

# Annual Report 2020





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Cover Image credit: Amrita Hepi, *Rinse*, Keir Choreographic Award 2020. Photo by Gregory Lorenzutti for Dancehouse

Image Credit (below): Houseparty 2020. Photo by Andrew J. Liu of Pride Productions



# IN SUMMARY

## CEO / Artistic Director's Report

The year 2020 will be forever marked. Australia endured Black Summer; a record bushfire event which burnt 18 million hectares and took the lives of people, flora and fauna. The smoke blanketed the cities and communities of the Australia East Coast and all the while, COVID-19 — a deadly global pandemic — slowly gained momentum in Asia. As I write this report, COVID has already caused the death of over 3 million internationally.

Everything and everyone is changed.

Dancehouse first closed to the public on 20 March 2020, shut down by Victoria's first round of city-wide lockdowns. The Melbourne and later, Victorian, lockdown continued throughout most of 2020 and, at the time, was one of the longest and strictest in the world.

Throughout the year Dancehouse has closed, opened, closed, re-opened and both struggled and sometimes thrived alongside the lives and careers of dance artists, the arts sector and society at large.

But 2020 began at a sprint.

The Keir Choreographic Award (KCA) presented 8 commissioned works from artists across Australia (Riana Head-Toussaint, Angela Goh, Amrita Hepi, Jo Lloyd, The Farm, Alison Currie and David Cross, Zachary Lopez and Lewis Major). The commissions were selected by an exciting international jury of Mette Edvardsen, Claudia La Rocco, Takao Kawaguchi and Serge Laurent. A successful and busy Melbourne semi-final of the Award aligned beautifully with Asia TOPA and the APAM Gathering. The KCA public program in Melbourne was one of KCA's largest incorporating talks, delegations and artworks.

The Asia Triennial of Performing Arts (Asia TOPA) partnership between January and March continued Dancehouse and Artistic Director, Angela Conquet's interest in Japan and Butoh-aligned artists and practices with exquisite works by Takao Kawaguchi, Akira Kasai and Ruri Mito.

But COVID's impact began in March in Australia. The KCA final in Sydney at Carriageworks proceeded as planned but rumours about lockdowns and venue closures circulated and audiences were anxious. The final piece to Dancehouse's Asia TOPA presentation; Eko Supriyanto's Ibu-Ibu Belu (27–28 March) was unfortunately cancelled.

My leadership began on 20 April 2020. And it was an unfitting and undeservedly sombre farewell for Angela Conquet, Dancehouse Artistic Director (June 2011–April 2020). Angela has left an enduring legacy raising Dancehouse as an indisputable global leader and beacon for the form internationally. Under Angela's leadership, Dancehouse has grown in all aspects: from artistic ambition, to reach, profile and resources. A hallmark of her achievements at Dancehouse has been the extensive network of international partners and artists and the initiation of a number of significant projects including the Keir Choreographic Award, and Dancehouse Diary. We are indebted to her extraordinary work.

Dancehouse in 2020 was impacted by 27 weeks of closure with over 37 weeks in restricted access to our North Carlton building.

An early risk mitigation was to reduce all applicable staff from full-time work and to encourage staff to use banked leave. Earned income fell away: box office, workshops, venue hire and memberships all plummeted.

And across the sector, bad news was easy to find.



## CEO / Artistic Director's Report

Dance Massive, an extraordinary festival influencing the lives and careers of a generation of dance-makers in Australia ended its 10-year success; unable to secure federal resources. With consortium partner Arts House, began a necessary and sometimes painful change process, reimagining a new model and new festival for dance in Melbourne. We are proud that this work has been engaged and led by independent dance artists.

Keir Choreographic Award partner Carriageworks went into voluntary administration in May with some KCA artists and jury members creditors in the process. Following acceptance of a Deed of Arrangement in July, Dancehouse, The Keir Foundation and the Australia Council for the Arts announced a joint repayment package to KCA artists and jury creditors to make-up the shortfall in owed payments.

As the effects of lockdown rolled-on, Dancehouse focussed on quick and safe return to studio practice for artists. Dancehouse was a sector-leader in proudly developing, adapting and devising COVIDSafe plans to enable early studio access.

In a brief re-opening in June, Dancehouse balloted space in our venue for 21 days to artists for free. One artist per studio at a time. Dancehouse staff undertook cleaning and sanitising between each venue booking. The responsibility of cleaning has endured into 2021 — a new COVID reality.

The free space ballot — YOUR HOUSE — continued as we re-opened eventually facilitating 199 sessions for 172 artists equivalent to 926 hours of free and COVIDSafe studio time.

Dancehouse commissioned a digital program: Dance (Lens), exploring Vimeo as a platform for live-streamed works, dance films and on demand content. Unfortunately our Melbourne Fringe program in November did not reach live-performance potential with 5 works shunted to 2021, but our digital program included pre-record events (*Now Pieces*), films and talks (*Alien Intimacy* and *SHIFT*) and a live-stream broadcast (*HOUSEPARTY*).

Dancehouse invested in a two volume edition of Dancehouse Diary with editors Angela Conquet and Philipa Rothfield. *Interior lives for Confined Times (A Collection)*; and *New Topographies of the Body (A Series)* commissioned 27 artists in a digital publication spanning sound, poetry, essay and video.

The 20 participants of the Emerging Choreographers Program (ECP) continued throughout the year with decidedly less studio time than expected. With Zoom talks, workshops and some creative manoeuvring the program rolled-out. Culminating in *Submerge* 12–13 December, the only live in-person presentation at Dancehouse in 2020 since the COVID lockdown.

Triumphantly, Dancehouse and Abbotsford Convent led-out the year with Freedance, a program of classes outdoors and on site at Abbotsford Convent across three streams: contemporary Action Lab, Street Dance and family Freedance.

Dancehouse achieved much during the lockdowns, albeit quietly from our bedrooms, lounge rooms and garages. A new website, new comms, building upgrades and repairs, new finance system and equipment. Our artistic program too has undertaken a necessary 'pivot' to adapt to a new era. Much of the results and impacts will be noted in the 2021 annual report, but I am excited to see Dancehouse re-equipped financially, physically and artistically for a new era.

I hope this Annual Report serves as a faithful record of an extraordinary year for Dancehouse. I hope I can write this sentence again with very different connotations in the future.

My sincere thanks to Angela Conquet, the Dancehouse Board, staff and community who have helped us and each other through a diabolical year.

— Josh Wright, CEO/ Artistic Director

## Chairperson's Report

For Dancehouse the beginning of 2020 was extraordinarily full with the organisation's involvement in AsiaTOPA, the KCA and a change in the directorship from Angela Conquet to Josh Wright.

The last year has seen one of the most unusual, tumultuous, both uneventful and eventful years of my experience.

During 2020 our world as we know it here in Melbourne, in Australia and throughout the world has changed through our collective and individual experiences of drastic bushfires, a global pandemic and the ongoing effects of this on everyone's lives and consciousness. And then as a result, the shifts in community, political and fiscal agendas.

We said adieu to Angela as director of Dancehouse, we acknowledge her enormous contribution to the organisation over the period of her directorship especially in the fostering of international relationships and the development of more complex discussions and sites for discussion around dance.

In this climate of radical change, Dancehouse, under the new directorship of Josh Wright managed to not only survive but thrive and transform into an organisation that is responsive and decisive around changing attitudes, heightening the organisation's focus in relation to the shifting landscape through Josh's creative and thoughtful leadership.

This landscape involves not only the adjustments in relation to COVID-19, but recalibration of our experience of the world in terms of engagement, inclusivity, access and the pressing demands of Climate Emergency.

During lockdown the team were able to undertake a number of activities during the pause in the usual activities, including restructuring the artistic programme, instigating maintenance works and improvements to the facility. It also gave the team an opportunity to work together in different ways, rethinking existing projects and developing new programmes. Consultative processes were established to address the future of Dance Massive and initiatives toward greater inclusivity and the development of an Indigenous advisory committee.

This period also offered the team an opportunity to think through the programmes offered by Dancehouse, articulating who our overlapping client groups are and could be, and how we may best serve them. How to offer the best possible experience for audiences, hirers, artists and staff in terms of how the resources of DH work in the IRL and digital realms.

Under Josh's stewardship, Dancehouse has new supporting partners, a new website, a beautifully regenerated floor, and a seating system that is more functional and adaptable. The teams for production, front of house, development and communication are operating with a new vigour as part of these shifts.

This pause, although deeply distressing for the sector as a whole and for the team and constituency of Dancehouse also allowed a deep rethink. With the wonderful assistance of John Paolacci, our treasurer, we were able to successfully find financial assistance through local, state and federal funding to support the staff, maintain and improve our systems especially in the digital realm, and plan constructively for the future.

The ongoing uncertainty is allayed somewhat by the extraordinary resourcefulness and professionalism with which Josh and the team have functioned this year. Their combined influence on the overlapping communities with which they interact has been nurturing, positive and generative. An enormous congratulations.

I also thank the Board of Dancehouse for their commitment and support for the organisation and for Josh in a most difficult time to begin as the CEO and AD of Dancehouse. Special thanks to the executive group that includes Tiffany Lucas and my deputy Nick Hays, and, most particularly, our treasurer John Paolacci for his diligence and care.

Finally, I must thank Josh who has performed as our CEO and AD with enthusiasm, creativity and generosity meaning that Dancehouse is an energetic and generative force going into 2021.

— Shelley Lasica, Chairperson

**195**      **Hours of cleaning (equivalent to 1 person full-time for 6.5 weeks)**  
**25.5**      **Number of weeks Dancehouse shutdown**  
**12**      **COVIDSafe Plan updates in 2020**

Dancehouse was a relative 'quick responder' in COVID in Melbourne. Despite an extensive lockdown, the organisation was small enough to re-open with safety restrictions without crippling financial impacts.

Dancehouse's first COVIDSafe plan was published in May 2020 on the website.

Dancehouse maintained venue access for the dance community as a priority service — giving away space for free through the Your House ballot. No hires were accepted directly out of two lockdowns: 22 June–8 July and 18 November–23 December.

Dancehouse hiring in COVID 2020 (and into 2021) has been reduced to sessions; often 3–4 per day with COVID cleaning and sanitising between each session to enable turnover.

As a high risk activity, dancing, making dance and experiencing dance has necessitated a suite of different COVIDSafety requirements aligned to activity. Dancehouse's COVIDSafety has aligned to industry requirements including:

- Indoor recreation and physical exercise
- Public Events, Entertainment and Cultural Activities (Indoor Seated)
- 'Creative Industries' — making and creating artwork

DATES	DURATION	DANCEHOUSE STEP	VIC GOVERNMENT RESPONSE
6 Jan — 19 Mar 2020	11.5 weeks	OPEN // Pre-Covid	
20 Mar — 1 Jun 2020	10 weeks	<b>Closed:</b> some staff on site	<b>Stage 3:</b> First wave response Covid-19
1 Jun — 8 Jul 2020	5.5 weeks	<b>Dancehouse Step 1</b> 1 person, then from 22 June 10 per studio	<b>Stage 2:</b> First phase easing
9 Jul — 26 Oct 2020	15.5 weeks	<b>Closed</b>	<b>Stage 4:</b> Greater Melbourne lockdown <u>AND</u> <b>Roadmap: Step 1 and Step 2</b>
27 Oct — 25 Nov 2020	3.5 weeks	<b>Roadmap: Step 3</b>	<b>Roadmap: Step 3</b>
26 Nov — 12 December	3 weeks	<b>Roadmap: Last Step</b>	<b>Roadmap: Last Step</b>
13 Dec — 21 Dec 2020	1 week	<b>Covid Normal</b>	<b>CovidSafe Summer</b>
22 Dec 2020– 4 Jan 2021	2 weeks	Scheduled shutdown over summer	



## Key Statistics

**19,678** Attendances (including in-person and digital)



**2,017** Paid tickets



**17,661** Free tickets



**108** Dancehouse Members



**590** Total artists engaged by Dancehouse

**267** Artists paid directly

**30** Number of works (performances, public programs, online)

**58** Individual shows or sessions

**78** Number on online resources (Watch, Move, Listen, Read)

## Unsolicited Feedback

*The workshop couldn't have come at a better time. Dancing at home was making me feel deflated and uninspired, and I didn't realise how much I missed being watched (as opposed to dancing in the void alone). Ros was able to provide some really concrete tools and perspectives on practicing dance. I think working on Zoom worked surprisingly well, especially one on one.*

**— ECP digital workshop with Ros Crisp**

*Also I just wanted to say out of all the studios I've dealt with recently this is the most thorough and well laid out COVID procedure. So kudos to you and all the Dancehouse staff for putting this together and thank you for all the hard work you've put into reopening and still keeping everyone accountable and well informed.*

