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Looking Back, Looking Forward

ACCESS ARTS' 22-23 ANNUAL REPORT

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Artwork Front Cover

BIRDS OF A FEATHER (Detail) by Brisbane Outsider Artists,
Hero artwork of "Looking Back, Looking Forward" Exhibition

Foreward

2023 marked 40 years of Access Arts. This milestone provided an opportunity to reflect upon the impact Access Arts has made to inclusion in the arts and where we are today; but also to consider the road still to be travelled to ensure equitable representation for artists and performers with disability in the Queensland arts ecology.

Amongst the celebrations of our 40 years of service, we continued to deliver upon our vision and mission as guided under our strategic plan. We continued to provide opportunities for people to explore their creative potential and build meaningful social connections through art.

For those seeking to develop further, we delivered professional development and mentoring opportunities. We continued to provide audiences for artists to showcase their work and earn more independent, self-generated income.

And, we continued to play an important role in advocating for artists with disability through our artist consultation and engagement with a range of stakeholders, including governments, businesses, disability organisations and mainstream arts companies and producers.

Access Arts continued to enjoy the support of CPL – Choice, Passion, Life who continued to enable our work despite – at times – difficult operating conditions. Their marketing expertise enabled us to reach new and greater audiences, not just for our workshop programs but for the Access Arts brand and the work of our artists.

Though a milestone in our history, the year set the tone for a new phase in Access Arts' history, as we began exploring our next tranche of strategic work as we approach the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games.

We thank everyone who journeyed with us during this year, including the artists who allowed us to work alongside them.



Our vision

Transform lives through art

Our mission

Empowering Queenslanders with disability or disadvantage to pursue their artistic dreams



Access Arts

Strategic plan to 2025

Values and Guiding Principles

- Excellence in all we do
- Commitment to disability-led work
- Equality and inclusion
- Openness and accountability
- Create and provide access to quality arts experiences

Our Behaviours

- Culturally ambitious, pioneering and trailblazing
- Respectful and inclusive
- Advocacy at all levels
- Professionalism

Advocacy

Objective

- Disability awareness training and other access services for mainstream arts
- Mainstream arts audience

Artwork

PALE HEADED ROSELLA by Belinda Peel,
Exhibited at "Dancing Colours" Exhibition

Access Arts

Strategic plan to 2025 continued

Economic Participation

Objective

- Business skills/leadership programs
- Development of sales channels (proprietary and in partnership)
- Partnerships with employers/ Disability Employment Services

Deepening and Developing Skills

Objective

- Mentoring and masterclasses
- Artist in Residence programs
- Professional development initiatives

Finding an Audience

Objective

- Proprietary and in-partnership exhibitions and performances
- Undercover Artist Festival

Exploring and Uncovering Creativity

Objective

- Ongoing arts workshop programs supported by NDIS funding
- Short-term/one-off programs for specific cohorts



Pictured

Hero artwork for Access Arts' 40 Celebrations, featuring Jaguar Jonze and artwork titled 'BIRDS OF A FEATHER (Detail)' by Brisbane Outsider Artists

Highlights

Celebrating 40 Years

In 2023, Access Arts marked 40 years of supporting people to explore and develop their creativity through the arts.

Access Arts marked this milestone with a celebration at Queensland Multicultural Centre on Saturday 3 June 2023, with the theme of "Unite, Celebrating 40 Years of Access Arts on Queensland Day". Supported by the Queensland Government, Brisbane City Council and MinterEllison, more than 200 people – including past and present participants, artists, supporters, staff and management committee and Board members – packed the venue for an afternoon of reflection and celebration.

Speeches were made by Access Arts' Patron Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM Governor of Queensland; Brisbane City Councillor Tracy Davis; GIRRIMAY woman, artist and midwife Marianne Wobcke; Access Arts CEO Pat Swell; and Access Arts Life Member Peter Vance. These were complemented by a performance by singer-songwriter Jaguar Jonze and a short film about the life of artist Karen Lee Roberts.

