

*Group Show;*  
‘Joining my  
future’: Art, Work,  
Inequality and  
Crisis

Dylan Tyncherov, Dean Theilig,  
Cody Whelan, Will Murphy, Neithan Newton, Ruci Kaisila,  
Joseph Samarani, Damian Seddon, Nancy Oziya, Muhubo  
Sulieman; curated by Grace McQuilten  
and Amy Spiers

Jan. 19 – Feb. 27, 2021

The art exhibition, *‘Joining my future’: Art, Work, Inequality and Crisis* explores the impact of crisis on art-making for emerging artists in Melbourne. Amidst the multiple unfolding crises created by climate change, neoliberal capitalism and COVID-19, what does the future of creative work look like? When many artists are locked out of the economic power structures that drive the arts, and the art world routinely excludes marginalised populations, what cultural capital and social support does it take to invest in careers in the arts?

The culturally diverse, emerging artists showcased in this exhibition have valuable perspectives on the crises we face. They have forged pathways into professional arts practice in performance, fashion design and filmmaking supported by the art organisations Outer Urban Projects, The Social Studio and Youthworx.

Performing artists Ruci Kaisila, Joseph Samarani and Damian Seddon from Outer Urban Projects, offer deeply personal insights into their own experiences of COVID-19 crisis while living through lock down in Melbourne’s outer northern suburbs. They convey their frustrations, desire to make art and hopes for the future through the mediums of music, song, dance and poetry.

Artists Nancy Oziya and Muhubo Sulieman from The Social Studio bring their textile and material skills to explore art-making with limited resources amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Muhubo has responded to the conditions of COVID-19, including lockdown and the closure of many art supply shops, by being resourceful working with materials at hand to construct a new weaving using traditional Somali weaving techniques. Muhubo has ambitious plans for her future career in the arts. Muhubo states, “I love the arts. I love it. My dream is one day in Australia, to have a space for the arts, like a gallery. I wish I had a studio where I’d teach people, the community and everyone came and everyone shares the skills.”

During COVID-19, Nancy has been working with The Social Studio team to produce medical scrubs for health care workers and has produced her own line of face masks. Her textile work for the exhibition references PPE and the idea of pandemic, which she brings together with traditional African fabrics and design. Another major concern for Nancy in her design is sustainability and climate change. Nancy states “I try to use ethically sourced fabrics, and my garments are all Australian made and made to order to reduce unnecessary waste.”

Alongside these explorations, Youthworx artists Dylan Tyncherov, Dean Theilig, Cody Whelan, Will Murphy and Neithan Newton have created insightful documentaries consisting of interviews with each other, and artists from Outer Urban Projects, about how the current pandemic has affected their work and how they feel about the current crises and their futures.

In addition to the works on display in the gallery, throughout the exhibition an accompanying public program of performances and skill sharing workshops will be presented at Bus Projects, where the artists will share their unique worldviews, aspirations and knowledge.

This exhibition is an outcome of an Australian Research Council funded study, “Arts Based Social Enterprise and Marginalised Young People’s Transitions” led by Professor Peter Kelly, Dr Grace McQuilten, Associate Professor Kimberly Humphery and Dr Amy Spiers of RMIT University, and Dr Deborah Warr of Charles Sturt University. This four-year project has involved research with arts-based social enterprises across Australia, including undertaking 60 interviews with staff and participants from twelve ASE organisations, and conducting three in-depth case studies with Melbourne enterprises The Social Studio, Outer Urban Projects and Youthworx Productions.