**— Artist on COVID Safety**

*Just wanted to express my huge gratitude and appreciation toward what you and everyone at Dancehouse do with offering artists a place to express themselves fully in your beautiful studios. I had an absolute ball and forgot how nice it can be to train in a studio space. It has been too long! THANK YOU for doing what you do. I hope you know it doesn't go unnoticed, filling our bodies, minds and spirits with happy souls — priceless!*

**— Your House recipient**

## 2020 Program Overview

### LIVE

#### Keir Choreographic Award

*Very Excellent Disabled Dancing* — Riana Head-Toussaint  
*Sky Blue Mythic* — Angela Goh  
*Rinse* — Amrita Hepi  
*That's Her Name* — Jo Lloyd  
*Hold me closer Tony Danza* — The Farm  
*Delimit* — Alison Currie & David Cross  
*Peril* — Zachary Lopez  
*Lien* — Lewis Major

#### Keir Choreographic Award Public Program

*Project F* — Prue Lang  
*Penelope Sleeps* — Mette Edvardsen & Matteo Fargion  
*Table of Contents* — Mette Edvardsen  
*The Retrospective Room* — Claudia La Rocco  
*1 Note 2 Movements* (workshop) — Matteo Fargion  
*Choreography As Writing* (workshop) — Mette Edvardsen  
*Rhythms of the Body* (workshop) — Priya Srinivasan  
*Mortal Materials* (workshop) — Claudia La Rocco

#### Asia TOPA

*Good Luck* — Takao Kawaguchi  
*Pollen Revolution* — Akira Kasai  
*Matou* — Ruri Mito

#### Asia TOPA Public Program

*Touch of the Other* (workshop) — Takao Kawaguchi  
*Touch of the Other* (showing) — Takao Kawaguchi  
*Conversations at MPavilion* — Priya Srinivasan & Philipa Rothfield

#### Submerge (Emerging Choreographers Program)

*course of action* — Emma Riches  
*a piece* — Alexandra Collins and Alexandra Clouston  
*We are...* — Jennifer Ma and David Leupolu  
*Condition* — Rhys Ryan  
*Dancing Affordances* — Caitlin Dear  
*Mirror "Me"* — Aimee Schollum  
*Pigeon Intimacies* — Jessie Gall & Lydia Connolly-Hiatt  
*a common thread* — Isabelle Beauverd  
*Soft Futures* — Hillary Goldsmith  
*Fresh to Familiar* — Siobhan McKenna  
*Untitled* — Chris Chua  
*Holding Balance Workshop* — Abigail Benham-Bannon, Gabriela Green Olea, and Marcela Olea

### ONLINE

#### Melbourne Fringe Festival

*Alien Intimacy* — James Batchelor  
*Shift* — Claire Marshall  
Houseparty: All Styles Tournament  
Now Pieces #1  
Now Pieces #2

#### Sister Sessions Vol. 6

#### Dance (Lens)

*6/6* — Orsola Valenti  
*Botchan Retreat* — Running Man Australia  
*I Dream of Augustine* — Cordelia Beresford  
*Necessary Games* — Sophie Hyde  
*Poetics of Home* — Gretel Taylor  
*Resonance* — Stephen Cummins

### ONLINE RESOURCES

#### Watch

Keir Choreographic Award

#### Listen

What is in-between (KCA)  
(In)visible Futures — Norah Zuniga-Shaw, Jen Rae, Dr Chris Ryan moderated by Angharad Wynne-Jones  
(In)visible Matter(s) — Hellen Sky, Catherine Clover, Rhiannon Newton moderated by Amaara Raheem  
(In)visible Forces — Helly Minarti, Barb Bolt, David Sequeira moderated by Collette Brennan  
(In)visible Scores — Mette Edvarsten, Claudia La Rocco, Lucinda Strahn moderated by Sandra Parker  
(In)visible Times — Linda Sastradipradja, Nareeporn Vachananda, Martin Hansen moderated by Carol Brown

#### Reload: Manifestos for Tomorrow

Claudia La Rocco & Leisa Shelton  
Takao Kawaguchi & Phillip Adams  
Mette Edvardsen & Lucy Guerin

#### Retune Talks

Anitra Nelson & Terry Leahy

#### Attunements

Deborah Hay with Philipa Rothfield & Angela Conquet



## 2020 Program

### Move

Sister Sessions for Victorian Youth Week — Marnie Newton, Lauren Drago,  
Jenn Ma & Arisa Herbert  
Follow Me — Isabelle Beauverd

### Read

Dancehouse Diary

#### 12.1: Interior Lives Scores for Confined Times (A Collection)

Jacob Boehme, Joel Bray, Serena Chalker, Ryuichi Fujimura, Martin  
Hansen, Becky Hilton, Jamie Lewis, Gregory Lorenzutti, Anja Mujic,  
Wendy Morrow, Melinda Smith, Tim Snowdon, Bella Waru

#### 12.2: New Topographies of the Body (A Series)

Devika Bilimoria, Amaara Raheem, Gretel Taylor, Dianne Reid, Linda  
Luke, Chloe Chignell, Kim Sargent-Wishart, Alice Heyward, Anna  
White, Rayen Bajette O'Keefe

### ARTIST AND SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

Emerging Choreographers Program

Dancehousing

Your House: Free Space Ballot

Who's Advocating For You?

Dance Massive x Co-Design

Public Classes & Workshops

Freedance

Independent workshops and classes



**LIVE**



# Keir Choreographic Award

Presented by Dancehouse, the Keir Foundation, Carriageworks and the Australia Council for the Arts, the Keir Choreographic Award (KCA) occupies a significant and dynamic place in the Australian dance landscape. Running biannually since 2014, it offers eight artists the time and space to create and present a fully funded new work, a remarkable context in which to engage with international perspectives and an opportunity to connect with new and ever expanding audiences for dance in Australia. The KCA today is an unmissable national mini-festival, assembling an inspiring and diverse community of artists, international guests, audiences, and local and national stakeholders.

1,208 Tickets

55 Activities

132 Paid artists

11,646 Attendees/viewers  
(Melbourne & Sydney)

## Program One

Jo Lloyd (VIC)  
*That's Her Name*

The Farm (QLD)  
*Hold me closer Tony Danza*

Riana Head-Toussaint (NSW)  
*Very Excellent Disabled Dancing*

Angela Goh (NSW)  
*Sky Blue Mythic*

## Program Two

Amrita Hepi (VIC)  
*Rinse*

Lewis Major (SA)  
*Lien*

Alison Currie and David Cross (SA/VIC)  
*Delimit*

Zachary Lopez (NSW)  
*Peril*

### Jury:

Claudia La Rocco (USA)  
Mette Edvardsen (NO)  
Serge Laurent (FR)  
Takao Kawaguchi (JP)

### Delegates

Riitta Aarniokoski (GER/AUS)  
Laurie Uprichard (USA)  
Nimmy Raphael (IN)  
Jim Handley (UK)  
Nicole Mion (CA)  
Bernard Baumgarten (LU)  
Matthew Lyons (USA)  
Marie-Andree Goujon (CA)  
Daniel Favier (FR)  
Brian Rogers (USA)  
Helly Minarti (ID)  
Claudia Morgana (ES)  
Michael Caldwell (CA)  
Pascale Joubert (CA)  
Karen Kitchen (USA)



## Keir Choreographic Award



Image credit: Gregory Lorenzutti for Dancehouse

### Jo Lloyd (VIC) *That's Her Name*

*That's Her Name* investigates the body as an inscriptive surface augmented through movement and materials. Lloyd used unfamiliar methodologies to uncover physical vocabularies and behaviours between the three performers, to display the unresolved body in performance, serving as a dialogue and reflective encounter for those viewing and being viewed. Using fictional and actual history as stimulus, physicalities were activated based on the real and imagined. What occurred had the potential to be a two-hour opera in 20 minutes, the preparation for a public speech, a crime scene, or all of these.

**Choreographer/Performer:** Jo Lloyd  
**Designer/Performer:** Andrew Treloar  
**Composer/Performer:** Duane Morrison



Image credit: Gregory Lorenzutti for Dancehouse

### The Farm (QLD) *Hold me closer Tony Danza*

Once we hear something, it can't be unheard and once we say something it can't be unsaid. *Hold me closer Tony Danza* was an investigation into how we form meaning and a provocation that perhaps our understanding of the world is intrinsically flawed. The light-hearted reference to a commonly misheard song lyric contains a deeper proposition about how we accumulate information and the damage we can do with our opinions and a lack of empathy or connectedness.

**Concept:** The Farm (Kate Harman, Michael Smith and Gavin Webber)  
**Performers:** Kate Harman and Michael Smith  
**Music:** Anna Whitaker  
**Design:** Vilma Mattila

## Keir Choreographic Award

**Riana Head-Toussaint (NSW)**  
*Very Excellent Disabled Dancing*

In *Very Excellent Disabled Dancing*, three visibly disabled dancers exposed the distinct, persistent differences in the way dance is consumed and understood when performed by people with disability. The dancers laid bare anatomical preoccupations, saccharine sympathy and uninformed hostility — confronting and defiantly reframing the dominant gaze to make way for genuine engagement with, understanding of, and appreciation for diversity in dance.

**Choreographer/performer:** Riana Head-Toussaint  
**Performers:** Georgia Cranko and Holly Craig  
**Videography:** Riana Head-Toussaint and Lux Eterna  
**Sound design:** Riana Head-Toussaint and Stephen Dobson  
**Outside Eye:** Imogen Yang



Image credit: Gregory Lorenzutti for Dancehouse

**Angela Goh (NSW)**  
*Sky Blue Mythic*

*Sky Blue Mythic* imagines dance as a non-human entity, existing on timescales longer than our cultural narratives, in spaces beyond the locality of the body, and forms unknowable to human-centric sensing. In a quest to move away from anthropocentrism, *Sky Blue Mythic* allows dance to alienate itself from human expression, in turn requiring the body to become an interface rather than a vehicle. By imagining a history of dance that is not humancentric, *Sky Blue Mythic* encounters possible worlds beyond our own reflection. This work confronts the notion that we do not exist in a vacuum but are staring into a void.

**Choreographer/Performer:** Angela Goh  
**Composer:** Corin Iletto



Image credit: Gregory Lorenzutti for Dancehouse

## Keir Choreographic Award

**Amrita Hepi (VIC)**  
*Rinse*

What is it about the beginning that remains intoxicating? The persistent lust for the initial thrill of a romance, scene, cannon, theory, relationship, meal, country — the opening lines. This work explores the romance of beginnings and what happens when the inertia takes over. *Rinse* questions whether being on the brink of extinction, or endings, has intensified the seduction of the past. Through recreating an entropic origin myth on stage, *Rinse* travels from end to end, positioning personal narratives in relation to dance, art, feminism, cannons, the void, desires, popular culture and colonial history.

**Choreographer and Performer:** Amrita Hepi  
**Dramaturg:** Mish Grigor  
**Costume Designer:** Aleisa Jalbert  
**Sound:** Daniel Jenatsch



Image credit: Gregory Lorenzutti for Dancehouse

**Lewis Major (SA)**  
*Lien*

With major fluctuations and disruptions presenting themselves across the world, *Major* observed an increased awareness of the competing identities that exist within himself as an artist and within his work. Unpacking the world that our ancestors have bequeathed to us, *Lien* interrogates the foundations of our current zeitgeist and asks at what price we enjoy the comforts we have inherited. The work explores the degree to which we are responsible for the deeds and the choices of those from whom we descend.

**Choreographer:** Lewis Major  
**Performers:** Sarah Wilson, Sophia Van Gent, Paulo Castro, Dane Yates  
**Dramaturg:** Jo Stone



Image credit: Gregory Lorenzutti for Dancehouse



## Keir Choreographic Award

**Alison Currie and David Cross (SA/VIC)**

*Delimit*

*Delimit* examines the relationship between menial, process-driven labour and dance. Playing with ideas of staging and set making, the work seeks to interrogate how the making of an art installation offers a frame in which to understand dance and its assorted modalities in different ways. *Delimit* slips between functional and abstract, exploring live action as an unstable liminal space between labour and performance.

