

# art of DISSENT

National Conference  
Melbourne, 20-22 October 2002

Draft Program

## SUNDAY 20 OCTOBER - OPENING SESSION

### ANZ Pavilion, Victorian Arts Centre

#### 2.00pm: Indigenous Welcome to Country

#### 2.20pm: Introduction to Conference – Moderator: Anne Dunn

Anne Dunne is a national regional development and regional arts consultant and government advisor.

#### 2.30pm: Speaker – Robyn Archer

Drawing on the themes for the conference, Robyn will lay bare the issues and challenges facing the cultural sector and this conference.

#### 3.00pm: DissEntertainment

#### 3:30-4.00pm: Informal Networking

Bar will be open in the foyer of the ANZ Pavilion for informal networking.

#### 4.00–4:30pm: Ros Bower Award presentation ceremony

**Proceedings Close:** 4:30pm, to allow delegates to see 5.00pm Festival shows (all nearby).

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# MONDAY 21 OCTOBER

## The Art of Dissent – Dissent and Democracy

### 9.00am, Monday 21 October: The Famous Spiegeltent

- *What role does Dissent play in a democracy?*
- *How can artists use their skills and vision to move people to engage with issues that confront society?*
- *Is public dissent being silenced?*
- *How much are 'celebrations of culture' about dissenting voices?*
- *Dissent for dissent's sake, or dissent to create new visions?*

**Moderator - Guy RUNDLE**, co-editor of *Arena Magazine*, a publication of analysis of dissent and culture from a left perspective. Guy's focus is based on rethinking what it is to be left (that the socialist left position is irrecoverable) and how to engage audiences to rethink dissent. His writing and the journal have a strong engagement with cultural dissent.

#### Panel

- **Aizura HANKIN**, former editor of *Voiceworks*, a journal of young people's writing, Aizura is also a founding member of Space Station Media Lab, a collective involved in a campaigns ranging from East Timor to Woomera and working with Indigenous communities.
- **Deborah KELLY**, Visual artist and instigator of Boat-people.org, organising projection events including action to project images of tall ships onto the Sydney Opera house to highlight the hypocrisy of migration policies. She recently curated *Border Panic*, a show of artists' responses to the asylum seeker debate at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney.
- **Margo KINGSTON**, a journalist with a strong and vocal position on evolving trends and issues in Australian culture, currently writing for the Sydney Morning Herald.
- **Mike PARR**, performance artist and print-maker with work in major Australian galleries, perhaps more well-known for sewing his lips together as protest performance art

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## Boundaries and Borders – Refugees, Multiculturalism and Dissent

### 11.00am, Monday 21 October: ANZ Pavilion

This forum explores the work that artists are undertaking to challenge government policy on Asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and racism.

- *What does the current debate on asylum seekers say about the current state of multiculturalism in Australia?*
- *Are migrant communities and voices being heard and what are they saying?*
- *What can artists do and what are they doing to change government policy on Asylum seekers?*
- *Is it possible to make a difference?*

**Moderator - Nikos PAPASTERGIADIS**, Deputy Director of the Australia Centre at University of Melbourne and former head of the Centre for Ideas.

#### **Panel**

- **Don MACKAY**, a campaigner at the Refugee Embassy at Woomera who is strongly engaged with the issues of hate, racism and the role of government policy in pandering to the worst elements of human nature.
- **Jema STELLATO PLEDGER**, artist and activist and founding member of Artists for Refugees. Working on theatre show *My Country, My Killer, My Home*.
- **Eva SALLIS**, writer and driving force behind Australians Against Racism, and a board member of Australians for a Just Refugee Program. She has published two novels: *Hiam*, (winner of The Australian/Vogel Literary Award 1997 and the Nita May Dobbie Award in 1999) and *The City of Sealions* (2002). She is currently a lecturer at the University of Adelaide. She travels regularly to the Middle East, particularly Yemen.
- **Tamsin SALEHIAN**, a visual artist involved in both environmental and artistic projects in the UK and Australia over 10 years. Her current project is *Six Weeks of Asylum/Six weeks of Compassion*.
- **Arnold ZABLE**, engaging with issues of asylum seekers through his creative work and an initiator of Artists for Refugees.

