

WA boost for multicultural arts marketing

The Multicultural Arts Marketing Ambassadors Strategy (MAMAS) in Western Australia is a joint initiative of the Australia Council for the Arts and the Department of Culture and the Arts (WA) that will focus on culturally and linguistically diverse programming and audiences.

It is designed to be a professional development opportunity for artists who are keen to modify their approach to programming, presentation and marketing in order to create a more culturally diverse artistic offering and audience base.

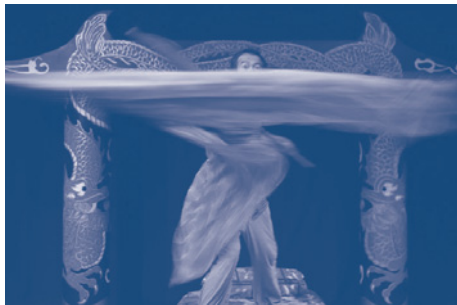
The Australian Institute of Management and the University of Western Australia's Integral Leadership Centre will deliver the 12-week program of lectures, seminars, research presentations and expert speakers which will commence in the second half of 2006.

The Hon Margaret Quirk MLA, Minister for Disability Services; Citizenship and Multicultural Interests; Women's Interests; Minister Assisting the Minister for Federal Affairs, launched the MAMAS program at a special event in Perth on 16 March.

Diversity asked three arts sector representatives, who have helped shape the MAMAS program, to offer insight into their approach to multicultural arts programming and marketing.

Beverly Growden, general manager of Barking Gecko Theatre Company says the company has invested heavily in the development of multicultural audiences for its children's theatre productions in recent years and sees MAMAS as an opportunity to capitalise on this investment.

After working with artists from diverse cultural backgrounds on a production in 2002, Barking Gecko's artistic director, Grahame Gavin, decided to develop works that reflect multicultural Australia. He was particularly interested in exploring multiculturalism from the young people's perspective and wanted to develop opportunities for multicultural artists living in WA.



● Barking Gecko Theatre Company, *Hidden Dragons*.
Photo: James Rogers

Barking Gecko has since built a strong partnership with the Chung Wah Association of WA that bore fruit in the form of three new plays. One, *Hidden Dragons*, which was written by Shirley Van Sanden and produced for the 2004 Perth International Arts Festival, had a sell-out season at the Sydney Opera House in 2005 and will tour to the Vancouver International Children's Festival this year.

Ms Growden says 'the success of *Hidden Dragons* has given Barking Gecko the confidence to further develop this area of our business'. Writer Shirley Van Sanden is working on a new play – *Trains of Thought* – which will be presented for Perth secondary schools in 2006.

Andrea Tenger, visitor development officer at the Art Gallery of Western Australia (AGWA) is keen to capitalise on the outcomes of audience development work for a recent exhibition, *St Petersburg 1900*.

The gallery's Friends Visitor Program created opportunities for local Russian community members to be involved in the concept, design and implementation of the program.

The most popular features of the exhibition were:

- The 'Red Room', a purpose-built interpretive space for children

- An information lounge with audiovisual presentations, a CD-ROM kiosk and Russian books and catalogues
- An educational trail with images from the exhibition translated into Russian, Italian, Mandarin, Vietnamese and Arabic.

A family day when Russian community members offered free activities including cultural performances, Russian food demonstrations, hands-on arts activities and puppetry theatre also set new attendance records.

Fleur Allen, education and development manager at West Australian Opera (WAO) says the MAMAS program will build on the company's 2005 audience development strategies and provide access to a structured program aimed at increasing WAO's audience diversity.

Ms Allen expects the MAMAS program will help WAO to:

- continue attracting young people and individuals from non-English speaking backgrounds
- foster a whole-of-company-approach to audience development to ensure the sustainability of these strategies
- gather important information on cultural protocols.

Ms Allen also cites 'the potential to collaborate with other arts organisations in Perth' as being one of the greatest MAMAS appeals.

For more information on the MAMAS program email <ama@ozco.gov.au>

The team behind MAMAS in WA includes Alison McArdle, Ricky Arnold and Jeremy Smith from Arts WA; Lee Christofis of the University of Melbourne; Ron Layne and Cecelia Cmielewski from the Australia Council for the Arts.

