



URBAN THEATRE PROJECTS 2014 Artistic Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

URBAN THEATRE PROJECTS' CURRENT BUSINESS PLAN 2012-2014 FOCUSES ON 4 KEY GOALS:

- Make distinctive new performance works that are nationally and internationally significant, and extend the company's role as a leader in artistic excellence.
- Provide the best conditions for quality art making supporting the development of artists and contemporary performance in western Sydney.
- Ensure artistic vibrancy and financial viability through building on existing relationships and exploring new markets.
- Ensure that the company is adequately resourced and operates efficiently and effectively with high standards of governance and accountability

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS DURING 2014:

- Presentation of *My Radio Heart* at Lismore City Hall and Bankstown Arts Centre, in partnership with NORPA
- Presentation of *Democratic Garden*, a commission by Blacktown Arts Centre
- Presentation of *On the Verge of Bloom* by Nicole Barakat, installed on the façade of Bankstown Arts Centre, viewed by at least 15,000 people over the course of 6 weeks
- Development of *Future Present*, a 2-week master class for 10 South Australian artists as part of Adhocracy, produced by Vitalstatistix
- Development and production of 4 new short works for radio by Aboriginal artists as part of *B-Side*
- Development of 9 new works for BANKSTOWN:LIVE
- Support of 4 artist residencies throughout the year
- Establishing the 2200:Review group which comprised 7 local Bankstown residents attending 11 works throughout 2014 with UTP.



PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS



Image credit: Katie Holmes

FINAL STAGE REHEARSAL & PREMIERE SEASON
AT NORPA & BANKSTOWN ARTS CENTRE.
COMMISSIONED BY NORPA. CO-PRODUCED BY NORPA
& URBAN THEATRE PROJECTS

Director/Writer: Rosie Dennis
Performers: Mathew Daymond, Lydian Dunbar, Claudie Frock, Zac Mifsud, Phoebe Rose & Randolph Reimann
Sound Design: Lawrence English
Co-Sound Design: Randolph Reimann
Video Design: Samuel James
Prod Manager: Frank Mainoo
Producers: Bethwynn Hackett NORPA & Bibi Serafim, UTP

Season: 27-29 Mar (Premiere)
9-12 Apr (Presentation)

Partners: Vincent Fairfax Foundation,
Wilson Park Public School, See Space

ABOUT THE PROJECT

In March 2014 after 7 weeks of creative development (spanning 18 months) and 3 weeks of rehearsal, NORPA in partnership with Urban Theatre Projects presented *My Radio Heart* at Lismore City Hall, a new Australian theatre work made in regional NSW with people living with a disability.

The seed for *My Radio Heart* was planted when band members from experimental sound ensemble Tralala Blip began comparing a long list of repetitive tasks that dictated the daily rhythm of their lives. Using this as a starting point, we explored the notion of disrupting this routine and finding love.

The final work was inspired by the Marvel comic book series X-Men and arcade video games to create a love story for the 21st Century. Cinematic audio-visuals charged with punk rock and electronica music created a breathtaking fantasy world for 2 young protagonists, in 2 separate worlds, trying to piece together the past and discover the future.

For Tralala Blip, the challenges of doing My Radio Heart had such a payoff that it was experienced as a truly epic adventure. From overcoming personal and cultural limitations of what one is perceived to be capable of, to working hard to overcome these self-imposed and cultural concepts, and to delivering the final show, was a grand achievement.

— TraLala Blip band members

Key to the success of the work was providing the performers with the opportunity to develop their performance skills within a structured environment designed to suit their needs. This artistic process was simultaneously challenging and deeply rewarding for the band members, exposing them to new skills and asking them to trust in a process which was

unfamiliar. Two band members have Downs Syndrome and one is developmentally delayed; all 3 thrived within this process and grew both personally and professionally. The routine, discipline and structure of the rehearsal process gave them confidence in their everyday lives which was regularly communicated to NORPA and UTP via carers and family members.

For 2 years I worked with Urban Theatre Projects on My Radio Heart. It was one of the best things I have ever done. I loved showing people – young, old and everyone in between – that anything is possible if you believe in yourself and have people around you who believe in you. Having a disability shouldn't stop you from living your dream.

— Lydian Dunbar, Tralala Blip Band member

I was personally blown away by the work and think its a stunning theatre installation work, moving and clever. The creative team and cast and all involved have done such an amazing job.

— Julian Louis, Artistic Director, NORPA

I can honestly say it was one of the best creative experiences the students have had to date. Inclusive, challenging, inspiring and respectful.

— Lisa McInerney, Assistant Principal, Wilson Park Public School – participating school in the creation of *My Radio Heart*, 2013/14

Following the Lismore premiere, the work toured to Sydney where it had a 4 night season (including a matinee) at Bankstown Arts Centre. Both seasons were warmly received by audiences.

As part of the *My Radio Heart* Sydney season we offered 2 workshops for people living with a disability. Tralala Blip led a 2-hour sound composition workshop for young people aged 8-12 years old and Tim Bishop and Rosie Dennis led an all ages movement workshop.

MEDIA

The media coverage was outstanding, covering a broad range of mediums (print, online, radio and television) and different perspectives and aspects of the show, from its multimedia dimension to the unique music ability of the band Tralala Blip and their development as musicians to performers.

