

7 February 2017

Footscray Community Arts Centre

Women of the World Festival Melbourne

Former leader of the Black Panther Party, Elaine Brown will headline Women of the World Festival Melbourne (WOW) at Footscray Community Arts Centre (FCAC), **Thursday 23 March – Saturday 25 March 2017.**

WOW Melbourne is a three-day festival of critical conversations, music, film and performances. It offers an extraordinary program of events that celebrate women's achievements and explores the challenges that are still faced today.

With 80 plus speakers it brings together international and home grown activists, writers, artists and educators. These women challenge and are changing the conversations of gender and gender equality, they include: **Paola Balla** (Aus), **Elaine Brown** (USA), **Mahogany Brown** (USA), **Tania Cañas** (Aus), **Margaret Harvey** (Aus), **Maria Katsonis** (Aus), **Jude Kelly** (UK), **Jerril Rechter** (Aus), **Sadaf Saaz** (Bangladesh), **Mallika Taneja** (India) and **Zenith Virago** (Aus).

Conversation will focus on: Women in political leadership from Black Panther Party to Food Justice; Mental Health, Crisis and Policy, queer and migrant perspectives; Indigenous Matriarchy; Story-telling — cultural practices as a site of resistance; Health, Sport & Leadership; Death Walking, Natural Death movement, Ageing in the LGBTIQ community; Refugee/ Asylum Advocacy and Self-determination; Female-centered Business Models and Social Justice; Disability, Access, LGBTIQ activism and their intersection with the Arts; and Youth perspective – Matriarchy and Climate Justice.

A free closing concert celebrates **WOW Melbourne** with Sampa the Great, Mojo Juju, DJ MzRizk & Thando, Electric Fields, Sugar Fed Leopards and Black Sistaz.

WOW Melbourne is hosted by FCAC in partnership with Southbank Centre London. Launched at London's Southbank Centre in 2011 by Artistic Director Jude Kelly, Women of the World has been identified as the largest network of women in the world, with its festivals engaging and inspiring over one million women across five continents and cities in the US, Egypt, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, the UK, and Australia.

'FCAC is the place where important conversations happen, we collaborate with artists and communities to create, share and showcase ideas and experiences that ask questions and develop new ideas for the contemporary Australian context. WOW Melbourne comes at a critical time in the global conversation about feminism. It is not only about being a woman, it is about exploring who we are as allies, as change makers, to grow our future and prioritise important issues that affect women, individually, collectively and globally' says Jade Lillie, Director and CEO of Footscray Community Arts Centre.

The full program will be launched on Friday 10 February, full details www.footscrayarts.com

Highlights include:

WOW Keynote & Panels **Moving. People. Politics**

As the waves of migration due to war, poverty and climate crisis continue to increase what are the strategies that are being implemented to address the new reality of the 21st Century?

Feminism... well this is awkward

As 'feminism' as a term and movement evolves has 'intersectional feminism' become the more inclusive cooler younger sister of the movement?

Some Woman's Work

Why is it a woman's work never done? In this feisty, creative panel discussion, we examine different understandings of labour in a range of 'feminised' sectors of the global and local contexts, including understandings of work that is often rendered invisible, stigmatised or poorly valued.

Miss education

What is the role of schools in gendering careers? How can the classroom be a site for encouraging leadership and creativity? Who is visioning and creating culturally and socially safe learning environments.

WOW Arts + Ideas

Thoda Dhyaan Se (Be Careful)

Caution is central to a woman's experience of life in India. **Thoda Dhyaan Se (Be Careful)** is a satirical performance. Rooted in a widespread anger against the everyday violence against women, it strips down a culture hiding behind its conservative mores, Mallika Taneja exposes the contradictions at the heart of India's stunted social progress.

Passenger

Devised and directed by award-winning theatre-maker **Jessica Wilson**, *Passenger* is a theatre work which places its audience inside a moving suburban bus. A conversation is heard onboard and – as we gaze at the passing world outside – we find ourselves affected in our 'seeking'.

One Night Stanza

Returns in its fifth year. Featuring poet, writer and activist Mahogany L Browne, and local poets and musicians in an intimate and moving evening.

Blood. Sex. Tears.

An intimate sound installation. Part conversational, part confessional, all real life. A Blood. Sex. Tears. caravan will be parked at WOW Melbourne, collecting and presenting WOW participant's stories throughout the Festival. Blood. Sex. Tears. is presented in partnership with Maribyrnong City Council.

Mum Is The Medicine

FCAC's Indigenous Cultural Program has developed a new program for mothers who are artists. A small group of creative thinkers, nurturers and practitioners join FCAC in residence in February to challenge, awaken and disrupt assumptions made about motherhood and creativity.

WOW Café

A lush and inviting pop-up venue on the lawns of FCAC, WOW Café offers a free-to-the-public curated program of WOW Melbourne highlights, including conversations, dance sessions, short talks and performances. It's a daily taste of WOW Melbourne for everyone. WOW Café is presented in partnership with Maribyrnong City Council.

WOW – Women of the World Festival Melbourne is delivered in association with Southbank Centre London.

FCAC is home to many international communities with both local and global contexts and WOW Melbourne will mirror this diversity in all of its intersections across themes, challenges and celebrations.

WOW - Women of the World Festival Melbourne, Thursday 23 March until Saturday 25 March at Footscray Community Arts Centre, 45 Moreland Street, Footscray. Bookings: <http://footscrayarts.com>

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WOW – Women of the World Festival Melbourne is delivered in partnership with Victoria University, Maribyrnong City Council, VicHealth, cohealth, McCullough Robertson, Queen Victoria Women’s Centre, Gandel Philanthropy, ACMI, Arnold Bloch Leibler, Besen Family Foundation, the Victorian State Government and Arts Centre Melbourne through Creative Victoria for Asia TOPA.

Collaborate Asia is funded by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts; its arts funding and advisory body.

Asia TOPA is a joint initiative of the Sidney Myer Fund and Arts Centre Melbourne and is supported by the Australian and Victorian Governments.