Message from the ACMAC Chair

When Australia Council for the Arts chairman David Gonski rang and asked if I would chair the Australia Council's Multicultural Advisory Committee (ACMAC), I was honoured that he would have thought of me in that role.

Now after several months as the chair I'm still on a steep learning curve but am blessed to be supported by a committee of passionate people all willing to share their knowledge and experience with me and the Australia Council team.

I would like to acknowledge the work of former chairs, the very dynamic Christine Pulvirenti and Deborah Klika, who blazed the trail which led to the development of the current AMA policy.

A community interest representative on the Australia Council's governing body, I have entered the third year of my first term. Over the

first two years there's been significant change in the way the Australia Council goes about its mission, and it's gratifying to see the reorganisation of its structure already bearing ripe fruits. Multicultural arts promotion remains a high priority for the organisation and there's a strong commitment to the aims and actions for Arts in a Multicultural Australia (AMA) that were signed off by the Council in June 2005.

We live today in a world violently disrupted by issues of race, and a stealthy intolerance of difference in beliefs and values that sometimes rears its ugly head. As we watched in horror the London bombings and the Paris riots last year,

little did we realise we'd experience our own shocking clashes on the beaches of Cronulla in Sydney.

This only serves to remind us of the big job that's yet to be done. Living in harmony requires work and commitment at all levels of society and government. The arts can – and will continue to – play a vital role in addressing these issues by developing myriad cross cultural connections and helping to break down the prevailing barriers of suspicion and mistrust.

This year is already an exciting one in which we've embarked on our new direction with a passion and commitment to provide leadership, encouragement and support for the vital work of our nation's multicultural artists and arts organisations.

On behalf of ACMAC, I wish you all the best in your endeavours and encourage you to participate vigorously in the dialogue that's fast establishing Australia as one of the world's leaders in multicultural arts practice. We all look forward to working with you in the continued development of Arts in a Multicultural Australia.

Nicky Downer
Chair ACMAC

New Multicultural Advisory Committee

The Australia Council Multicultural Advisory Committee (ACMAC) develops strategies for and monitors the implementation of the Australia Council's Arts in a Multicultural Australia (AMA) Policy.

ACMAC makes recommendations to the Australia Council's governing body – the Council – on issues that affect the full expression of cultural diversity in the arts.

As a result of the AMA evaluation in September 2005 the committee was reshaped into an industry expert group, with members appointed for their understanding, specialist knowledge, expertise and skills in the Arts in a Multicultural Australia.

The ACMAC chair is Nicola Downer. She sees the committee playing a 'vital role in development and promoting multicultural arts for practitioners and audiences alike.'

Nicola Downer, SA

Chair ACMAC, Australia Council community interest representative

Nicola was appointed to the Council as a community interest representative for three years from 18 December 2003. She is a member of the State Theatre of South Australia Board of Governors and the Helpmann Academy Foundation Board. She was president of Regional Arts Australia until June 2004.

Shane Carroll, NSW

Chair of the Dance Board

Shane was appointed chair of the Dance Board for three years from 21 May 2003. She has

worked as a professional dancer with Nederlands Dans Theater and Sydney Dance Company.

Teresa Crea, SA

Artist and New Media Arts Fellow

Teresa is a New Media Arts Fellow of the Australia Council and was the long-time creative director of para//elo (Live Arts). She is a deviser/director with a history of developing work within the arts for a multicultural Australia framework.

Professor Amareswar Galla, ACT

Australian National University (ANU), Canberra

Amareswar is the director of studies, sustainable heritage development, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies and visiting fellow in the Humanities Research Centre at the ANU. He is the convener of the Pacific Asia Observatory for Cultural Diversity and Development and vice president of the International Council of Museums, Paris.

Walter Gomes, WA

Community Development Officer – Arts and Culture, Town of Kwinana

Walter was a former general manager of Kulcha, and one of the inaugural *kultour* participants. He is a practising visual artist and is a member of the Contemporary Music Advisory Panel for ArtsWA and Arts Advisory Panel for Healthway.

