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APAM



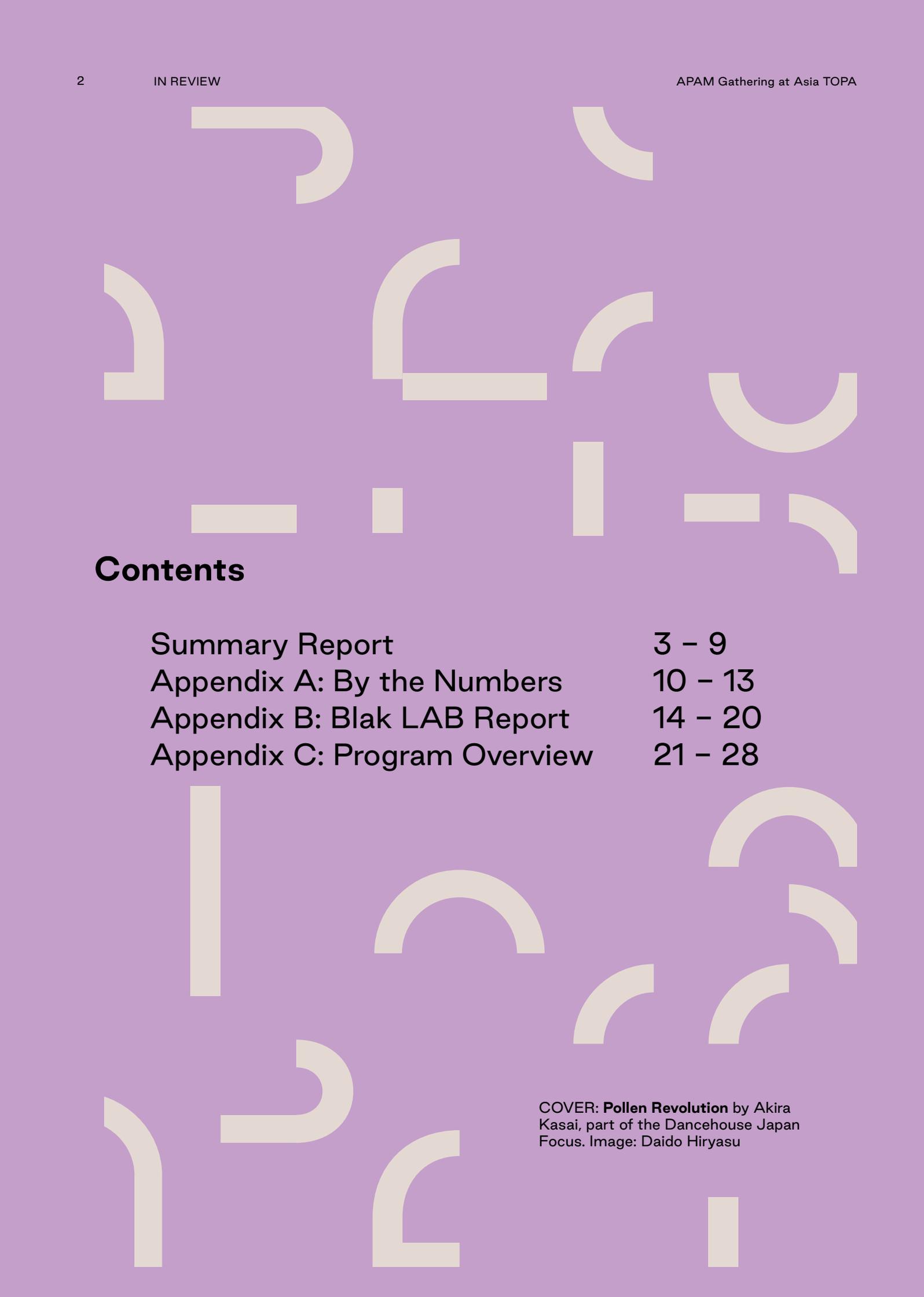
APAM Gathering at Asia TOPA 24 – 28 February 2020



ASIA TOPA



SIDNEY MYER FUND



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COVER: **Pollen Revolution** by Akira Kasai, part of the Dancehouse Japan Focus. Image: Daido Hiriyasu

In Review

The Australian Performing Arts Market (APAM) works year-round, and across Australia, to connect contemporary Australian theatre, dance, emerging and experimental art with international and national opportunities. By showcasing Australian and New Zealand artists and their work, APAM deepens relationships and creates new markets and pathways nationally and across the globe for contemporary performance. This report details the successful delivery of the [APAM Gathering at Asia TOPA](#) as part of a suite of programs delivered by the APAM Office in the financial year 2019–2020.

The APAM Gathering at Asia TOPA was attended by over 400 national and international colleagues, representing 29 countries, and included 21 Showcase works presented at Asia TOPA, alongside 47 Profile presentations by Australian and New Zealand artists, 7 Local Player visits, 6 special events including Blak Lab and an extensive exchange program.

The APAM Gathering at Asia TOPA took place on the lands of the Kulin Nation in Melbourne. The Gathering marked the commencement of APAM's new approach to hosting international visitors at a range of established festivals around Australia, more regularly.