Sydney's Urban Theatre Projects and Northern Rivers Performing Arts have put together something so creative and unique with My Radio Heart that it lingers in the mind long after the piece ends.

— The Northern Star

AUDIENCE

The work played to a sold-out audience in Lismore and to 80% capacity in Bankstown, a strong result for a work made in regional NSW.

"I am 72 years old and attended My Radio Heart. To use a modern phrase I was blown away by the production.... The combination of the music, video projection and wonderful acting in such a simple setting was a riveting performance.

— Audience member, NORPA

I saw the production of My Radio Heart on Saturday and haven't been able to stop thinking about it since! Gentle, captivating, insightful, endearing, inspiring, poignant, and profound, I was pleased to be able to share this with my family who enjoyed it also.

— Matthew Sloper, Multi-task caseworker

FUTURE OF WORK

There has been international interest in the work which both presenting partners are exploring for 2016.



ON THE VERGE OF BLOOM

Image Credit: Rosie Dennis

WORKSHOPS & PUBLIC INSTALLATION COMMISSIONED BY URBAN THEATRE PROJECTS

Lead Artist: Nicole Barakat
Participants: Kevin Bala, Barbara Barakat, Liane Beattie, Cheryl, Sunila Dass, Sarah Dorofaeff, Beverley Ellis, Hanh Ly, Frances Panopoulos, Glenda Rawlinson, Joe Roche, Josephine Roche, Tian Sisak, Victoria Sisak, Amanda Thompson, Jocelyn Vyse, Leanne Ward.

Workshops: 20 Feb–12 Apr
Installation: 25 Jul–30 Sep

BACKGROUND

On the Verge of Bloom is a collaborative artwork created with members of the local Bankstown community. Over a period of 8 weeks the group, led by visual artist Nicole Barakat, came together to transform everyday discarded household materials into a luscious garden of hand-made flowers and plants.

The project took inspiration from the flowers and plants growing in the garden of local resident Frances Panopoulos. In October 2013, Nicole was in residence in France's backyard as part of UTP's *Practice & Participate* program. For 2 weeks, the backyard became a studio and Nicole spent time drawing the garden, writing and creating material responses from the daily refuse of the Panopoulos family.

From these initial drawings and small material explorations, the group developed a larger scale collection of plastic plants. They worked intensely over 12 workshops to transform Bankstown residents' rubbish into objects of beauty and wonder.

This project is about the environmental aspect of reusing but also the idea of transforming things that have been discarded. It's about the idea that you can transform things into something beautiful. It's not about rubbish but more about the conceptual idea of taking things that are not valued and revaluing them and also transforming things from within us.

— Nicole Barakat, Lead Artist

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

Surveyed participants agreed that the workshops exceeded their expectations, agreeing that they met people they wouldn't normally meet and felt a sense of accomplishment participating in a public art installation. The workshops also made them think more seriously about recycling/re-using materials.

I really liked the idea of using recycled products to make art, because there is already too much waste to create new things. There was a good sense of community participation and contribution.

— Workshop participant

FUTURE OF WORK

We are exploring options with a Bankstown school to gift the artwork. This is being led by Nicole Barakat.



DEMOCRATIC GARDEN

Image: Katie Green

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROJECT COMMISSIONED BY BLACKTOWN ARTS CENTRE

Lead Artist:	Rosie Dennis
Project Managers:	Tian Zhang (UTP), Paschal Berry (BAC)
Participants:	Krishna Acharya, Tulasi Adhikari, Evelyn, Alejandro, Russell Ashley, Stephen Boyle, Gordon Burr, Ana Carter, Teresita Colcol, Stella Cunningham, Agnes D'Souza, Desdemona Grudziens, Gina Hammond, Ben Hammond, Debra Hansel, Amy Henderson, Paul Hew, Andrew Jarvis, Hari Khadka, Efren Maalat, Naty Millarez, Daphne Placho, Ganesh Poudli, Eliza Scarpellino, Nelia Sumcad, Jenny Tisdell, Tom V. Tomic, Georgie Tuck & Beatriz van den Bosch
Prod Manager:	Eamonn Mcloughlin
Builder:	David Hawkes
Install Team:	Adam Kennedy & Will Newell
Watering:	Tom V. Tomic
Workshops:	28 Jul–8 Oct
Installation:	9 Oct–1 Nov
Partners:	Blacktown Arts Centre

ABOUT THE PROJECT

In March 2013, Urban Theatre Projects premiered *Life As We Know It*. Part of the set for this show was a vertical pallet garden. The garden attracted a lot of interest from audiences which led us to consider whether or not we could re-use the set for a new collaborative project. The result was *Democratic Garden*.

Commissioned by Blacktown Arts Centre, *Democratic Garden* is a purpose-built vertical pallet garden. The project begins with a stack of custom-made empty packing pallets and a call-out to local green (and non-green) thumbs who are interested in joining a “vertical gardening group”.

We had interest from 21 local residents and a core group of approximately 12 people who attended weekly workshops onsite at Blacktown Arts Centre and at Grantham Community Gardens in Seven Hills.