Kon Gouriotis, NSW

Director, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre and Liverpool Regional Museum

Kon was the founding curator of the Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre and was the director of

Street Level Gallery, an artists-run initiative in Blacktown. He is the chair of the Community Cultural Development Committee and a member of the Arts Advisory Committee for the NSW Ministry for the Arts.

Professor Andrew Jakubowicz, NSW

University of Technology Sydney (UTS), NSW

Andrew Jakubowicz is professor of sociology at UTS, is a member of the UTS Transforming Cultures Research Centre and was foundation chair of the Disability Studies and Research Institute. He is research director for the educational website Making Multicultural Australia.

Fotis Kapetopoulos, Vic

Kape Communications

Fotis is the principal of Kape Communications, a boutique company specialising in cultural brokerage, cultural marketing and arts industry development.

Kape is one of the partners delivering the Multicultural Arts Professional Development program. Fotis was recently appointed as cultural producer for para//elo theatre company in South Australia.

Tiffany Lee-Shoy, NSW

Regional Cultural Planning Coordinator at the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC)

WSROC is one of Australia's oldest and most respected local government lobbying and research organisations and a key advocate for Western Sydney. Tiffany is the chair of Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE) and is the deputy chair of the Australia Council's Community Partnerships Committee.

Further details are at <www.ozco.gov.au/council_priorities/multicultural>

Music: *Seasons of Dreaming*

Seasons of Dreaming is a musical journey, an unpredictable musical adventure where music of the ancient East collides with contemporary Western technology. Featuring internationally acclaimed Chinese composer/musician Wang Zheng Ting and innovative local composer/music technologist Mark Elliot this collaborative concert is a unique Australian music experience. Set to digital soundscapes generated live by Elliot, Wang explores the traditions of Chinese music with a range of sheng (mouth organs) dating back as far as 3500 years.

Globally recognized as a leading authority in the art of sheng performance and academic understanding, Wang creates music which, although an amalgam of influences, steers clear of the all-pervasive easy listening mix, and delivers a sound portrait reflecting a complex mix of personal experience and tradition.

Elliot is researching and developing methods for large-scale collaboration in conjunction with his artistic compositions. Elliot's compositions to date have shown a genuine flair for the theatrical and the courage to attempt the sort of broad cultural fusion that previous generations of composers tended to place off-limits.

Renowned for their experimentation with integrating Chinese and Western music, the two have generated a series of highly successful collaborations since 1999 including the large scale Monkey King concerto for sheng and Western orchestra.

Sydney: Gallery 4A, 21 September; Hobart: IHOS, 7 October; Brisbane: BEMAC, 22 October.

● Kultour program (left to right below) *Opposite My House is a Funeral Parlour*. Photo: Konstantinos Tsetonis; Ajak Kwai. Photo: Malcolm Ladd; and *Seasons of Dreaming*. Photo: Bill Poon.

Music: *Ajak Kwai*

Ajak Kwai recalls a childhood in a small town called Bor in the Malakal Region of the Upper Nile, where villagers would gather for ceremonies under the full moon. Although just a child, the compulsion to sing was too much for Ajak; from an early age, she was singing more than she was speaking. Learning the songs of her culture she joined a local choir as a teenager to sing gospel music in the unique Dinka style.

In 1992, due to religious and political unrest in Sudan, Ajak was forced to leave her home and went to live in Egypt. Here she joined international choirs and formed a female singing group called Bor Band. In 1999, after seven years of exile in Cairo, the members of the Bor Band were granted refugee status under the UN Humanitarian Aid program. Ajak chose to migrate to Australia, to join the small group of Southern Sudanese refugees in Hobart.

Forging a new career that combined her cultural roots with her new life, Ajak teamed up with local world and jazz musicians including multi instrumentalist extraordinaire, Martin Tucker. Since then she has become known around Australia for her soulful and distinctly Saharan voice that expresses heartfelt songs for her homeland and deeply philosophical and global concerns. She sings about important values in Dinka culture: love, peace and the all-important cows, the source of Dinka life.

In 2004, Ajak produced her debut CD *'Why not Peace & Love?'* and is writing and producing her second album.

Perth: Kulcha, 18 March; Darwin: Browns Mart, 25-26 August.