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## Representing Difference – From Fringe to Mainstream, or When's the Celebration Over?

11.00am, Monday 21 October: Room 2

Many popular movements for social change have started from a dissenting drive for change. Many of these consciously adopted a strategy of Celebration in order to legitimise their marginalised positions. There is now a widespread re-examination of the nature of dissent and its problematic relationship with celebration.

- *Is social change still on the agenda for these movements focussing on celebration?*
- *What's mainstream and what's fringe? What's selling out?*
- *What lessons can be learnt from embracing celebration?*
- *Do communities risk being sidelined if more dissent is introduced?*
- *What is the role of a 'radical fringe'?*

### Panel

- **Tony DOYLE**, a leading advocate of Disability Culture, formerly with Arts Action SA and founder of High Beam Festival.
- Alexander **KOUTTAB**, co-founder of Al Haqq and Secretary of the Australian Arabic Council.
- **Jonathon PARSONS** (TBC), Associate producer at 2002 Adelaide Festival.
- **Jason SWEENEY**, sound hustler, text wrangler performance-maker and advocate of Queer theory, trying to reach into the mainstream while maintaining a dissenting focus.

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## Reversing the Flow – Enabling Regional Voices

**11.00am, Monday 21 October: Room 3**

'The Bush is screaming.' In the face of enormous challenges facing regional and remote Australia, there is remarkable resilience and persistent expression of dissent. How is this dissent reflected in the arts projects coming out of regional Australia?

- *Who speaks on behalf of regional communities?*
- *How do these communities engage in dissent and manifest this culturally in the face of isolation?*
- *What role should be played by bodies working with these communities to explore dissent beyond celebrations?*
- *How can the rest of Australia share and learn from this dissent?*

**Moderator – Anne DUNN**, National regional development and regional arts consultant, and government advisor.

### **Panel**

- **Andrea Hicks** is artist coordinator of "Small Towns, Big Picture" a project of the Cultural Development Network in regional Victoria
- **Mary-Denese HOLMES**, a narrative therapist in western Queensland assisting communities to develop and explore their stories, and Deputy Chair of Queensland Community Arts Network.
- **Onko KINGMA** (TBC) has worked in agricultural, rural and economics research and policy analysis in universities, research institutions and government.
- **Lochie McDONALD**, Albany Gaol project and Murray Bridge.
- **Alex REID**, Arts Development Manager, Country Arts SA.

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## Whose Festival? Can Arts Festivals Embrace Community Cultural Development?

### 1.30pm, Monday 21 October: ANZ Pavilion

- *Should arts festivals have a role other than showcasing outcomes of projects produced elsewhere? Should they commission and develop projects over a longer term and is this possible? Is there a place in arts festivals for cultural development?*
- *Who owns a festival and whose interests should it serve?*
- *How have arts festivals embraced community cultural development and what did they deliver?*
- *Do we need a new generation of programmers and how do we get them?*

**Moderator** – **Teresa CREA**, formerly Associate Producer, 2002 Adelaide Festival.

### **Panel**

- **Gay BILSON**, Associate Director, 2002 Adelaide Festival.
- **Lochie MCDONALD**, Murray Bridge project.
- **Jerril RECHTER**, Melbourne Festival associate producer, community outreach program.
- **Steven RICHARDSON**, Former Executive Producer of Next Wave Festival responsible for the opening up the recent, highly successful Festival to include longer-term, on-going developmental processes.

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## Propaganda of the Deed – Cultural Activism

### 3.30pm, Monday 21 October: ANZ Pavilion

A new generation of activists is creating spaces to organise and make public statements. Behind this activism lies strong communities with national and international links and passionate cultural engagement with powerful issues.