Co-directors: David Cross & Alison Currie

Performer: Cazna Brass

Lighting Design: Goven Ruben

Costume Design & fabrication: Ellie Boekman

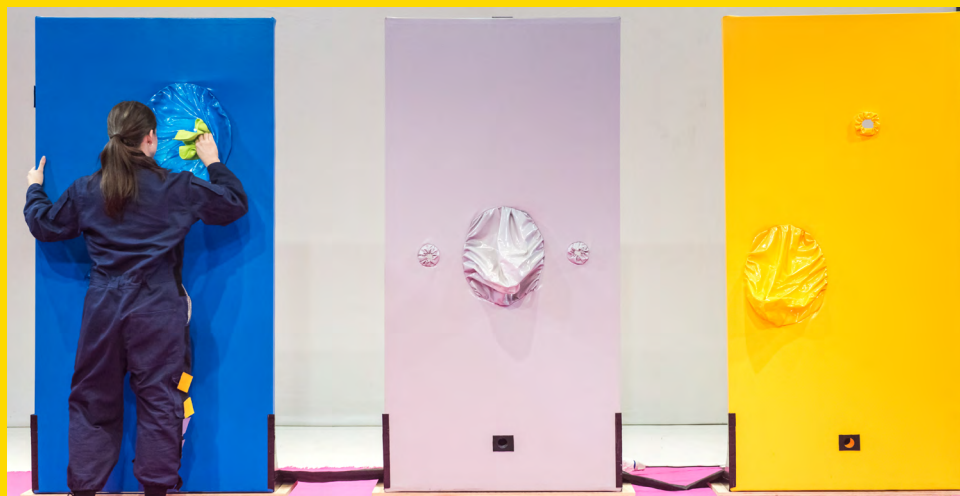


Image credit: Gregory Lorenzutti for Dancehouse

**Zachary Lopez (NSW)**

*Peril*

This work is an exorcism of undesired narratives imposed on the Asian body. Drawing from folklore, ritual and the concept of material culture, two bodies endure states of dissonance and turmoil, vibrating between fantasy and the fantasised. They attempt to interrogate histories, conjure spirits and escape the threat to and of their bodies, creating a hypnotising cleanse. In collaboration with Yilin Kong and sound designer James Brown, a new reality unfolds. *Peril* enables bodies to transcend objectification and pass into a unified identity.

Concept/Choreography: Zachary Lopez

Performers: Yilin Kong, Zachary Lopez

Sound Design: James Brown

Costume Maker: Jennifer Do



Image credit: Gregory Lorenzutti for Dancehouse

# Public Program



## Performance

**Prue Lang**  
*PROJECT F*

*PROJECT F* is a kinaesthetic engagement with feminism, felt via a particular focus on female figures from 12th century until now. It uses the parallel stories and music from historic and modern day trailblazing women – Hildegard von Bingen (b. 1102) and Princess Nokia (b. 1992) – as provocations to explore notions of feminist utopia, in choreographic terms.

**Concept and Direction:** Prue Lang  
**Choreography:** Prue Lang in collaboration with the dancers  
**Performers:** Jana Castillo, Amber McCartney, Lauren Langlois, Niharika Senapati

*Prue Lang was a 2018 KCA commissioned artist. This is the full-length version of the initial work.*



**Mette Edvardsen & Matteo Fargion**  
*Penelope Sleeps*

*Penelope Sleeps* is an indirect reference to the figure of Penelope, the wife of Odysseus, who waited for her husband for years while he travelled the world and waged war, and who, in the meantime, also kept a large number of suitors at bay. Like the tale of the small spider that Edvardsen recounts, Penelope was a weaver (etymologically, the Greek word *pēnē* refers to 'weft'). However, every night she would unravel the result of her work in order to start over again. The performance mimics working-without-an-outcome: *Penelope Sleeps* is about the notion of operating, of writing or performing — like the weaving of a text that is constantly beginning to fray.

*Mette Edvardsen was a 2020 KCA Jury Member.*

**Text:** Mette Edvardsen  
**Music:** Matteo Fargion  
**Performers:** Mette Edvardsen, Matteo Fargion and Angela Hicks

## Keir Choreographic Award Public Program

### Workshops

#### Matteo Fargion

##### *1 Note 2 Movements 3 Words*

This 2 day composition workshop focussed on what happens when ideas and techniques that come from music are translated into movement, and vice versa. Drawing from 30 years of experience of working as a composer and performer in the dance and theatre world, Matteo Fargion proposed exercises that used an extreme reduction of possibilities to stimulate the imagination. Questions about how to find material, how to keep something going, what makes a strong or a weak change and other compositional 'problems' were discussed. Participants also explored ways in which music and movement can co-exist on stage without falling into too familiar relationships. This workshop was for anyone interested in making performance work, and musicians were welcome, but not obliged, to bring in their instruments.

#### Mette Edvardsen

##### *Choreography As Writing*

Many of Mette Edvardsen's recent works have been developed using language as material, looking into the relationship between writing and speaking, between language and voice. Mette Edvardsen is working on the verge of the visible, considering choreography as writing. This workshop for professional choreographers explored some of her methodologies and scores.

Presented in partnership with Lucy Guerin Inc as part of the Dancehouse Keir Choreographic Award public program.

*Mette Edvardsen was a 2020 KCA Jury Member.*

#### Priya Srinivasan

##### *Rhythms of the Body*

In this workshop we ask: What happens when dance is not just dance but it is also embedded in music, text and politics? How can you learn from non western forms to learn methodologies to generate new choreography while being proactive in discovering your own solutions, archiving yourself and connections within your own body?

#### Claudia La Rocco

##### *Mortal Materials*

For writers and artists with a developed writing practice.

We talk about the things we do and make being ephemeral. As if we lasted. As if we had anything more than a little time and a little space ourselves in which to wrap around and through and under all of it. This was a writing/making/thinking/talking lab for artists interested in spending fifteen hours' worth of their non-renewable resources so as to explore collectively shaped questions and speculations. The Keir Choreographic Award was one of myriad starting points.

*Claudia La Rocco was a 2020 KCA Jury Member.*



Image credit: Courtesy of the artist.



## Keir Choreographic Award Public Program

### Installation

#### Mette Edvardsen

*Table of Contents & Time has fallen asleep in the afternoon sunshine* book launch

A collection of texts, books, notes and other ephemera placed on a table for further reading. Many of Mette Edvardsen's recent works have been developed using language as material, looking into the relationship between writing and speaking, between language and voice. Mette Edvardsen is working on the verge of the visible, considering choreography as writing. Publishing — in the form of traces, texts, drawings, books — has developed into an important part of her artistic practice.

#### *Time has fallen asleep in the afternoon sunshine*

A launch for the project *Time has fallen asleep in the afternoon sunshine*, which started as a group of people who dedicated themselves to memorising a book of their choice. Together they formed a library collection consisting of living books. The publication brings together eighteen text contributions from artists and theoreticians with a varying degree of proximity to the project.



Image credit: Gregory Lorencetti for Dancehouse

#### Claudia La Rocco

*The Retrospective Room*

A reading, writing, moving, drawing, sitting room that encouraged a porousness between the inward-looking world of the solitary maker and the social world of improvisation and chance encounters. A room stocked with good wine and invited guests, natural light, comfortable seats, previous works and present influences. A room in which stillness and quiet are always suitable answers. A work that reveals itself in the doing and being, that builds itself out of time spent and ideas exchanged.

Local and international artists — poets, musicians, writers, choreographers — will enter in resonance with Claudia's scores and materials. Come and go as you please. Wait for things to unfold

With: Amaara Raheem, Leisa Shelton, Brian Rogers, Dylan van der Schyff and others.



Image credit: Gregory Lorencetti for Dancehouse



# ASIA TOPA

Dancehouse's Japan Focus for Asia TOPA included Japanese National Treasure, Akira Kasai, heralded as the 'Nijinsky of butoh,' with his critically acclaimed work, *Pollen Revolution*; in addition to phenomenal enfant terrible Takao Kawaguchi and exceptional emerging choreographer Ruri Mito. The Japan Focus delved deeper into how Japanese traditional forms find expression within contemporary dance and, by implication, within contemporary society. This program opened up multiple invitations: to perceive time beyond the linearity of Western thought; to conceive of tradition as a continuum of contemporaneity; and to understand specific dance forms and lineages as trans-national and trans-historical.

**Takao Kawaguchi**  
*Good Luck*

**Akira Kasai**  
*Pollen Revolution*

**Ruri Mito**  
*Matou*

**Eko Supriyanto**  
*Ibu-Ibu Belu*  
\*\*CANCELLED

4 Shows

14 Sessions/Episodes/Shows

34 Paid artists

683 Attendees



*Dancehouse's Japan Focus was supported by Sidney Myer Fund and Arts Centre Melbourne.*

*Dancehouse would like to warmly thank THE SAISON FOUNDATION JAPAN and in particular Atsuko Hisano and Taro Inamura, for the most generous support during Angela Conquet's fellowship in Japan in 2019 which inspired this ASIATOPA program. Most warm thanks are also extended to our Japanese colleagues Mr. Shinji Ono and Mrs Ritsuko Mizuno for their insightful curatorial advice and to Yumi Umimare for her committed assistance with production and logistics.*

## Asia TOPA



*Image credit: Bozzo*

**Ruri Mito**  
*Matou*

In Japanese, the word 'matou' encompasses several direct meanings: to wear, put on, tangle and roll up. But used figuratively, 'matou' also describes the moment your life flashes before your eyes in a near-death experience. It sounds like 'willing to wait' in Japanese, while 'tsuki-matou' means 'to haunt'. In Ruri Mito's solo performance of the same name, she explores the body as a mysterious, haunted vessel, unable to be understood or seen in its entirety as cells continuously die and regenerate. By placing her own body under the microscope, Mito explores the curious invisible fabrics of the human body.

**Choreographer & Performer:** Ruri Mito  
**Music:** Yuta Kumachi  
**Lighting:** Akiyo Kushida  
**Costume:** Tomoko Inamura



*Image credit: Bozzo*

**Takao Kawaguchi**  
*Good Luck*

Slow, continuous movement unfolds as though it were a filmic scene played at one tenth of its original speed, but beneath this dance emerges a curious, compelling narrative. Accompanying the stretched out bodies, stories and emotions is a highly immersive and sensorial soundscape by David Vranken, featuring Tokyo-centric field-recordings ranging from a shrine, subway stations, and game centres to streets, forests and a beach. Part of the Dancehouse Japan Focus alongside Matou and Pollen Revolution.

*Takao Kawaguchi is a 2020 Keir Choreographic Award jury member*

**Choreographer & Performer:** Takao Kawaguchi  
**Sound Design:** David Vranken



## Asia TOPA



Image credit: Daido Hiroyasu

**Akira Kasai**  
*Pollen Revolution*

Akira Kasai's own son performs this riveting solo, a surreal and startling journey through time, cultures, and states of being. Kasai's striking onstage personae morph from kabuki performer to street dancer to solitary actor while his movement shifts between classical Japanese, hip-hop and the soulful otherworlds of butoh.

Beginning with what may seem like traditional Japanese dance, this daring solo performance sees costumes fly away, madness unleashed and representations of gender probed. Pollen Revolution is a masterly work from a choreographer who is still reshaping and reinventing butoh itself.

**Choreographer:** Akira Kasai  
**Dancer:** Mitsutake Kasai  
**Lighting designer:** Michino Oono  
**Producer:** Hisako Kasai



Image credit: Michael Tae

**Eko Supriyanto**  
*Ibu-Ibu Belu*

*Originally planned to take place between 27–28 March, this event was cancelled due to COVID-19 and all tickets reimbursed.*

Ibu-Ibu Belu is the culmination of two years of research into the Likurai, a dance tradition which forms a vital thread in the social fabric across the island. Through his exploration of movement, rhythm and textile traditions Supriyanto manifests the ways in which dance carries the kinship of people who are now divided by politically imposed borders separating NTT and Timor L'Este.

**Choreographer:** Eko Supriyanto  
**Performers:** Evie Anika Novita Nalle, Yunita Dahu, Angela Levenia Leki, Feliciano Soares, Marlince ratu Dabo

## Asia TOPA — Public Program



### Workshop

**Takao Kawaguchi**

*Touch of the Other* — workshop with public outcome at Temperance Hall

During the 1960s, controversial sociologist Laud Humphreys studied in meticulous detail the codes and choreographies of male-male sex in public restrooms. *Touch of the Other* explores the aesthetics, erotics, and politics of these places, known to their users as “tearooms.” Leading Tokyo-based choreographer and dancer Takao Kawaguchi explores the legacies of public sex mapped out by Humphreys’ own scripts (now collected at the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives in Los Angeles), while connecting these histories to contemporary practices, as well as to the policing and pleasuring of bodies today and queer sociality.



### Conversations at MPavilion

Co-Curated by Priya Srinivasan & Philipa Rothfield

#### On Contemporaneity

Takao Kawaguchi, Linda Sastradipradja and Amaara Raheem in conversation with Dr. Philipa Rothfield and Dr. Priya Srinivasan

There is a sense in which every artwork is contemporary, emerging according to its moment or time of creation. Yet, the concept of the contemporary in dance is more loaded than that. It can be argued that the very concept of time – which produces a notion of the contemporary – is a colonial concept, formed in the west and imposed on non-western cultures which embody very different conceptions of time. In the case of dance, this manifests in terms of a hierarchy, which privileges so-called contemporary forms (modern, postmodern, experimental) over other art forms (traditional or premodern), which are thought to belong to the past. How might we rethink narrow western centric understandings of art by opening up to more than one sense of time and temporality in art?

