

Midsumma Festival

Artistic outcomes:

Midsumma has repositioned itself as a globally relevant cultural influencer with artistic leadership, learning and diversity at its heart. Over the last three years we have experienced rapid but planned growth in audiences, breadth and scope of artists, organisational capacity, and depth of artistic partnerships and new work development.

We have gained artistic recognition for our curatorial direction and the vital role we play in the development of queer culture across Victoria and nationally.

It is the aim of Midsumma Festival that the projects we produce will have long-term cultural and industry impact beyond immediate KPIs and outputs.

Increased quality or creative and artistic work: [Positive reviews](#)

“Gender Euphoria is a concept whose time has come, and at this year's Midsumma Festival we got a chance to see it in full flight” - [Andy Connor via The Guardian](#), reviews *Gender Euphoria* – a Midsumma Presents event (first all trans and gender diverse cast on main stage in Australia).

“The piece inspired a sense that everyone should be free to explore their own beliefs and standards, a message as lovely as the performance itself.” - [Sophia Dickinson via Arts Review](#), reviews *Third Nature* as part of BODY (new commission by innovative transgender dance maker, fusing Indian dance and queer aesthetics).

“Krishna created a wonderful set that resonated with me as a QTPOC (and by the howls around me I gather many others as well), and honestly was probably the best therapy I’ve gotten in years.” - [Sumarlinah Raden Winoto via Liminal](#), reviews *BEAST* as part of BODY (new commission by performance artist Krishna Isha).

“Dance is an extremely visual thing. I can’t see. It’s as simple as that. Which was why, when I heard that Dancing Queens was offering an audio described performance, I was beyond intrigued. It was contagious from the moment I walked into the performance space.” - [Olivia Muscat, Blind Critic via Whiteness Performance](#) experienced audio subscribed performance of *Dancing Queens* – a Midsumma Presents event (new commission by James Welsby, innovative dance maker).

“This extraordinary show gives audiences a rare opportunity to be part of a profoundly experimental and cinematic solo theatre performance.” - [Flora Georgiou via Stage Whispers](#), reviews *MDLS* by Motus as a part of BODY.



Midsumma Festival

Strategic – *Creative collaboration*

Diversity of artist and audience representation:

We create powerful events that inspire, share stories and build meaningful connections, spanning cultures, age/generations, gender/sexual identities and abilities/disability.

8% of audiences identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Partnerships with Vic NAIDOC Committee, Yirramboi Festival and VACCHO, and employment of an Aboriginal Engagement Coordinator has increased visibility for and cultural events by LGBTQIA+ First Nations peoples in the festival.

87% increase (over two years) in disability cultures with engagement built into the DNA of the organisation through Auslan interpretation and description services, staff training, Pathways mentorship program and in 2018 the commissioning of tactile installation created for and by blind/low vision LGBTQIA+ artists.

Diverse families, youth and older audiences were represented broadly across all areas of the program, resulting in multigenerational engagement, including increase in older audience engagement; which doubled from 2018 – 2019.

Midsumma Festival

Fostering development across the sector

Enhanced culture and reach:

43% increase in overall program size since 2017 across art forms. Curatorially, there is a focus on intersectionality of diverse artistic communities and art forms.

65% audience growth of the curated arts program attendance over two years. Total audience 284,098 (54% growth in two years) of which 197,868 was to the Midsumma curated new work program, Midsumma Presents. *Midsumma Presents is made up of both ticketed and free events.*

External industry recognition of the increased artistic quality and breadth of programming in 2019 evidenced by feedback and breadth and depth of partnerships.

Midsumma has evolved a methodology (first of its kind) for developing work that is uniquely shaped to contextualise the experience of queer artists and audiences.

Curatorial highlights from the 2019 Midsumma Presents program include:

- New dance work by rising contemporary dance maker, James Welsby, with Dancing Queens integrated traditional queer dance forms (vogue, heals, waacking) with contemporary participatory performance aesthetics. (Dance House)
- New work by trans theatre maker, Krishna Isthia, breaking the "white straight man" mould of stand-up comedy to reflect a form that allows for trans bodies of colour. (Arts House)
- New installation work by non-binary visual artist, Debris Facility, whose radical use of debris materials and their own body for art installations is leading the conversation in material use in contemporary visual art. (Arts House)
- Multi-arm exhibition by curators Abbra Kotlarczyk and Madé Spencer-Castle offered new methods for curating by connecting contemporary notions of queer family with the work of iconic queer artist and activist David McDiarmid; featuring work by Tony Albert, Archie Barry, Nathan Beard, Rafaella McDonald, Claudia Nicholson, Parallel Park (Holly Bates and Tayla Jay Haggarty), Francis E. Parker, Charlie Sofo and Amy Spiers. (Centre for Contemporary Photography, Bus Projects, Abbotsford Convent)
- Launch of new music by acclaimed musician and transwoman, Simona Castricum, who is leading a new avant-garde in contemporary music in Australia. (Arts House)

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Strategic – *Creative collaboration*

Diversity of Artist Representation:

