

QPAC PRESENTS

Circus in a tea cup

BY VULCANA CIRCUS



5-7 DECEMBER Cremorne Theatre, QPAC

Welcome

QPAC, Vulcana Circus, and Micah Projects pay our respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ancestors of this land, their spirits and their legacy. The foundations laid by these ancestors — our First Nations Peoples — gives strength, inspiration and courage to current and future generations, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, towards creating a better Queensland.

Circus in a Tea Cup is a production that encapsulates the heart of QPAC: community and the firm conviction that art can change lives. It is impossible to not be touched by the journey of these courageous women; finding the courage to trust again, to be vulnerable and to rebuild strength and belief in themselves is nothing short of remarkable. And to witness the extraordinary impact of this production not only on the artists, but also the creatives and audience is similarly inspiring.

One of the most beautiful things that the arts can do is provide an opportunity for voices and stories to be heard that may not otherwise be shared. *Circus in a Tea Cup* does not simply tell those stories; it works within a physical artform as part of a journey that leads to personal healing and growth.

This is the second time we have had the privilege of standing alongside two wonderful organisations, Micah Projects and Vulcana Circus, to present *Circus in a Tea Cup*. What we see as an audience is only a small part of the commitment to personal development and healing that these women have undertaken. This is a special season, and we are proud to co-present it with the support of Brisbane Domestic Violence Service.

John Kotzas AM
Chief Executive

Co-Director's Notes

Circus in a Tea Cup 2024 has been a five-month journey of collaboration and creation for our new ensemble of performers and theatre makers. This ensemble has been created through the process of finding a shared movement language that incorporates the benefits of circus to build trust and connections between bodies. This process brought together performers from the Vulcana circus community and performers who bring their own truths as survivors of domestic violence.

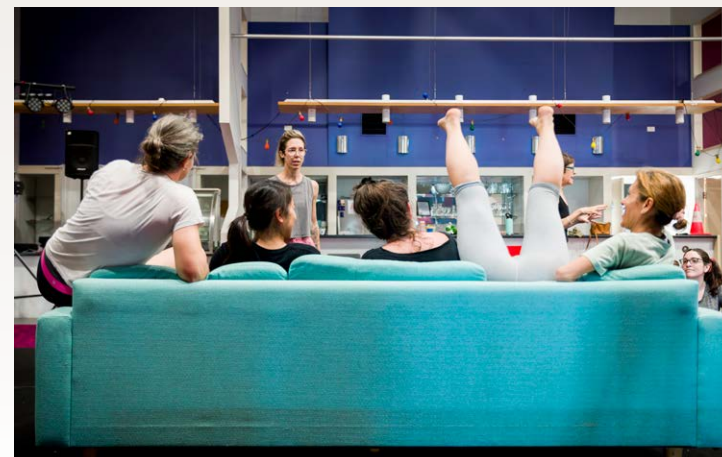
The work is situated in a domestic setting, a site that evokes narratives of safety, security and trust, but where the experiences of survivors of domestic violence defy these understandings.

The motifs and images that appear throughout this performance remind us of the duplicity of these spaces while also harnessing our power to change the story. Themes of isolation and desire for connection run through the piece, and the struggle to illuminate these stories can also bear most heavily on those who have experienced harm and violence and who are scrutinised extremely harshly in their efforts to obtain justice.

It has been a privilege to work with these performers, to face together the challenge of integrating their movement, their stories of strength and survival, and to watch this performance emerge.

The ensemble has had the courage to be vulnerable and invite you to witness the intimacy of personal and collective imagery that has emerged from their collaborations. They have shared their voices, their fears, and their hopes that we might see their strength and be inspired to take action. It will take all of us.

CELIA WHITE AND ALEX MIZZEN



About Micah Projects

A Short Message

Micah Projects have been proud supporters, partners and beneficiaries of the wonderful Circus in a Tea Cup program since its inception.

We are honoured to be part of a unique opportunity with participants finding skills they never knew and confidence they never imagined. This program is above the discourse of being a victim or recipients of service. Public space is important for showcasing this, and arts intuitions have always been places of equity and inclusion, so very connected to the skills and vision of Vulcana Circus. Circus in a Tea Cup is transformative, allowing performers to regain belief and capacity in their bodies.

The Company

Micah Projects is a not-for-profit organisation committed to providing services and opportunities in the community to create justice and respond to injustice. They provide a range of support and advocacy services to individuals and families including Family, Women and Children Support Services, Forgotten Australians Support Services, Homelessness to Home Support Services, Mental Health and Disability Support Services, and Supportive Housing Services.