#### The Dynamics of Taste

Maria Randall and Yumi Umiumare in conversation with Dr. Priya Srinivasan and Dr. Philipa Rothfield

This conversation interrogates the politics of taste; in particular the politics of arts ecologies that define questions of aesthetic value and the systems that support them. In particular, we ask what it means to be a practitioner of “traditional” artforms in a landscape that privileges “the contemporary” and how taste can be thought to be hegemonic. Which artforms are seen, funded, showcased, valued and supported is ever-changing and exposes the trends of the time, but more so, the policy and power systems in place. This conversation asks whether the “traditional” can be unpacked to reveal its often colonial, postcolonial, hybrid and contemporary origins in order to rethink the very notion of taste.



## Emerging Choreographers Program

### Submerge



Held over one weekend at Dancehouse, *Submerge* presented 11 works from 14 cutting-edge, emerging dance artists.

Made up of performances, research sharings, workshops, and installations, these artists with diverse practices stood on the precipice of “what comes next”. Their distinct works ranged from the conventional to the unconventional: from looping choreographies, to the physical re-birthing from a pile of compost.

*Submerge* saw artists reawakening their practice in a new context. Connected by the artists’ experience of “newness” as they continued to create in a precarious and distanced world, the program of performances presented pieces in varying stages of completeness. It connected the artists and entangled their practices. Within this context, no singular project existed in isolation, but rather alongside one another, as part of a relational whole.

*Submerge* invited audiences to go under(/sub), to immerse(/merge) themselves as these dance artists re-emerged within the “now”.

*Submerge* was the public outcome of Dancehouse’s Emerging Choreographers Program (ECP) — a year-long capacity building and professional development initiative. The opportunity gives 20 young choreographers from diverse cultural and training backgrounds support to develop the skills required for ongoing self-sustaining artistic enquiry, including the concrete tools needed for creating and administering their work.

#### Submerge #1

*course of action* — Emma Riches

*a piece* — Alexandra Collins and Alexandra Clouston

*We are...* — Jennifer Ma and David Leupolu

#### Submerge #2

*Condition* — Rhys Ryan

*Dancing Affordances* — Caitlin Dear

*Mirror “Me”* — Aimee Schollum

#### Submerge #3

*Pigeon Intimacies* — Jessie Gall & Lydia Connolly-Hiatt

#### Submerge #4

*a common thread* — Isabelle Beauverd

*Soft Futures* — Hillary Goldsmith

*Fresh to Familiar* — Siobhan McKenna

#### Submerge #5

*Untitled* — Chris Chua

#### Holding Balance Workshop

Abigail Benham-Bannon, Gabriela Green Olea & Marcela Olea

*Holding Balance* was a collaborative workshop series presented as a part of *Submerge* that took place via Zoom. Each workshop looked at the spaces and places we find ourselves in today, how we connect, how we live in crisis, the dreaming and the work, and what’s on our horizon.



Image credit: “We are...” by Jennifer Ma and David Leupolu. Photo by Andy Kuramoto.



**ONLINE**



**James Batchelor**  
*Alien Intimacy*

*Alien Intimacy* by James Batchelor and Zander Porter speculates on an interpersonally constructed “alien sensibility” where the visible and the invisible, or the physically embodied and the virtually disembodied, intertwine. The duo’s speculative choreography proposes new landscapes comprised of console gaming scenography and low-res NASA images. “Touch” is recalled as a microscopic gravitational force and a magnetic repulsion over the illusory notion of a direct contact. In *Alien Intimacy*, “contact” is macroscopically proportioned, inviting new senses of (non)touch-touch, the “almost-touchable,” or a “space-in-between.” *Alien Intimacy* merges “audience” with “smartphone” and “stage” with “socially-distanced public” to reconceptualise contact-points between viewers across neighbourhoods, oceans, and browsers.

*The screening was followed by a Q&A between Djibril Sall, Zander Porter and James Batchelor*



**Claire Marshall**  
*Shift*

With an 8-minute duet repeated four times in different locations, choreographer Claire Marshall investigates how the sense of ‘story’ shifts with unstable notions of location, cinematic form and editing. The duet follows a discordant couple stuck in a rut, looping their manipulative behaviours as four stories shift to become one. The editing of *Shift* was not pre-planned before filming, making its production unconventional by traditional filmmaking standards. Rather, through experimental creative processes, the sense of story unfolded through the enactment of the choreography, grounded and shaped by the various shooting locations.

*Shift* was created as one of the creative outputs of Claire Marshall’s Master of Fine Arts (Dance) at the Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne in 2019. *Shift* was selected for the 48th Dance on Camera Festival NYC in July 2020 and was awarded Best of Fest in the 20–40 minute short film category.

*The screening was followed by a Q&A between Claire Marshall and Sandra Parker*





## Melbourne Fringe Festival

•Online

### Houseparty: All Styles Tournament

Houseparty is the all-out street dance party you can crash from the privacy of your home. Melbourne's top street dance artists go toe to toe in an all-styles tournament, judged by street dance icons including Princess Madoki and your vote counts too. Join us live for these DJ-driven battles as you vote with our judges on who should take the Houseparty crown. See you on your (kitchen) dance-floor.

**Judges:** Princess Madoki and Patric Kuo

**16 all-stylers:** Joshkun Arslan, Maggie 'Madfox' Chen, Kiki Devine, Lauren Drago, Christian 'Nonoy' Francisco, Miriam Garrido, Peter Isaac Koh, Alec 'Steelo' Pernes, Marnie Newton, Maggie 'Maggz' Zhu, Naddie, Will Reyno, Kambodia, Phillip Luong, Carolyn Ooi and Aleena Panagopoulos

**Emcee:** Jonathan Homsey

**DJ:** DJ Naru



# HOUSE PARTY

DANCEHOUSE DA

20 Participants

773 Plays

Battle Winner: Maggie 'Madfox' Chen



**Now Pieces — For Now**

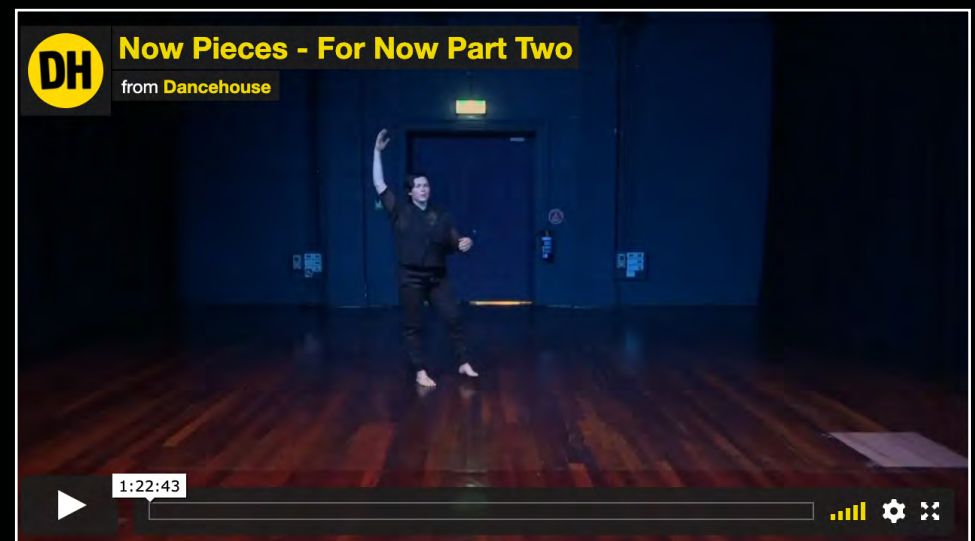
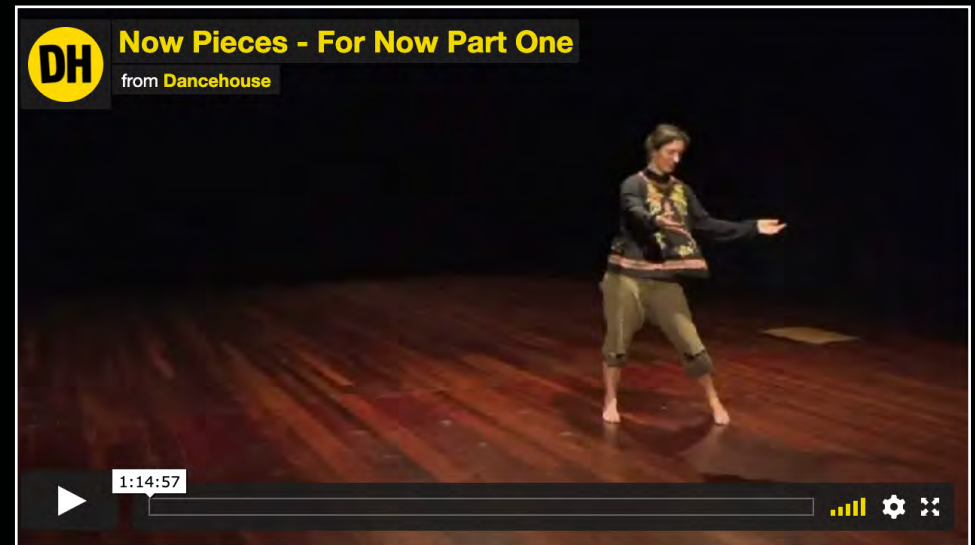
*Now Pieces – For Now* streams eight improvisers experimenting and connecting despite the conditions! It names the here and now: responds to the immediate and the personal and meets the more social, political, and atmospheric moment we share. This platform embraces performance, exchange, dialogue and movement: it builds and rebuilds community one body at a time. Curated by Kevin Jeynes and Paea Leach, *Now Pieces – For Now* responds to the world in which we find ourselves and remind us of the necessity and vitality of moving.

**Organisers:** Kevin Jeynes and Paea Leach

**Improvisers:** Bronwen Kamasz, Tony Yap, Peter Trotman, Lynne Santos, Deanne Butterworth, Phoebe Robinson and Alex Harrison

9 Paid artists

389 Views

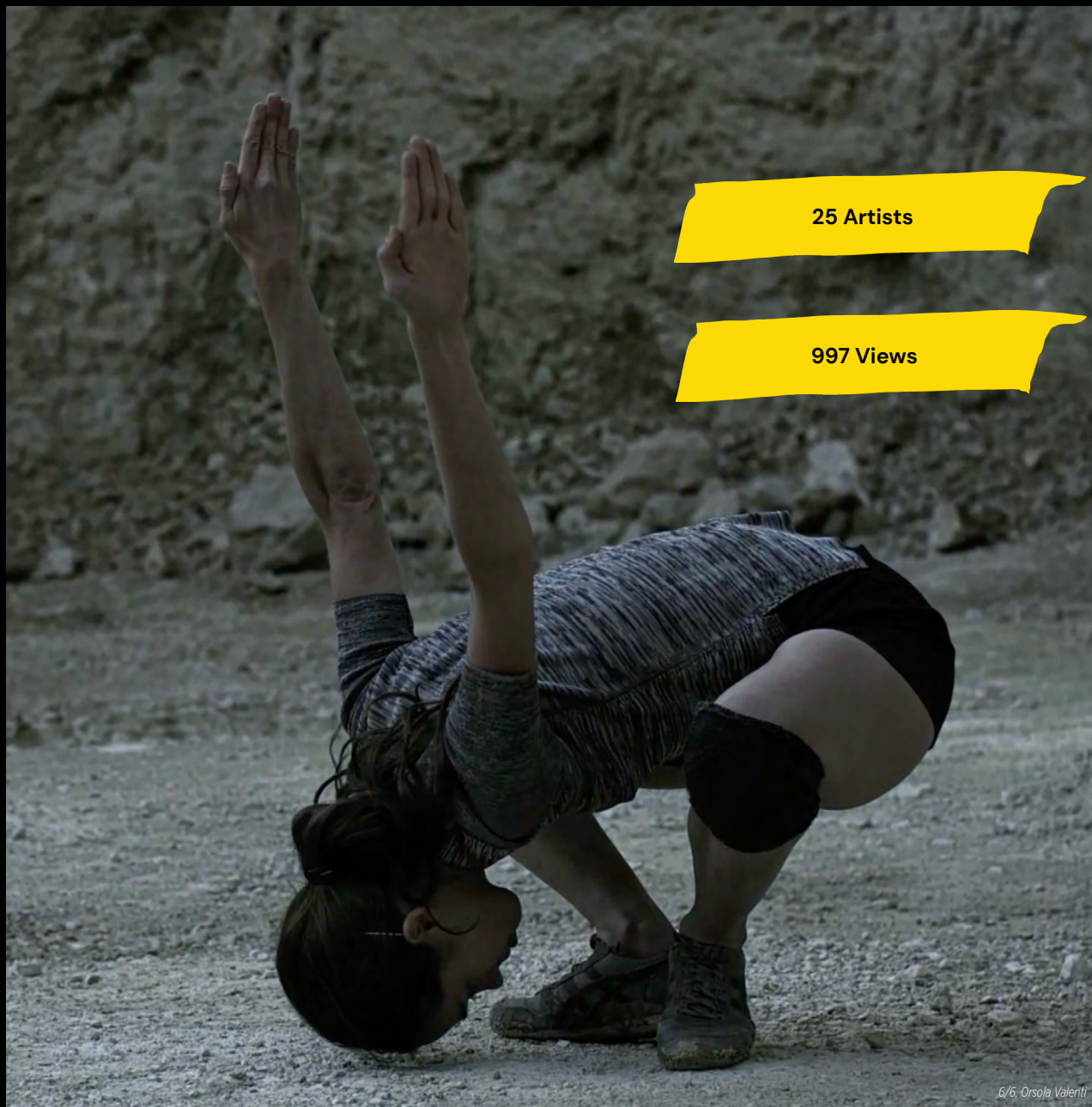


# DANCE (LENS)

The Dance (Lens) series highlighted outstanding Dance Films from Australia and internationally with artist Q&As.

