

A LISTENING PARTY



ALLEARS

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We acknowledge the Dharawal people as the Traditional Custodians of this land and pay respect to all Aboriginal Elders, past and present and people from all Aboriginal nations.

FOREWORD

Last October C-A-C projected a giant rainbow flag across its facade. It was loud and urgent and the rainbow colours pushed against the night sky full of resistance, gathering us together in Campbelltown. For many of us the pride flag held critical meaning during the plebiscite. A symbol of pride and protest, and of safety, of sanctuary - a sticker on a passing car, a painted letterbox, a flag in a window, a button – each holding within them the illusionary, yet comforting power of protection.

Now there is work to be done. To create lasting protection for people takes ongoing effort and risk. From small personal gestures, to re-writing law. It begins with thinking beyond our own experience. Accepting that we can't know how it feels to be in any other body other than our own, but trying to imagine nonetheless. We must be prepared to get it wrong and to be told that we must do better. We must listen deeply.

At C-A-C we are determined to support the creation of safe and celebratory spaces for queer artists and audiences, where the full breadth of queer arts practice and experience can be explored and shared.

– Jenn Blake, Program Manager C-A-C

CURATORIAL INTRO

*I continue to listen rather than claiming to understand.*¹
– Ariel Goldberg

I am all ears: a casual idiom in which the ear assumes the body, taking precedence, taking responsibility. It implies actively and attentively listening to another. It is an encounter of care. This is the starting point for *All Ears: A listening party*, a performance event that will shape a shared and embodied experience to propose a queer mode of listening.²

Taking place inside a theatre context, *All Ears* draws together the performative processes of both queerness and listening. Queer theorist José Esteban Muñoz proposes that queerness is a performative mode: “it is not simply a being but a doing for and toward the future.”³ Understood in this way, queerness is a process. A series of ongoing actions directed towards troubling existing stratum of power that perpetuate the silencing and invisibility of particular bodies. *All Ears* turns to listening as one such action, imagining the ear as an opening through which queer ethics, politics, aesthetics, intimacies and desires can be received and channelled. In this space, you, the listener, are a critical and active participant, where alignments and divergences will be felt.

For several months we, the curators, have been in conversation with the artists of *All Ears*. Together we have shaped the questions of the project, asking: How can listening be a practice of resistance? What are the urgencies and responsibilities of a listener today? The artists have responded with personal and, at times, vulnerable new performances. They are: Alissar Gazal, Brian Fuata, Emily Crocker, Enoch Mailangi, Jax Jacki Brown, Kate Britton and Hayley Forward, Koco Carey, Marcus Whale, Nina Buchanan and Samia Sayed. The performances will be complemented with a shared meal prepared by Aunty Omar and Muhammad Ali Qureshi, who together are 2 Boys in Saris.

As way of introduction to *All Ears*, Alissar Gazal will be our host – a central conduit between artist and audience. Alissar’s diverse practice as a filmmaker, performer and Club-Arak founder grounds this project in the practices of storytelling and hospitality.

Brian Fuata's improvisational performance, *Care disfigurements (soft hands)* searches for the sounds we emit that are beyond language, somatic utterances that hold the lure and weight of both sexual pleasure and haunting pain. The figure of the 'ghost' – a motif that Brian repeatedly returns to in his practice – becomes the armature through which Brian disavows a cohesive singular self. In its place, Brian's ghost introduces a slippery multiplicity and reflexivity, entering into a realm of psychic energies and potential failures.

Emily Crocker's *Sonnet* looks to those moments when we are "beyond words," when that silent space between us becomes palpable, whetted with queer affect. As a poet, Emily troubles this silence in attempting to locate it, to speak it, to feel it.

In their lecture performance, *Kiki, Doesn't Love You!* :, Enoch Mailangi unpacks the nimbus of pink dollar and noise pollution encircling queer culture in 2018.⁴ Enoch questions whether queer culture deserves the same conservation and protection as our physical environment.

Interweaving spoken-word poetry and direct address, Jax Jacki Brown draws our attention to the sounds of her wheelchair. Jax's talk will reflect on her most immediate sound environment, where flesh and metal are intimately bonded.

In *Out Of My Mind - Mohefisi* Koco Carey reveals the vulnerabilities of staking out an aural space for herself. Mohefisi is a Tongan term meaning 'restless sleeper', referring not just to a sleeping body but extends to a sense of unsettlement. Performing passages from her personal journals this movement and sonic score draws together body with language, foregrounding the importance of finding ones own voice.

