



GRIFFIN THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS

EXHALE

Image: Emele Ugavule

BY BLACK BIRDS
9–13 APRIL

How do we find the light within the dark? How do we cultivate beauty out of sorrow and begin to heal, for ourselves and one another?

Interdisciplinary and intercultural, *Exhale* is about indigeneity, accountability and trauma. It explores the relationships and boundaries forged between Indigenous cultures on foreign lands; negotiations between environmental and urban lifestyles; and the ability to heal through storytelling.

Exhale is the creation of **Black Birds**—the Sydney collective fast gaining kudos for energetic, uplifting performances that astutely dissect the female Black and Brown experience in Australia. Incorporating art forms including spoken word, movement, dance, song and story, **Black Birds'** work is at once intimate and unexpected, challenging and empowering. Instagram @bl.ckb.rds

Exhale was developed, rehearsed and performed on Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung lands of the Kulin nation and the Gadigal lands of the Eora nation. Black Birds wish to pay our respects to the Wunrundjeri, Boon Wurrung and Gadigal peoples and their Elders past, present and future. Always was, always will be Aboriginal land.

Griffin acknowledges the generosity of the Seaborn, Broughton & Walford Foundation in allowing it the use of the SBW Stables Theatre rent free, less outgoing, since 1986.

BIOGRAPHIES



Ayeesha Ash
Creator/Performer

Ayeesha is a proud Māori Grenadian woman, born in Grenada and raised in Brisbane. She is the Artistic Director of Black Birds and an interdisciplinary artist who seeks to spark social consciousness through her work. She studied Acting at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, and since graduating has appeared in theatrical works in Queensland, Sydney and Melbourne, including *Brown Skin Girl* as part of Griffin Theatre Company's Batch Festival and subsequently for Red Line Productions at the Old Fitz. She has also performed with collectives such as Between Two Worlds, The Dollar Bin Darlings, and The Oyster Club; was Assistant Director for La Boite's *The Village*; and has toured works for Black Birds around the East Coast of Australia, Aotearoa and Barbados. Ayeesha is also studying a Bachelor of Communications (Social & Political Sciences) at UTS and is an Arts & Culture Contributor at FBI Radio. Instagram @eeshash



Emele Ugavule
Creator/Performer

Emele is a Tokelauan (Te Kaiga o Fagatiale, Nukunonu, Te Kaiga o Koloi, Uea) Fijian (Kaideuba, Navua) woman and multi-disciplinary storyteller working across live performance as an actor, writer, director and producer. Her work is intercultural, incorporating film and live music, and centres on the development of trans-indigenous collaborative processes. Syncretic in nature, Emele unpacks the evolving relationship between herself, her community and her multiple homes—geographical, emotional and ancestral. She is currently Artist in Residence at Lost in Books and is a recipient of Create NSW's 2019 Creative Development Fellowship (Theatre). Emele is the Creative Director of Talanoa, Associate Producer of Q Theatre and Co-Founder of Black Birds. Instagram @emeleugavule

Development supported by Next Wave and the City of Melbourne through Arts House in allowing it the use of the SBW Stables Theatre rent free, less outgoing, since 1986.



Amber Silk
Lighting Designer

Amber is a lighting designer and production manager who has worked across all forms of live entertainment, including small and large-scale outdoor events, site-specific work and multidisciplinary projects. Recent lighting design credits include: for Griffin Theatre Company (Batch Festival)/Red Line Productions at the Old Fitz: *Brown Skin Girl*; for Blacktown Arts Centre: *Disaffected*; for Dark Mofa/Liveworks/Perth International Arts Festival/National Kaohsiung Centre for the Arts: *The Second Woman*. Amber has worked with prominent organisations such as Balit Narrun Festival, Bankstown Arts Centre, Blacktown Arts Centre, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Island Vibe Festival, The Japan Foundation, Moogahlin, Oxfam Australia, PACT Centre for Emerging Artists, Quandamooka Festival, The Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Official After Party, and Urban Theatre Projects. Amber is most passionate about making work that seeks to engage communities, to interrogate existing cultural prejudices, and affect positive social change.



Sela Vai
Choreographer

Sela Vai is a Sydney-based movement artist who seeks to create sensuous alchemy through movement, and is resident choreographer for Black Birds. Credits include choreographing the opening performances for Pacific Runway 2017 and 2018; choreographing and movement directing Australian-based artists like L-Fresh the Lion, Kase Avila, Kid Fiction, Ngaiire, Thelma Plum and Wallace; choreographing commercial projects for Disney Channel and Heaps Gay, and performing for Solange at the Sydney Opera House; Australian Dance Festival, First VI Kinjaz Production, Sephora, Sydney Fringe Festival, TedX Sydney, and World of Dance. Sela was also a part of The Dream Dance Company's works *Prodigy* and *Untold*, Amrita Hepi's *A Caltex Spectrum*, and Dancing For Jane's *ONE* (Australian tour). Instagram @iamselavai

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