The Gathering's preparation occurred within the emergence of COVID-19 (coronavirus) in Wuhan, China. Over January and February, Australia imposed travel bans on people who had been in China prior to 31 January without a mandatory isolation period of 14 days. By the beginning of March 2020, Australia introduced increasingly stricter measures to combat the global spread of what was to become the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Asia TOPA

[Asia TOPA](#) (Triennial of Performing Arts) is a three-month long festival exploring the connections between contemporary Australia and its growing diaspora. Asia TOPA is primarily a new work platform with at least 50% of the productions in 2020 being new and many which were specially commissioned or developed for the event. The 2020 Festival focused on new work creation alongside presentations of iconic and legendary artists and reflects the contemporary imagination and lived experience of artists from the entire Asia-Pacific region. Australian artists, groups and companies have made connections across the region to present collaborations and intercultural works spanning music, dance, theatre, contemporary performance, film, digital, visual art, public talks and more.

Led by Arts Centre Melbourne, Asia TOPA is a consortium-programmed platform for presenting work. Fourteen Asia TOPA Consortium partners and more than 20 Victorian Program Partners committed to simultaneously program and present contemporary Asian arts and culture across the festival.

The APAM Gathering at Asia TOPA was a five-day industry event running alongside and intersecting with the public-facing Asia TOPA program in the last week of February. Performance works programmed by any member of the Asia TOPA Consortium that fell within the period 24–28 February and included Australian artists in collaboration with artists from across the Asia Pacific were included in APAM's selection of Showcase works. Additionally, national and international delegates attending APAM were able to see a further eight intercultural collaborative works in Melbourne on weekends either side of the Gathering dates.

Gathering

The inaugural APAM Gathering at Asia TOPA included 5 days of industry activity alongside the Asia TOPA festival. The Gathering comprised sessions in 13 venues across Melbourne through a number of curatorial streams including:

+ SHOWCASE

Curated and presented as part of Asia TOPA, all 21 Showcase works were presented in full length to public audiences, with full production values and were led by or featured collaborations with Australian artists and companies. Participants at the Gathering purchased individual tickets to the Showcase works via either the Arts Centre Melbourne box office or presenting venue box offices. They were able to do so using discount codes which offered them 20% off the standard adult ticket price. Full ticket prices at Asia TOPA scaled from \$15 to \$93 with the median and average price \$44.70.

Based on survey data 88% of delegates saw between 1–6 Showcase performances with 41% delegates seeing between 4–6 performances across the 5 days. Of the invited international presenters over 50% saw additional Australian collaborative work on the weekends pre- and post-Gathering.

+ PROFILE

Profile saw 46 presentations from artists and companies from Australia and New Zealand over 6 sessions to the delegation of over 400 national and international presenters, artists and producers. Profile was selected by a national curatorial panel from an expressions-of-interest process, offering opportunities for artists, companies and groups to share their repertoire, ideas and ambitions.

The APAM curatorial panel for the Asia TOPA Gathering included: Angela Conquet, Dancehouse; Annette Shun Wah, Contemporary Asian Australian Performance; Eva Mullaley, Yirra Yaakin; Louise Partos, Artback NT; Lynn Fu; Madeleine Flynn and Tim Humphrey; Merindah Donnelly; Natalie di Risio; Sasapin Siritwanij, Bangkok International Performing Arts Meeting (BIPAM); Steph Walker, Auckland Arts Festival; and Stephen Armstrong, Asia TOPA.

+ **Pitch:** 17 works in development seeking commission or presentation.

+ **Snapshot:** Offering an insight into the bodies of work of 10 artists or companies.

+ **Tour-Ready:** 19 works with a completed premiere seeking further presentation opportunities.

+ LOCAL PLAYERS

Curated by presenters and producers in Melbourne, 7 Local Player sessions offered participants a window into the contemporary performing arts sector locally. They featured involvement with over 24 artists and 12 staff members representing the following venues and organisations: Abbotsford Convent, ArtPlay, Arts House, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA), Dancehouse, Footscray Community Arts Centre (FCAC), and Next Wave at Brunswick Mechanics Institute. The ambition with Local Players was to profile a diversity of artforms and contexts in which artists are making and presenting work in Melbourne.

+ SMOKE AND FIRE

Jason Tamiru, Yorta Yorta man and Malthouse Theatre Producer, curated the series Smoke and Fire Yarns: local people, telling local stories. Presented by Malthouse Theatre, the series included three events and a welcome party and involved 26 local artists and facilitators.

+ EXCHANGE / NEIGHBOURHOOD

Curated by APAM and the First Nations Advisory Group, Exchange included keynotes, panels, talks and networking. The Exchange program hosted 14 talks and workshops involving 82 artists and speakers. A key component of Exchange was a whole-day event on the final day; NEIGHBOURHOOD. The day was co-curated by local artists Eugyeene Teh and Mish Grigor and featured 3 artist provocations, 3 plenaries and 16 break-out sessions involving 40 artist hosts and presenters. NEIGHBOURHOOD was co-presented by Theatre Network Australia (TNA) in association with the Australia Council for the Arts.