The Same Nest is Marcus Whale's contemplation on desire. In an improvised performance with Holly Conner and Jacques Emery, Marcus's poetry takes on an operatic scale. This lush and excessive score mirrors how bodies become possessed by desire, and then, in turn, how desire is amplified and transfigured by time.

Nina Buchanan's *Falling Forever* is a new composition for piano and live electronic processing. This complex and layered arrangement speaks to the emotive tumult of intimacy. For Nina, the piano becomes a "dual symbol of both repression and expression"⁵ that draws a listener into the nuanced trepidations and excitations of connecting with others.

Drawing from religious and culturally significant rituals, Samia Sayed's *The Ultimate Devotion* is a performance that instates women's presence, power and radical persistence. Beginning with Koumbah Semega-Janneh singing the Adhan, Samia's work is a call to arms and an act of devotion.

Bodily senses and collective experience are central to *All Ears*. As part of the event 2 Boys in Saris will host a shared meal of North Indian style biryani and Punjabi Masala-Chai. Performing as Bindi and Bangles, Aunty Omar and Muhammad Ali Qureshi will lead us from the ear to the tongue, expanding our sensual experience to embrace the entire body.

The Third Ear is the crucial echo of *All Ears*. This audio catalogue (available as a downloadable podcast) is the responsive outcome of writer and curator, Kate Britton, and sound designer, Hayley Forward. Tracing the development of the artist commissions throughout the project, Kate and Hayley draw on interviews, research at the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives, and Australia's rich community of queer audio makers to contextualise the process and ideas informing *All Ears*. *The Third Ear* will be released in early 2019. (Details of how to sign up to *The Third Ear* are included later in this program.)

All Ears: A listening party is not an answer but a process; a shared and unpredictable conversation. We ask you to listen to these artists and to each other, to hear what affinities emerge and what new horizons are shaped when we become *All Ears*.

Frances and Jess

¹ Goldberg, Ariel. *The Estrangement Principle*, New York: Nightboat Books, 2016. P 79.

² In both this text and the overall project, we do not aim to locate and delimit what “queer” is. How everyone understands queer is nuanced and individual, shaped by lived experience. For this event queerness is conceived of as a shifting dynamic that exists between those of us in attendance – a dynamic that is open, compassionate and unassuming towards others, holds yourself to account, and is informed by the (many possible imaginations and concrete realities of the) body.

³ Muñoz, José Esteban. *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. New York and London: New York University, 2009. P 1.

⁴ The ‘pink dollar’ is the purchasing power of LGBTIQ+ consumers

⁵ Nina Buchanan, email correspondence with the author, 2 August 2018.

SCHEDULE

Saturday 1 September 2018, 11:30am - 3:30pm

11.30am PART ONE
Aunty Glenda Chalker, *Welcome to Country*
Alissar Gazal, *Foreword*
Samia Sayed, *The Ultimate Devotion*
Emily Crocker, *Sonnet*
Enoch Mailangi, *Kiki, Doesn't Love You! :\
Marcus Whale, *The Same Nest**

INTERMISSION

Lunch by 2 Boys in Saris

2.00pm PART TWO
Alissar Gazal, *foreword*
Koco Carey, *Out Of My Mind - Mohefisi*
Jax Jacki Brown, *Queering normal: The
soundscape of my queer disabled body*
Brian Fuata, *Care disfigurements (soft
hands)*
Nina Buchanan, *Falling Forever*

THE THIRD EAR

The Third Ear is a podcast catalogue for *All Ears: A listening party*. It contextualises the project: conceptually, culturally, historically and sonically. Drawing on interviews, archival research, and relevant theoretical texts, it explores how we listen, how this might be understood through the lens of queer thinking, and the potential of a 'queer listening' practice. *The Third Ear* comprises an introductory audio essay, and one subsequent episode for each artist's work in *All Ears*.

Subscribe to *The Third Ear* on SoundCloud - <https://soundcloud.com/cac-australia/sets/the-third-ear-an-audio>

Released early 2019. All ticket holders for *All Ears* will be notified via email and any subscriber to the podcast will be sent a notification.

ARTISTS

Alissar Gazal is an award winning documentary filmmaker, actor, and producer and has been working in the arts since 1991. Alissar is also a cultural producer and developer and for the last 15 years has produced Club Arak a LGBTQ dance party.

Brian Fuata works in performance through live and mediated forms. He employs various modes of presentation within the framework of structured-improvising.

Emily Crocker writes and performs poetry. Emily is interested the role of sound and theatre practices in elevating the form of spoken word.

