

Introducing our Birthday Suite



2014 marks the 40 year anniversary of Footscray Community Arts Centre (FCAC). This means 40 years of creativity, diversity, activism and democracy. Since its founding in 1974, FCAC has opened its doors to more than 2 million visitors and participants from Melbourne's west and beyond, and provided a platform for the creative expression of artists and groups such as **Brook Andrew, Archie Roach, Black Arm Band, Ash Keating, Fear of a Brown Planet, Cal Wilson, Back to Back Theatre** and **Diafrix**.

To mark this new milestone, we have curated a series of events celebrating our past, present and future, and the remarkable communities and artists that make FCAC what it is. Called the **Birthday Suite**, these events have been running since the end of 2013 and include exhibitions, performances, workshops and parties. Through these programs we're reaching out to our collaborators around the world and asking them to share their stories in a special exhibition called *Stories from the Past*, bringing in old friends - like **Back to Back Theatre** who are collaborating on a special presentation of *THE DEMOCRATIC SET* - and celebrating the people who began it all, such as union leader **George Seelaf**.

During this important year we will be reflecting on the role of art in our lives, its power to bridge cultural differences, and how it can shape new experiences and learnings about each other and our communities. And we will be taking what we find into future, and the next 40 years of community engaged art at FCAC.

Following are the next six months of Birthday Suite events.

May - December events in brief

<p>May - Themes Celebrating Activism, Arts and Industry.</p> <p>George Seelaf and union founders of FCAC.</p> <p>Australia Council Art and Working Life initiative.</p>	 <p><i>Image: Jeff Busby</i></p>	<p>PERFORMANCE: Back to Back Theatre's <i>THE DEMOCRATIC SET</i></p> <p>Back to Back Theatre's long-running and internationally acclaimed community project <i>THE DEMOCRATIC SET</i> will come to Footscray Community Centre, where it was initially conceived. Created with local members of the community, <i>THE DEMOCRATIC SET</i> offers participants 15 seconds in the filming space to explore their individual take on a grand theme of democracy and equality. Participants will be led by director Bruce Gladwin. The final film will be screened at FCAC's birthday celebrations in November.</p> <p>When Thursday 1 May – Sunday 4 May Venue FCAC Performance Space</p>
	 <p><i>Image: Williamstown Naval Dockyards Band, 1986</i></p>	<p>COMMUNITY DAY: Footscray Meat, Butchers and Biffo. Let's Picnic!</p> <p>Inspired by the meatworkers 'butchers' picnic' and celebrating the relationship between industry and art, along with the legacy of FCAC co-founder, George Seelaf, FCAC is hosting a picnic this May Day weekend.</p> <p>FEATURING: Snuff Puppets, Massive Hip Hop Choir, The Riverside Metalworker blacksmiths, Mobile Radio (TBA), The Melbourne Rapid Response Theatre Team (TBA), and The Hacketts. There will also be a picket line, Union shop BBQ and meat raffle, public soapbox and placard-making workshops.</p> <p>When Sunday 4 May, 12pm – 4pm Venue FCAC Riverside Lawn and Amphitheatre</p>

<p>August – Themes Artists and Community.</p> <p>Simon Terrill <i>Crowd Theory.</i></p>	<p>EXHIBITION The Home Show An exhibition of contemporary artists working in community - 40 artists, 40 hours, 40 days. Roslyn Smorgon Gallery will be given over to the private thoughts and personal takes of a self-selected community of artists engaged in contemporary art practices with a socially aware slant. Each has been asked to take up the role of curator and nominated an artist and artwork that speaks to them – stating something about identity, community, place and voice. The baton is passed and each artist in turn repeats the task, creating both a conversation and an exhibition formed with a collective curatorial voice. Curated by Michael Brennan. When 14 Aug – 28 Sept Venue Roslyn Smorgon Gallery</p>
	<div data-bbox="427 779 683 981" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="427 985 694 1012" data-label="Caption"> <p><i>Image: No Passport Required.</i></p> </div> <p>PERFORMANCE Music Hive Revisited Former FCAC Music Coordinator Duncan Foster returns to present a long overdue reprise of the popular Music Hive series, a celebration of the diverse music scene of Melbourne’s west. Musicians include the Paul Williamson Quintet, sitar master Khalil Gudaz and No Passport Required, an extraordinary cross-cultural group that perform traditional and contemporary hits from each other’s musical heritage. No Passport Required features Parvyn Kaur Singh (India – Bombay Royale), Doug deVries (Australia), Thuy Kim (Vietnam), Claudia Osegueda (El Salvador), Nabila Wahyuningtyas (Indonesia), Michael Bestrin (Chile), Ray Pereira (Sri Lanka) and Khai Du (Vietnam). When 2 August, 7:30pm 16 August, 7:30pm 30 August, 7:30pm</p>
<p>November – Themes The future.</p>	<p>PARTY: FCAC Birthday Party You can’t have a birthday without a party and over the past 40 years, FCAC has learned how to throw a good one. Performances, art, music and community, as well as a special screening of The Democratic Set. Venue FCAC When Saturday 8 November</p>
<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>EXHIBITION: FCAC Immersive Space, Postcards From Forever Footscray Community Arts Centre is collecting stories from the people, artists and communities that have contributed to the history of one of Australia’s leading community engaged arts organisation. Asking for them to write a message, create an artwork and share your story on this postcard and then post it back to FCAC to be included in our special 40th Birthday exhibition. These visual stories will be on display in the FCAC Immersive Space, a dedicated space for community members to access material from the Centre’s 40 year history.</p>

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