Hybrid: *Opposite My House is a Funeral Parlour*

Naree Vachananda is a Thai national who did a Bachelor of Dance at the Victorian College of the Arts School of Dance and has worked as a dancer/choreographer in Melbourne since graduating in 1997. Her performance *Opposite My House Is a Funeral Parlour* premiered in June 2005 at fortyfivedownstairs in Melbourne.

The new work is a compelling multi-media solo contemporary dance about death. Her sister who

continued on page 4 >

kultour turns five!

kultour a national network dedicated to touring Australian multicultural arts, now in its fifth year, hits the road this month.

The annual multicultural program, which tours both performing and visual arts nationally, was established by the Australia Council for the Arts in 2001; today 11 members from around Australia tour consistently high quality work.

kultour's program of events over the coming months is a microcosm of contemporary artistic practice in Australia from some of our most talented artists. Anita Larkin, acting *kultour* co-ordinator, describes the program.



Theatre: *My Of-Course Life*

Like her Greek and Croatian grandmothers before her, Alitheia's kitchen is filled with the bubbling smell of garlic and tomatoes cooking in wine. The toddlers are screaming, she is on her own and there are buckets of nappies piling sky high. But this is Australia and a million miles from the traditions of the past. Or is it?

My Of-Course Life is a rich emotional journey of one woman reconciling old ways with new. Writer/performer Toni Allayialis takes us on a journey, mixing song and storytelling, to bring her Greek and Croatian ancestors and madcap Australian family to life. We see the painful story

of her maternal grandmother's arranged marriage and consequent migration. We discover her paternal Croatian Gypsy grandfather and his unexpected marriage to an English woman against the backdrop of Innisfail's cane fields.

This beautifully produced and performed one-woman show resonates deeply with immigrants and refugees to this country as Allayialis slips between her very North Queensland life into the lives of her ancestors and explores the journey that brought them to Australia. The show is cleverly infused with music composed by acclaimed Melbourne composer/musician Irine

Vela, as well as traditional and contemporary songs that weave their way through the lives of the women from the past to the present day.

'My Of-Course Life, written and performed by Allayialis with music composed and played by Irine Vela, is a wonderful combination of storytelling, song, slapstick, mime and dance. Under the direction of Maryanne Lynch, Allayialis slowly draws us into the world of her family through a series of reflections, remembrances and flashbacks, exposing the strengths and weaknesses of the various ancestral influences on her life.' Andy MacLean, *MC Reviews*.

Lismore: NORPA, 2-3 April; Darwin: Browns Mart, 5-11 June.

> continued from page 3

works in Manhattan watched from her office window on 9/11 as New York's Twin Towers fell. Speaking to her on the phone that morning Vachananda thought: 'What if I lost my sister'? She was inspired to investigate the many ways people face death. Her performance contrasts a growing Western paranoia of dying, with Buddhist thinking on the cycle of life.

Since 9/11 Vachananda has developed choreography around the many myths, ideas and science concerning death. Threads such as the myth of Persephone, reincarnation, journal notes from a lunar cycle, and forensic analysis of cadaver flies that nest in dead bodies.

But don't expect black costumes, white powder or saffron transcendence. This dance of death is uncompromisingly contemporary. It features sound installation composed by Darwin-based composer Edward Kelly and multi-media projection by Yeap Heng Shen from Malaysia.

'...*Parlour* is a long, brave work, danced with intense focus and hypnotic beauty. Its circular, ritualistic repetitions and tendril-like extensions gathered restrained emotional momentum as Vachananda tossed her head and clasped or probed her body as she investigated the space between life and death.'

Lee Christofis, *The Australian* 14/6/05

Perth: Kulcha, 12 August; Lismore: NORPA, 16 August; Sydney: Gallery 4, 30 August.

Visual Arts and Community Events: *Crowd Theory*

The Crowd Theory Project is a series of photographic events that Footscray Community Arts Centre (FCAC) has developed into a unique model of working with and engaging communities in the creation of art. The project explores how communities imagine themselves.

More than 400 people from interested communities work with artists to explore themes about representations of collective identity and how this relates to specific geographical sites. Through this process, events are planned in which these communities create a detailed vision of themselves that is captured in a large-format photo (2.5 metres x 1.8 metres).