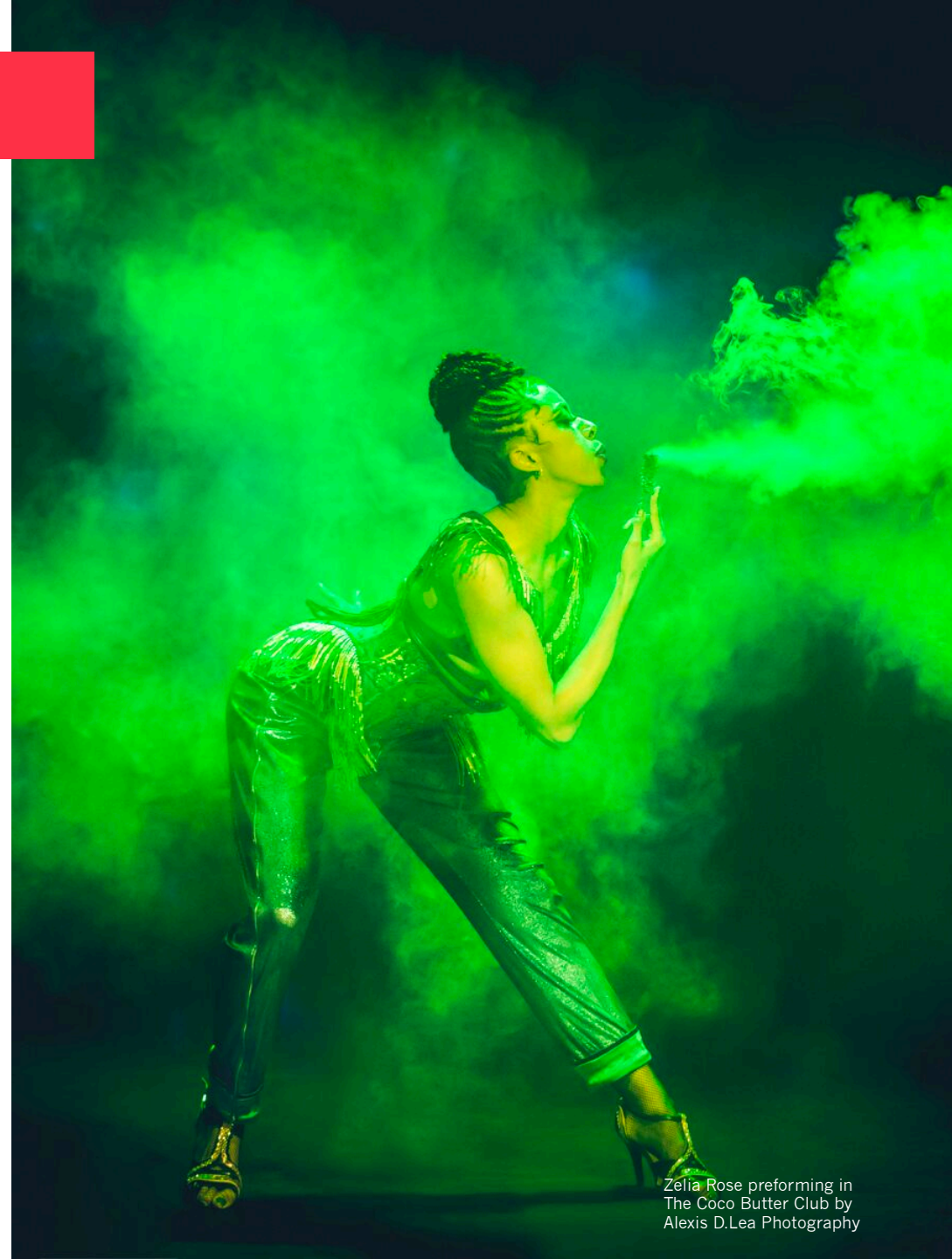
58% culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD). Resulting from increased CALD engagement through a partnership with Arts Centre Melbourne in the presentation of The Cocoa Butter Club in 2018 and upcoming Queer Unsettled 2020.

11% of audiences identify as trans and gender diverse and intersex representation. Increase of these audiences through BODY, an unprecedented leadership project commissioning and profiling works by 27 trans and gender diverse artists and 3 intersex artists, locally and internationally. Included the first all gender diverse professional cast on a main stage in Australia, and commissioned intersex work.

Midsumma Mentorship Programs:

[Midsumma Futures](#) - for early-career artists and culture-makers.

[Midsumma Pathways](#) - for LGBTQIA+ artists with disability.



Zelia Rose performing in
The Cocoa Butter Club by
Alexis D. Lea Photography

Midsumma Festival



Tony Albert – *QUEER* 2018
Found objects and acrylic on wood - 60 x 366 cm
Courtesy the artist and Sullivan + Strumpf Sydney and Singapore

Strategic - *Improved audience development*

75% increase in online engagement:

Midsumma Facebook - Midsumma Festival 2019 saw:

- a 60% increase in post reach and 75% increase in engagement compared to 2018.

Midsumma Twitter - Midsumma Festival 2019 saw:

- 56% increase in post reach
- 2% increase in mentions
- 213% increase in followers compared to 2018.

26.5% increase in website users; 77% were returning audiences; 33% new audiences.