+ INITIATIVES: First Timers and First Nations Industry Program

12 people participated in APAM's First Nations Industry Program and 25 people in the First Timers program running throughout the Gathering. The value of these programs is noted in the post event survey responses with 78% respondents finding value in the First Nations Industry Program and 63% in the First Timers Program.

+ BLAK LAB

Curated by the First Nations Advisory Group and produced by APAM, Blak LAB was presented in partnership with First Nations Lead, ILBIJERRI Theatre Company, Arts Centre Melbourne, and in association with Abbotsford Convent Foundation. Blak LAB fostered First Nations-to-First Nations collaborations between Australian artists and Asia-Pacific peers. 12 Australian artists and 5 international artists took part. The LAB began a week before the Gathering and culminated in a strongly-attended featured Exchange session on Wednesday 26 February. Blak LAB was funded by Arts Centre Melbourne with additional support from the Australian Cultural Diplomacy Grants Program of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and from the Department of Communications and the Arts.

An exciting outcome of the Blak LAB was the April 2020 announcement of Thomas E.S. Kelly's appointment as the 2020 McKnight International Choreographer. The McKnight International Choreographer Residency, a program of the McKnight Choreographer Fellowship, invites one international choreographer each year to spend time in residence in Minnesota, collaborating with Minnesota dance artists and showcasing new work.



Images: Sarah Walker & James Henry

Participants

- + **412** attended the full Gathering
- + **104** of whom were international visitors, representing **29** countries
- + The remaining participants were domestic. with **55%** from Victoria, **20%** from New South Wales, **9%** from Queensland, **6%** from Western Australia, **4%** from South Australia, **3%** from Tasmania and **2%** from the ACT and NT.
- + Of the Australian participants **75**, or **21%**, identified as independent artists.
- + An additional **88** participants registered to attend the NEIGHBOURHOOD program on Friday 28 February 2020.
- + APAM supported the attendance of **61** international visitors from **27** countries.
- + For the first time APAM introduced a tiered pricing structure to better support attendance by independent artists. Registration for the APAM Gathering at Asia TOPA were in 3 price points: **\$462** for independent artists and individuals (national and international); **\$726** for small to medium organisations; and **\$858** for larger and government organisations nationally, and all international organisations.
- + A small number of international invited and registered delegates from mainland China, Singapore, Korea and India were affected by COVID-19 travel bans and associated impacts.

Impact

The post-event survey, individual unsolicited feedback and extensive debriefing of key stakeholders has provided the APAM team with a wealth of data and feedback to review the successes and opportunities for improvement from the APAM Gathering at Asia TOPA. The post-event survey was completed by **145** of **412** participants. Quantitative response of note as follows:

- + **87%** of participants' primary reason for attending was networking with peers. **59%** were after new relationships and **33%** were seeking presentation opportunities.
- + **88%** of participants saw between **1-6** showcased works at Asia TOPA with biggest percentile seeing **1-3** works.
- + **40-67%** of participants had a significant to a moderate amount of interest following their participation in APAM. **59%** of participants considered participation in APAM a return on investment.
- + **99%** of people participating in APAM made new connections, and **98%** deepened existing relationships. Of these, the majority made up to 10 new connections and deepened a further 10.
- + Survey: **63%** of participants met their objectives for attending the Gathering, with **33%** indicating it was too soon to tell.
- + Survey: **93%** of participants identified a good match between Profile, Showcase and attendees.
- + Over **75%** of participants thought the Profile sessions were exciting, relevant, reflected diversity and were representative of Australian and New Zealand performance.
- + The three most valuable aspects of the APAM Gathering at Asia TOPA were: Building relationships in the Asia Pacific region (**61%**), engaging in important sector and geographic conversations (**55%**), and experiencing performance and ideas by First Nations artists (**48%**).
- + **24%** of respondents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and **79%** of respondents identified as Culturally and/or Linguistically Diverse.

+ **36%** of invited internationals supported by APAM attended other Australian or New Zealand events pre- or post-Gathering including Perth Festival, Adelaide Fringe, Adelaide Festival, Keir Choreographic Award and PANNZ Arts Market.

APAM's evaluation over the period 2020-2024 will be undertaken by BYP Group who, towards the end of 2020, will reconnect with Gathering participants to seek further input on the outcomes of connections and relationships begun and deepened through the APAM Gathering at Asia TOPA.