For 8 weeks the group met weekly to discuss ideas for plants and garden design that in some way connected to the social fabric of Blacktown, whether that be through food, personality or cultural traditions. The workshops were open to all ages and required only a healthy curiosity and an open mind.

Collectively the group agreed that the residents of Blacktown and the surrounding suburbs are “open, progressive and generous” – a counter view to the (often) negative portrayal of the area in the wider mainstream media. The final work was installed in the Blacktown Arts Centre carpark for 4 weeks and was planted with medicinal weeds, herbs, leafy greens and flowers.

We shared everything together. It was very multicultural, understanding each other and respecting each other. Now we know where this plant comes from, how you cook it because you only know how to cook one way. It's like people; we have to grow together, especially in Blacktown!
— Naty, Democratic Garden participant

It represents us, it represents the place, our connection to it....all of our ideas could be incorporated and everyone from Blacktown can come here and enjoy it.
— Desdemona, Democratic Garden participant

It's a gathering of cultures. It's a gathering of different types of people entwining and creating something that's organic and natural – plant based products.
— Ana, Democratic Garden participant

FUTURE

Blacktown Arts Centre were extremely happy with the project, and are considering purchasing the garden infrastructure from UTP to create something more permanent for the arts centre.

It was great to work with you and the UTP team again! And so lovely to have that garden at the arts centre, not to mention all the gardeners! Today we took delivery of a Brook Andrew caravan, which we had on site at the artist camps, and has been donated to us by Gadigal Information Services. My initial thought is that we might make a little garden around it and involve the Democratic Gardeners! Thanks to you and the team for a great project.
— Jenny Bisset, Director Blacktown Arts Centre

This was the first iteration of this project and whilst the structure was known (vertical – antithetical to democratic some would argue), the plants and the overall design were decided upon collaboratively.

Both *Democratic Garden* and *Future Present* (page 19) saw UTP engage new models of collaboration with partners that involved UTP's expertise in community engagement and brokering new relationships with the wider community for our collaborating partner. We would like to continue to refine this area of practice and view it as a potential revenue stream for UTP in the future.



CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

Image: Christopher Woe

SHORT WORKS NIGHT

KEY ARTISTS: Phil Soliman & Teta (his grandmother)
Arab Theatre Studio
Rhonda Dee
Gemma Quilty
Fadle El Harris
Adam Hatzimanolis & Robert McMahon
Sabrina D'Angelo

Residency: 28 Apr–2 May

Season: 2 May

Partners: Bankstown Arts Centre,
Bankstown Youth Development Service

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Urban Theatre Projects initiated a 3-way project curated and produced in collaboration with Bankstown Arts Centre and Bankstown Youth Development Service.

The curatorial team consisted of Vandana Ram, Tim Carroll and Rosie Dennis. An open call was made to artists working across artforms to explore the theme of “Close Encounters”. Works presented spanned installation, film and live performance and grappled with the theme of otherness and connection.

It was a well attended evening which opened with Phil Soloman sharing a chickpea soup made from his Teta’s recipe and closed with the wry, dry wit of Sabrina D’Angelo. It gave UTP the opportunity to creatively partner with our peers at the arts centre and invest in the development of new work by western Sydney artists.



WORKS IN PROGRESS



BANKSTOWN: LIVE DEVELOPMENT

Image: Jagath Dheerasekara

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW WORK COMMISSIONS FOR BANKSTOWN:LIVE

2014 culminated in a series of residencies and rehearsals for our Sydney Festival project BANKSTOWN:LIVE – 9 new works presented in backyards and on a suburban street in Bankstown over 4 nights.

The seed for BANKSTOWN:LIVE was planted in 2013 with our neighbourhood residency project *Practice & Participate*. *Practice & Participate* gave artists an environment in which to play, experiment and explore new models of collaborative practice in a facilitated/curated context that directly engaged with place (site) and people (community). Both Toby Martin and Alwin Reamillo began working on their BANKSTOWN:LIVE project during *Practice & Participate*. During this ‘lab’ we also connected with 4 families living on Northam Avenue. We maintained these relationships throughout 2014 and collaborated with them to realise BANKSTOWN:LIVE.

For the most part, the BANKSTOWN:LIVE artists were commissioned to create new works. Artists began conceptually developing these works mid-2014 and making the works on-the-ground between September–December.

RESIDENT HOSTS

Parallel to the artists engaging with the neighbourhood and making work, UTP sought out participants, volunteers and home owners willing to share in our vision to connect the neighbourhood. This was done via door knocking, a local media campaign, letterbox drop, social media and word-of-mouth.

I was delighted to offer my front yard (and backyard) which were accepted by you for the project Practice & Participate for a period of 2 weeks in October 2013 for the purpose of Art Making by 2 resident artists. A year later I am really excited to be continuing the collaboration

with UTP by offering my backyard as a location for BANKSTOWN:LIVE as part of Sydney Festival 2015 and do something for the Bankstown local community.

If we look to the future as being behind a closed door, perhaps by supporting projects like BANKSTOWN:LIVE such as the one above and others, it may well be that we can gently push that door open, be it ever so slightly, peer through the dim mists swirling behind it, and obtain a glimpse of what that future may be.

— David Cranston, Resident Partner

.....