Brisbane Domestic Violence Service (BDVS) is their regional Domestic and Family Violence support service for people living in Brisbane. They provide a range of free and confidential services for people who are experiencing or are at risk of domestic and family violence. They work to enhance the safety of women and children through an interagency approach to support and advocacy.

The People

Karyn Walsh

Chief Executive Officer

Debora Jackson

Chair

Additional Project Support from Katherine Vega

Senior Administration Worker

About the Project

Circus in a Tea Cup is an evolving performance program of transformation, designed to support survivors of domestic violence through artistic expression and healing. Initiated in 2005 in partnership with the Brisbane Domestic Violence Advocacy Service, the program involved a five-month process where survivors and support workers shared a journey of discovery and healing, culminating in a performance to a closed audience made up of members of the support sector in the Visy Theatre at Brisbane Powerhouse.

Due to its impact, *Circus in a Tea Cup* was revived in 2021 by Micah Projects, now overseeing the Brisbane Domestic Violence Service. This iteration aligned with QPAC's contribution to 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence. The project brought survivors and Vulcana Circus ensemble members together to create a contemporary circus performance that poignantly conveyed stories of resilience, recovery, and empowerment.

The program fosters empowerment in real-time, with participants learning circus skills, discovering a shared movement language, and crafting performances that embody their journeys. The 2024 season of *Circus in a Tea Cup* at QPAC's Cremorne Theatre, is showcasing work created by 19 participants who have met weekly over five months at the Vulcana Arts Hub. Under the guidance of Vulcana's artistic director Celia White and co-director Alex Mizzen, these survivors and artists — some performing for the first time — have created a performance that celebrates healing and strength.

Building on successes and learnings of past years, *Circus in a Tea Cup* 2024 aims to once again be a vessel for positive transformation, and once again serves as part of QPAC's contribution to 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence.

This program creates a different kind of emancipation in real time. It creates true stories about picking up the pieces and learning to fly high.

Project Credits

Co-Directors Celia White and Alex Mizzen

Performers:

An Write, Cassandra Greig, Danielle Bush, Ella Kangaroo,
Filiz Gotkas, Jane Michele, Kerri-Anne Mineham, Lauren Crawford,
Nadia Bagley, Pilar Rose de Lepervanche, Suzanna Anovic,
Tracey Tewksbury, Tristane Robert, Bena Brown, Eunice Poon,
Hélène Windels, Natalie Lazaroo, Tamyka Bell and Tobi Leggans.

Child Care Pei Ying Chen

Videographer Paris Owen and Jacob Sosnowski

Lighting Design Briana Clark

Sound Design Anna Whitaker

Associate Sound Design Emma Burchell

Circus Rigging Helen Clifford

Production Manager Kylie Mitchell

Stage Management Mayu Muto

Assistant Stage Management Rosie Albina

Graphic Design Dilsah de Rham

Production Images Jade Ellis

Headshots & Hero Image Grace Law,
with image by Chloe Callistemon

Rehearsal Images Claudia Baxter

Special thanks to Anja Kapelski, Karen Coyle, and Lillian Kapelski
for their invaluable assistance with costume construction.

We also extend our gratitude to Tess Raby, Claudia Baxter, Belinda Cox, Karyn Walsh,
Lisa Berlin, Rania Bayeh, Lara Croyden, Jane Shelton, Trish Desmarchelier, and
the Zonta Club of North Brisbane Inc, Rhianna Patrick, Julia Solomon, Kerry Redfern,
Kian Dillon, and our research partners from Griffith University, Dr Natalie Lazaroo,
and Dr Judy Rose for their support.

We are deeply grateful to the Board and Staff of Vulcana for their dedication,
and to the cast of *Circus in a Tea Cup* (2021) for inspiring this production.

VULCANA

MICAH PROJECTS
Breaking Social Isolation
Building Community

Qpac
QUEENSLAND
CULTURAL
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Key Statistics

**“On average one woman a week
in Australia is killed by an intimate partner.”¹**

**“Of the 9.9 million women in Australia,
2.7 million have experienced violence,
emotional or economic abuse
by a cohabiting partner in 2020/2021.”²**

**“Queensland Police Service responded
to more than 171,000 domestic violence
call outs in 2023 — more than
450 call outs a day.”³**

**“In 2023/24 financial year
11,936 women were supported by
Domestic and Family Violence Services
at Micah Projects.”⁴**

¹ Cussen, T., & Bryant, W. (2015). Domestic/family homicide in Australia (Research in practice, no. 38). Canberra, ACT: Australian Institute of Criminology.