However, the stand-out performance was by Access Arts' own participants.



Access Arts' Light, Curtain, Action! participants performing "Otherwise"

In the two months leading up to the celebration, Access Arts Ashgrove workshops participated in a range of development activities which they brought to life on stage through a new theatre and dance show and performance of new original songs.

Visual artists were also recognized at the event with a range of works by 20 artists from Access Art's Yeronga studio hanging the venue's foyer area.

Filled with bold, breath-taking live theatre and visual arts experiences showcasing the incredible talent of Queensland's D/deaf and disabled artists, 'Unite' honoured Access Arts' past, connected with our history, celebrated our present, and projected forward to the future.

Our artists presented experiences to community that moved beyond stigmas associated with disability, showcased how Access Arts nurtures individual artistry and career pathways, recognises excellence and culturally educates.

Marking 40 Years

by past Directors David Gerrand and Neal Price

How wonderful it is to hear of this milestone that marks the 40th year of operation. It's a mark of the organisation's ability to deliver access to the arts and create career pathways to its members. Now with such a significant length of experience it's good to reflect on those artists who established this company in 1983.

The company came together under the co-ordination of Annette Innes at a rehabilitation pool at the Royal Brisbane Hospital where a group of people would meet each week. They decided they wanted to set up a company that met their needs. They wanted to do a play, wanted to socialise more and wanted a say in how their lives were managed.

Several members of the group had been at what was then called the Spastic Centre and they shared a strong bond from school days into adulthood.

Elizabeth Navratil, Willie Prince, Cathy Brennan, Robert Plant and Bob Williams were some of the names that came to mind. Each finding creative ways to get involved and have more of a say in the ways things were managed. A funding application was written and was successful and Access Arts was born.

The first Project Manager was Erin Redfern who was faced with the enormous task of attracting people to the board and employing artists on projects.

Artists such as Richard Benge, Scotia Monkivitch, Lowana Moxham, Hugh Watson, Meg Kanowski, Therese Collie, Katrina Devery, Russell Dykstra, Aunty Maureen Watson, Marcus Hughes, Ahmarnya Price, Zane Trow, Donna Toussaint and Keith Armstrong all worked and contributed to many projects and workshop over the years.

There were many more than can be recalled as Access Arts was one of the largest employers of artists in Brisbane at one stage.

David Gerrand was the first Director who envisaged touring performances and working internationally. Under David's tenure the company went from its formative stages to a fully-fledged professional arts company touring Australia and Indonesia. The first Australian Arts and Disability Company to achieve this.

Access Arts and other state organisations gave birth to the Nation Network, Disability and Disadvantage in the Arts Australia (DADAA) now Arts Access Australia. Performances such as Cabaret Erratica and Alive Still Life set new standards for Arts and Disability Companies Australia-wide.



Pictured: Access Arts' Artist, Heather Pepperill standing next to her artwork (2022)



Access Arts undertook its first research project in partnership with Queensland University of Technology and the Department of Health to establish community artists in residence programs, - Arts On Fire.

Neal Price took over from David as the second Director, expanding membership, and working across several diverse sectors such as Mental Health and Aged Care, and encouraged members to build their work to showcase in festivals, clubs, performances across Australia and internationally.

The company expanded work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with Jan Leo, John Harvey, Bianca Beatson, Chairmain Wharton, Aunty Beryl Wharton, Deborah Bennet and Aunty Colleen Wall, William Barton and Aunty Delmae Barton during an exciting period of activity at Access Arts.

Ross Barber, the third Director, was an established visual artist developing long term community projects with deep links to community, local councils and artists' networks. Mr Ichino's Kiln, touring exhibitions, and The Outsider Gallery continued the high standard of arts and cultural delivery Queenslanders expected.

