

MEDIA RELEASE

Level 5, 10 Hickson Road The Rocks
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sydneyfestival.org.au



UTS Big Thinking Forums + Talking Dance at Sydney Festival



In partnership with UTS, Sydney Festival has worked closely with academics, Indigenous elders, artists and advisors to create a series of forums for topical discussions around culture and expression. Focussing on language, history and dance the UTS Big Thinking Forums will explore issues of Indigenous culture, Australian history and the future of a number of artistic, cultural and environmental issues for practitioners, curators and audiences in the arts community.

Sydney Festival Director **Wesley Enoch**: “Sydney Festival happens at a time when you’re thinking about the year ahead as if it was a blank sheet. You’re in a New Years Resolution state of mind. This is a time to embrace big ideas and important thinking, to consider how you want to spend your time in this city, how you engage with the world and how you connect with world cultures. Working with UTS and our other partners to deliver these forums gives people a chance to touch base with some of the brightest cultural thinkers around topics of national and international importance.”

UTS Vice-Chancellor **Professor Attila Brungs** shares Wesley’s enthusiasm towards the partnership: “Partnering with Sydney Festival is both exciting and a natural fit for us. We share a vision of making a difference in our community through knowledge and understanding. UTS is proud to be the Sydney Festival Knowledge Partner. We look forward to fostering creativity, innovation and increased social capital throughout Sydney.”

Taking place in the Great Hall at UTS, **Talking Culture** will be a forum inspired by Sydney Festival’s *Bayala Let’s Speak Sydney Language* project which celebrates the Indigenous heritage of Sydney and the growing movement to awaken local language. Speakers will explore the cultural action by communities to share Indigenous Knowledge on an everyday basis. Speakers will include Gadigal Elder **Uncle Alan Madden**, Sydney Festival Director **Wesley Enoch**, *Bayala* Language Teacher **Aunty Jacinta Tobin**, UTS Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Leadership and Engagement) **Professor Michael McDaniel** and Wiradjuri Elder **Uncle Stan Grant** with moderator **Professor Larissa Behrendt**.

Also moderated by Behrendt, **From 1967 to 2067** will be a panel discussion reflecting on the changes over the last fifty years since the 1967 Referendum that proposed to improve the place of Indigenous people in our country and was supported by 90.77% of Australians. The panel is invited to look to the next fifty years to predict and prioritise future constitutional and political change. The panel will include

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Wiradjuri Elder **Aunty Millie Ingram**, Artist **Vernon Ah Kee**, Historian **John Maynard**, and Writer **Alexis Wright**. Big Thinking Forums are presented by Sydney Festival, UTS & ABC

At Carriageworks, a series of three conversations between Festival artists exploring ideas in their performance works and broader practice, *Talking Dance*, will be held throughout the Festival:

Talking Dance: Indigenous Knowledge & the Environment will ask what role Indigenous knowledges communicated through song, dance and story can play in our current discussions about the environment and how is dance a vital part of this discussion? Contributing artists will be **Ghenoa Gela** (Force Majeure), **Dalisa Pigram** (Marrugeku) and **Eko Supriyanto** (Ekosdance) and will be chaired by **Claire Hicks** (Director of Critical Path). *Talking Dance: Beyond the Choreographer* will be a conversation about the many other creative roles that lead to the success of a show with **Jala Adolphus** (Ekosdance), **Juliette Barton** (Sydney Dance Company), **Amber Haines** (DanceNorth), **Amrita Hepi** (Independent) and **Miranda Wheen** (*Champions*). *Talking Dance: Handle With Care* will ask what is the place of care and caring in our society and how might an embodied practice help us in understanding it? With contributing artists **Jacob Boehme** (*Blood on the Dance Floor*), **Future Fidel** (*Prize Fighter*), **Amit Lahav** (*Institute*) and **Jodee Mundy** (*Imagined Touch*).

Also presented as part of Sydney Festival are a range of talks, forums and play readings including *Who's Afraid of Patricia Cornelius?*: a discussion with one of Australia's most awarded and celebrated playwrights, **Patricia Cornelius** and Sydney Festival Director Wesley Enoch, **Cat Jones'** *Scent of Sydney* with a series of conversations and debates to open the discussion about the olfactory portrait of our city with an invitation for Sydneysiders to contribute their ideas and stories of Sydney's identity and *Yellamundie National First Peoples Playwriting Festival* which will provide networking opportunities for artists, industry forums, and readings of six new national and two international plays.

More information on the Sydney Festival Website: <http://www.sydneyfestival.org.au/2017/talks-workshops>

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