

2024 Rubibi Artist Lab

Biographies

Anne-Janette Phillips

An Indigenous Aboriginal Freelance Dance Artist from Broome with the descendant of the Bardi Yawuru and Nykina peoples of the West Kimberley Region. Professional Artist with a DIPLOMA in Careers in Dance whom a graduate from NAISDA Dancer College class of 2010 who also has great skills and talents within the Creative Arts Industry that is flexible and versatile with any given task to interpret and elaborate an idea or concept of a matter. Extraordinary skills of many trades within her profession who seeks to reach potential goals, dreams and aspiration to be successful and achieve personal highlights from humble beginnings as she is a well known artist that discovered her hidden raw talents with first established dance group of the Broome Community, known as "Modern Dreamtime Dancers" Inc in 1992 and become a profound artist of many talents in 1996.

Rika Hamaguchi

Rika is from Broome in Western Australia. She is a descendant of the Yawuru, Bunaba, Bardi and Jaru people in the Kimberley Region. Rika also shares Japanese, Chinese and Scottish ancestry. Rika studied at NAISDA Dance College, where she was awarded the prestigious Chairman's Award. Between 2015– 2023 Rika was a senior artist with Bangarra Dance Theatre Company. National tours have included: *Sand Song*, *Bennelong, lore*, *OUR land people stories*, *Dark Emu* and *30 years of sixty five thousand*, regionally (*Kinship*, *Terrain*, *OUR land people stories*, *Bennelong*, *Spirit: a Retrospective*) and internationally (Europe, Asia, America). She also performed in *Tracker*, an Australian Dance Theatre/Ilbijerri Theatre co-production in Perth, Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane seasons.

Bernadette Trench-Thiedeman

Bernadette works with writing, devising, directing, performance, puppetry, painting, film and animation. In 2023 she was selected for artist residencies at Instituto Sacatar and Kaaysa Art Residency, Brazil where she created new theatre and screen works. She is currently co-producing a documentary about simultaneous floods in Australia and Brazil, supported by the Australian Embassy. In 2022 her work 'Phantasmagoria' premiered at Theatreworks (Naarm) supported by Creative Victoria. In 2017 she toured 'The Divination Agency' to the Studio Underground in Boorloo/Perth, the Adelaide Fringe Festival, Naarm/Melbourne and Rubibi/Broome. In 2018 she completed a Master of Writing for Performance at the VCA, trained in Butoh with Yumi Umiamare and Neutral mask with John Bolton. Since she moved to Rubibi in 2011 she has worked on theatre projects throughout the Kimberley, leading the Big Country Puppets site specific giant puppetry performances in collaboration with Aboriginal Rangers, elders, artists and youth. Her film and animation work have been screened on ABC, SBS, at PICA, the Art Gallery of WA and the Australian Cinemateque GOMA. Bernadette has worked with organisations including Theatre Kimberley, Mangkaja Arts, Warmun Arts, the Snuff Puppets, Western Edge, Arts Project Australia, Arts Access Victoria, Lyric Opera and Black Hole Theatre.

Jael Johnson

Jael completed a degree in Theatre and Drama at Murdoch University (1988-1991), worked in theatre for a few years, and then left the arts professionally for 25 years during which time she organised a lot of events and training. She's remained involved as an amateur creative in visual arts and writing and as an avid reader and attendee of films, theatre, and exhibitions. Jael's completed various arts short courses (writing, visual arts, creative leadership, video etc). Since 2016, Jael's worked at Theatre Kimberley in a non-artistic role and supported TK productions as productions manager. In 2023, Jael completed NIDA teaching artist training to facilitate a short Intro to Acting course ran at Goolarri (TK, Goolarri and NIDA entered into a partnership funded by NIDA Connect).