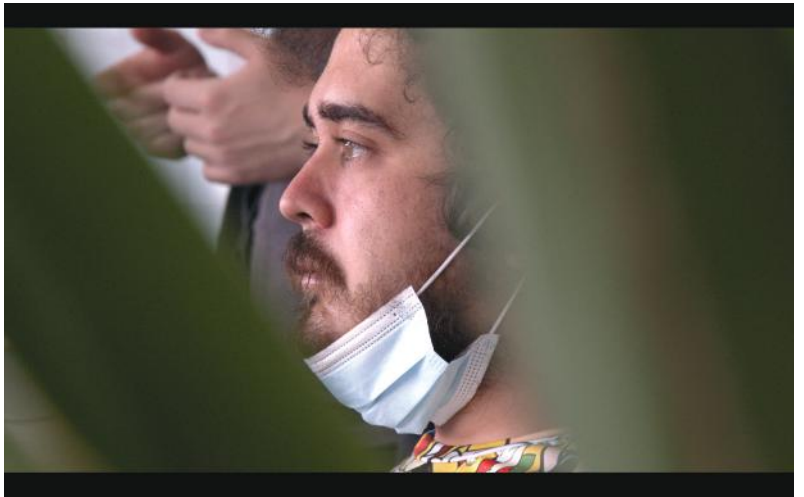
Curators Grace McQuilten and Amy Spiers wish to thank our partners Outer Urban Projects, The

Social Studio and Youthworx, art organisations that support emerging artists through innovative creative education and career pathways. Special thanks to all the hardworking staff that helped with the exhibition including David Mackenzie, Callum Goodes, Lucie McMahon and Nicola Innes of Youthworx; Irine Vela, David Ralph and Kate Gillick of Outer Urban Projects; and Dewi Cooke and Cate Coleman of The Social Studio.

This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body. For further information about the exhibition, public programs or research, please email [amy.spiers@rmit.edu.au](mailto:amy.spiers@rmit.edu.au).









## *Biographies*

Outer Urban Projects is a bold performing arts company that creates new forms of contemporary performance imagined from the life experiences of young emerging artists from the outer northern suburbs of Melbourne – a part of Melbourne and Australia that although not at the epicentre of mainstream cultural life, possesses great artistic wealth and community energy. We give voice to the unexpressed aspirations and creative potential of ghettoised, culturally diverse emerging artists whose origins span five continents. OUPs programs are interlinked, they include a Community Access Tutorial Program, Fee For Service (Social Enterprise), Linkages to further arts training and employment with other arts companies, a developing Ensemble, Major Works for main stage presentation and an Associate Artist Program. [outerurbanprojects.org](http://outerurbanprojects.org)

The Social Studio is a not-for-profit social enterprise, operating since 2009. Our mission is to create pathways into further education and long-term, rewarding employment for young people from new migrant and refugee backgrounds, and a community that celebrates artistic talent, skills and sustainable business. We do this by providing the opportunity to acquire skills and qualifications in clothing design and production through industry-based training (provided by RMIT University). The Social Studio also provides pre-accredited training/work experience in fashion and manufacturing. [thesocialstudio.org](http://thesocialstudio.org)

Youthworx is a youth media social enterprise that trains and employs young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in creative and commercial media production. We offer accredited training in Certificate II and III in Creative Industries and run a film production business where we employ graduates of the training in key production roles. We have been operating since 2008 and each year work intensively with 25-30 young people as well as running short form workshops for a further 80 highly marginalised young people. [youthworx.org.au](http://youthworx.org.au)

Ruci Kaisila is a musically gifted performer in gospel and soul. In 2012, Ruci's compelling vocals won the Tükçe Olimpiyatları National Australian Competition: a competition where non-Turkish artists perform poetry,

drama or music in Turkish language. Ruci won the State & National finals and was sponsored to travel to Turkey for the International finals. Ruci has featured in number of Outer Urban Projects' new Australian works including Grand Divisions: A Moved Urban Cantata presented at Arts Centre Melbourne as part of Melbourne Festival 2015. Ruci was recently cast in Anthem, a new Australian work of scale supported through the Major Festivals initiative managed by the Australia Council. Anthem brought together four playwrights, Andrew Bovell, Patricia Corneliuss, Melissa Reeves, Christos Tsiolkas and Composer Irine Vela. Anthem toured Melbourne, Sydney and Perth Festivals 2019-2020.