Like dance, film is conveyed in time. A time which can be manipulated, accelerated, stopped and rewound at will. On-screen narratives are produced by the rhythmic combination of takes, jump-cuts, wipes, fade-ins and fade-outs — where the camera itself becomes a choreographic tool that extends beyond the physical boundaries of the body and the stage.

Dance (Lens) explored the embodiment and disembodiment of dance, speculative stages, screening history and the communal dance of watching from the other side of the screen.



25 Artists

997 Views

6/6 Orsola Valenti



## Dance (Lens)

## •Online

**Botchan Retreat, Running Man Australia**

+ Q&A between Nathan Smith & Yumi Umiuware

Yohju is working hard to climb the corporate ladder. Whilst chasing a promotion, his employers send him to Matusyama to enjoy a weekend at the Botchan Retreat. Very soon he realises this trip isn't what it seems and now his career and his life are on the line.

**6/6, Orsola Valenti**

+ Q&A between Orsola Valenti & Audrey Schmidt

6/6 is a filmic response to Cindy Van Acker's work. This cinematographic rewriting of six solos created for the stage by Cindy Van Acker, entails revisiting and reworking each choreography, going to the heart of each piece to extract its very essence in a form metamorphosed by the approach to film.

**Poetics of Home, Gretel Taylor**

+ Q&A between Gretel Taylor & Dianne Reid

*Poetics of Home* is a series of five screendance works exploring the artists' relationships with objects, architecture and atmospheres within domestic spaces. This offered locked-down Melbourne artists a rich catalyst for danced departures.

**Resonance (1991), Stephen Cummins**

presented as a part of *Game Changers*, curated by Tracie Mitchell

+ Q&A between Tracie Mitchell & Mathew Bergan

This film deals with homophobia and misogyny. Using gesture, dance and monologue, it begins with a gay bashing in the back streets of Sydney and explores the resonance of this violence in the lives of the people involved and their relationships.

**SHIFT, Claire Marshall**

presented as a part of *Melbourne Fringe Festival*

+ Q&A between Claire Marshall & Sandra Parker

An 8-minute duet repeated four times in different locations, choreographer Claire Marshall follows a discordant couple stuck in a rut, looping their manipulative behaviours as four stories shift to become one.

**Alien Intimacy, James Batchelor and Zander Porter**

presented as a part of *Melbourne Fringe Festival*

+ Q&A between Djibril Sall, Zander Porter and James Batchelor

*Alien Intimacy* speculates on an interpersonally constructed "alien sensibility" where the visible and the invisible, or the physically embodied and the virtually disembodied, intertwine. *Alien Intimacy* merges "audience" with "smartphone" and "stage" with "socially-distanced public" to reconceptualise contact-points between viewers across neighbourhoods, oceans, and browsers.

**I Dream Augustine, Cordelia Beresford**

presented as a part of *Game Changers*, curated by Tracie Mitchell

+ Q&A between Tracie Mitchell & Narelle Benjamin

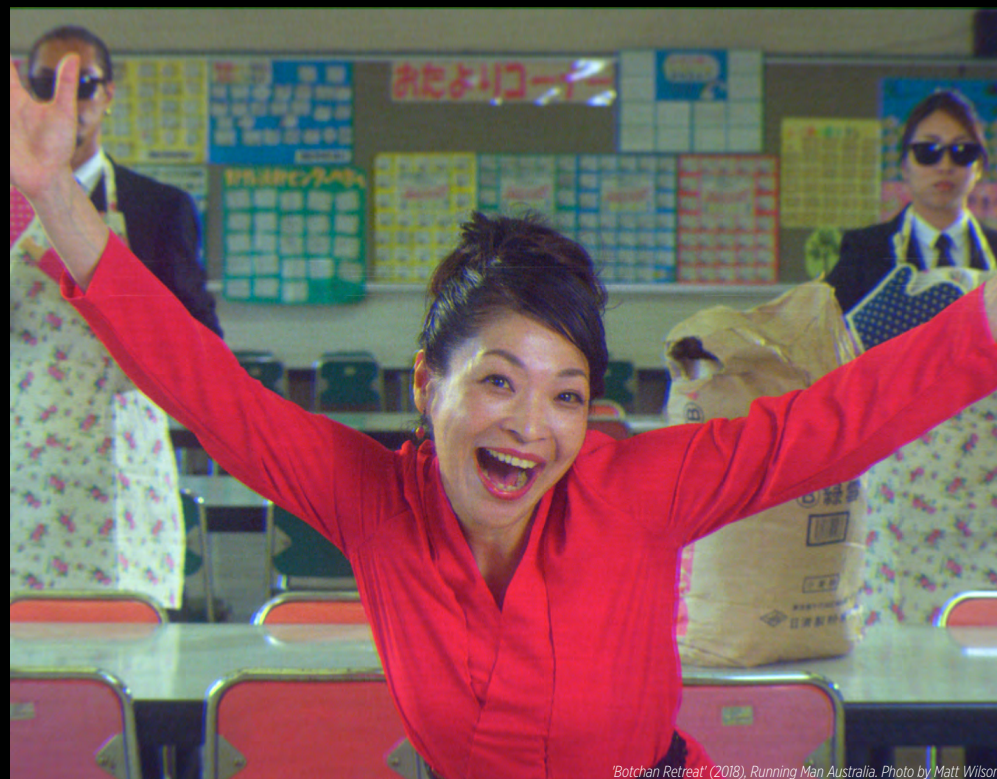
*I Dream of Augustine* is informed by the true story of Augustine — a 15 year old who was a patient of neurologist Dr Jean-Martin Charcot. As his patient, Augustine was hypnotised and her symptoms of hysteria were publicly exhibited whilst she was held at the Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris.

**Necessary Games, Sophie Hyde**

presented as a part of *Game Changers*, curated by Tracie Mitchell

+ Q&A between Tracie Mitchell & Sophie Hyde

*Necessary Games* explores human intimacy, connection and the games we play. Using idiosyncratic movement and compelling interactions, this award-winning triptych of dance films is a unique collaboration between Restless Dance Theatre and Closer Productions.



'Botchan Retreat' (2018), *Running Man Australia*. Photo by Matt Wilson.

## 12.1: Interior Lives Scores for Confined Times (A Collection)

So much has changed, is changing, in so short a time! The forward march of economic and market forces ground to a halt. Social interaction became reconfigured, subject to state regulation, surveillance and intervention. We found ways to live and love within and according to this changing landscape. Wherever we found ourselves, we were reminded of the vulnerability of our bodies, our attention drawn to the precarity of life. This issue, rather than being thematic, unfolded according to a more flexible format, taking shape over several incarnations. Issue #12 was staged across several 'volumes', articulated over time and drawn together under the title, WHAT NOW?

**Featuring:** Jacob Boehme, Joel Bray, Serena Chalker, Ryuichi Fujimura, Martin Hansen, Becky Hilton, Jamie Lewis, Gregory Lorenzutti, Anja Mujic, Wendy Morrow, Melinda Smith, Tim Snowdon, Bella Waru

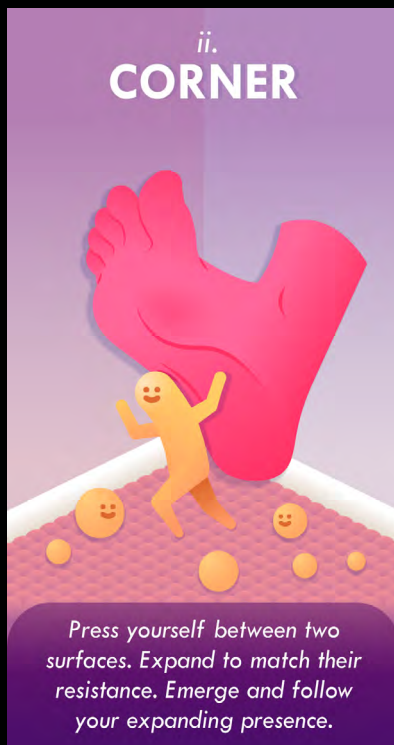


Image Credit: Bodily Visions by Tim Snowdon



Image Credit: Choreography For Seeds & Soil by Gregory Lorenzutti

## 12.2: New Topographies of the Body (A Series)

Volume #1 of our Covid issue entitled, *Interior Lives*, asked contributors to write a score, so as to reach out from their confined spaces and make bodily contact. As we began to receive our contributions, it became apparent to us that connecting is also a way of bringing about change regarding how we think about and feel through our bodies. It is as if the landscape changed or, to use Lena Hammergren's term, as if the bodyscape shifted. Volume #2 took up this theme of corporeal change by posing its contributions as a series of topographic interventions, which reshape the body and its corporeal milieu.

**Featuring:** Devika Bilimoria, Amaara Raheem, Gretel Taylor, Dianne Reid, Linda Luke, Chloe Chignell, Kim Sargent-Wishart, Alice Heyward, Anna White, Rayen Bajette O'Keefe



3,968 Views

27 Artists

Image Credit: Porous and Present Bodies: Site-responsive performance in an era of environmental crisis by Gretel Taylor. Photo by Laki Sideris.



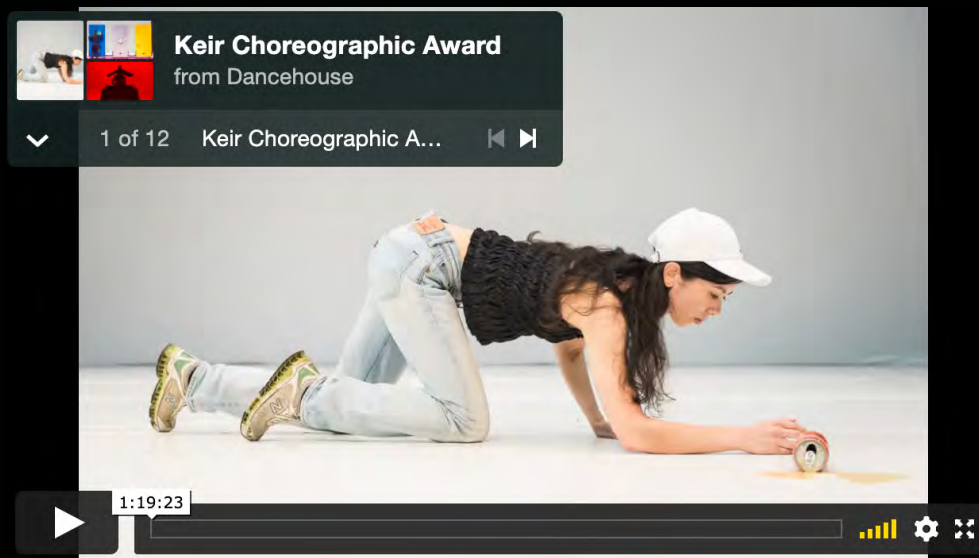
## Online Resources

•Online

## Watch

## Keir Choreographic Award

The Keir Choreographic Award (KCA) is an unmissable biannual national mini-festival, assembling an inspiring and diverse community of artists. During Victorian lockdown, Dancehouse made all works presented at the Keir Choreographic Award (KCA) 2016–2020 available to view via Vimeo.