Emma Bennison became the fourth Director with a vast knowledge of the disability sector and with a performing artist background. Emma was the first female Director, acting as a leader for advocacy, inclusion and equity.

Emma went on to become CEO of Arts Access Australia and expanded her influence and experience to all Australians.

Early member Elizabeth Navratil wrote and performed in her own work and worked in professional performances and festivals across Australia and internationally. Other performers such as Karyn White, Janelle Colquhoun and Julie Gardner paved the way for many artists to access the mainstream arts sector.

In recent times, Tim Sharp's Laser Beak Man had been a Brisbane Festival success with Dead Puppet Society.

Access Arts own Undercover Artist Festival had offered important performance opportunities to members as new openings occur in previously closed environments.

Congratulations to the Chief Executive Officer Pat Swell and staff who keep this important legacy alive and well. And to all those who have contributed to this amazing company, your legacy lives on.

David Gerrand & Neal Price

Performing Arts Program

Workshops

Our year-round workshops on Tuesdays at Ashgrove comprises three programs: Theatre and Dance Ensemble, Theatre and Dance Skills Extended, and Access Arts Singers.

The first public showcase of the financial year was Saturday 3 September 2022 when our Theatre and Dance Ensemble collaborated with Queensland Youth Orchestra as they played contemporary composer John Rotar's 'Cloud Temple'.

Then 'Lights, Curtain, Action!' consumed our performing artists' creative energies from April to June 2023, a time when they welcomed indelabilityarts guest artist Zoe Houghton, make-up and body paint artist Kelli MacAlpine, harpist Gary Moody, and vocalists Tim McCallum, Hayley Kitchener and Peter Vance to support and extend their practice.

Their creative development will continue as they will re-present their performance this September at Undercover Artist Festival 2023.

“Tears to the eye stuff. [Our son] was for a while the central piece in a moving performance. Thank you, thank you, thank you Access Arts!”

– Parent



Pictured

Participants at Undercover Artists' CV Development workshop

Undercover Artist Festival

During the year, Access Arts continued to prepare – both operationally and artistically – for the biennial Undercover Artist Festival (September 2023).

During the reporting period, building the capability of artists was a critical focus. This was achieved both through a workshop-based development series and a funding-based development program.

Held from July to October 2022 and attended by more than 120 people, the workshops focused on:

- CV Development - Festival Director stepped participants through a creative CV template, supporting artists to articulate their creative experience. Participants also received new, professional headshots.
- Allyship in Disability Arts – Facilitated by Dr Bree Hadley (Professor at QUT), this in-person workshop welcomed disability arts allies, supporters, facilitators and introduced concepts of allyship in a disability arts context. Participants learned the different 'types' of allies and how to honour a disabled artist's agency while supporting them to do their work.
- Expressions of Interest 101 – Festival Director shared the application process for Undercover Artist Festival 2023, using it as an example of how to approach pitching creative works to major festivals, events and venues. Participants learned about the importance of articulating their creative vision in a clear and concise way, how documentation and imagery help 'sell' their work, and how to ensure they address key selection criteria.

In November the Undercover Artist Development Program, which supports the creation of new, disability-led performing arts works, received 67 applications. As a result, four new disability-led performing arts projects were created, providing paid experiences for these artists. Two of these projects, "Sleep and the City" by Emma-June Curik and "Betsy and I" by Alexandra Ellen, were selected to be premiered at the 2023 Undercover Artist Festival in recognition of the quality of the pieces. 'Sleep and the City' is a cabaret work-in-development that explores the parallels between Emma-June's journey to diagnosis for narcolepsy with her dating life and that of the iconic 'Sex and the City'. Semi-autobiographical 'Betsy and I' explores the relationship Ivy has with her disability through her friendship with her wheelie-walker, Betsy.

From a more operational standpoint, the Undercover Artist Festival team focused on engaging with Government and non-Government funders. Undercover Artists Festival was successful in receiving a Plus1 Award from Creative Partnerships, a grant that matches private sector donations. This was leveraged through fundraising activities – such as the Make the Stage campaign – and corporate development activities to generate more than \$100,000.