Joseph Samarani began performing percussion at 7 years old with the Drum Tec Junior Ensemble. In 2008 he studied Latin Ensemble and Afro-American Percussion under the direction of Alex Pertout at VCA and in 2011 he completed a Certificate IV in Music Performance at Northern College of the Arts & Technology. Known as the Golden Fingers, Joseph excites and fascinates audience with his electrifying percussion performances. In 2017 he started his own band, Kings of Lightning, and also currently plays percussion in Arabic band, [Volume Entertainment], performing regularly at functions and events. Joseph performs with Outer Urban Projects as an Associate Artist after taking part in Outer Urban Projects Community Access Program since 2015.

Damian Seddon is a choreographer and hip-hop dancer with a style that leans towards contemporary street dance. Residing in Reservoir, Damian has worked as a dance tutor for Outer Urban Projects' Community Access program. As an Associate Artists of Outer Urban Projects Damian performed in the company's Major Work, VESSEL, and is a regular workshop instructor for Dance Alliance and performed in Hume Studios. In 2017 Damian was chosen from a large pool of auditionees to become a cast member for Sir Matthew Bourne's adaptation, Lord Of The Flies, State Theatre, Art Centre Melbourne (2017). Damian secured a scholarship to attend Wildabeast in the United States – a convention and workshop geared to commercial dance industry.



Nancy Oziya is originally from Uganda. She has studied Fashion Design and Technology, and worked in the fashion industry for the past two years. She presented work for “NGVWA presents Art of Dining: Best of the Best 2019” in collaboration with Flack Studio and Patrick Dagg. She has also participated in Melbourne Fashion Week and VAMFF, and has designed and made garments for individuals such as Jan Fran from Studio 10. Oziya has worked as a sewing teacher and design assistant for The Social Studio. Her label “Oziya” references her African cultural heritage, and is Afrocentric inspired. Oziya believes fashion can start new conversations, and she wants to communicate who she is as an African-Australian through her designs.

Muhubo Suleiman is a Somali traditional weaver. She was self-taught at a young age, growing up in Somalia where she learned a variation of cultural weaving and sewing skills. She specializes in handmade traditional rugs, bags and wall decorations, allowing her to showcase her traditional Somali craft to a wider audience while at the same time preserving her cultural heritage. As Somalia has been swept by severe drought for years, the natural resources are very much non-existent. Fortunately, she has discovered that very similar grasses and trees are indigenous to Australia and this allows her to continue to make her crafts environmentally sustainable and environmentally conscious.

Participating Youthworx creative media students are Dylan Tyncherov, Dean Theilig, Cody Whelan, Will Murphy and Neithan Newton, from Melbourne. Dylan, Dean, Cody, Will and Neithan are interested in film, documentary and video installation.

Dr Grace McQuilten is an art historian, curator and writer. Grace has worked extensively in social enterprise and community development alongside her academic career. She currently leads the Contemporary Art and Social Transformation Research Group at RMIT University, and is a Chief Investigator on the Australian Research Council funded projects, ‘The underworld: Outsider artists and the reformulation of Australian Art’ (2018–21); ‘Art-based social enterprise and marginalised young peoples’ transitions’ (2017–20) and ‘Ambitious and fair: Strategies for a sustainable visual arts sector’ (2021–2024).

Dr Amy Spiers is an artist, writer and researcher living on the unceded lands of the Kulin nation in so-called Melbourne, Australia. Her socially-engaged, critical art practice focuses on the creation of live performances, participatory situations and multi-artform installations for both site-specific and gallery contexts. Spiers has presented art projects across Australia and internationally, including at Monash University Museum of Art (Melbourne), the Museum für Neue Kunst (Freiburg), MONA FOMA festival (Hobart) and the 2015 Vienna Biennale. As a writer and researcher, Amy has published texts widely, including for the Museum of Contemporary Art, Journal of Art & Public Sphere, Public Art Dialogue and Journal of Arts and Communities. Spiers completed a Master of Fine Art in 2011 and a PhD in 2018 at the Victorian College of the Arts. She is currently a research fellow at RMIT University working on the Australian Research Council funded project, ‘Art-based Social Enterprise and Marginalised Young People’s Transitions’ (2017–2020).

Bus Projects acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we operate: the Wurundjeri people and Elders past and present of the Kulin nations.

Bus Projects is supported by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria and by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body. Bus Projects' 2017–19 Program is supported by the City of Yarra.