SONGS FROM NORTHAM AVENUE

Lead Artist: Toby Martin
Musicians: Alex Hadchiti, Mohammed Lelo, Anh Linh Pham & Phu Tran
Residency: Throughout 2014
Residents: Michael Kamaleddine, David & Katherine Cranston

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Following on from his 2013 *Practice & Participate* residency, Toby Martin worked on and off during 2014 from 3 locations in Bankstown – a small mixed business on Chapel Road South, a weatherboard house on Northam Avenue and a studio space at Bankstown Arts Centre. The focus of the 2014 residency was to use the material from 2013 and write songs for a live performance (and possible album). Toby concluded his residency with a small showing in Michael Kamaleddine’s corner store.

It was great to have the opportunity to play those new songs ‘in situ’ and to some of the people who helped inspire them.

— Toby Martin

BANKSTOWN DANCING PROJECT

Choreographer: Emma Saunders
Lead Dancers: Nancy & Albert Oh
Residency: Oct-Dec

ABOUT THE PROJECT

In September we placed an open call for couples and families living in Bankstown LGA to participate in 2 dancing projects. The first was a contemporary take on the Rumba with an established Bankstown-based ballroom dancing group who meet weekly at the Bankstown Trotting Club. The second was a re-working of the Hokey Pokey.

The groups met weekly both onsite at Bankstown Arts Centre and at the Trotting Club. Toby Martin also attended rehearsals with the ballroom group and performed his song *Spring Feeling* written whilst in residence during 2014.

.....

LULLABY MOVEMENT

Lead Artist: Sophia Brous
Residents: Berrie Clark; Eftehia; Mona Goubran; Rita Khawaja & Manar Kobaili; Niki Mountakis; Lina, Ronnie, Neva & Asian Women at Work Mother's Group; Seyi & Lola Lagoke; Demetra Stratakis; Jola & Kujawy Sydney; Erica & Malifrankopani; Lina Nguyen; Sudha Natarajan & RAIN Inc.; and Nissirine, Julia & Lebanese Film Festival.
Residency: Nov

ABOUT THE PROJECT

UTP Producer Antonia Seymour and Project Manager Tian Zhang hosted Melbourne/UK based artist Sophia Brous for an intensive 7-day residency. During this time Sophia met with more than 12 Bankstown families who contributed a lullaby for BANKSTOWN:LIVE. From mid November-December Sophia worked remotely, liaising with UK musicians David Coulter and Leo Abrahams to shape and arrange the content. The trio returned to Sydney in January 2015 for final stage rehearsals and presentation of the work.

.....

BANKSTOWN BAYANHIAN HOPPING SPIRIT HOUSE

Lead Artist: Alwin Reamillo
Builder: David Hawkes
Residency: Sep-Dec

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The floods in Manila and typhoon Haiyan triggered Filipino visual artist Alwin Reamillo's interest in temporary shelters which, in times of natural disasters, have become a 'forced' home to many people. In response to these natural disasters and the resulting impermanence of home, Alwin began to develop a 'pro-forma' temporary shelter as part of his 2013 *Practice & Participate* residency. Architecturally the temporary shelter was inspired by the bamboo huts/homes in the Philippines. The house is built from found materials and bamboo with key collaborator and builder David Hawkes.

The grounding of the project is on a particular cultural practice. The best way to demonstrate this is to have a visible presence to the community. The process was meaningful and real, the outcome positively charged.
- Alwin Reamillo

During this second stage residency Alwin conducted a number of workshops in Bankstown and Blacktown with local residents and more specifically, members of the Filipino community, engaging them in the artistic and creative process.

The *Bankstown Bayanihan Hopping Spirit House* culminated in a traditional ceremony of local residents carrying the house through the suburban streets of Bankstown.

.....

THE LAST WORD

Writers: Peter Polites, Samantha Hogg, Robyn Schmitz, David Cranston, Amanda Yeo & Gaele Sobott
Performers: HaiHa Le, Russell Kiefel, Vicki Van Hout, Maddy Madden, Peter Polites & Susannah Bayes-Morton
Composer: James Brown
Engineer: Mitchell Hart
Residency: Sep-Dec
Partners: Sweatshop Literacy Movement & University of Western Sydney

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Building on our investment in supporting new writing from Western Sydney for digital content, UTP commissioned 5 writers at varying stages in their career, from emerging to mid-career, to respond to the provocation of the last word or words that they may say to a family member or loved one. Each text was performed by an actor and recorded at the studios at University of Western Sydney Nepean campus. The final works were compiled into a 47-minute audio experience for audiences to experience through headphones whilst sitting in a suburban backyard.

.....

THE TRIBE

Writer: Michael Mohammed Ahmad
Adaptation: Michael Mohammed Ahmad & Janice Muller
Director: Janice Muller
Performer: Hazem Shammas
Prod Support: Frank Mainoo
Residents: David & Katherine Cranston
Partners: Sweatshop Literacy Movement, University of Western Sydney
Residency: Aug & Nov-Dec

ABOUT THE PROJECT

...I was only 7 when this happened but it always feels like right now. My Tayta raises her blouse and shows me her stomach. It's so big it rests on her large thighs. Her skin is golden and soft, and sometimes, when she holds me close and kisses me, her body feels like a plastic bag filled with warm water. Tayta's hands are like wood because she has arthritis. They're thick and brown and dry and she can hardly move them, except for when she's preparing aa-jin - dough. Tayta places both her hands on the base of her stomach and she lifts. She reveals to me eleven scars that look like train tracks running in different directions just below her belly button....