- *Can artists be activist leaders?*
- *How are cultural activists organising and how effective are they?*
- *How does on-line activism work?*
- *Who are the targets for this activism?*
- *What's the relationship between physical communities and on-line activism?*

Using specific campaigns as a focus for discussion, the panel engages the audience in examining the challenges facing their work.

**Moderator – Geoff SHARP**, General Editor of Arena Magazine.

#### **Panel**

- **Nik BEURET**, founding member of Space Station Media Lab and of the Indy Media Collective.
- **Marni CORDELL**, a founding editor of The Paper, an independent media tool and ran the national Young Writer's Festival in Newcastle for 2 years. She has recently completed *Small Voices*, a web-based project in East Timor and Indonesia.
- **Aizura HANKIN**, former editor of *Voiceworks* and spoken word performer, writer, activist, and founding member of Space Station Media Lab.
- **Geert LOVINK**, an exponent of internet culture as a space for public debate with new possibilities of dissent, running news reporting and explorations of cyber culture.
- **Kylie PURR** (TBC), Festival Manager of the National Young Writers Festival, part of *This Is Not Art*.

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## Radical Bodies

### 3.30pm, Monday 21 October: Room 2

Defining body image and sexuality has a long tradition of dissent, shock and actively seeking to challenge views of sexuality in Australian culture. The body is the site of 'first view' by a culture, and our most personal representation.

- *Are new forms of presenting 'radical bodies' seeking to change anything or are they manifestations of self-indulgence?*
- *Are our physical bodies still a site of dissent that can lead to genuine social and cultural change?*
- *How is the 'radical body' being explored in new ways?*
- *What makes a body radical? Is it radical simply because someone intends to be radical?*

**Moderator - George TALEPOROS**, lectures at Deakin University, wrote his Ph.D. on disability and sexuality, and has been influential in exploring cultural action by people with disabilities.

#### **Panel**

- **Jaye HAYES**, an emerging independent artist and activist whose work combines the theory of pirate/net radio with the processes of culture jamming and the practice of environmental dance – operating covertly in public and virtual space.
- **Belinda MASON-LOVERING** (TBC) recently produced an exhibition, *Intimate Encounters* a photographic exhibition about disability, sexuality and body image.
- **Nicky SULLIVAN** lectures in the Department of Critical and Cultural Studies at Macquarie University. Her areas of research are Queer Theory and Culture and Body Modification.
- **Jane TRENGOVE** is visualartist with extensive experience in community cultural development, sensitively combining identity politics and visual art practice in queer and disability communities

## MONDAY 21 OCTOBER – EVENING EVENTS

### **6.00pm, Monday 21 October: The Famous Spiegel tent**

Fitzroy Learning Network and Artists for Refugees present:

#### **Kan Yama Kan**

*This production played a sell-out season in Melbourne in July and returns for one night only.*

### **6.00pm, Monday 21 October: Radical Melbourne Walking Tour**

*Led by Jeff and Jill Sparrow, this popular walking tour exploring the sites of historical Dissent events in inner Melbourne.*

*Event will proceed weather permitting.*

### **8.30pm, Monday 21 October: Projection Event**

*Projection events as activism, **Boat-people.org** project images onto public spaces.*

*Event will proceed weather permitting.*

*A limited number of free tickets for Art of Dissent delegates are available for the listed evening events. Reservations can be made with the conference secretariat on 02 9519 0303 or at the conference registration desk on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2002 subject to availability.*

*Reserved tickets must be collected from the Art of Dissent registration desk before 12.00 pm on Monday 21st October 2002. All unclaimed tickets will then be reallocated to other conference delegates.*

## TUESDAY 22 OCTOBER

### From Maralinga – Back to Country

#### 9.30am. Tuesday 22 October: The Famous Spiegelent

Using the Maralinga Projects commissioned by the 2002 Adelaide Festival as a starting point, this forum explores how Indigenous communities are using new cultural projects to make empowering changes in their communities. The Maralinga Projects encapsulate some of the fundamental issues facing Indigenous people, including:

- *Recovering lost history – rewriting and revisioning history.*
- *Contamination and misuse of land.*
- *Building cultural identity.*
- *Campaigns for the right to return to traditional lands.*

This project received only limited coverage during the Adelaide Festival and yet may be seen as one of the most challenging and inspiring 2002 Festival projects. This forum will examine the project, its effects and implications for land rights.

