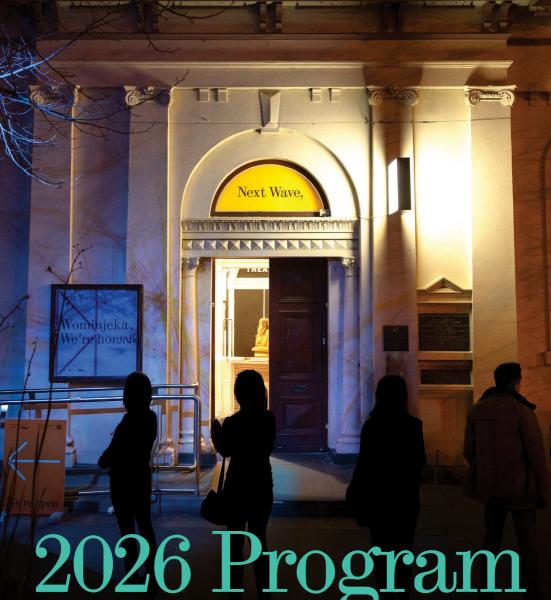
Next Wave,



A world shaped by artists

For over 40-years, Next Wave has been the incubator for Australia's most ambitious and boundary-pushing young and emerging artists. Since its beginnings as a biennial festival in 1984, Next Wave has continually reshaped itself in response to shifting artistic needs and the evolving worlds in which new work emerges.

Our 2026 artistic program revitalises Next Wave's commitment to emerging and early-career artists with a creative developments, exhibitions, public programs, performances, residencies, partnerships, and more. Marking 25 years of Kickstart, we revive this landmark creative development program alongside new ventures that prioritise experimentation, peer learning and deep community connection.

From our home at Brunswick Mechanics Institute, we offer artists space to forge ambitious projects at pivotal moments in their practice. Through an ever-shifting constellation of artistic and public programs, performances, events, creative developments, residencies, and partnerships, Next Wave becomes a year-round site for testing, gathering and sharing new possibilities.

Guided by a curatorial framework attuned to future thinking, Next Wave supports the next generation of artists and arts leaders to imagine, and begin shaping, the art worlds to come.



Core Programs

Kickstart

Creative Development & Presentation

In 2026–27, Next Wave's flagship Kickstart program will focus on nurturing early-career artists from across Victoria, offering deep, sustained support to develop and present bold new work. This reimagined iteration shifts from a national model to a locally focused program, centring Victorian-based and locally responsive practices, and revitalising the festival spirit within our year-round activities.

An open call will invite artists to pitch an original work for development and presentation in September 2027—offering a significant opportunity to showcase their practice to audiences, industry, and local communities. Works will be selected with support from our Arts Advisory (see page 8–9), ensuring diverse perspectives and practices are championed.

EOIs in early 2026



Georgia Lucy, *Gough & Margaret's Bull Clip*, Kickstart, 2025, Next Wave, Narrm/Melbourne. Courtesy the Artist. Photo: Mae Hartrick



ALL School Artist Led Learning + Activations

ALL School is an artist-led learning program by Next Wave, designed to facilitate knowledge-sharing and idea swapping. The program includes artist talks, labs, workshops, lectures, symposia, podcasts, publications, and texts.

Year round, allschool.nextwave.org.au



Composite Moving Image ARI in residence

Composite Moving Image continues as Next Wave's Artist-Run-Initiative in residence. Their 2026 program brings together a sequence of screenings, commissions, sound works, and broadcast experiments that invite new encounters between artists, audiences, and the evolving languages of film, video, and audio-visual art.

Year round, composite.org.au



Community Lunches

Our community lunches invite artists, community, peers, and local groups and service providers to converge, connect and spark new encounters over a shared meal.

Year round

FROM TOP: Industry Discovery Day, 2025, Next Wave, Narrm/Melbourne. Photo: Tom Nobel. Composite Screening at Next Wave Neighbours, 2024. Next Wave, Narrm/Melbourne. Courtesy the Artist. Photo: Tom Nobel. Ellamay Khongroj Fitzgerald, A Seat At The like, 2025, Next Wave, Narrm/Melbourne. Courtesy the Artist. Photo: Mae Hartrick.

Soft Infrastructures Social Practice and Community Engagement Commission

Soft Infrastructures is an annual commission dedicated to social practice and community-led methodologies, supporting an early-career Victorian artist to create a career-defining work that reflects the evolving role of art in public life.

The selected artist will receive curatorial mentorship and support to undertake an ambitious research-led commission that sits across art, education, and social engagement.

Late 2026

Swell

Emerging Curator + Graduate Showcase

Swell is a new initiative supporting emerging curators/producers to create collaborative presentations showcasing the work of recent graduates from art schools, universities, and technical institutions across Naarm and greater Melbourne. Taking its name from the metaphor of a rising force – a gathering wave of creative energy – Swell recognises the momentum, potential, and impact of emerging voices in Australian arts and culture.

The program also bridges the gap between study and professional practice, supporting access-driven, collaborative exhibition-making by the next generations of artists and creative practitioners.

Late 2026

More information about our core programs will be available soon – sign up to our newsletter to stay in the loop



Next Wave Arts Advisory

Next Wave's <u>Arts Advisory</u> is a new initiative ensuring artists' voices are central to shaping our programs. This group of practicing artists and arts workers will come together in 2026 to guide the development of our program and help ensure Next Wave stays responsive, inclusive and relevant.