Kimba Benjamin

Kimberley is a proud Yawuru, Bardi and Kija woman from Rubibi/Broome and has recently returned home to live. Kimba has worked as a researcher, writer, director and story producer for documentary series such as 'Back to Nature' (ABC, writer/director episodes 4 and 6) and 'Family Rules S2' (NITV, series producer). Most recently venturing into drama and writing and directing two episodes on Jub Clerc's SBS web series 'Warm Props' and completing a Netflix directors attachment on 'Surviving Summer S2' (2023). Having previously lived and worked in Boorloo/Perth and Naarm/Melbourne, Kimba's diverse work and passion for telling stories is informed by her connections and relationships with communities across the Country.

Hozaus Claire

Hozaus Claire is a young Walmajarri/ Gooniyandi man from Fitzroy Crossing. Born in Derby in 1995, he grew up in the Fitzroy Valley with the elders as his teachers. At 29yrs of age his artwork and stories are a vibrant legacy to the importance of his elders' traditions and culture and the honour in which he has in the continuation of these traditions. Each one of his paintings represents a personal and deep connection to country and the amazing rugged beauty that is the landscape of the West Kimberley.

Through his paintings, Hozaus explores the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, the gap between but also their connection and how one's upbringing, education, jobs and family can influence this. He aspires to reveal the beauty and diversity in which everyone can experience, sharing the land and working together. "Everyone has two lives they have to live, their personal life within their own selves and the life which everyone sees. You need the dark to see the light and the light to see the dark".

Meredith Bell

Meredith is the Artistic Director of Theatre Kimberley, based on Yawuru Djugun Country (Broome, WA). Originally from the U.S., Meredith earned a Bachelor of Arts in Visual Art (Magna Cum Laude) from Davidson College(1998); she has a background in painting, sculpture, theatre and acrobatics. Since 2014, she has directed the popular Sandfly Circus program, creating and directing several major performance works for the 100+ student cohort. Since 2017, she has developed and produced numerous annual circus productions with nationally acclaimed visiting directors including Come Fly With Us (2017, directed by Anni Davey) and Silly Plonkers & the Dentist Factory (2021, directed by Jamie Bretman and Rowan Thomas of Dummies Corp). She has overseen the development and production of the giant

puppetry musical, *The Shorebird Quest* (2019, 2023), and three major productions in the Worn Art Revamped platform: *X-Girl Red and the Tragic Pearl*; *Te Kore*; and *Raranga, the Weave*.

Brenton Mckenna

Brenton E McKenna, locally known by his middle name, “Eszra” is a respected Yawuru artist based out of Broome, WA, who found a passion for comic books in his youth. A passion which ultimately led to him to become one of the world’s most coveted First Nations Graphic Novelists. Eszra was inspired by the complexity and depth of Ghost Rider comics, rather than Superman in his youth. While the other kids played sport, Eszra went into other worlds, reading comics and becoming immersed in vivid drawings. As his illustrating skills developed through his teenage years, so did his ability to write stories, to become a complete storyteller. His stories were a deep combination of his own childhood experiences, his grandmother’s stories about Broome and the monsters and heroes that existed in his head. After studying visual arts in Victoria, Eszra was one of twenty successful applicants to be awarded the Australian Society of Authors in 2008. It wasn’t long before Magabala books, a respected First Nations independent publisher, published Eszra’s first work – *Ubbys Underdogs: The Legend of the Phoenix Dragon* in 2011. The “Ubbys” brand has gone on to become an iconic three-part series with Eszra touring his work across the globe and attending literature festivals in many parts of the world.

Ngaire Pigram

A proud queer, Wajarri & Yawuru storyteller from Rubibi, Ngaire Pigram has been active in film, television and theatre for over twenty-five years as a multidisciplinary artist and conspirator for change, with their passion for truth telling and supporting the voices of their communities remaining staunch and at the forefront of their life’s work and creativity. Ngaire strives to collaborate with their communities and the broader industry to create safe spaces for stories that empower and elevate representation of First Nations’ and queer voices to educate and inspire generations of today and beyond.

Gary Hamaguchi

Gary is a Jaru/Noongar/Japanese writer and director living in Broome, Western Australia. Gary has written and directed multiple award-winning short films. He is currently working on the next season of *Mystery Road* and has recently released the documentary series *Larapinta* currently on SBS on demand.