The Response

APAM is a good market. It is not just a place for producer-arts maker or presenter-performer with some happy transactional ends. APAM is also a market that brings together fresh arts works with arts workers. It is a space to share experiences and get an idea.
– Survey participant

I just wanted to write to send a huge THANK YOU for my brilliant week at APAM. I had a hugely productive visit, and your care, intelligence and hospitality were all so brilliant. I feel like I've come away with a really good understanding of the ecology and having met almost everyone I could have wanted to meet! Wish we had a UK APAM.
– International Participant

The week was engaging and stimulating, great to speak to so many colleagues and make new connections. Your whole team were wonderful and I was really impressed by the quality of work and presentations.
– Claire Moran, Cryptic

The most important lesson that I will take away from this is learning, and what actually attracted me to this platform in the first place, is to learn about First Nations Aboriginal culture and do my best to support that narrative.
– Blak LAB international Artist

Thank you all so much, it was such a critical conversation and aside from being illuminating it was also comforting to be amongst our friends braving the storm together.
– Eugene Ughetti, Speak Percussion

I've learned and discovered a lot of contemporary art scenes of Australia and New Zealand, thankfully.
– International Participant

I heard powerful and exciting voices I have never heard before and would have never had the opportunity to hear otherwise. I learned a lot. I witnessed some incredibly inspiring talks and passionate discussions beyond an idea of conversation. I personally do not like the word conversation when applied to matters of urgency & gravity as it sounds light and incidental. It is used frequently in large art meetings and it always feels too polite, too risk-averse, for art that matters. And it should. It felt like risk was engaged. The situating at the Meat Market, even the lunch boxes, was very democratising. It kept everyone together physically and felt much more down to earth. It felt that people, all kinds of people, were closer at hand. And the discussions I had, the people I spoke to, and the partnerships I began exploring for our small but mighty organisation, are very exciting, and whilst on hold will blossom now and in the future.
– Moira Finucane, Finucane and Smith



Image: Sarah Walker

Learnings

With a program of rolling Gatherings scheduled over the coming years, the APAM team are committed to testing, trialling and responding to ideas and feedback.

There is an inherent complexity in moving from a single mode of curation to multiple and varied modes of curation, as was evidenced in the APAM Gathering at Asia TOPA. The Gathering included Showcases curated by the Asia TOPA consortium and partners, Profile sessions curated by the APAM Curatorial panel, the First Nations Advisory Group's curation of the Blak LAB, and Melbourne venues curating Local Player and special events. Complexity is not new to our sector and is something that as professionals we are adept at navigating. The APAM team will work to clarify the various curatorial threads more clearly in future Gatherings.

Now more than ever, artists' remuneration is key to the survival and development of our industry and our capacity to withstand disruption and change. Working alongside existing presentation infrastructure is essential to shift the economic burden of showcasing from artists and to make the market model more equitable and inclusive to a diversity of artists and their practice.

Facilitating opportunities across the spectrum of international engagement reflects the way artists and companies are currently employing resources to make work. The broadening definition of opportunities that the APAM Office is brokering includes residencies, commissions, exchange and collaboration alongside, of course, the touring and on-selling of work. Gatherings are an essential mechanism in this process that can now be supported year-round and in different ways by the work of the APAM Office.

The worldwide pandemic that hit just weeks after the APAM Gathering at Asia TOPA has had severe impacts on the global arts community. An unprecedented event, its impact on international engagement and national and international touring has been catastrophic, with venues and festivals cancelled or indefinitely postponed and many artists and companies losing work and engagements that have been years in the making. There's great uncertainty around when national and international mobility for artists and companies will resume and, indeed, what the 'new normal' in this space will be. We hold confidence, however, that connection and relationships are the means by which new possibilities will emerge over the long term. The focus of APAM is to continue to support artists and presenters to remain connected and in a productive dialogue through Gatherings and the year-round work of the APAM Office.

The APAM team is grateful for the generous and detailed feedback received from Gathering participants through the survey and other means which provide learnings and directions for improvements.



Image: Sarah Walker

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APPENDIX A: By the Numbers

ASIA TO **PA**



The following data has been drawn from Participant Registrations and recorded responses to post-Gathering Surveys and Evaluations.

Registered Participants

412 participants registered to attend the APAM Gathering at Asia TOPA.

+ **104** of whom were international visitors, representing 29 countries. APAM supported the attendance of 61 of these international visitors, representing 27 countries

+ **308** of whom were from Australia, of which:

- + 55% came from VIC
- + 21% from NSW
- + 9% from QLD
- + 6% from WA
- + 4% from SA
- + 3% from TAS
- + 2% from the ACT and NT

+ **33** participants came from NZ, representing 8% of all participants or 31% of international participants

+ **370** participants are from Asia Pacific region, representing 89% of all participants

Of the 412 participants, 162 attended the APAM Gathering on Complimentary Registrations: 68 of whom were International, and 101 were Australian participants and included 73 participating artists. The remaining 250 participants were full-paying attendees.

+ **75 (or 18%)** identified as an Artists. With the other 82% of Participants identifying as:

- + Producer / Agent / Tour Management (23%)
- + Artistic Director (21%)
- + Programming (18%)
- + Management (9%)
- + A representative of Government or Funding Body (6%)
- + Other (2%)
- + An Advocate (1%)
- + A Consultant (1%)
- + in Marketing / Comms / PR (1%)

An additional **88** Participants (arts sector members) registered to attend the NEIGHBOURHOOD program (Friday 28 February only).

Gathering Programming

13 local venues across Melbourne engaged through the program, through the following curatorial streams: Showcase, Profile, Local Players, Exchange, NEIGHBOURHOOD, Blak LAB, First Nations Industry Program and First Timer initiatives.

+ SHOWCASE

The APAM Gathering included **21** Showcase works from the program offering of the Asia TOPA festival.

