

Case study

Black Honey – *Hot Brown Honey*

Details

What:

The Black Honey Company were awarded a *Fresh Ground* residency at the Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts (JWCoCA) to further the creative development, dramaturgy, choreography, costume and set design of their production *Hot Brown Honey*.

The work was originally created by Lisa Fa'alafi (Polytoxic), Candy B (Circus OZ) and Busty Beatz (Musical Director - *Briefs*) and explores multiple genres including dance, poetry, comedy, circus, strip tease and song.

The *Fresh Ground* residency was used to rehearse the show in preparation for performance seasons, to expand marketing tools and develop producing skills to on-sell the work nationally and internationally.

Hot Brown Honey achieved a sell-out season at the Adelaide Fringe in February 2015 and was presented by JWCoCA in March 2015 as a signature programmed event.

In April 2016 *Hot Brown Honey* will tour to the Melbourne International Comedy Festival.

When:

November 2014 to March 2015

Where:

Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts (JWCoCA)



Hot Brown Honey. Image by Sean Young

Key stats:

- 7 performances
- 1192 attendees
- 10 participants

Arts Queensland contribution:

- \$10,000 - Fresh Ground grant funding
- \$11,040 in-kind support through the Fresh Ground Residency at JWCoCA.

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Links:

Hot Brown Honey excerpts:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t4BpirARQpA>

Outcomes

- After the success of the show in March 2015, Brisbane Festival invited *Hot Brown Honey* to a return season at JWCoCA, placing the work in an international festival context.
- Black Honey Company was able to support a large cast of local and interstate artists to create, develop, rehearse and develop a range of skills. The exposure in a national context has led to increased work for all the artists involved.
- A partnership with production house Briefs Factory to present the work has been established as a result of the residency.
- The audience development strategies developed during the residency, particularly the social media campaign around creative and culturally specific content, has built diverse audiences for future shows and created links with the community.



Image by Sean Young

Learnings and reflections

Hot Black Honey reflected on the benefits of the residency:

Having the time to explore the content has been vital to the work's heart and soul. Issues were able to be addressed in a real and thoughtful way during the residency, enriching the performances. New marketing strategies to develop future audiences were also tested. The JWCoCA support has been a significant contribution to the success of the work.

Discussions with Briefs Factory began during the Fresh Ground Residency and were finalised during the JWCOCA season in March 2015. The producers recognised the process in which the work was made while visiting during the Fresh Ground residency. By witnessing the process and the performances they saw the potential trajectory of the work locally, nationally and internationally and have entered into a partnership with Black Honey Company to present the work, bringing on an internationally-renowned production team.

Without the JWCoCA support and financial investment, through the Fresh Ground residency, Black Honey Company (as an Independent arts company) would not have had the capacity to support Hot Brown Honey. Throughout the development and the subsequent seasons, it became clear that Fresh Ground is not only a financial contribution, but also a truly physical one by backing daring work that places diversity centre stage. Being able to present Hot Brown Honey after the Fresh Ground residency was inspiring and reassuring to the artistic team about the content and artistic depth of the work and enabled us to establish exciting connections with local audiences.

Black Honey Company look forward to continuing the relationship with the JWCOCA into the future as the production moves to the global market.