- Excerpt, *The Tribe*, Michael Mohammed Ahmad

The Tribe is a personal story written by Michael Mohammed Ahmad about the death of his grandmother. It is told through the eyes of a 7-year-old boy and takes the audience from inner city Alexandria to the streets of Lakemba.

UTP invited writer Michael Mohammed Ahmad and director Janice Muller to adapt the novella *The Tribe* into a 1-hour monologue to be presented in a suburban Bankstown backyard. The pair worked intensively over a 6-week period to develop a first draft script before a 3 week creative development in December 2014 with actor Hazam Shammis. Final stage rehearsals and presentation took place in the backyard of local Bankstown resident David Cranston in January 2015.

FAMILY PORTRAITS

Lead Artist: Joanne Saad

Residents: Aminata Bangura & Fatmata Bangura; Ali Naji, Firas Naji, Leith Naji, Layla Naji & Layal Naji; Christos Panopoulos & Georgia Panopoulos; Rayanne Ziam & Wafa Ziam

Residency: Oct-Dec

ABOUT THE PROJECT

A call-out was distributed looking for Bankstown families to participate in *Family Portraits* – Joanne Saad’s conceptually simple, artistically rigorous and generous work. Joanne photographed the interior of each family’s house and printed these interiors as large photographic backdrops. The backdrops were installed on the suburban street during BANSKTOWN:LIVE and each family hosted audience members, sharing sweet black tea, coffee and personal stories.



DIGITAL

Image, B-Side, Rosie Dennis



BRE & BACK

Image Credit: Carolyn Constantine

DOCUMENTARY FILM

Director: Rosie Dennis
Contributors: Jenny Shillingsworth
Grace Shillingsworth
Lily Shearer
Noeleen Shearer
Also Featuring: Mary Waites
Lindsay Waites
Meg Tredinnick
Doreen Murphy
Sandra Murphy
Douglas Orcher
Eljerian Cubby
Ross Coleman
Debra Gilchrist
Thomas French
Cinematography: Bonnie Elliott & Carolyn Constantine
Sound Recordist: David Tranter
Editor: Dena Curtis
Producer: Antonia Seymour
Production Asst: Frank Mainoo
Dates: Mar-Dec
Partners: NSW Department of Family and Community Services and Arts NSW.

ABOUT

Ngemba woman Jenny Shillingsworth travels from her home in Minto, south-west Sydney back to her birthplace – Brewarrina – a small and once thriving town in the far reaches of north-west NSW. She goes to visit her mother, Grace, and her extended family. Taken away by authorities at a young age and brought up in a Christian home, Jenny has had to rekindle her relationship with her mother over the years and rediscover her culture.

Until recently, Murawarri woman Lily Shearer lived in Belmore, in Sydney's west. After 27 years of living off country she moved back to Brewarrina to spend time with her mother, Noeleen. Lily talks of the strong family and cultural values Noeleen instilled in her and her brothers. Invited into the rhythm of the everyday, Noeleen shares stories of her family, fishing and living in Bre.

The interweaving stories of Jenny and Grace, Lily and Noeleen go to the heart of one of the most important relationships in our lives – that with our mother. Inherent in their stories is Australia's history of the Stolen Generation and the impact this has had on families and communities. The focus of *Bre & Back* is on the strength of these 4 inspiring women, and their stories of wisdom and resilience, love and forgiveness.

BACKGROUND

The idea for the documentary came after a lunch date Rosie Dennis had with Jenny Shillingsworth back in early 2013. During lunch, Rosie and Jenny talked about their mothers. That day, Rosie took away a profoundly different perspective on the mothers' experience of the children who were taken as part of the Stolen Generation.

Following on from this, Rosie invited Lily Shearer and her mother, Noeleen Shearer to be part of the documentary. Over the next 3 months Rosie had regular conversations with Lily and Jenny, conversations that would eventually shape the content of the film.

The process of making the film involved regular one-on-one sessions with Rosie 3 months out from filming. She listened to our stories and that shaped the work from the beginning. This process was very different to what I'm used to as a collaborating artist. What made the process different was the relationship and trust building through the exercises and the weekly, and very long phone chats leading up to the shooting of the film. Rosie has a holistic approach and understanding of Aboriginal cultural practice and protocols, which I found easy to engage with and brought out memories of childhood for both mum and I.
– Lily Shearer

Rosie & Antonia made a site visit to Brewarrina in early September ahead of filming to scope out locations and seek permission from the local Aboriginal elders to film.

Following this visit, the film-crew had 2 short (5-day) location shoots in Brewarrina and a 3-day shoot in Sydney. Editing of the documentary took place during December 2014 and January 2015.

A rough cut of the documentary was shown to the contributors and their families in December 2014 for feedback. All women were extremely positive about their portrayal. This informal screening was also attended by industry colleagues Andrea James and Liza-Mare Syron who continue to provide support and advice on Indigenous protocols to UTP.