The discount ticket code provided to Participants for use when purchasing tickets to the Showcase works was used **290** times – **157** times by International Participants, and **133** times by Australian Participants.

Of the **21** Showcase productions, **8** were works created by Australian artists/companies, and **13** were works created in collaboration between Australian and International artists/companies. Of these, **4** were a collaboration between Australian and Indonesian artists; **2** were a collaboration between Australian and Filipino artists; **2** were a collaboration between Australian and Chinese artists; **1** was a collaboration between Australia, Singaporean and Japanese artists; **1** was a collaboration between Australia and New Zealand; **1** was a collaboration between Australia and South Korea; **1** was a collaboration between Australia and Thailand, and; **1** was a collaboration between Australia, China, India and Canada.

+ PROFILE

190 artists/organisations applied for a spot in the Profile program, across Pitch, Tour-Ready and Snapshot categories. **46** successfully presented in 1 of the 6 Profile sessions scheduled across the APAM Gathering.

6 of the projects/organisations which presented came from New Zealand

6 of the projects identified as being Australian First Nations-led.

+ LOCAL PLAYERS

7 Melbourne small-to-medium arts venues were engaged to host a Local Player event. These venues included: ArtPlay, Arts House, Dancehouse, Next Wave at Brunswick Mechanics Institute, Abbotsford Convent, ACCA, and Footscray Community Arts Centre (FCAC).

Through the Local Player program **17** artists were engaged and **12** staff facilitated these events.

+ FIRST NATIONS INDUSTRY PROGRAM (FNIP)

24 individuals applied for the **12** available positions in FNIP.

Of the **12** successful applicants: **6** came from NZ and **6** were Australian; **5** were financially supported by Creative New Zealand, **6** were financially supported by APAM; and **1** was supported through their involvement in the Profile session.

+ FIRST TIMER PROGRAM

34 individuals applied for the **19** available positions in the First Timer program.

An additional **6** individuals were supported to join the program by Creative Victoria in a partnership between APAM, Multicultural Arts Victoria, and the Abbotsford Convent, and facilitated by Collette Brennan, bringing the total cohort to **25**.

The program engaged **5** industry professionals to act as Mentors to the Participants over the course of the Gathering. They were: Felix Preval (Darwin Festival), Angharad Wynne-Jones (Arts Centre Melbourne), Sam Routledge (Terrapin), Viv Rosman (Polyglot), and Collette Brennan (Abbotsford Convent).

+ BLAK LAB

8 collaborations applied for the 4 available places in Blak LAB. A total of AUD **\$142,500** was invested in Blak LAB. Blak LAB engaged **17** artists: **12** national and **5** international.

Survey Responses

145 Participants responded to the post-Gathering Survey, representing **36%** of all registered Participants.

38% of respondents had not attended APAM before, **62%** had previously attended **1 or more** APAMs.

87% of respondents identified 'Networking and connecting with peers', and **58%** identified 'New relationships' as one of their main objectives in attending Gathering.

Survey respondents identified that the three most valuable aspects of the Gathering were:

+ Building relationships with companies, artists and cultural organisations in the Asia Pacific region (**60%**)

+ Engaging in important conversations in the sector and geographic region (**55%**)

+ Experiencing contemporary performance and ideas by Australian First Nations artists and companies (**48%**)

98% of survey respondents made new connections at Gathering, with **38%** making **11 or more** connections.

98% of survey respondents also said they deepened existing connections, with **44%** saying they did this with **11 or more** connections.

88% of Participants saw between **1-6** Showcase performances as part of Asia TOPA, with the biggest percentile seeing **1-3** performances.

24% of respondents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

79% of respondents identified as Culturally and/or Linguistically Diverse.

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APPENDIX B: Blak LAB Report

ASIA TOPA



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Overview

Blak LAB was presented by Australian Performing Arts Market (APAM), in partnership with First Nations Lead, ILBIJERRI Theatre Company, and Arts Centre Melbourne, and in association with Abbotsford Convent Foundation.

In addition to core funding from Arts Centre Melbourne and significant staffing and production resources from APAM, **Blak LAB** received funding from the Australian Cultural Diplomacy Grants Program of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and from the Department of Communications and the Arts.

Since 2013, Asia TOPA LABs have been the genesis for sensational international collaborations and inspired works including *Satan Jawa* and *Attractor* in 2017, and *Black Ties*, *The Seen and Unseen* and *Virtual Intimacy* at Asia TOPA 2020.

The 2020 Asia TOPA LAB evolved to **Blak LAB**; a lab curated and led by Australia's First Nation artists and cultural leaders in a new partnership with APAM and its First Nations Lead, ILBIJERRI Theatre Company.

Blak LAB invested in future works through artist-to-artist collaborations between First Nations people across Australia and the Asia-Pacific. Curated by APAM's First Nations Advisory Group, and facilitated by two senior First Nations artists, **Blak LAB** is part of a growing and celebrated movement of international First Nations-led creative incubators.

Over eight days the LAB artists worked within their group, and came together at designated times as a whole. **Blak LAB** artists connected with national and international colleagues as part of the APAM Gathering at Asia TOPA. The aim was to seed developments and future commissions for contemporary First Nations performance.

