

New Queensland arts initiative tests alternative support structure for independent artists

MAPS FOR ARTISTS launches 14 October 5:30pm – 7pm, Brisbane Powerhouse

Six of the most promising independent Queensland dance and theatre groups will engage in a unique three-year Australia Council pilot, which seeks to create an alternative support structure for creators of new performance work.

MAPS (Managing and Producing Services) will be funded in Queensland as a joint venture between the theatre and dance boards of Australia Council and Arts Queensland, with Victoria and Western Australia following suit with their respective State funding bodies.

The vision for MAPS is to partner the artists with a managing producer and equip them to more successfully compete in wider touring, festival and venue networks in Australia and abroad and to support them in creating new work of an international artistic standard.

In Queensland, the initiative will be delivered as a producer partnership between Brisbane Powerhouse and Metro Arts – Queensland's two primary supporters of independent practice – and will be officially launched under the name MAPS FOR ARTISTS on 14 October 2008 at the Brisbane Powerhouse.

Brisbane Powerhouse Artistic Director, Andrew Ross, expects the initiative to address the common situation where Australian artists with significant potential fail to secure work nationally and internationally.

"MAPS is an exciting opportunity for Australia's top independent acts to grasp the national and international touring and production opportunities that so often slip through their fingers," Andrew said.

"Some of our most promising artists often miss opportunities, not because their work isn't up to standard, but rather because they lack the vital management, administration and producer skills to compete on a global scale," he said.

"If we can support our artists with a professional management base then this program will foster a vibrant and professional Australian independent theatre and dance industry on our soil and beyond."

Metro Arts Chief Executive Officer, Liz Burcham, said the partnership was a rare and exciting opportunity for independent artists to access a wealth of knowledge, resources and networks.

"While this partnership is a first for Brisbane Powerhouse and Metro Arts, it is clearly a fitting collaboration to support this MAPS initiative," Liz said.

"Both organisations believe this initiative is precisely what independent artists need to successfully develop quality art that connects beyond their existing markets – tailored, ongoing and ambitious professional development support," she said.

"We're looking forward to leveraging our respective venues and artistic, management, marketing, financial and operational experience to make MAPS FOR ARTISTS a resounding success."

MAPS for Artists

MAPS FOR ARTISTS will be led by newly appointed Manager, Katherine Hoepper, with initial advisory support from Lyn Wallis, and will be overseen by a management team consisting of key staff from Brisbane Powerhouse and Metro Arts.

Katherine will provide each artist group with focused attention and tailored advice and will ensure they are cajoled, developed, challenged, extended and shaped in how to better structure their products and skills as well as providing some general management support.

Katherine brings to the role great experience in arts management, her most recent position being General Manager of Queensland's annual *Out of the Box* festival, General Manager of Kooemba Jdarra, Education Manager at Sydney Theatre Company, and Administrative Coordinator at Queensland Theatre Company.

Respected performing arts producer and director, Lyn Wallis, most recently worked as Theatre Producer at Casual Powerhouse in Sydney, and prior as Theatre Director of Company B, Belvoir.

Metro Arts (www.metroarts.com.au) has built its reputation on providing an environment and structure of professional development support where artists at all stages of their careers feel comfortable to experiment, develop and test new work.

Brisbane Powerhouse (www.brisbanepowerhouse.com.au) is the city's leading presenter of quality national and international performing arts productions and complements its artistic program with new works by the best of Brisbane's independent artists.

MAPS is a joint initiative of Arts Queensland and the Australia Council, the Australian Government's arts funding and advisory body.

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