Performing Arts Program

First Nation Performing Arts

Access Arts' collaboration with Gold Coast partner Guyamgan Bahna Fashion resulted in a spectacular First Nation Fashion Show at Robina Community Centre on 16 July 2022.

It was a healing experience, acknowledging young people who had lost families and friends through mental health and suicide. This three-day-intensive safety and wellbeing program for teenage women, with complementary workshops for teenage men, aimed at reducing substance misuse and self-harm, and fostering healthy, safe and strong family environments for vulnerable young people through fashion and design.

Highlights of the project were the identification of culture, wellbeing and storylines which lay behind the Indigenous designer garments that the young people modelled. The stunning line-up of First Nation designers and international guests were Colleen Tighe Johnson (First Nation), Darin Dunn (First Nation), Cheryl Creed (Murrii Quu Couture), Jolonzo Goldtooth (International First Nation), Sherleen Yellowhair (International First Nation) and Amelia Jan Tahere-Angus (International First Nation).

The program built confidence through the transformational experience of hair, makeup, self-care and personal grooming workshops. The young people then stepped out of their comfort zone, stepped up to the catwalk, and modelled Indigenous-designer clothing with pride.

Access Arts' partnership with Blakdance brought a new iteration of "Birth of Mother" to Warwick in November 2022 at the Big Anxiety, a festival that tackles distress and trauma through art. "Birth of Mother" opens conversations about navigating motherhood as a young First Nation woman. It is a highly personal work developed by lead artist Githabul, Migunberri-Yugumbeh woman Alinta McGrady, focusing on Alinta's own healing of her birthing trauma as well as her family's intergenerational birthing traumas.

Working with Alinta as project lead was Girrimay nurse, artist and storyteller Marianne Wobcke who contributed her 40 years' experience as a clinical Indigenous midwife.



Performing Arts Program

Creative Ageing

In April 2023 we re-commenced our Creative Ageing program, which had been on pause since the initiation of the Royal Commission into Aged Care and due to the impact of the Covid pandemic.

Artist-led by Jennifer Price, seniors at CPL's Moorooka centre enjoyed 10 weeks of creative arts workshops in movement, theatre and music as a means for positive health and wellbeing, self-expression, visibility, sense of belonging and social connectedness with. Opportunities are being explored to continue to program.

"I like coming here because I am wanted."

"Goodbye cruel world, I am off to join the circus."