**Moderator - Paul BROWN**, Co-ordinator, Environmental Studies at University of New South Wales and engaged in planning for Maralinga Projects for Adelaide Festival.

#### Panel

- **Dr Archie BARTON**, CEO of Maralinga Tjarutja Inc and long-term campaigner for the right of the Tjarutja people to return to their traditional lands.
- **Alison PAGE**, an Indigenous designer from Merrima Designs, Sydney who continues to consult with the Oak Valley community on the design and creation of an artroom.
- **Lynette WALLWORTH**, Associate Director of the 2002 Adelaide Festival and has worked in photography, short film, installation and performance. Lynette was the head curator and responsible for the project concept of *Big New Sites* produced by The Performance Space in Sydney. Part of her work for Adelaide Festival 2002 involved *Nourish*, a program of diverse art forms at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the *Desert Oaks* painting and art room project with the Oak Valley Community on Maralinga Land.

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## Blackfella/Whitefella – Toeing the Line

**11.00am, Tuesday 22 October: Room 1**

Exploring the relationships between white and Indigenous artists in working for cultural development.

- *Is there an appropriate relationship between whitefella and Indigenous artists?*
- *How could such a relationship flourish?*
- *Is there a conflict between perceived roles of rebellion / dissent and relationships between whitefella and blackfella artists?*
- *Should whitefellas butt out of the debate?*

This panel explores the question of working together – often in cross-cultural environments for social change.

**Moderator – Tony BIRCH**, Indigenous historian, lecturer in English at University of Melbourne.

### **Panel**

- **Wesley ENOCH**, freelance theatre director and formerly Artistic Director of Kooemba Djarra.
- **Gary FOLEY**, well known as an activist and actor and a curator at the Melbourne Museum.
- **David MILROY**, Artistic Director of Yirra Yaakin Noongar Theatre in Perth.
- **Rachael SWAIN** is Artistic Director of Marrugeku Theatre Company, a long-term inter-cultural project and makers of "Mimi" and "Crying Baby".

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**Seni untuk Seni; Seni untuk Rakyat**  
**(Art for Art; Art for the People)**

**11.00am, Tuesday 22 October: Room 2**

Following on from the strong engagement of artists in supporting the causes of East Timor, this forum looks to the future.

- *Redefining political and artistic practice in the world's newest nation.*
- *Which are the cultures of East Timor, post-independence?*
- *What is the role of cultural action in independent East Timor?*
- *Is culture becoming the domain of elites?*
- *What drives Australian artists to engage in East Timor?*

**Moderator - Alex TILMAN**, secretary of the East Timor Students Association, who has worked for the Department of Serious Crimes in the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor. He is currently working on an Honours thesis at Victoria university on the politics of Constitution Making in East Timor.

**Panel**

- **Maria Alice CASIMIRO BRANCO**, an East Timorese activist based in Darwin and has worked on a number of cultural projects, including with Graham Pitts over 15 years.
- **Susan DITTER**, artistic director of Corrugated Iron Youth Theatre in Darwin. She has been involved in *Timor on the Move* (providing bicycles for East Timor) and is planning *Darwin/Dili*, involving the development of an adult circus troupe.
- **Eugenio Fatima LEMOS** is a musician from East Timor who plays contemporary music with *5 de Oriente* promoting local culture and also a trainer for sustainable agriculture in East Timor.
- **Graham PITTS**, who has had a long engagement with political theatre throughout Australia. His works have been performed in both mainstream and community settings, including recent work about East Timor.

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## Speaking for Ourselves – Dissent in the Ranks

**11.00am, Tuesday 22 October: Room 3**

Are young people being sold out? An exploration of the empowerment and dynamism cultural activism amongst young people.