The four **Blak LAB** lead artists were Axel Gee, Thomas E.S Kelly, Gary Lang and Rachael Wallis. **Blak LAB** was facilitated by Kamarra Bell-Wykes and Raymond Blanco.

Image: Ben Swinnerton.

Meet the Artists

+ **Axel Gee** is a writer and performance artist based in Melbourne. He started his creative career in Brisbane performing in local theatre groups and working for various Indigenous arts organisations. In 2012, Axel moved to Melbourne, furthering his experience in acting and expanding into other art forms. He is a proud Torres Strait Islander (Mer), Puerto Rican and Malaysian man, whose queer identity also informs his work. Axel is interested in going beyond identity to create works that add depth and nuance to the minority experience.



+ **Thomas E.S. Kelly** is a proud Bundjalung–Yugambah, Wiradjuri, Ni–Vanuatu man. In 2012 he graduated from NAISDA Dance College and has since worked with Vicki Van Hout, Shaun Parker and Company, Branch Nebula, EARTH, Chunky Move, Dancenorth, The FARM, Tasdance, Outer Urban Projects and Urban Theatre Projects.



+ **Gary Lang** is the choreographer and artistic director of the Northern Territory Dance Company. He is a Larrakia man from Darwin with extended family relationships in Yirrkala NT. Gary has worked widely throughout Australia and the world. He trained at the National Aboriginal and Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA), graduating in 1990.



+ **Rachael Wallis** is a versatile dancer and choreographer based in Yirrkala, Arnhem Land, NT. Covering both traditional and contemporary dance styles, she has worked with leading Indigenous dance companies and choreographers, performing regionally, nationally and internationally.



Images supplied.

The Projects

Cycles of a Seedling

+ **Lead Artist:** Axel Gee (independent artist – Melbourne, VIC)

+ Axel conducted solo research into a new large-scale interactive performance – *Cycles of a Seedling* (previously entitled *Healing Beyond Identity*). It is inspired by the stages of Axel's meditation journey over several years.

BOOMA

+ **Lead Artist:** Thomas E.S Kelly (Karul Projects – Gold Coast, QLD)

+ **Collaborator:** Tupe Lualua (Le Moana Dance Company – Samoa / Aotearoa)

+ *BOOMA* is conceived as a physical theatre piece for 14 performers exploring the booma (stomp) as expression of connection and relationship.

The Sun and The Moon

+ **Lead Artist:** Gary Lang (NT Dance Company – Darwin, NT)

+ **Collaborator:** Aulu Tjibulangan (Paiwan)

+ *The Sun and The Moon* is a dance piece that brings together Aulu's sun totem and Gary's moon totem, exploring the cultures of the Paiwanese people of Taiwan and the Larrakia and Yolgnu people of the Northern Territory.

Bayini

+ **Lead Artist:** Rachael Wallis (Miku Performing Arts – Yirrkala, NT)

+ **Collaborators:** Sang Mei-Chuan (Paiwanese song woman – Taiwan), Labaga Taru (musician / composer – Truku tribe), supported by Ljavaus Chen (translator / Paiwanese traditional dancer).

+ *Bayini* is a dance and live music work exploring a Yolgnu story about the first visitors to Arnhem Land, Austronesian peoples, who travelled in boats to trade with Yolgnu. The stories of this trade are sung and danced to this day. The new work explores Bayini as the common ancestor of both Taiwanese and Australian First Peoples.

The Process

Blak LAB expressions of interest (EOI's) were opened on 30 September 2019, with applications due by 13 October 2019. During the EOI process 8 applications were received. On 23 October 2019 the First Nations Advisory Group (FNAG) met via Zoom with Sarah Bell and Kath Papis to curate and select the four successful applicants to participate in **Blak LAB**.

Blak LAB involved:

- + Welcome to Country
- + Daily group check-ins
- + One-on-one sessions with the Lead Artists and Facilitators
- + Cultural Protocol Workshop led by Trish Adjei (Australia Council for the Arts)
- + Industry Meet & Greet
- + Studio Visits by invited national and international presenters
- + Sharing feature presentation to the participants of the APAM Gathering at Asia TOPA

Images: Ben Swinnerton and James Henry.



By The Numbers

- + **12** Australian Artists engaged
- + **5** International Artists engaged
- + **34** Members of the Industry attended the Meet & Greet
- + **10** domestic guests in attendance at Studio Visit #1
- + **18** international guests in attendance at Studio Visit #2
- + **412** attendees at the Blak LAB Sharing

The Response

Then after playing with ideas, our songs, music and dance just fell into place. We felt guided by forces so strong and pure. I was so happy to be working with the other artists.

– Blak LAB artist

Blak LAB gave us the platform to share ideas and aspirations, our hopes and dreams. We all gained confidence and satisfaction by realising that our careers are on a great path. This gives us strength to move forward into the world and perform our stories.

– Blak LAB artist

The most important lesson that I will take away from this is learning and what actually attracted me to this platform in the first place, is to learn about First Nations Aboriginal culture and do my best to support that narrative.