FUTURE

The film is due to premiere as part of BANKSTOWN:LIVE for Sydney Festival in 2015, with subsequent screenings during Senior's week at Bankstown Arts Centre and the Art Gallery of NSW, and a special screening at the Festival of Baiame's Ngunnhu in Brewarrina.

We are continuing to pursue a number of film festival opportunities, a screening at NSW Parliament House and are in conversation with ABC Television's acquisition department and Ronin films.



B-SIDE

FAST & FURIOUS WEEK OF WRITING FOR RADIO FOR INDIGENOUS ARTISTS

Writers:	Gayle Kennedy, Billy MacPherson, Vicki Van Hout and Robyn Schmitz
Performers:	Maddy Madden, Luke Carroll & Jesse Guivarra
Sound Design:	Gail Priest
Dramaturg:	Rosie Dennis
Residency:	4-8 Aug
Studio Recording:	9 Aug
Partners:	Gadigal Information Service

ABOUT THE PROJECT

B-side is UTP's Indigenous digital writing program. Over the course of a week, 4 Indigenous artists at various stages in their career are commissioned to write a new short work for radio. Within the week-long intensive the artists were supported by UTP's Artistic Director, who provided provocations and dramaturgical support.

The project gave 69-year old Bankstown local resident Robyn Schmitz the opportunity to work with and learn from 3 experienced artists. At times Robyn felt a little out of her depth, but with support from the peers in the room Robyn crafted a strong poetic text about her mother's time at the Cootamundra Girls Home. Robyn's work was also included in *The Last Word* podcasts that were presented at BANKSTOWN:LIVE 2015.

Experienced Aboriginal poet and author Gayle Kennedy wrote an inter-generational drama called *The Debut*. Set in a small outback town it tells the story of a tomboy grand daughter and her Pa on the eve of making her debut.

Choreographer Vicki van Hout used the week-long residency to craft an insightful, sharp and funny triptych of shory essays called *The Umbrella* which used the history of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy as creative fuel.

I was wrought in a time of contradiction hinged on free love, sit-ins, tune-outs, flower power and the renewed yellow peril. Hendrix, The Animals, The Doors, Cylla Black and Soul, blasting the soundwaves of the perilous tropics. We were white. We were invisible. But we had the vote.
 – Excerpt Vicki Van Hout's *The Umbrella*

Billy MacPherson used the week to adapt a section of his stage play *Cuz*, a playful work which explores the relationship between two cousins.

The week culminated in an open studio reading ahead of a studio recording at Koori Radio.

THE FUTURE

Urban Theatre Projects is committed to producing *B-side* for 3 years. Podcasts are available on our website and will soon be available on iTunes.



RESIDENCIES

UTP has a demonstrated track record in supporting young and emerging artists to develop their own aesthetic and voice within a well supported artistic and producing environment. During 2014 UTP supported 3 *SPACE* Residencies, 4 independent artist residencies and an R & D project for 10 South Australian artists.



FUTURE PRESENT

Image Credit: Emma Webb

A 2-WEEK MASTERCLASS FOR 10 SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ARTISTS WHICH INVITED ARTISTS INTO DIALOGUE WITH FARMERS, INNOVATORS & ACTIVISTS. PRESENTED AS PART OF VITALSTATISTIX'S ADHOCRACY PROGRAM.

KEY ARTISTS

Facilitator:

Rosie Dennis

Artists:

Alysha Herrmann
Ashton Malcolm
Edwin Kemp Attrill
Emily McMahon
John Willanski
Josephine Were
Meg Wilson
Rebecca Meston
Susie Skinner

Industry Partners: Wayne Bright, Aboriginal Farmer
Adrian Matthews, Barrafresh Fishfarm
Chris Mosey, Waterloo Windfarm
Daniel Spencer, Youth Climate Coalition
John Rohde, Rohde's Free Range Eggs
Kristin Alford, Bridge8
Nathaniel Wiseman, Wagtail Urban Farm
Rachel Mundy, Youth Climate Coalition
Roberta & John Swinbank, self-declared greenies
Steven Clarke, SARDI
Ulli Spranz, B.-d. Farm Paris Creek
Ron Newchurch, Nunga Produce

Dates:

26 May-9 Jun

Partners:

Vitalstastix, SA

ABOUT THE PROJECT

In June 2014, Urban Theatre Projects was in residence with *Future Present*, a 2-week masterclass which paired 10 South Australian artists from a range of artistic disciplines with 10 individuals who are leading innovation and activism around climate change and primary industry in South Australia. The 'lab' explored the critical global issue of climate change and economic transition, and looked at sustainable farming models in relation to a sustainable artistic practice.

Over the course of the 2 weeks the *Future Present* artists undertook field trips and research, exploring the lives of those who bring food to our tables and developed 3 presentations that informed, questioned and inspired. The presentations were shared at Adhocracy, Vitalstatistix's national artist hothouse.

PROCESS

In February 2014, UTP Artistic Director, Rosie Dennis began desk-based research on local South Australian farmers and individuals interested in sustainable farming practices and the future of farming in Australia.

In May, Rosie visited SA and met with 6 industry partners to brief them on the project and the *Future Present* artists. The final group of industry partners included a fish, free range egg, dairy, herb, urban and wind farm as well as individuals and government representatives.