Visual Arts Program

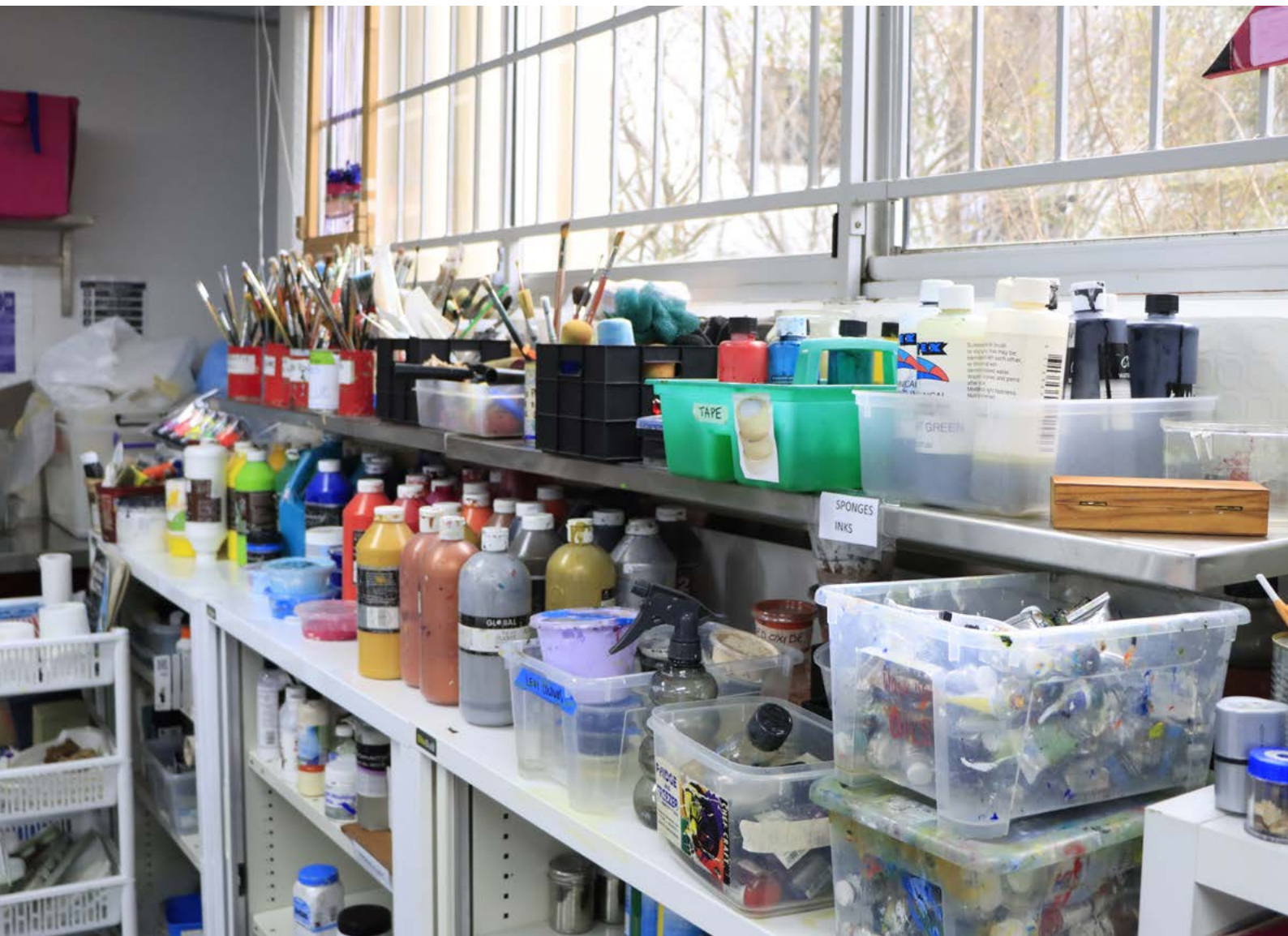
Workshops

Inside Access Arts' visual arts studio in Yeronga our participants develop their artistic practice through year-round workshops.

Mixed Media is for beginners and people with more artistic experience. Our Brisbane Outsider Artists (BOA) program is for emerging professional artists wishing to exhibit and sell their art. In January 2023 we added Textile Art and Arts Business to our range of workshops.



Pictured: Access Arts' Artist, Belinda Peel live painting at "Looking Back, Looking Forward" Exhibition (2022)



Artwork

SUNFLOWERS by Michael Mulvey
Exhibited at "Dancing Colours" Exhibition

Exhibitions

Access Arts mounts two major exhibitions each year: one at St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital, and the other at KPMG.

The exhibitions fulfill a range of outcomes for Access Arts and the artists themselves. For Access Arts, the exhibitions provide an opportunity to raise the profile of the organisation and increase visibility of its work with artists with disability. For artists, the exhibitions provide exposure for their work to new and different audiences and the opportunity to generate income from sales.

Our artists exhibited 57 artworks in "Dancing Colours" at St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital, which opened in June 2022 and continued until 16 September 2022.

Around 20 artworks were sold as a result. An online platform to showcase and sell works – promoted as part of the exhibition's extensive marketing campaign – resulted in one sale from interstate. "Dancing Colours" was sponsored by MinterEllison and Brisbane City Council.

