Rhys Ryan), *Bodylex* (Rhys Ryan, Dancehouse); and *Just a Boy, Standing in Front of a Girl* (15 Minutes From Anywhere).



HOLLAND BROOKS (THEY/THEM)

(Stage & Production Manager)

is a versatile interdisciplinary stage/ production manager, writer, director and designer with a Bachelor in Performing Arts (Performance Making) from WAAPA. Their work disrupts the concept of what is stageable and possible in live performance contexts - both on and offstage. Holland's debut play *Unnatural* (2024, TBRT), received 6 Performing Arts WA Awards nominations, including Best Independent Production and Outstanding New Work. Recent works include *The Machine Stops* (Theatre Works), *Hometown* (Spare Parts Puppet Theatre), and *Unnatural* (The Blue Room Theatre).

ARTIST BIOS



PERFORMING LINES

(Producer)

produces provocative contemporary performance by Australia's most audacious independent artists.

We curate a portfolio of work that is propelled by pressing questions and new ways of seeing the world. We champion the unconventional, the marginal, the rebellious and the new.

Our purpose is to champion risk and to ensure that the breadth and plurality of Australia's creative potential is represented and celebrated.

Performing Lines is led by Executive Producer Simon Wellington, and manages teams in Sydney, Perth, Melbourne and Hobart, with a network of producers and presenters around the country and the world.