



# National Regional Arts Fellowships 2020: Recipients List

May 2020

## Creative Development

### Kristina Chan, Red Head NSW

Based in regional NSW, Kristina is a dancer, choreographer, director and teacher with over 20 years' experience in the performing arts industry. Throughout her extensive dance career, Kristina has performed in Australia, Canada, UK, USA, Asia, Israel, and Europe. She has been a key collaborator in many Australian dance choreographies, working with companies and independent artists.

Kristina's choreographic practice explores environmental change, our relationship to nature, and the impact that we are making on our planet.

Kristina has committed much of her career to pass on knowledge to the next generation, positively impacting aspiring dancers and young choreographers, and nurturing Australia's future dance professionals. She has taught, lectured, and produced work within educational and tertiary institutions across Australia. Kristina has received industry awards including a Helpmann Award (2011), two Australian Dance Awards for Best Female Dancer (2006 & 2009) and the Peggy Van Praagh Choreographic Fellowship (2017).

### Mentorship and youth workshops in drought and bush fire affected communities

Kristina will undertake a mentorship with Jill Watkins, who has specialist skills in circus and community cultural development. Kristina and Jill will lead creative workshops for a group of young people from the drought and bush fire affected areas of the mid-north coast of New South Wales. The workshops will culminate in the creative development of a new performance work addressing the topics of these recent environmental events. The project is supported through a local partnership with the Manning Entertainment Centre in Taree.

## First Nations Creative Development

### Jack Sheppard, Bungalow QLD

Jack Sheppard is of the Tagalaka Clan from Far North Queensland. He is an inter-disciplinary performing artist and emerging writer. Jack has studied dance, and graduated from WAAPA's Aboriginal Theatre Course. Jack works and creates in the fields of dance, physical theatre, experimental movement and acting. He devised 'Wild Australia', a roving installation piece for Yirramboi Festival (2017), and his short play, 'Monsoon', was selected for a reading in The Blue Room Theatre, Perth. Jack premiered his physical theatre solo show, 'The Honouring', at Yirramboi Festival (2019), and presented the beginnings of his new work, 'Crackpipe Dreaming', at Melbourne Fringe (2019). Jack has worked in film, puppetry and aerial performance. He thrives in both solo and group collaborative spaces and uses his drive for storytelling to engage with community, provoking conversation and momentum for social change.

## 'Serpent Waters'

'Serpent Waters' is a play written by Jack Sheppard that addresses Australia's issues with land use, water consumption, and the use of water as a commodity rather than a life source. From a First Nations perspective, Jack imagines a world where Indigenous people are going through an immense transition of healing, social and spiritual upheaval, and liberation from their profoundly entrenched pain. From this act of healing through self-reflection, the Rainbow Serpent is revived from its dormant state and gifts the First Peoples with new water systems that they must protect and renew through ceremony. It is their responsibility to carefully distribute water to Australian communities who are going through a dramatic water crisis.

With this fellowship, Jack will undertake creative development with a small team of actors, working under the guidance of two First Nations dramaturges. The outcome will be a script reading, followed by a Q & A session. This will be open to the public, especially members of the First Nations and arts communities in the Cairns region.

## Arts Worker Professional Development

### Alex Wisser, Kandos NSW

Alex Wisser is an artist and creative producer based in mid-western New South Wales. In 2013 Alex co-founded the Cementa Contemporary Arts Festival and took up permanent residence in the township of Kandos with his family. Since then, his practice has continued to focus on the challenges and opportunities of making art in a regional context. His current practice includes large scale, long term projects such as Cementa Festival and Kandos School of Cultural Adaptation, which seek to embed art into a local, regional cultural context.

Through this evolution, his work has taken on forms that transgress simple disciplinary boundaries, often crossing into community volunteerism, arts administration, or social work. Alex has run for local council and has served as the secretary for the Rylstone Kandos Chamber of Commerce for the last three years. These roles are not necessarily those of an artist, but they have undeniably contributed to his developing understanding of how communities and civil society functions to achieve (or fail to achieve) social outcomes.

### Growing Connections: Strengthening Community in Drought

Alex's current work with Kandos School of Cultural Adaptation (KSCA) on the Resilient Farmer Project in Capertee, NSW, demonstrates the vital contribution artists and cultural leaders make to the emotional wellbeing and resilience of drought-affected communities. This fellowship will expand Alex's understanding of, and connection to, socially engaged art practice across regional Australia through an investigation with diverse communities into the experience of living with drought. Delivered in partnership with the Creative Recovery Network, this project aims to develop a national research framework for participatory collaborations between artists and farmers.

## First Timer Creative or Professional Development

### Bethany Reece, Margate TAS

Bethany is a Tasmanian-born contemporary dancer, and recently graduated with first-class honours from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts. While studying, she had the opportunity to travel and perform in a variety of environments under the creative direction of a multitude of choreographers. These diverse and multifaceted experiences of human movement have led Bethany to develop an interest in the relationship between physicality and identity, culture, and a sense of belonging.

Bethany aspires to be involved in works that make space for the voices of the vulnerable and disadvantaged, and that challenge and provoke change.

#### Stratified Knowing

This Fellowship will investigate the metaphor of knowledge layered within the earth, as stratified sediment. These layers of material reveal the impact of human-kind on the climate over billions of years, providing a unique visual reference to encourage climate discussion.

Bethany will work with a mentor, a composer, and another dancer on the development of this, her first independent contemporary dance work. Bethany will present this work in progress to a small and informed audience and use this to obtain constructive feedback.

### Vanessa Keenan, Tumbarumba NSW

Vanessa is the Managing Director of Acorn Creative Group, a creative agency specialising in local government and creative industries. Vanessa has specialist knowledge and expertise in arts management, communications, and delivering projects that resonate with communities.

Vanessa's roles in arts management and her communications background give her an ability to understand the requirements for delivering projects that have lasting results. In the cultural sector, Vanessa has developed a number of policies, strategies and master plans that have resulted in the roll out of public art commissions, master planning cultural precincts and ongoing arts programs.

In addition to curating and producing cultural projects, Vanessa has created, implemented and advised on communications and engagement strategies for projects with budgets ranging from minimal to multi-million dollars.

#### Regeneration Project

Vanessa's fellowship centres on creative development and artist engagement, working with five professional artists directly impacted by the fires, exploring the impact of bushfires on professional artists and the landscapes they use for inspiration. The fellowship will result in the development of a curatorial rationale and a series of curatorial statements that will inform the development of an outdoor arts event, incorporating work by the impacted artists and others in response to the changing landscape.