

Case study

Circa

Details

What:

Since 2004 Circa has been at the frontier of new circus, creating powerful works of circus art that challenge, thrill and delight. Featuring an ensemble of multi-skilled circus artists under the direction of Yaron Lifschitz, Circa's award-winning works have been seen in 33 countries across six continents.

Circa features a full-time ensemble, an administrative team and a dedicated circus studio in Brisbane. Circa also runs a training centre with an extensive workshop program in Brisbane, in schools and communities throughout Queensland and Australia.

Circa also manages arTour, Queensland's centre of contemporary touring knowledge. arTour supports performing artists and producers to tour work through regional Queensland and nationally.

In 2014 Circa's 21 artists performed 375 shows, made five new circus creations and toured to 16 countries.

When:

2014

Where:

Queensland: Brisbane, Gold Coast, Toowoomba, Nambour, Bundaberg, Lockyer Valley

Interstate: Regional Australia and capital cities

International: North America, South America, Western Europe



Performance of *Opus*. Photo by Justin Nicholas

Key stats:

- 1131 activities
- 164,403 attendees and participants
- 44 FTEs, 29 paid artists/cultural workers, 2 volunteers

Arts Queensland 2014 contribution:

\$453,535 – Organisations Fund

Links:

www.circa.org.au

<https://www.facebook.com/circacontemporarycircus>

<https://vimeo.com/circapresents>

Outcomes

- **Performing on the world stage:** 375 performances were given in 16 countries of nine different shows. *Opus* was presented with commissioning partners including The Barbican, Perth Festival, and Melbourne Festival. *S* was performed in Brazil and Argentina and secured further bookings for 2015. Circa presented a special performance of *How Like an Angel*, a collaboration with I Fagiolini, as part of the White Light Festival in New York. Circa toured to five new countries including a first visit to Croatia. *Beyond* was toured after an eight month season in Berlin and had a smash-hit four week season at the Edinburgh Fringe
- **Touring Australia:** Circa toured five different shows to 33 venues and delivered 756 circus workshops to 10,854 participants of all ages. Highlights included sell out performances of “S” in Mildura and Nunawading; the entire population of Candelo attending *46 Circus Acts in 45 Minutes*; connecting with many youth circuses around the country, and touring *Wunderkammer* through SA and WA. Touring in 2014 enabled Circa to build relationships with more than 20 presenters, develop a much deeper understanding of the national market and a stronger national presence and securing National Touring Status for touring in 2015-2017.
- **Artist development:** In 2014 Circa focussed on artist development, refining new skills, making more time and space within the busy schedule for creation and reflection and finding richer and more imaginative ways to present circus. Circa worked with artists outside of the circus genre to collaborate on new shows including *Carnival of the Animals*, a multi-media re-imagining of the Camille Saint-Saens classical musical suite. It premiered in the Lyric Theatre, QPAC to an audience of over 9,000 and involved a successful collaboration with Music Director Quincey Grant and Video Designer Michaela French.



Carnival of the Animals. Photo by Justin Nicholas

Learnings and reflections

Diversification of Circa's business model has strengthened its viability and broadened its income base:

- Circa tendered for and was successful in taking over the management of arTour, creating a new business arm of the company.
- Circa has a three-year partnership with Creative Regions in Bundaberg to deliver circus workshops and develop a youth ensemble. This partnership with dance and gymnastic schools grew out of a community recovery project in Bundaberg and Gladstone after the floods.
- Many commissioning and project partners were secured in 2014 including a large scale project for Powerhouse Museum; a new commission for Brisbane Festival and other national and international festivals; and a new show for Underbelly Productions; a creation for a Spiegel tent in Norfolk & Norwich Festival.
- In 2015 Circa will work on attracting donors, large and small, to help build the support base for the company and artists.