## Move

## Sister Sessions for Victorian Youth Week

Marnie Newton, Lauren Drago, Jenn Ma & Arisa Herbert

Sister Sessions, in collaboration with Dancehouse as part of Victorian Youth Week brought street dance classes directly to your living room. From Litefeet, to Waacking and Hip Hop, four female dancers shared the foundations of different movement cultures. Sister Sessions was a virtual offering to boost exploration, encouraging you to get active and embody the music from the inside out.

## Follow Me

Isabelle Beauverd

Follow Me offered adults of all ages a new access point to the choreographic process. Part dance class, part movement essay the series began in 2020 with Isabelle Beauverd for a 35 minute dance class. She shared and taught excerpts of her choreography and concepts from her repertory that anyone could learn in their home, within a small space.



## Online Resources

## •Online

### Listen

#### What is in-between (KCA)

*(In)visible Futures*

Norah Zuniga-Shaw, Jen Rae, Dr Chris Ryan moderated by Angharad Wynne-Jones

*(In)visible Matter(s)*

Hellen Sky, Catherine Clover, Rhiannon Newton moderated by Amaara Raheem

*(In)visible Forces*

Helly Minarti, Barb Bolt, David Sequeira moderated by Collette Brennan

*(In)visible Scores*

Mette Edvarsten, Claudia La Rocco, Lucinda Strahn moderated by Sandra Parker

*(In)visible Times*

Linda Sastradipradja, Nareeporn Vachananda, Martin Hansen moderated by Carol Brown

#### Reload: Manifestos for Tomorrow

Claudia La Rocco & Leisa Shelton

Takao Kawaguchi & Phillip Adams

Mette Edvardsen & Lucy Guerin

#### Retune Talks

Anitra Nelson & Terry Leahy

#### Attunements

Deborah Hay with Philipa Rothfield & Angela Conquet

### Podcasts

SERIES 1—5

[LISTEN](#)

Conversations and lectures by inspiring artists, theorists, critics and agitators at Dancehouse.

What is in-between?

56:03

44

(In)visible Futures: Norah Zuniga-Shaw, J...

(In)visible Matter(s): Hellen Sky, Catherine Clover, Rhiannon Newton & Amaara Raheem

(In)visible Forces: Helly Minarti, Barb Bolt, David Sequeira & Collette Brennan

(In)visible Scores: Mette Edvardsen, Claudia La Rocco, Lucinda Strahn & Sandra Parker

(In)visible Times: Linda Sastradipradja, Nareeporn Vachananda, Martin Hansen & Carol Brown





# ARTIST AND SECTOR DEVELOPMENT





## Emerging Choreographers Program

Dancehouse's Emerging Choreographers Program (ECP) is a year-long capacity building and professional development initiative. The opportunity gives 20 young choreographers from diverse cultural and training backgrounds support to develop the skills required for ongoing self-sustaining artistic enquiry, including the concrete tools needed for creating and administering their work. Additionally, the program encourages a dynamic and critically reflective environment by nurturing both the practice and the thinking of the practice in resonance with contemporary society.

This program is funded by the Packer Family and Crown Resorts Foundations. The 2020 program was proudly supported by Clifton Hill/North Fitzroy Community Bank Branch – Bendigo Bank and the Robert Salzer Foundation.

### ECP#1 2019/20

Although interrupted and then extended because of COVID, Dancehouse's first Emerging Choreographers Program gave 20 choreographers space and time at Dancehouse to experiment, reflect and develop their own artistic practices. The artists were supported through in person and online workshops, masterclasses, seminars, sharings and discussions with local, national and international established choreographic artists. Although the program does not focus on specific outcomes, the group decided to publicly present a mini festival of work-in-progress showings in December 2020: *Submerge*.

### Artists

Abi Benham-Bannon, Aimee Schollum, Alexandra Collins, Angela Valdez, Caitlin Dear, Chris Chua, Emma Riches, Gabriela Green, Hillary Goldsmith, Isabella Whawhai Waru, Isabelle Beauverd, Jennifer Ma, Jess Gall, Kayla Douglas, Luigi Vescio, Lydia Connolly-Hiatt, Mark Brown II, Rachael Wisby, Rhys Ryan and Siobhan McKenna

### Facilitators

Andrew Morrish, Philipa Rothfield and Lucy Guerin, Jill Orr, Priya Srivinasan, Rosalind Crisp, Kimberly Bartosik, Takao Kawaguchi, Matteo Fargion, Leisa Shelton, Auspicious Arts, Kara Ward, Dan Koop, Stephanie Lake, Freya Waterson, Daniel Kok, Ahilan Ratnamohan, József Trefeli, Victoria Hunt, Vicki Van Hout, Yumi Umiumare, Jacob Boehme, Angela Conquet, Jonathan Homsey, Audrey Schmidt, Beth Cross and Ashley Dyer.



Image credit: Chris Chua, work in progress showing for untitled video game (*Submerge* #5)



Dancehousing gives self-organising dance communities a consistent space to safely meet, experiment, perfect their craft and present new work. It is a weekly hub for distinct communities to practice in parallel, it is a regular performance platform, it is a supportive frame for self-organisation. With the possibility of expanding over time, the program supports individuals, community leaders and groups of artists practising in Street Dance Cultures, Contact Improvisation and Performance Improvisation.

Dancehousing community groups were approached in July 2020 but did not begin their residency until 2021 due to COVID restrictions.

### Participating Groups:

**9DIMES** is A Naarm (Melbourne) based dance company that brings together dance and music artists from various cultural and professional backgrounds, with a strong focus on street culture. Their work involves bridging divisions in performance/ theatre while integrating street-base art into larger multimedia experiences. Since the company's inception, it has been 9DIMES' vision to help provide opportunities for multicultural subaltern communities to participate and refine their professional practices in the arts.

**Burn City Waack** is community based in Melbourne dedicated to the art form Waacking. Waacking is a culture that began in the underground LGBT clubs of Los Angeles and later spread out into the world. It's a safe space for all individuals who want to learn/share in the culture of the dance in a respectful environment for the past six years connecting locals with international leaders in the form.

The noble **House of Deviné** (HOD), a queer collective and family of artists, is known for creating safe spaces for QTBIPOC to thrive in, often through mentoring, training, performing and hosting inclusive events. The ballroom house consists 11 POC queer and trans individuals, together creating inclusive spaces and facilitating pathways for the LGBTQIA+ community. Currently HOD continues to create Balls focusing on the intersections of the New York Ballroom culture with the queer social culture of so called Australia, including their Housewarming Ball in 2019, funded by City of Melbourne's Signal.

In 2017 **Jam on Toast** (JOT) was hot out the toaster, lathered in jam and served in Melbourne's dance community by Oliver and David. It acts as an open styles dance jam that occurs every Wednesday in Melbourne's CBD and now Monday's at Dancehouse – catering for all levels, styles, ages through the lens of empowerment and celebrating uniqueness.

**The Melbourne Jamstas** are a collective of experienced Contact Improvisation (CI) practitioners, committed to keeping the richness of the CI form alive in Melbourne. For more than a decade, The Jamstas have caretaken and nourished the Melbourne CI Jam – which itself has been running on a consistent weekly basis for over 25

years; the longest running CI Jam in Australia, held for most of it's life at Cecil Street Studio. Being involved in the Dancehousing program, offers The Jamstas time and space to deepen and nourish their own CI practices, in order to further support both the CI community of Melbourne and the broader CI community in Australia, as well as be part of the exciting dance ecosystem at Dancehouse.

**On the Table** expands beyond traditional in-process showing formats, hosting artists or collectives will share their work, inviting others to partake in their explorations; putting something 'on the table' for everyone attending to examine together. Artists will be working within or adjacent to the realms of dance, movement, choreography and bodily practice. Sessions will take a broad range of formats from workshops and progress showings to open explorations. Facilitating artists may bring in choreographic material, a practice, an idea, a framework, a question, a score, a reading or any manner of provocation.

**Now Pieces**, 2021 builds on the lineage of improvisation in contemporary dance practice in Melbourne, and opens up to forms and methods of improvisation in other creative fields and cultural practices. Improvisation as a performance technique is the disciplined exploration of embodied practice that leads to crafted, spontaneous, and artful communication made on-the-go. This monthly platform invites a range of intergenerational practitioners who—in one way or another—prioritise movement to incorporate body, sound, vocalisation, memory, image and energy, responding to each passing moment in relation to the space where they are dancing in relation to the audience.

**Sister Sessions** is a Melbourne-based collective with the vision of creating a strong, evergreen female dance community in Australia through innovative events and projects designed to connect, challenge and empower female dancers in their individual and collective journeys. Since launching in March 2018, their Ladies Only battles have successfully recruited first timers into the battling practice, as well as increased the participation and visibility of female dancers across the broader dance scene. Seeing more than 150 female dancers across 6 events (and counting), Sister Sessions is the most prominent and consistent female dance event in Melbourne.



## Your House

Coming out of the COVID lockdowns in Melbourne, Dancehouse prioritised access to safe studio space for artists.

The Your House program was a ballot for free studio space with artists indicating their preference for days and times. Dancehouse staff drew names out of a hat until all space was allocated or all entries offered a session.

In total, the program has facilitated 199 sessions for 172 artists equivalent to 926 hours of free and COVIDSafe studio time.

All artists who entered the ballot were provided with at least one session of free studio access.

From 26 November 2020–28 February 2021, each artist could have up to 5 others in the studio for their session.

**926 Hours of space**

**199 Sessions**

**172 Entries**

Ballot	Dates	Entries	Sessions	Eqv. Hours
<b>Ballot #1</b> One person per studio	1–21 Jun 2020	90	84	198 hours
<b>Ballot #2</b> One person per studio	4–25 Nov 2020	34	33	228 hours
<b>Ballot #3</b> Up to five per studio	26 Nov–20 Dec 2020	33	32	252 hours
<b>Ballot #4</b> Up to five per studio	4–17 Jan 2021	16	41	200 hours
<b>Ballot #5</b> Up to five per studio	4–28 Feb 2021	14	9	48 hours







### Who's Advocating for You?

Hosted by Dancehouse, this virtual panel was an opportunity to hear from organisations advocating for independent artists and the small to medium contemporary dance sector in Australia.

This 60 minute virtual panel was FREE to attend and live captioning was provided.

The panel was facilitated by Shelley Lasica, independent dance artist and Dancehouse Chair.

Speakers included:

- Australian Major Performing Arts Group (AMPAG) — Bethwyn Serow
- Ausdance National — Julie Dyson and Paul Summers
- Ausdance VIC/NSW — Michelle Silby
- BlakDance — Merindah Donnelly
- Live Performance Australia (LPA) — Evelyn Richardson
- Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA) — Andrew Crowley and Sam Gaskin
- Theatre Network Australia (TNA) — Nicole Beyer



### Dance Massive Sector Update

Josh Wright, CEO/ Artistic Director Dancehouse and Emily Sexton, Artistic Director Arts House hosted an online presentation: Dance Massive Sector Update – March 2021 on Thursday 10 September 2020, 3–4pm.

The Sector Update gave an insight into the reasons and circumstances which led to Dance Massive not proceeding as hoped in March 2021.

Participation was free and live captioning and AUSLAN were provided. Afterwards, a recording and transcript of the presentation was made available on both Dancehouse and Arts House websites.

**195 Participants**

## Co-Design a dance festival for Melbourne

### Co-Design: Imagine a festival for dance in Melbourne

373 Participants

Following the news that Dance Massive could not continue in its current form, Dancehouse and Arts House, with support from Creative Victoria, appointed four independent arts practitioners — Mariaa Randall, Luke George, Priya Srinivasan and Tam Nguyen — to begin and lead a community co-design, to explore the potential of a dedicated contemporary dance festival for Melbourne

The Co-Design team led sector consultation with **373 artists and producers** between **September and November 2020**.

The Co-Design team listened in three ways:

1. **An online survey**
2. **Focus groups** — Intentionally targeted to bring together diverse voices drawn from our lived experience. Nine conversations were held including four intersectional conversations and five conversations for participants who might share commonality in their practice or cultural background. Perspectives invited to take part in dedicated focus groups included: First Nations artists, culturally diverse artists, independent artists, artists with disability, gender diverse artists, teachers, presenters, street and club artists.
3. **Individual consultation** — Deep listening of elders and pioneers from the selected categories by individual consultants.

### CO-DESIGN TEAM STATEMENT

In order to understand the current state of dance and what the term “contemporary dance” might mean in Melbourne, we have used a decolonising methodology to guide this artist led dialogue with the sector.

**What now?**

**What next?**

**What do we all want next?**

Our creative process aims to rethink existing structures by employing an intersectional and dialogic framework to address race, gender, age, sexuality, access and class.