- *What is the role of artists working with young people?*
- *Does this relationship change when multiple layers of disadvantage are involved?*
- *Is there a gap between rhetoric and reality?*
- *Who speaks for young people?*
- *Is it possible to have a long-term presence working with disadvantaged young people?*
- *What real change is possible?*

**Moderator - Martin THIELE**, formerly co-ordinator at Connexions Jesuit Social Services and recently wrote a book with Sally Marsden on evaluation of cultural development work with young people.

### **Panel**

- **Kara BEAVIS**, attached to Contact Youth Theatre researching models for working with young people from refugee backgrounds.
- **Philip CRAWFORD**, Coordinator of Big hArt projects.
- **Natasha CHO**, Chair of Victorian Writers Centre, young writer and writer and advocate.
- **John HARVEY**, Co-ordinator of Young People's program, Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjarra Yankunytjatjarra.
- **Lena NAHLOUS**, Program Manager of Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE), a community cultural and information development organisation based in Parramatta NSW, working with disadvantaged communities in western Sydney.

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## Breaking the Code – Disability and Genetic Engineering

**1.30pm, Tuesday 22 October: Room 4**

Questioning issues of genetic engineering from the perspective of people with disabilities, this forum uses arts projects as a springboard for insights into the role of arts to engage in broader social debates.

- *What does the debate about human genetic engineering say about how society treats people, and people with disabilities in particular?*
- *What ethical issues confront artists with disabilities when engaging on these issues?*
- *How can the voices of people with disabilities best contribute to such debates?*

### Panel

- **Oron CATTS** is a wet biology art practitioner specialising in tissue engineering and is Artistic Director of *Symbiotica* at the Department of Anatomy and Human biology, University of Western Australia.
- **Bruce GLADWIN** and members of the ensemble from *Back to Back*.
- **Kate SULAN**, member of *Rawcus*.
- **Susie DEE**, animateur and director of *Teratology*, an Institute of Complex Entertainment (ICE) production examining a speculative future of genetic engineering.
- **Tony DOYLE**, a leading advocate of Disability Culture, formerly with Arts Action SA and founder of High Beam Festival.

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## Democratising Culture

**3.00pm, Tuesday 22 October: Room 4**

To create a new reality, we have to imagine that it is possible. Having focussed on Dissent, how do we go about promoting change in our society?

- *Can the creative realm transform reality and society?*
- *How can cultural activists engage more fully in the issues facing our society?*
- *Does Dissent have to remain in the margins or does 'going mainstream' kill it?*
- *Should we refuse the boxes we are put in?*
- *Can dissenting practice be encouraged by institutions or must it always arise from the grass roots to be effective?*
- *What can we do to valorise dissent?*

**Moderator - Mary KALANTZIS**, Dean, Faculty of Education, Language and Community Services at RMIT. She is and co-author of a number of books including *A Place in the Sun: Recreating the Australian Way of Life*.

### Panel

- **Florencia BERINSTEIN**, an award-winning Argentinean-born artist working in Ontario Canada working with a range of communities on Public Art and Urban design projects.
- **Alissar CHIDIAC** is a cultural development worker with over twenty years experience in a wide range of community based projects, including community arts and theatre work, community development and education with young people and women, as well as adult education with migrants.
- **Richard ECKERSLEY**, one of Australia's leading researchers in quality of life issues, is a Fellow at the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health, The Australian National University.
- **Jon HAWKES**, director of Community Music Victoria and author of *The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability: Culture's Essential Role in Public Planning*. Jon was Director of the Australian Centre for International Theatre (1991-98), a founding member of Circus Oz and a former director of the Community Arts board of the Australia Council.
- **Alan ROGERS**, Manager of Community and Lifestyle at Brisbane City Council.
- **Megan SPENCER**, a maker of 'transgressive' documentary film, a film reviewer at JJJ and passionate advocate of taking transgression mainstream.

**Alissar Chidiac** is a cultural development worker with over twenty years experience in a wide range of community based projects, including community arts and theatre work, community development and education with young people and women, as well as adult education with migrants.

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