² [Australian Bureau of Statistics, \(2023\)](#)

³ [Queensland Police Service \(2024\).](#)

⁴ [Micah Projects. \(2024\). Impact Reports Summary: Nurturing Equality.](#)

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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The Honourable John-Paul Langbroek MP
Minister for Education and the Arts

Sharon Schimming
Acting Director-General, Department of Education

QPAC rests on the lands of the Jagera and Turrbal peoples. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this country and recognise their rich cultural heritage and enduring connection to the land, waters and skies. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are this country's original storytellers, and it is our privilege to continue to share stories and be a place of gathering on this land that has been a meeting place for millennia.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

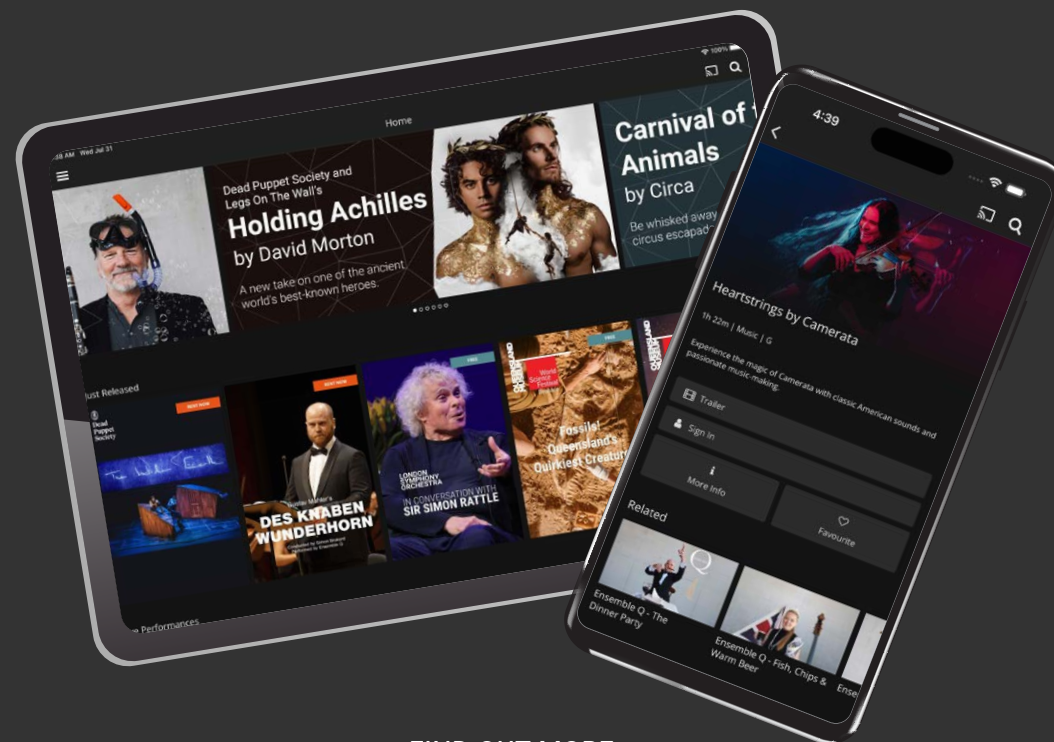
QPAC warmly thanks our key donors who help us engage broadly across the state and continue enriching lives through performing arts.

Tim Fairfax AC and Gina Fairfax AC, Dr Lee and Professor Peter Coaldrake AO, Leigh Tabrett PSM, Susan Rix AM, Julian Myers, Dr Sally Pitkin AO, Dare Power, Dr Cathryn Mittelheuser AM, Sandi Hoskins, Lance and Suzanne Hockridge, Leigh Wheeler, Judith Musgrave Family Foundation, Queensland Community Foundation, de Groots Charitable Fund, Joachim and Paula Erpf, Dr Colin and Mrs Noela Kratzing, Barbara Snelling, Frank and Karen Alpert, Dr Ailbhe and Dr Frank Cunningham, Jenny Morton, Klaus Beckmann and several donors who wish to remain anonymous.

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We thank our partners and supporters for their continued
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of live performance in Queensland.

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Vulcana, artists with lived
experience of disability and
AI researchers at Queensland
University of Technology