– Blak LAB international artist

And huge thanks for APAM, BlakLab, and all your truly wonderful support and help. We are still basking in the glow of our successful stay in Melbourne, all the wonderful people we met, terrific events and performances.

– Mary Ellen Childs, Program Director, McKnight Fellowships for Choreographers and Dancers

First Nations Advisory Group

The First Nations Advisory Group supports APAM's decision making, providing advice, engagement, and guidance to the APAM Office. Collectively, the First Nations Advisory Group also supports the programming, cultural and creative decisions of our First Nations Lead Producers.

The FNAG members are Aunty Nancy Bamaga (QLD), Merindah Donnelly (QLD), Ben Graetz (NT), Rachel Maza (VIC), and Ali Murphy Oates, Lily Shearer, or Liza-Mare Syron (NSW) from Moogahlin Performing Arts

Support Staff

- + **Kamarra Bell-Wykes** (VIC), Facilitator
- + **Raymond Blanco** (QLD), Facilitator
- + **Sarah Bell** (VIC), First Nations Lead, Associate Producer
- + **Kath Papas** (VIC), First Nations Lead, Senior Producer
- + **Naretha Williams** (VIC), Blak LAB Coordinator

Partners

APAM wishes to acknowledge their Blak LAB partners ILBIJERRI Theatre Company, Arts Centre Melbourne, Abbotsford Convent Foundation, Australian Cultural Diplomacy Grants Program of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Department of Communications and the Arts.

APAM thanks the outreach program of Pacific Dance NZ for connecting Tupe Lualua with the initiative.

ILBIJERRI
THEATRE COMPANY

**Abbotsford
Convent**

ASIA TOPA



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Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



Australian Government

Department of Communications and the Arts

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APPENDIX C: Program Overview

Document created for distribution in October 2019

ASIA TOPA



Sidney Myer
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In Brief

About APAM

APAM is an initiative of the Australia Council for the Arts and is under the stewardship of Creative Victoria from 2020–2024. The APAM Gathering at Asia TOPA is the first of two Gatherings in 2020; the second will be at Darwin Festival in August*. These two events mark the evolution of APAM's new approach to host visitors at a range of established festivals around Australia, more regularly – 1–2 Gatherings per year.

For more information on APAM's new approach please see the APAM Program Overview.

The 5-day APAM Gathering activities include:

- + **Showcase** / works presented as part of Asia TOPA
- + **Profile** / opportunities to hear from artists and companies in three categories: Pitch, Snapshot, Tour-Ready
- + **Local Players** / hosted events and visits to local venues and key players that support and sustain Melbourne's cultural life
- + **Exchange** / APAM's curated programs of keynotes, panels, talks and initiatives

More information on each activity is offered in this document.

About Asia TOPA

Held on the lands of the First Peoples' of the Kulin Nation, Asia TOPA is a festival celebrating Australia's connections with contemporary Asia. Across Arts Centre Melbourne, the Southbank Arts Precinct and partners across Melbourne, the festival hosts over 50 performance seasons, exhibitions, screening and participatory events.

While participating in the APAM Gathering with 400 national and international colleagues, you have the opportunity to experience the Asia TOPA program including 20 Showcase works from Australian and New Zealand artists alongside an additional 7 performances from contemporary Asian artists. An additional 12 Asia TOPA works feature in the weekends before or after the Gathering.

*Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the APAM Gathering at Darwin Festival has been postponed until August 2021.



Showcase

During the APAM Gathering, you will be able to experience 20 Showcase works curated within the Asia TOPA program.

SHOWCASE PERFORMANCES

Meta by Lucy Guerin Inc. and Ensemble Tikoro; *Black Ties* by ILBIJJERI Theatre Company and Te Rehia Theatre; *The Seen & Unseen* by Kamila Andini, Ida Ayu Wayan, Arya Satyani with Adena Jacobs, Eugyeene Teh, Jenny Hector; *Are You Ready to Take the Law Into Your Own Hands* by Sipat Lawin and Friends with David Finnigan; *Dragon Ladies Don't Weep* featuring Margaret Leng Tan by Chamber Made and Culturelink Singapore; *Double Delicious* by Contemporary Asian Australian Performance; *HuRU-hARa* curated by Thomas Henning, TerryandtheCuz and collaborators; *Torch the Place* by Benjamin Law for Melbourne Theatre Company; *Biometric Mirror*:

Performance under Surveillance by Niels Wouters and Mindy Meng Wang; *Obang* by Youbi Lee and Yee Wen Soo; *Hades Fading (Hades Memudar)* from Mainteater and Kath Papas Productions with Sandra Fiona Long; and *Made in China 2.0* by Wang Chong with Emma Valente for Malthouse Theatre.

SHOWCASE DURATIONAL

When it Rains (I Feel Like Eating Jeon) by Jihyun Kim, Madeleine Flynn and Tim Humphrey; *Feedback Loops* with Madison Bycroft, Tianzhou Chen, Lu Yang, Sahej Rahal, Justin Shoulder, Zadie Xa at ACCA; *Knowledge in Your Hands, Eyes and Mind* by Phaptawan Suwannakudt; and *What is Chinese?** by Xiao Ke and Zi Han.

*Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the Asia TOPA season of *What is Chinese?* was postponed.



Pre / Post Gathering

As Asia TOPA runs January through March, there are many works that can be viewed Pre and Post the APAM Gathering.

Pre-Gathering 21-23 February

A Planet – A Lament by Garin Nugroho with Michael Kantor, Anna Tregloan; *Beethoven 9* by Circa; *Praise!* by Marcus Whale and Eugene Choi; *Meeting Points Series: Hand to Earth* by Australian Art Orchestra with Sunny Kim, David Wilfred and Peter Knight; and *Park Jiha* supported by Moopie.

Post-Gathering 29 February – 18 March

Oedipus Schmoedipus by post and Hong Kong Repertory Theatre; *Folding Beijing* by Hao Jingfang and Daniel Keene; *Virtual Intimacy* by Very Theatre and ActNow Theatre; *Not Today's Yesterday* by Lina Limosani and Seeta Patel; and *Boris with Merzbow* supported by Corin.



Profile

PITCH / for works in development and yet to premiere

With presentations from: ActNow Theatre; Amrita Hepi; Belloo Creative; Chamber Made; Chunky Move and Restless Dance Theatre; Force Majeure; Joel Bray Dance; Kurinji; Luke George x Daniel Kok – Collaborations; Marilyn Miller; Marrugeku; Nathan Maynard and Jamie McCaskill; Nicola Gunn; Phillip Adams and Temperance Hall; Pony Express; PYT Fairfield; Snuff Puppets; Terrapin; and The Inhabitants.

SNAPSHOT / insights into an artist or company's body of work

With presentations from: All The Queens Men; Branch Nebula; Genevieve Lacey; ILBIJERRI Theatre Company; Metro Arts; NORPA; Polyglot Theatre; The Last Great Hunt; The Zealand Dance Company; and Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company.

TOUR-READY / productions with a completed premiere

With presentations from: Back to Back Theatre; Claire Edwardes & Richard Cilli/ Bureau of Works; Contemporary Asian Australian Performance; Eleanor Bishop & Karin McCracken/ Zanetti Productions; Justin Shoulder/ Insite Arts; Jessica Wilson; One Fell Swoop Circus; Patch Theatre; pvi collective; Rawcus; Rowan Pierce; Samara Hersch; Silo Theatre; Steamworks Arts; Sydney Chamber Opera; Taki Rua Productions in partnership with Theatre of Auckland; The Farm; Thomas Supple; Urban Theatre Projects; and White_mess.



Local Players

During the APAM Gathering, you will have the chance to visit a number of local Melbourne players, and engage in discussions regarding their work. These local players support and sustain Melbourne's cultural life and include:

Abbotsford Convent
ACCA [Australian Centre of Contemporary Art]
ArtPlay
Arts Centre Melbourne
Arts House
Dancehouse
Footscray Community Arts Centre [FCAC]
Malthouse Theatre
Melbourne Fringe
Next Wave
The SUBSTATION
TNA [Theatre Network Australia]



Exchange

APAM's Exchange program features keynotes, panels, talks and networking program along with a range of special initiatives unique to the APAM Gathering at Asia TOPA including:

Blak LAB

Since 2013, Asia TOPA LABs have been the genesis for sensational international collaborations between artists. For 2020, the Asia TOPA LAB evolves to Blak LAB; a lab curated and led by Australia's First Nation artists and cultural leaders.

Blak LAB invests in future works through artist-to-artist collaborations between First Nations people across Australia and the Asia-Pacific. Curated by APAM's First Nations Advisory Group, and facilitated by two senior First Nations artists, Blak LAB is part of a growing and celebrated movement of international First-Nations-led creative incubators.

Smoke & Fire

Curated by Jason Tamiru, Associate Producer Malthouse Theatre, and presented by APAM, Smoke & Fire includes three events telling the stories of local First Nations' peoples and communities by storytellers in those communities.



While you're around

Other International Productions

During the APAM Gathering, international works presented as part of Asia TOPA include: *Ibu-Ibu Belu* by Eko Supriyanto; *datamatics [ver. 2.0]* by Ryoji Ikeda with Shiro by NONOTAK; *NocturnalX* with Click#15, Carsick Cars, Jungle Mico Project & Cun Tie; *Joe Hisaishi in Concert* with Melbourne Symphony Orchestra & Studio Ghibli; *A O Lang Pho* by Nouveau Cirque du Vietnam; *SVA Kranti: The Revolution Within* by Mallika Sarabhai and The Darpana Academy of Performing Arts; and *Abida Parveen*.

APAM is here to help you make the most of your trip. We strongly recommend extending your visit and considering our Sister events:

Honey Pot

Presented by Adelaide Fringe
14–February–15 March, Adelaide

Keir Choreographic Award

Presented by Dancehouse and Carriageworks
3–7 March, Melbourne
12–14 March, Sydney

PANNZ (Performing Arts Network of New Zealand) Arts Market
8–12 March, Auckland

Perth Festival

7 February–1 March, Perth

Adelaide Festival

28 February–15 March, Adelaide

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