## Public Classes & Workshops

### FREEDANCE

Freedance was 10 weeks of energetic dance classes held in the open air at Abbotsford Convent and led and curated by local artists from Dancehouse.

There were three class styles to choose from, including: a Contemporary Action Lab for professional contemporary dancers; a Street Dance series for all levels; and a Family Freedance series for the whole family.

To keep it COVID Safe, all classes were held outside across the Convent's outdoor spaces, gardens and basketball court.

And to top it off, the classes were FREE.

#### Contemporary Action Lab (Ages 18+)

Aimed for the professional mover yearning to travel in space, Monday night's Contemporary Action Lab was open to all contemporary dancers. Curated and led by Keir Choreographic Award 2018 winner Melanie Lane and Yellow Wheel Artistic Director Kyall Shanks.

#### Street Dance series (Ages 16+)

Suited for beginner to intermediate street dancers, Wednesday night's Street Dance series was led by choreographer Trevor Santos and Sister Sessions co-founder and waacker, Marnie Newton. Join us as we bring the flavour and energy to get everybody moving again—from foundations, to grooves and choreography.

#### Family Freedance series (Ages 7+)

Family Freedance classes were specially designed for children aged 7+ and their accompanying adults to get bodies a-movin' and those endorphins flowing! Incorporating movement, rhythm, creative dance and body awareness — participants were led by Josh Lowe, founder of Drill Youth Dance Company and former Artistic Director of Yellow Wheel; and Shamita Sivabalan, one of Australia's leading Bollywood educators.



Alec Pernes for FREEDANCE. Photo by Mathew Lynn.

## Independent Public Classes & Workshops

Dancehouse's public dance classes and workshops are run and taught by independent artists and teachers who hire Dancehouse to host their classes and are available to the general public.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, **239 sessions were cancelled in 2020.**

### One-Off Workshops

- 8 Sessions
- Total 125 attendees

Abhinaya — Manjusha Manjusha  
 Alchemy — Anne O'Keeffe  
 Captivate Action — Lyndall Grant  
 Contemporary Dance — Ogemdi Ude  
 Crios Massages: Self Thai Massage Class — Giovanni La Rocca  
 Odissi Indian Classical — Monica Singh  
 Reggaeton and Cuban Salsa — Gene Segura  
 Yoga Workshop — Zahra Kassem

### Workshop and Class Series

- 56 Sessions
- 13 Classes
- Total 450 attendees

Action Theater — Danielle Cresp  
 Contemporary Dance — Izzy Washington  
 Contemporary Dance — Sarah Elsworth  
 KAP Melbourne — Kim Page  
 Raising the Barre — Irina de Loche  
 Sensuality Workshop — Eleanor Hadley  
 Afro Latin Groove — Irina de Loche  
 Contact Annual Workshop — Emily Bowman  
 Grow Through Dance — Irina de Loche  
 Studio Redhead — Studio Redhead  
 Ballet (Beginners/Professionals) — Kieran Gourley  
 Beginners Adult Ballet — Shay Reeves  
 Zumba — Marlyse Marquer



Odissi Indian Classical — Monica Singh



Action Theater — Danielle Cresp. Photo by Sarah Walker Photos.





**OPERATIONAL**



## Management and Staffing Structure

STAFF	ROLE	DATES	EFT
Angela Conquet	Artistic Director/CEO	Jan—Apr	Full-time
Angela Conquet	Artistic Associate	Apr—Dec	0.2 EFT
Josh Wright	Artistic Director/ CEO	From Apr	Full-time & 0.8 EFT
Ashley Dyer	Program Producer		0.8 EFT
Olivia Hutchinson	Operations Manager		Full-time & 0.8 EFT
Audrey Schmidt	Marketing and Communications Manager		0.6 EFT
Georgia Rann	Production Manager		0.6 EFT
Jonathan Homsey	Development Manager		0.4 EFT
Jill Chrisp	Venue Manager		0.4 EFT
Andy On	Freedance Producer	From Nov	0.2 EFT
Philipa Rothfield	Creative Advisor		Contract

BOARD	ROLE	DATES
Shelley Lasica	Chair	
Nick Hays	Deputy Chair	
John Paolacci	Treasurer	
Tiffany Lucas	Secretary	
Veronica Bolzon		
Penny Hueston		Till May 2020
Dean Hampel		
Jacob Boehme		
Sandra Parker		
Joanne White		



From left to right:  
Angela Conquet, Ashley Dyer, Olivia Hutchinson, Audrey Schmidt, Jonathan Homsey, Georgia Rann, Jonathan Homsey, Jill Chrisp, Josh Wright, Andy On, Philipa Rothfield



## Management and Staffing Structure

### CONTRACT STAFF

### ROLE

Pia Lauritz, Luke Fryer, Angela Dexter, Rebekah Claridge, Jacqueline Aylward, Michaela Ottone, Alison Tong, Tessa Leong

Front of House

Alison Graham, Andy de On, Angela Butler, Ash Koek, Beth Weatherly, Emily Managan, Daniel Freeman, Gabriel Bethune, Geogrina Wolfe, Jacob Shears, Jacob Trethowan, James O'Donoghue, Jillian Chrisp, Marty Shlansky, Olivia Borghesan, Rebecca Etchell, Samuel Barnes, Tom Dent

Technical &  
Production staff

Leora Hester, Paula Tucker

Bookkeepers

### VOLUNTEERS & PLACEMENTS

### ROLE

Charmaine Chan

Marketing Placement

Beth Raywood Cross

Producer Placement



Image credit: Dancehouse Staff and contractors producing Houseparty (2020). Photo by Andrew J. Liu of Pride Productions.

## Venue

### Venue Upgrades

Dancehouse undertook significant cleaning and venue upgrades in 2020, taking advantage of reduced venue availability and public access.

Venue upgrades and maintenance included:

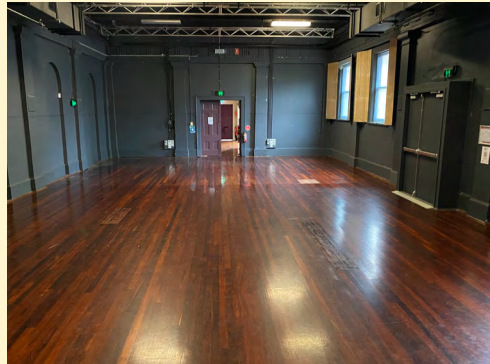
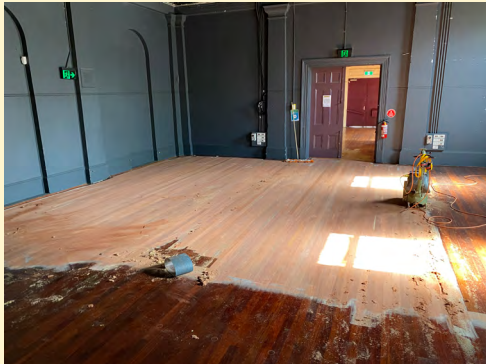
- Renovation of the foyer, bar and box office space
- Sanding and waxing of the floorboards in the Foyer and Sylvia Staehli Theatre

More significant works are set to be undertaken in 2021 — much planned, arranged and resourced in 2020.

### Space Hire

One of Dancehouse's more significant earned income streams, venue hire, was greatly impacted by the COVID lockdowns and restrictions in Melbourne.

In 2020, Dancehouse used sessional booking blocks for hiring and venue use. These booking blocks promoted traffic flow in and out of spaces and common areas and aided cleaning and sanitising.



<b>25.5</b>	<b>Number of weeks in 2020 Dancehouse was closed</b>
<b>83%</b>	<b>Drop in venue hire from 2019 (\$88,136) to 2020 (\$14,906)</b>
<b>9.5</b>	<b>Number of weeks available to hirers in COVID</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>Weeks Dancehouse open with COVID restrictions in 2020</b>



## Operations Report

### Key Operational Updates

- COVIDSafety Policies and processes
- Finance system transitioned from MYOB to Xero (online)
- Audit and updating of all Dancehouse agreements
- Dancehouse policy audit and implementation plan
- All Dancehouse incident reporting has been moved online to the website to aid transparency

### Archives

For many years, Dancehouse has held a paper and media archive and filing on site. The COVID lockdown offered an opportunity to begin cleaning, sorting and creating a robust archive of important Dancehouse documents and history.

The archives also held significant contributions from the Cecil Street community as well as media including VHS, CD, DVD and earlier formats.

With the generous support of volunteers Philipa Rothfield, Tilly Parsons, Hellen Sky and Angela Conquet, the Dancehouse historical filing and archives were rigorously cleaned and sorted. Dancehouse is currently approaching libraries and archives to appropriately care for and digitise this important repository of dance history.



(Left) Conversations at MPavilion (AsiaTOPA), Yumi Umiumare, Dr. Philipa Rothfield and Dr. Priya Srinivasan

## Development Report

Dancehouse faced both challenges and opportunities during 2020 to generate donations. The organisation created two development campaigns; one in February in partnership with Asia TOPA and another in June for a digitally delivered Dancehouse Diary.

The philanthropic event in February was associated with the conclusion of Dancehouse's donor program since CONNECT. CONNECT aimed to connect artists meaningfully with their audiences and supporters from 2018–2020. The program invited select dance-lovers and curious minds to gain insights from our artists and immerse themselves in their ethos and creative processes. On 20 February, 40 attendees had an intimate gathering with Akira Kasai and his team, supported by Choya wine. This bespoke event generated just under \$1,000 for the organisation.

As lockdown began in March, Dancehouse prioritised an end of financial year campaign in June to commission over 40 artists through the digital Dancehouse Diary. Across portals including Australian Communities Fund and Give Now, Dancehouse generated over \$5,000 with 100% going directly to independent dance artists.



Image: Daido Hiroyasu

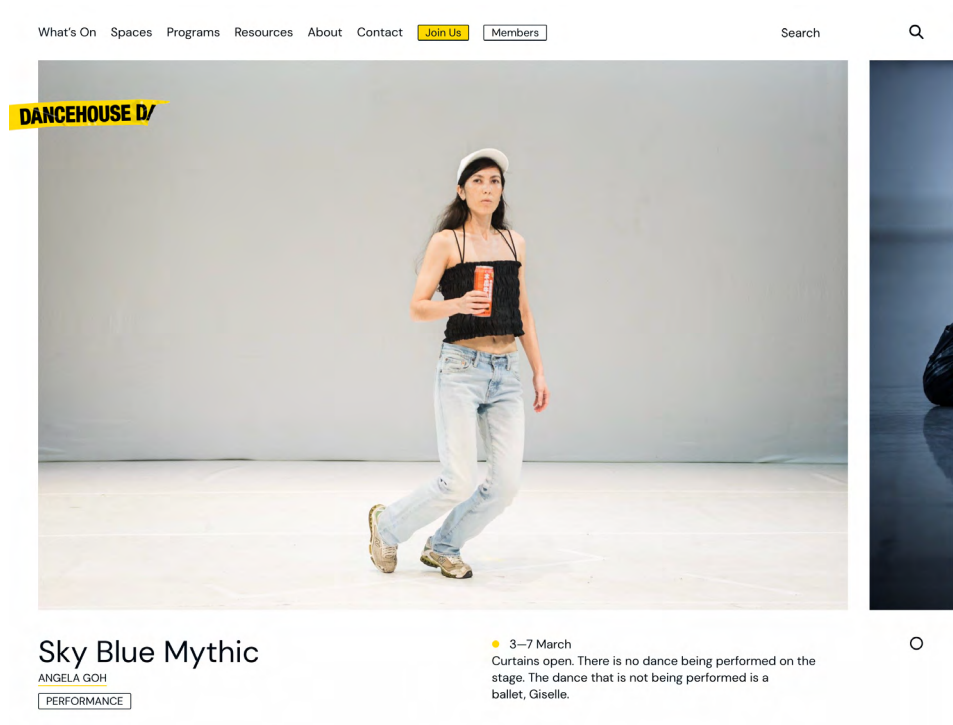


## Website

In 2020 we worked with The Company You Keep (TCYK) to create a website that is accessible with an accompanying face-life for our logo and brand identity. The website is impactful and easy-to-use, giving users the ability to find events, performances and spaces to hire as well as connect with the Dancehouse community. The website was built on a back-end that is intuitive and easily updated by our team, which was a marked contrast to earlier custom website.