The *Future Present* masterclass was structured in 3 parts:

Part 1: Site Visits

Part 2: Processing site visits/discussion/provocations/generating content

Part 3: 3-day Adhocracy weekend, open studio

Part 1 was a stimulating and all consuming week with 9 meetings/site visits to a range of farmers from a small-scale urban farm to an Indigenous farmer working the land in Port Victoria. Each session lasted for approximately half a day and included travel to and from the site.

Part 2 was more fluid and focused on task-based creative exercises (both solo and small group) and larger group discussion about the artistic process. Much of the preliminary discussion was focused around industry and looking at the farming industry in relation to the arts industry.

The most enjoyable part of the residency was being forced to continually question how and why you were doing things and making decisions. There was no time for an idle mind...the constant feeling of an unknown outcome was quite challenging.

– Future Present Artist Feedback

There was definitely a balance between a supportive and challenging environment. Working out of our comfort zones was highly encouraged.

– Future Present Artist Feedback

The fortnight culminated in 3 different presentations over the June long weekend and concluded with a panel discussion on the future with Mark Butler MP, Kristin Alford (Futurist), Dr. Jared Thomas (Indigenous writer), Nat Wiseman (Urban Farmer and Project Partner), Roberta Swinbank (Sustainable Farmer, Greenie and Project Partner).

John and I keep saying to each other, "Wasn't that fun on Tuesday". Truly. I am aware that I, maybe we, have become a bit jaded in recent years. It was SO good for us to meet young, optimistic, enthusiastic young people. It did us the world of good. Thankyou.

– Roberta Swinbank, industry partner, sustainable farmer, Milang

Overall the 2 weeks were engaging and stimulating. As with most group projects, some artists thrived within the unfamiliar process and others found it challenging as the method was foreign, disorienting and at times uncomfortable. The latter is a key driver in process-driven projects UTP initiates, which at their core, seek to place an artist out of their comfort zone and to create a dialogue between unlikely partners, in this case artists and farmers.

As UTP were not creating a specific work/show, but sharing an artistic process, our role in *Future Present* was flexible and determined by the artists. We remained responsive and open to the ideas in the room. The *Future Present* artists were mostly early career, which meant that this masterclass was less about seeding their own projects and more about framing content, setting provocations and challenging assumptions about process, product and place.

In addition to on-the-ground facilitation for this residency, the *Future Present* artists and UTP also tracked our carbon footprint as a way to benchmark how much a project such as this costs in terms of carbon and what we could do to offset the carbon generated by the project. The project created a total of 4.662 T in CO2 emissions which equated to approx 28 trees. The group chose to plant trees at one of the artist's properties.

FUTURE

The 2 weeks were extremely productive for UTP in terms of getting to know more about the SA cultural landscape and an insight into 10 artists' practice. It also helped UTP consider the future of the project and a wider application of the process inside and outside the arts industry.

Both *Future Present* & *Democratic Garden* (page 7) saw UTP engage new models of collaboration with partners that involved UTP's expertise in community engagement and brokering new relationships with the wider community for our collaborating partner. We would like to continue to refine this area of practice and view it as a potential revenue stream for UTP in the future.

SPACE

OPEN CALL FOR SPACE-ONLY RESIDENCIES HOSTED BY URBAN THEATRE PROJECTS @ BANKSTOWN ARTS CENTRE

KEY ARTISTS

Artists: Gaele Sobott
Nick Atkins and Tom Christophersen
Sime Knezevic

Residency: 3–16 Feb
12–25 May
7–19 Jul

OVERVIEW

The 2014 _SPACE residency program was very successful. In total we offered 3 residencies to artists working in contemporary performance and literature. The _SPACE Residency offers access to our Rehearsal Studio 1 at Bankstown Arts Centre and 20 hours of technical, administrative and dramaturgical support.

In 2014 we supported:

SWEATSHOP ARTISTS WITH DISABILITY INITIATIVE led by Gaele Sobott. During the residency the group began working on an anthology of writing to be published as a Braille/print book. They used the 2-week residency to begin both conceptualising the book and developing and shaping a performance piece parallel to the book. The content explored the group's experience of disability, and how access can be integral to the writing/performance.

OFF THE RACK saw Nick Atkins and Tom Christopher explore a series of mythologised suburban identities through fashion and the catwalk. They constructed apparel from cheap household objects and recycled materials only to destroy them in the name of spectacle.

LEADING MAN by Sime Knezevic is a solo performance incorporating elements of clowning, improvisation, monologue and live art. It is also a mechanism to explore personal notions of aimlessness, boredom, awkwardness and idiocy.

The freedom to contemplate my own personal interest theatre and performance for 2 weeks [was most rewarding].

– Sime Knezevic

Sime used the 2 weeks to test the conceptual framework and content on peers and colleagues.

All 3 _SPACE residencies culminated in showings to invited audiences.

FUTURE

We will continue the _SPACE residency program in 2015 and are looking at ways to engage with some of the _SPACE artists in our 2015 program.