Our artists' second major exhibition called "Looking Back, Looking Forward" marked 10 years of Access Arts' partnership with KPMG. Over the decade, 42 artists have exhibited 225 artworks and reached an audience of 78,968 people. As a result of this partnership with KPMG, artists have sold 83 of their artworks over the years (37 per cent of works exhibited), which is a tribute to the standard, quality and creativity of their art.



Pictured: Access Arts' exhibiting artists and staff at "Looking Back, Looking Forward" Exhibition (2022)

10 years of Access Arts' partnership with KPMG

42

exhibiting artists with disability

225

artworks exhibited

37%

of all artworks exhibited were sold

Visual Arts Program

Celebrating Individual Achievement

Brisbane Outsider Artist, Tanya Darl, won the 2022 Japanese Paralympic Art World Cup Award, exhibiting her artwork "Inclusion – for the Love of Each Other and our Earth" in Tokyo in December 2022. This is the second occasion Tanya has been selected to exhibit in Tokyo at the Paralympic Art World Cup.

In May 2023, Brisbane Outsider Artist, Tommy Daenguthai, create his first largescale public artwork onsite in the Queen Street Mall as part of the Brisbane Street Art Festival. Tommy was also commissioned to create the Hero Image for Undercover Artist Festival 2023 with an artwork he called "Blue Mother Earth".



Pictured: 'Queen Nala' by Tommy Daenguthai at the Brisbane Street Art Festival

First Nations Visual Arts

Seventeen First Nations artists enjoyed "Heartlands of Brisbane", a series of weekly visual arts workshops led by Uncle Gerard between July and September 2022.

Though this collaboration with Green Square Community Arts Group, these artists developed their leadership and life skills while creating artworks which they entered into the "Heartlands of Brisbane" exhibition. Participants were "shy in the beginning but if you look at them now you wouldn't think these are the same artists.

They are more confident in their self". It ended with a public graduation ceremony at Green Square Close, Fortitude Valley.



Artwork
'Queen Nala' by
Tommy Daenguthai
Mural Reproduction
(Portrait)



Professional Development Program

Sync Leadership Australia Online

The disability-led Sync Leadership Australia Online Program built leadership skills in arts professionals with disability. For the second year, Access Arts - with funding support from the Australia Council for the Arts – collaborated with Sync UK to deliver this national program.



Pictured: Sync Leadership Australia Online
2022 Cohort

From the 23 applications received, eight participants were selected from Victoria, Queensland, New South Wales and the ACT.

Over two weeks in November 2022 Sync UK experts Sarah Pickthall and Jo Verrent worked with Access Arts to deliver the program, with additional support and coaching to artists from Sync alumnus Morwenna Collett.

“I’ve learnt that I’m of value the way I am. That my output is worthy even though I’m disabled. That I need to speak up about my worth...”

“There are heaps of emerging programs out there but very few that go into depth to unpack mid-career artist trajectories to move them into leadership roles.”

“The vast expanse of material we covered within such a short period of time was quite amazing!”

Professional Development Program

Earn From Your Art

Earn From your Art is a leadership and coaching program designed by Access Arts to support emerging leaders with disability or who are d/Deaf to build their arts practice into a career.

Disability-led by QUT's Professor Bree Hadley, with leadership expertise from Pro Performance Managing Director Liz Crawford and employment support from Mylestones, this two-year pilot encourages participants to develop skills and confidence as arts leaders. Following an intensive mentorship program, the three trainees - Tanya Darl, Alexandra Ellen and Mags Doherty – worked under supervision to devise and deliver their own arts workshops.

Following this, Undercover Artist Festival appointed Alexandra Ellen as Trainee Producer (Accessibility) and Mags Doherty as Trainee Producer (Events). They commenced these funded, paid positions in April 2023, ahead of the September 2023 festival.