In 2004, The Crowd Theory Project was produced by FCAC in collaboration with Simon Terrill, dramaturg David Everist, and undertaken by more than 400 members of the communities of Braybrook and Footscray in the western region of Melbourne. The project involved the creation of two photographs, and accompanying

soundscapes by Kim Dellavedova, investigating the relationship between people and place.

The first photo was taken at FCAC on the banks of the Maribyrnong River. Three ruptures in the earth indicated a subterranean presence that provided the narrative framework for the image. The foreground consists of unusual markings in the soil and lighting from beneath the gardens onto the groups of people enveloped in smoke. This was set against an industrial backdrop and a spectacular cityscape.

The second photo was taken at a frequently used and historically significant sports ground in Braybrook. The open expanse of the oval provides a stark backdrop for a representation of the diverse and complex social fabric of this locality. Conversations were had with the communities on how the locality is perceived - 'it's time we showed positive images of Braybrook', to suggestions for the site of the photograph and evocative ideas of expressing identity.

Sydney: Liverpool Regional Museum, Exhibition 29 June – 6 July, Forum: 1 July; Lismore: NORPA, Exhibition 29 April – 6 May, Forum: 29 April.

kultour's program of events 2006

With the support of the Australia Council for the Arts the kultour network develops an annual multicultural national touring program, which tours both performing and visual arts. These annual programs aim to educate, inspire and entertain.

The touring program allows local professional artists to reach new audiences in new areas and in turn allows Australian audiences to gain insight into the exciting multicultural work that is currently on offer in the arts in Australia.

For further information on kultour visit <www.kultour.com.au>. For tour dates and venues, contact kultour co-ordinator on 03 9417 6777.

Transformations Conference 2006

The *Transformations 2006* conference is from 27 to 29 November at the Australian National University, Canberra. It is the second international conference examining global and local trends in culture and environment within the framework of human development. For information about the call for proposals visit <www.transformations2006.org.au>

Have your say about the Community Partnerships Scoping Study

The Australia Council for the Arts Community Partnerships Scoping Study moved into phase two in February with the release of its key discussion paper and the commencement of public consultations.

Discussion paper released

The Scoping Study discussion paper proposes future directions for the Australia Council's support and engagement with the community arts sector. Its recommendations are based on interviews conducted by an independent consultant with a wide range of arts and cultural practitioners and organisations.

The Australia Council is interested in public comments and feedback on the discussion paper. To obtain a copy and/or submit your views visit <www.ozco.gov.au/cp> and select the link to 'Scoping Study public consultations' on the right-hand side. **Submissions must be received by Thursday 30 March 2006.**

Public submissions will be reviewed by the Scoping Study Reference Group, and the final paper and recommendations will be presented to the Australia Council in June 2006. For background information about the study or Community Partnerships you can attend a public consultation (see below) or visit the website (see address above).

Public consultations

Public consultation to inform community arts practitioners about the Australia Council's Scoping Study are being held across the Australia from 21 February to 5 April 2006.

Artworkers are encouraged to attend these forums to ensure there is input from the multicultural arts sector in the Australia Council's future direction. For details about your nearest consultation visit <www.ozco.gov.au/cp> and select the link to 'Scoping Study public consultations' on the right-hand side.

Publications

EMPIRES, RUINS + NETWORKS: The Transcultural Agenda in Art (edited by Papastergiadis and McQuire) follows the successful conference commissioned by ACMAC. It is available from the Melbourne University Press <www.mup.com.au> or from Readings Bookstores at <www.readings.com.au>



Australian Government



Diversity is a publication of the Australia Council for the Arts. The Australia Council is the Australian Government's arts funding and advisory body. It supports and promotes the practice and enjoyment of the arts.

The views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Australia Council or its staff.

© Commonwealth of Australia 2006
ISSN : 1833-4431

Australia Council
372 Elizabeth Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010
PO Box 788
Strawberry Hills NSW 2012
Telephone 02 9215 9000
Toll free outside Sydney 1800 226 912
Fax 02 9215 9111
www.ozco.gov.au