### Key Features

- Newsletter Subscription
- Calendar Filtering of Events (audience, event and time categories)
- Calendar Filtering of Spaces and Availability (with bookings widget)
- Forms
- Google Map Integration
- Accordion/Tabbed navigation for What's On Detail/About page.
- Accordion/Tabbed navigation for Resources page.
- Basic Membership subscription form and login block
- Past events archiving with a filter system



**DANCEHOUSE D/**

### Dancehouse logo evolution and diversification in 2020

**DANCEHOUSE D/**



**DANCEHOUSE D/**

**DANCEHOUSE D/**

**DANCEHOUSE D/**

Dancehouse official font across website and marketing collateral, DM Sans.

AaBbCc  
0123456

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

## Marketing Report

In 2020 Dancehouse noticed a huge drop in the effectiveness of online marketing due to screen fatigue reported during the COVID-19 pandemic in addition to the waning popularity of Facebook. With audiences disengaged on Facebook, our ability to build targeted and cost-effective promotions was heavily impacted.

### Website:

With the website migration and rebrand taking months to complete in 2020, our analytics are likely somewhat distorted — with some links referring to our old website, and others referring to our new.

In 2020, our website was visited by **17,178 unique visitors** (33.75% decrease from 2019) and we received **93,103 Pageviews** (22.99% decrease from 2019). However, regardless of these drops, we saw a **20.74% increase in Average Page Depth** (average number of pages viewed per session). This increase likely points to the greater efficiency of a more easily navigable website.

Our top referrer remained Facebook (2,638 users), even though this is a 45% decrease in referrals since 2019.



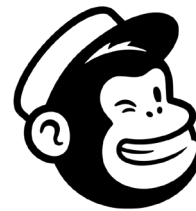
2,166 Followers ↑

We saw a **6% increase in Impressions**, a **20% increase in Engagement** and a **120% increase in url clicks** on Twitter.



3,001 Followers ↑

With 3,001 followers by the close of 2020, we grew our audience by 637 followers since 2019. This was a **27% increase in audiences** on Instagram.



68,753 Deliveries in 2020 ↓

Of **68,573 successful deliveries**, we saw **28,751 total opens** in 2020 and **3,511 total clicks** on Mailchimp.



16,1658 Impressions in 2020 ↓

4,475 Likes ↑

We had a total **16,1658 Impressions on Facebook in 2020**, with **257 new likes** since 2019 and **264 new follows**.

However, Dancehouse experienced significant drops in engagement and audiences on Facebook in 2020. Accounting for unfollows, we only saw 146 new Likes and 144 new Follows in 2020 as opposed to 402 new likes and 425 new follows in 2019.

This means we saw a **66% decrease in audience growth on Facebook** since 2019. Further, we saw a **74% decrease in Impressions** and a **72% decrease in Reach** on Facebook.

These significant decreases are likely due to general screen fatigue as well as the platform's increasing unpopularity. These concerns were only exacerbated in 2021 when the tech giant briefly cut off access to some parts of the web through its platform in response to a proposed law that would force it to pay for linking to news stories. Further, Facebook Ad Centre tightened audience reach and targeting in 2020, and continues to roll back data sharing across platforms such as Mailchimp. As a result, investing in social advertising became less of a viable option for reaching audiences.



## THE AGE

CULTURE DANCE REVIEW

## In Matou, dancer shows the flexibility to astonish

By Kim Dunphy

February 16, 2020 – 12.43pm



## MATOU

★★★★½

DanceHouse / AsiaTOPA

February 14-15

For a dance performance, I'd describe *Matou* as an extreme sport. It looked to require of Japanese dancer-choreographer Ruri Mito both intense mindfulness and the most strenuous bodifulness. For her audience, the show was demanding too. Ghostly and gruelling, but also gorgeous.

*Matou* opened with Mito positioned mid-stage in the most extraordinary shape, appearing to be an inverted dismembered torso. It was only that I had fleetingly observed her enter the space earlier that I had any certainty it was a whole person in front of us. Was it a human shape, with all its body parts? A wide shouldered male torso right way up, or female body upside-down?

This mesmerising spectacle was held for much longer that it felt uncomfortable to watch, almost unbearably so. I longed for Mito to unfold and reclaim a recognisable form.



Ruri Mito in Matou at Dancehouse

Other shapes she flowed and folded into evoked creatures: a sideways-creeping crab, an angular-legged grasshopper and a chrysalis-emerging caterpillar. The most astonishing moment came as her widespread legs acted as fulcrum for her reverted torso, head and arms to circle the floor in a loose arc. The normal restrictions of a small human body seemed not to apply, with somehow the upside-down top half of her swinging wildly while the right-side-up bottom half held steady.

The choreographic sparseness was complemented perfectly with the barest essentials, of a hardly-there flesh costume, unobtrusive lighting and soundtrack by Yuta Kumachi featuring sounds ranging from melodic tinkling like glass wind chimes to a nasty tinnitus-sounding buzz.

The audience's enthusiastic response prompted Mito to return three times for a bow. It was delightful to see her bounding in and out so lightly after these extreme endeavours. This sold-out performance confirms Melbourne audience's interest in Asian cultural practices reflected (or induced) by the marvellously diverse offerings of the AsiaTOPA festival.

AUSTRALIAN DANCE REVIEWS

## Cross-pollination: Akira Kasai's 'Pollen Revolution'



AKIRA KASAI'S POLLEN REVOLUTION/PHOTO BY DAIDO HIROYASU



Dancehouse, Melbourne.  
20 February 2020.

How does the world enter the soul? Can a nation reside in the body of an individual citizen? And in return, how can the receiver transfigure the message? In Akira Kasai's widescreen epic solo, *Pollen Revolution*, the broad sweep of Japanese cultural memory melts into the sylph-like figure of a solitary chameleon. Here, the androgynous angel of history moves between past and present, traversing gender and normalcy, encompassing both revolution and nostalgia. S/he subverts the old with the newly possible and, simultaneously, creates the new according to the fashion of the old.



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Revolution & Resilience

Asia TOPA presents Akira Kasai's "Pollen Revolution" and "What Happened in Shanghai" by Victoria Chiu

"What Happened in Shanghai" by Victoria Chiu. Photograph by Gregory Lorenzetti

Performance

Asia TOPA presents Akira Kasai's "Pollen Revolution" and "What Happened in Shanghai" by Victoria Chiu

Place

Melbourne, Victoria, February 2020

Performance

Asia TOPA presents Akira Kasai's "Pollen Revolution" and "What Happened in Shanghai" by Victoria Chiu

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Witness

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Reviews
Asia TOPA: Good Luck

Takao Kawaguchi. Photo: Bozzo

Asia TOPA: Good Luck

by Andrew Fuhrmann | March 10, 2020 | 0 comment

Takao Kawaguchi's dance work **Good Luck** is quietly beguiling, says Andrew Fuhrmann

Takao Kawaguchi – choreographer, dancer and media artist – first visited Melbourne in 2003 when he was still a member of the Kyoto-based art collective **Dumb Type**, a group that aims to combine visual arts practices with performance art. As part of Robyn Archer's second Melbourne Festival, they presented *Memorandum*, a sound and light spectacular dominated by large, manically flickering projections and dancing silhouettes.

Type and hit enter...

Read More >>

www.dancehouse.com.au

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27/03/2020

Bold statement from Angela Goh wins Keir Choreographic Award

THE AUSTRALIAN

## Bold statement from Angela Goh wins Keir Choreographic Award

By **DEBORAH JONES**

6:59PM MARCH 16, 2020 • 1 COMMENT

It's often the case that alarm bells start ringing when an artist writes a highly detailed program note explaining precisely what their contemporary dance piece means. Frequently it's just not possible to see in the work what the choreographer claims. There's a big disconnect.

In the case of Angela Goh, though, the statement is an indispensable part of *Sky Blue Mythic*, a piece that deservedly won for her the \$50,000 2020 Keir Choreographic Award.

"Curtains open," it starts. (There is no curtain.) "There is no dance being performed on the stage." (This is true at the beginning.) "The dance that is not being performed is a ballet, Giselle." (This is also true.) Magic.

At first there is a John Cage-like silence as the performer (Goh) places something that looks like a small sundial on the floor and retreats. Just as the audience starts to feel a bit restive Goh reappears, walks slowly across the complete bare stage, falls and spills a can of soft drink.

This action is later repeated after some exquisitely slow searching by Goh, accompanied by a wonderfully strange score by Corin Iltis. It's a work that would bear many more viewings.

The \$10,000 Audience Choice Award went to Amrita Hepi for *Rinse*, a captivating, highly personal work that covered a lot of ground in 20 minutes — the required length for all participants. Speaking a text that became more absorbing as she continued, Hepi explored the effect of a dominant West on equally valid cultural aspiration. Like Goh she danced her own work superbly.

The Keir is an award for choreography, not the dancing of it, but it was hard not to be swept up by the performance of *The Farm's Hold Me Closer Tony Danza* by Kate Harmon and Michael Smith. It starts with a mishearing of a Bernie Taupin lyric — and haven't we all done something similar? — and develops into a sometimes tender, sometimes fierce depiction of togetherness and its opposite.

It was the most accessible dance of the evening and nothing wrong with that.

The least appealing was *Delimit* by Alison Currie & David Cross, performed by Cazna Brass. It consisted of Brass putting up the set, a group of door-like rectangles with extrusions to which odd shapes were attached and inflated, and then taking stuff off and putting it away. The number of minutes in which this remained interesting was limited.

*Keir Choreographic Award, Carriageworks, Sydney, March 13.*

THE AGE

CULTURE DANCE ARTS

## Simple and succinct work scoops \$50,000 prize

By **Julia Cotton**

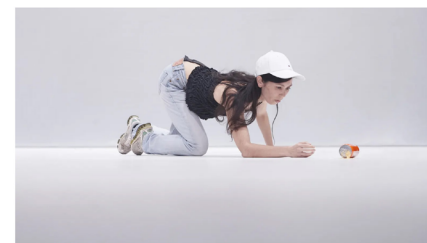
March 16, 2020 — 2:01pm

f t i e | A A A

Keir Choreographic Award

Carriageworks, March 14

There was a strangely sombre mood at Carriageworks on Saturday night. With the impending closure of venues and cancellation of arts events, the rather empty foyer lacked its usual upbeat buzz. Later this changed and there was an almost defiant, celebratory atmosphere as four finalists waited to hear who had won this year's prestigious Keir Choreographic Award.



Angela Goh has won the \$50,000 Keir Choreographic Award. ZAN WIMBERLEY

The \$50,000 award went to Angela Goh whose work, *Sky Blue Mythic* explores time and duration and, in Goh's words "allows dance to alienate itself from human expression". The work is clean and precise, Goh enters and holds eye contact with the audience. She uses sustained, controlled movements and effective isolation of body parts, it is simple and succinct. Building to a climax, she vocalises one note before becoming lost in a cacophonous chorus of recorded voices.

People's Choice award winner Amrita Hepi, addresses the audience directly in her autobiographical work, *Rinse*. She is a strong and confident performer, her story telling as assured as her dancing. Hepi's reflections on life as a dancer, incorporating and comparing indigenous and western influences are insightful. She confides, challenges, always maintaining her connection with the audience, plus she brings a good dose of humour to the piece. Hepi is clearly popular, having also won the audience award in 2018.

Of the other two pieces, *Hold Me Closer Tony Danza* is the most accessible and engaging. Created by The Farm and performed by Kate Harmon and Michael Smith it is bold, funny and pushes some boundaries. Harman and Smith immediately establish a strong partnership. While light-hearted to start with they soon engage in conflict and struggle. Like the layering of their t-shirts, there is depth in this work and constant surprises. They trick the audience into applause, a false ending before their duet evolves through continuous contact, a wrapping and unfurling until they find harmony in a precarious counter-balance.

*Delimit* by Alison Currie and David Cross by contrast is banal and mundane. It "examines the relationship between menial, process-driven labour and dance". The only problem being that a few seconds of dance at the end does not really constitute a relationship. With no sound/music and a single lighting state, it was the essence of workmanlike and became repetitive and predictable.

Commissioning new work is essential and thanks to the Keir Foundation these choreographers can continue to defy expectations and present provocative and controversial dance works.

## PARTNERS

Dancehouse wishes to gratefully acknowledge the generous support of our partners for 2020

## GOVERNMENT



## PROJECT



## DEVELOPMENT



## PROGRAM



## THE SAISON FOUNDATION

## MEDIA







# DANCEHOUSE

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[www.dancehouse.com.au](http://www.dancehouse.com.au)

Dancehouse is assisted by the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding advisory body, and is supported by the Victorian Government through Arts Victoria, Department of Premier and Cabinet and by the City of Yarra through the use of the Dancehouse facility.

Dancehouse stands on what always was and always will be Aboriginal land. We pay our respects to the traditional owners of this land, the Wurundjeri peoples of the Kulin Nation, to their elders past, present and emerging, and acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

Image: Houseparty 2020. Photo by Andrew J. Liu of Pride Productions.