Pictured: Mags Doherty leading a workshop

Pictured

Access Arts Achievement
Award 2022 Recipient,
Oliver Hetherington-Page

Professional Development Program

Access Arts Achievement Award

Each year, Access Arts in partnership with CPL presents the Access Arts Achievement Award to a Queensland artist or artsworker with disability or who are D/deaf.

In December 2022, Oliver Hetherington-Page as the 2022 award winners, receiving \$10,000 in prize money to further develop his new cabaret work "Santa Claus is Autistic". In recognition of the standard of applicants, the selection panel of Tarragh Cunningham, Bree Hadley, Nigel Lavender, Jo Thomas and Rhys Kennedy also provided special recognition to performing artist Allycia Staples.

Over its history, this Award has been transformational for many artists. November saw the creative development of 2021 Award-winner Karen Lee Roberts' fast-moving cabaret 'Sex and Other Philosophies' and a rehearsed reading of 2020 Award-winner Alexandra Ellen's 'Betsy and I', subsequently be premiered at 2023 Undercover Artist Festival.

The 2019 Award-winner, aerial artist Lauren Watson, is now a CircAbility Project Lead for the Brisbane-based world class circus company Circa; while 2018 Award-winner Carol Taylor is now a partner and lead designer with adaptive fashion label, Christina Stephens, which presented a collection at Australian Fashion Week in 2021.

Professional Development Program

SAFE Grants

North Queensland singer-songwriter Maggie Slater used her SAFE grant to promote her latest single, "Pulp", which explores issues of patriarchal influence over women in early relationships. This grant enabled Maggie to take her artistry and professional profile to the next level.

Whitsundays visual artist Donna Lawrence used her SAFE grant to create "Light and Shade", a visual exploration of Dialectical Behavioural Therapy, in the form of a solo exhibition and visual book. Both grants were funded by CPL.



Pictured: SAFE Grant recipient, Maggie Slater

Producing Hub

Access Arts continued to develop an understanding of the additional supports needed for people with disability to fully engage and economically participate in the arts.

During the year, Access Arts consulted with artists on unmet needs and unrealised opportunities resulting from barriers to participation.

The first stage of this consultation, made possible by a \$10,000 grant from the Lord Mayor's Community Trust, involved initial research and consultation with the disability arts sector facilitated by Professor Bree Hadley.

Complementing this, artists at the beginning of their creative development journey participated in the 'Lights, Curtain, Action!' program from April to June 2023.

Comprising a series of workshops, this program began exposing participants to specialist streams of development, including make-up and stage craft.

Further work is intended to be undertaken in 23-24 to further understand the role Access Arts could play in bridging the gap in existing programs and systems, as well gaps which will remain unfilled without specific intervention where Access Arts could play a more direct role.



Corporate Information

Access Arts Patron

The Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM

Governor of Queensland

Access Arts Board as at 30 June 2023

The Hon Justice Thomas Bradley

Chair

Julie Byth

Secretary

Simon Crane

Director

Bree Hadley

Director

Rhys Kennedy

Director

Wendy Lavelle

Director

Nigel Lavender

Director

Kenneth MacDonald

Director

Access Arts Staff as at 30 June 2023

Mathew Bing

Tim Brown

Jasmin Coleman

Rebecca Dostal

Harmonie Downes

Rachel Gaffney-Dawson

Alice Gittins

Mathew Johnson

Ivan Levant

Madeleine Little

Symone Male

Karandeep Ratti

Savannah Roberts

Fiona Roedige

Ann Russell

Carla Sanzone

Mary Schneider

Samantha St Clair

Walter Stahl

Clare Stephens

Pat Swell

Natalie Symonds

David Truong

Karina White

Artwork p22

GHOSTLY BUILDINGS PROTRUDING by Dion Halse,
Hero artwork of "Dancing Colours" Exhibition (2022)



ACCESS ARTS

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07 3505 0311

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accessarts.org.au



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