Enoch Mailangi is an Indigenous and Polynesian TV writer and text-based artist from Sydney. Their practice and writing primarily champions themes of Black mediocrity and explores celebrity culture as a vehicle of colonisation.

Hayley Forward is a sound designer, artist, and engineer. **Kate Britton** is a writer and curator. Collaboratively, they are interested in the collision of theory, art and action, queer practices, oral histories, the affect of sound, long-form audio documentary, and bush walking.

Jax Jacki Brown is a disability and LGBTIQ rights activist, writer and spoken-word performer. Jax is a co-producer of Quippings: Disability Unleashed a disability performance troupe in Melbourne.

Koco Carey is a Western Sydney based 'fakaleiti' artist, with a movement-based practice focusing on queer belonging and cultural performativity. Her work investigates personal experience, from her cultural heritage as a Tongan and Maori 'Fakaleiti' to being a founding vogue member of the house of Slè (directed by Bhenji Ra) and her identity as a trans person living and growing up in Western Sydney.

Marcus Whale is a musician and artist working on Gadigal land. Forming an electronic world around his singing, slipping between pop, club, experimental and contemporary classical music. Recently, his practice has expanded to include performance, sound, text and video.

Nina Buchanan is a musician, producer and composer based in Melbourne. Her work explores the intersections of analogue synthesis, dance music contexts, contemporary digital production and keyboard music, with an acute sensitivity to tonality, texture and emotionality.

Samia Sayed is a Sydney-based Queer, Arab, artist and writer. Her work explores the experience of being raised in Australia amongst first-generation families, of travelling to homelands from which these families have been removed, of the tensions between these two worlds, and of the loss and violence that she experiences amongst these contexts.

Two Boys in Saris (Aunty Omar and Muhammad Ali Qureshi) is about starting a dialogue on breaking gender norms, and giving each and every person on earth the wings they want, desire and have the right to have.

CURATORS

Frances Barrett is an artist and curator living on Gadigal land, Sydney. Her interests in live encounters and collaborative processes inform both her curatorial and artistic practice.

Jess Olivieri is the Curator of Contemporary Performance at Campbelltown Arts Centre. Drawing on experience as a curator and artist Jess is interested in how we can define and frame liveness within a queer methodology, recently completing a PhD on the topic.

PROJECT TEAM

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| Concept | Frances Barrett |
| Co-curated | Frances Barrett & Jess Olivieri |
| Assistant Curator | Akil Ahamat |
| Sound Designer & Audio Technician | Hayley Forward |
| Lighting Designer | Peter Rubie |
| Production Assistant & Lighting Operator | Emily Moffat |
| Assistant Audio Technician | Felix Abrahams |

Campbelltown Arts Centre would like to thank: all the artists involved for their tireless energy and dedication to the project; Frances Barrett and Hayley Forward for their rigor and hard work; Bundanon Trust for hosting the initial residency for the *All Ears* artists as well as Australia Council and Create NSW for their ongoing support.

Frances Barrett would like to thank: the artists, Hayley Forward and the *All Ears* crew; the entire team at Campbelltown Arts Centre, particularly the tenacious and inspiring Jess Olivieri; Kate Britton, who was there from the beginning; Tara McDowell, Helen Hughes and Spiros Panigirakis, my dear Monash colleagues; to Barbara Cleveland and PVG, my lifebuoys; Claudia Nicholson and Enderie Nuatal, who always, without question, listen.

STAFF LIST

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| Director | Michael Dagostino |
| Program Coordinator | Jenn Blake |
| Business Coordinator | Mouna Zaylah |
| Curator Contemporary Visual Art | Adam Porter |
| Curator Contemporary Dance | Nick Power |
| Curator Contemporary Music | Matthew Steffen |
| Curator Contemporary Performance | Jess Olivieri |
| Collections Officer | Jasmine Kean |
| Assistant Curators | Emily Rolfe, Matt Prest, Akil Ahamat & Samantha Relihan |
| Production Team Leader | Paul Welch |
| Education Officer | Edwina Hill |
| Creative Learning & Engagement Officer | Timothy George |
| Arts & Cultural Liaison Officer | Brenden Broadbent |
| Digital Content Officer | Ashley Sime |
| Media & Marketing Officer | Danielle Farrugia |
| Administrative Assistant | Sharon McAndrew |
| Visitor Services Team Leader | Zana Lopez |
| Visitor Services Officers | Louise Snowdon, Julie Finch, Laura Brunick, Cindy Fabian & Tina Wheatley |



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