ARTIST-INITIATED RESIDENCIES

Image: lina Kastoumis

SHORT RESIDENCIES INITIATED BY INDEPENDENT ARTISTS

KEY ARTISTS

Artists: Colin Kinchela & Gavin Walters
lina Kastoumis
Arab Theatre Ensemble
Applespiel Collective

Residency : Throughout 2014

OVERVIEW

Whilst UTP continues to provide support through our _SPACE residency program, we remain open to accommodating artists who may have a more spontaneous need for space. Where possible, we try to accommodate these informal requests.

In 2014 we supported:

Colin Kinchela and Gavin Walters by providing rehearsal space and a small showing for the final stages of their Next Wave show *SEETHrough*. *SEETHrough* dealt with themes of masculinity and masculine exchange across Blackfulla/Whitefulla cultures.

lina Kastoumis: prior to this residency lina had spent over 2 years photographing people on her daily train rides across western Sydney. Her hashtag, #commutorama, means 'what I see when I commute'. lina accessed our rehearsal space over 5 weeks, trialling and testing her work and exploring potential presentation platforms including performance lecture and installation. This culminated in a one-night showing to industry peers and friends.

Arab Theatre Ensemble: In 2013 Saleh Saqqaf and Alissar Chidiac were part of UTP's _SPACE Residency program. During their residency they highlighted the fact that there was currently no Arabic theatre company in Sydney. As a result of this conversation, UTP offered to support Saleh and Alissar in their vision to build an Arabic Theatre Ensemble and provide space for Arabic theatre practitioners to meet and creatively and culturally brainstorm/practice. The group met weekly from January to July and during this time created a short work for *Close Encounters*. In addition to creating the short work, the group also began to map the existing Arabic cultural activity in Bankstown and south western Sydney more broadly.

Applespiel Collective to remount their work, *AppleSpiel Makes a Band and Take On The Recording Industry* for Malthouse.



OTHER

ACTIVITY

#2200 REVIEWS

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

RESIDENTS: Gaelle Sobott
David Cranston
Maree and David Ledson
Cecelia Balamoan
Dean Lloyd
Frances Panopoulos

OVERVIEW

We invited 7 local residents to accompany UTP's Artistic Director and a UTP staff member to 11 cultural events during 2014. UTP covered the cost of tickets and transport and in return the group shared their critical feedback on the work they saw.

I saw a brief notice in the local newspaper inviting residents of Bankstown to attend theatrical performances once a month during 2014 as guests of Urban Theatre Projects, who are based at Bankstown Arts Centre. I jumped at the chance.

I phoned the number given and explained mine and my son's situation and asked if they could accept us both, given my son's difficulties with communication, both verbal and written as the deal with them involved writing a review or account of the performance.

Rosie Dennis, the coordinator was understanding of our situation, as she had personal and work related connections with people with various disabilities. In fact UTP was commissioned by NORPA to write a musical play My Radio Heart for their members, some of which have disabilities, to perform in Lismore & Bankstown. We saw this excellent production when it came to Bankstown Arts Centre in April.

Prior to this in March we also saw a play Ganesh & the Third Reich, also involving actors with a disability exploring difficulties experienced by themselves and others. This excellent production was at Eveleigh and had toured 6 countries before this.

Every production we have seen so far has been excellent and challenging in its subject and performance. We will see another tonight I expect at Blacktown Performing Arts Centre called SistaNative. I'll write my usual longish review and David will tell me in his own words what he thought about it and I'll write it out to send on to Rosie. Maybe some day David will write out his own and send it by computer, along with mine. I'm still hoping.
– Maree Ledson

WORKS:

Cinderella – Belvoir St Theatre
Nunsense – Bankstown Theatre Company
The Wharf Revue – Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre
c/rca S – Parramatta Riverside Theatre
Sistanative – Seini Taumoepeau Blacktown Arts Centre
Bankstown Poetry Slam – Bankstown Arts Centre
My Radio Heart – Bankstown Arts Centre
Ganesh Versus The Third Reich – Back to Back Theatre, Carriageworks
Jump For Jordan – Griffin Theatre
Chance – Christian Boltanski at Carriageworks
The Shadow King – Sydney Festival

FUTURE

Urban Theatre Projects would like to continue the 2200 Review, and will consider meeting every quarter throughout 2015.



INTERNATIONAL: IETM & ESSIEN AT LIFT

IETM SATELLITE CARAVAN MEETING OVERVIEW

On Friday, 16 May UTP hosted more than 35 international delegates as part of IETM Caravan (a 2-day program in Sydney for international delegates who were attending the Melbourne Asian Satellite).

UTP was the only Western Sydney company the delegates visited and were part of a small group of partners working on the Sydney Caravan program, which also included Carriageworks, Sydney Festival and Performance Space. There was a large representation from Asia, which was a great opportunity to introduce the work of UTP to delegates.

Ahilan Ratnamohan's MICHAEL ESSIEN I WANT TO PLAY AS YOU

From 2011–2013 UTP supported Ahilan Ratnamohan's vision to create *Michael Essien I want to play as you* – an ambitious new dance theatre work made across 2 countries with 5 refugee footballers. The work premiered in 2013 as part of the European Capital of Sport Cultural Festival at CC Luchtbal in Antwerp. Following this premiere season the work was invited to LIFT, London International Festival of Theatre, a great outcome for the work and confirms the importance of UTP's continued investment in developing the voices of emerging artists and taking risks both here and on the international stage.