



DIASPORAS



Background

DIASPORAS is set to disrupt the old systems and ignite diverse artists to create new work, new networks and a new arts ecology.

DIASPORAS is a platform that will hold space for the interrogation and development of arts and cultural practice with diverse creatives and culturally and linguistically diverse artists, and their communities; as a springboard for the building of cultural, social and knowledge capital and training ground for the next generation of producers, designers, technicians, and creatives.

DIASPORAS will be led and peopled by diverse creatives, demonstrating our commitment to authentic leadership and self-determined practice. This new model will foster collaboration and connection through multiple channels, elevating a cohort of artists and artworkers that will lead Victoria's arts scene into the future. The festival will foster innovation in conceptualization, form, collaboration, facilitation, communications, curation and delivery.

Rationale

Never before has it been more important for diverse creatives to tell their own stories on their own terms. The real and terrifying threats to our pluralistic society, from the forces of bigotry and intolerance, is the impetus for MAV's new festival. We know that art has the power to transform and educate, in the first instance diverse creatives need to see themselves and see each other, to imagine a future in which our diversity is one of our greatest assets.

The calibre of work is undeniable and the potential, exponential. What has been missing are the tools, resources and environment to build extraordinary work within. The arts industry needs to step up and meet the brilliance its our doorstep, with DIASPORAS the key to the future.

The festival will underpin the development of artists and artform practices, engaging with Victoria's identity as a sophisticated, cultured, pluralistic society. Together with artists from refugee and migrant communities, we will present a unique program where contemporary arts practice is challenged and transformed by deep engagement with First Nations artists and artists from across the globe.

Context

Despite the efforts of many, our arts sector remains conspicuously white. While there are clear indicators of progress, (particularly in the Indigenous arts space due to decades of persistent and strategic advocacy by First Nations artists and activists), the pace of change remains glacial. The debilitating reluctance on the part of many organisations to embrace diverse and equitable programming, reflects the immediate need for capacity building and best practice models. We believe that artists are best placed to lead the change agenda, through engagement with their work and ideas.

MAV Drivers

Our principal driver is the desire for self-determination of diverse artists and communities. To that end, the artistic motivations behind this initiative do not reflect the vision of one individual, but many. We deliberately have no artistic director, instead enabling all participants to direct their engagement with the festival in a way that reflects their aspirations and needs. Through self-determined practices, we will underpin a human-rights based framework, which posits cultural practice as essential to the wellbeing and sustainability of individuals and society.

We have drawn our model of practice from deep engagement with artists and communities whose cultural practices are inextricably embedded in notions of identity, citizenship and belonging. These cultural practices are in constant evolution. They exist within complex systems of cultural production, dissemination and consumption. They may reflect traditional cultural practices, or re-emerge in contemporary manifestations that challenge and redefine culture. Cultural practices provide vehicles for the exploration of our past, present and future. They do not exist in isolation, but are expansive, allowing artists to work interculturally, intersectionally and intergenerationally to evolve new forms, methods and impacts.

Audience/Market Development

Our focus on the engagement of community elders is to create avenues for intergenerational dialogue, sharing of histories and linking history to contemporary struggles. These themes respond to current issues within diverse communities and recognises the unique power of the arts to heal, connect and transform.

Another major focus of audience development is young people of colour in their teens, 20s and 30s, who are most in need of inspiration and aspiration, given the systematic neglect of this cohort as both audiences and artists by the mainstream sector. We are also responding to the data that is emerging post COVID of the needs within this cohort for visibility, connection and control, in shaping the narratives of their lived experiences and the policy responses emanating from government in dealing with their diverse circumstances.

Cultural Safety

DIAPORAS is seeking to establish new benchmarks in relation to cultural safety. We understand that projects are places where inequities can result in a lack of cultural safety for project participants. We will endeavour to do our utmost to attend to the cultural safety of all project participants by continually educating ourselves on this issue, making cultural safety a priority, rigorously examining our own protocols and behaviours, listening without defensiveness and acting on observations and concerns.

Diasporas is supported by

