

Level 5, 10 Hickson Road, The Rocks
Sydney NSW 2000 Australia
Phone +61 2 8248 6500
sydneyfestival.org.au

Sydney Festival Announces New Festival Director for 2022 – 2024



Olivia Ansell, Festival Director for 2022 – 2024. Photo: Daniel Boud.

The board of Sydney Festival has today announced the appointment of their new Festival Director for 2022, Australian curator and producer, Olivia Ansell.

Ansell, a highly accomplished arts professional with over two decades' experience as a director, choreographer and performing artist, is set to commence her three-year tenure in November. She comes to the role after two and a half years as Head of Contemporary Performance at Sydney Opera House.

Of the new appointment, Sydney Festival Chair, David Kirk MBE stated:

"Sydney Festival is delighted for Olivia to take the artistic reins as Festival Director in 2022. Having conducted an extensive global search that unearthed a number of high-calibre candidates for the role, it was incredibly pleasing to appoint someone with the breadth of experience that Olivia brings. We have no doubt that her creative insight and deep passion for Sydney will shape the festival's next evolution in a way that is sure to thrill our audiences."

Voted one of Vivid Sydney's Top 100 Creative Catalysts, Ansell possesses a vast breadth of art experience, including roles as co-Executive Producer and creative force behind the hugely-popular immersive experience *Hidden Sydney*; Artistic Director of Sydney Comedy Festival at Sydney Town Hall; Curator of *Kings Bloody Cross* for Vivid Ideas; producer of Richard Walley OAM and Nigel Jamieson's large-scale concert spectacular, *HOME* for Perth International Arts Festival; Consultant Executive Producer for OzAsia Festival Adelaide; and inaugural Executive Producer of Shaun Parker & Company. She is also a lecturer in Movement for the Sydney Conservatorium of Music's Con Opera School.

"I've had a long obsession with Sydney's irresistible charm and with the city's untold stories, eager to be unleashed," says Ansell. "I am beyond thrilled for the chance to collaborate with Sydney's dynamic cultural, community and tourism sectors, and for the opportunity to create world-class festival experiences that dare the audience to dream."

MEDIA RELEASE

Level 5, 10 Hickson Road, The Rocks
Sydney NSW 2000 Australia
Phone +61 2 8248 6500
sydneyfestival.org.au

SYDNEY FESTIVAL

Since 2017, Ansell has curated and championed a diverse range of maverick storytellers to the Sydney Opera House stage, including Lucy Moss and Toby Marlow's cult musical *SIX*; Hofesh Shechter's critically acclaimed *Grand Finale*; Lin Manuel Miranda's *In the Heights*; *A O Lang Pho* by Cirque Nouveau du Vietnam; Natalia Osipova and David Hallberg's *Pure Dance* and Australian comedian Hannah Gadsby's hit show, *Douglas*.

Sydney Opera House CEO, Louise Herron AM affirmed Ansell's exceptional contribution: "Olivia has made an outstanding contribution to Sydney Opera House since she began as Head of Contemporary Performance in 2018. Her appointment as Festival Director of Sydney Festival, one of our longstanding partners, is fantastic news and we can't wait to see what exciting programming and experiences she brings to our city."

Following an international search undertaken by strategic leadership consultancy, [Challis & Company](#), the appointment marks the next era for the 43-year-old festival, with the 2021 festival due to be the final outing under current Festival Director, Wesley Enoch.

"I am so excited to hear of Olivia's appointment," states Enoch. "Her commitment to Australian artists makes her exactly the right person at exactly the right time steering Sydney Festival to remain the Festival of Sydney and Australia's largest commissioner of new Australian works. Olivia is passionate, whip smart and has an eye for finding the popular, the adventurous and the stories we need to hear."

Ansell will present her first festival in January 2022.