Photo: Tessa C. Stevens

Zoë Bastin

Zoë Bastin is an Australian choreographer, performer, researcher, and educator whose interdisciplinary practice sits at the intersection of contemporary dance, visual art, and critical theory. Their work examines how bodies are shaped by and resist systems of power through queer and feminist methodologies. Zoë completed a PhD at RMIT University in 2021 on the philosophy of the body and currently lectures and supervises research projects at RMIT, VCA, and Deakin University.



Photo: Abdela Igmirien

陳雋然 Chun Yin Rainbow Chan

Rainbow Chan is an award-winning vocalist, producer and multi-disciplinary artist. Her practice bridges popular music and contemporary visual arts, exploring themes of cultural representation, (mis)translation, matrilineal histories and diasporic heritage. Central to her work is the research and reimagining of women's oral traditions, particularly the fading bridal laments of Weitou women, Hong Kong's first settlers, to whom she has deep ancestral ties.



Photo: Courtesy the artist

Axel Garay

Axel Garay is a proud Meriam (Eastern Torres Strait), Puerto Rican & Malaysian queer man living and working on the lands of the Kulin Nations in Narrm (Melbourne) Australia. Axel is an emerging interdisciplinary artist using digital video, installation and alternative photographic processes to explore themes of technology ethics, desire, spirituality, history and human psychology.



Photo: Courtesy the artist.

Matisse Laida

Matisse Laida is a Queer Mauritian/Venezuelan artist and community arts worker whose practice spans film, food, performance, and public programs. Their work centres care, culture, and collaboration through a queer diasporic lens. They are the founder of We Eatin' Good, a QPOC project using food to gather community and explore identity, and have worked across festivals, arts organisations, and youth programs to create spaces for marginalised artists to be seen and supported.



Photo: Wild Hardt

Varsha Ramesh

Varsha Ramesh is a producer from Chennai, India now based in Narrm/Melbourne working across experimental and contemporary practice. She has worked across arts organisations, festivals, and ARIs, shaping projects with an ethic of care, curiosity, and creative rigour. All her work is guided by a deep commitment to equity and justice. Currently, she's a Creative Producer at Arts House and Board Member at Runway Journal.



Photo: Abdul Halik Azeez

Aziz Sohail

Aziz Sohail is a Pakistan-passport holding curator and writer whose work builds interdisciplinary connections between art, history, archives, literature, theory, and biography and supports new cultural and pedagogical infrastructures. Their research and resultant projects honour and recognise the power of queer and feminist collectivity, sociability, joy, and wayward encounter and unfold through slowness, collaboration, and tentacularity.

Coming up at Next Wave

Presentation / Theatre / Children /

UNDERARTS Summer Workshop Finale

See an original theatre piece devised and performed by UNDERARTS' 8–16 year old summer workshop participants – inspired by the worlds of Studio Ghibli.

The piece will be developed over four creative and collaborative days lead by Allison Wiltshire and Ahmarnya Price, two artists and facilitators with a shared passion for helping young people tell stories, take creative risks and make something entirely their own.

Learn more about the program at underarts.com.au

23 January, Free

Theatre /

Robert the Octopus presented by Midsumma Festival

A queer surreal farce about looking for love. And an octopus.

Sadie has a crush on her co-worker Georgia. But they only ever see each other online. In a desperate attempt to capture Georgia's attention, Sadie buys a pet octopus.

Starring Lily Fish, Michelle McCowage, Hallie Goodman.

Directed by Kimberley Twiner (PO PO MO CO).

Written by Malthouse Playwright in Development Alex Duncan.

"Intricately crafted physical comedy" - The Age

29 January - 7 February, tickets from \$30

This performance is supported by Next Wave, Misumma Festival and Merri-Bek City Council



Coexistence, Jesse Vivante and Alexander Meagher

Coexistence is a collaboration between Alexander Meagher and Jesse Vivante featuring their original works for percussion and electronics: *A Brilliant Seagull*, and *Omni-Omni*. Exploring the connections between storytelling, choreography, and sound, they are combined into a single experience that highlights thematic similarities, such as the duality of sound and physical presentation, and philosophical notions of breaking traditional pathways of thought.

When the two works collide, the existence of one is revealed to the other, and the question is raised as to how these two streams of consciousness can share the same space. Together, the performers present parallel worlds where two stories meet, realisations are made, and their awareness expands. What revelations will be made from this encounter? And will they create a new, shared story, or continue on their separate paths?

Alexander Meagher is a versatile and dynamic percussionist from Melbourne/Naarm who enjoys the multifaceted nature of percussion and enjoys learning about music genres and instruments from throughout history and from around the world. He is passionate about narrative-focused, energetic, and transportive performances and has performed with orchestras, music theatre, and festivals both nationally and internationally.

Jesse Vivante is a percussionist, sound designer, and performer originally hailing from Boorloo (Perth). His work explores new approaches to artistic practice through the interplay between contemporary percussion, installation, and movement, where sound and gesture act as mutual catalysts to perpetuate one another. By shifting percussion beyond its sonic function and into choreographic space, and by treating movement as a generative sonic force, he looks to cultivates a hybrid form of work that unifies the boundaries between movement and sound.

13 – 15 February, ticket details to come In partnership with Speak Percussion



compost: compose, Rasha Tayeh

This performance forms part of <u>Blindside's Emerging Curator Program</u>, a professional development opportunity for an emerging curator to increase their logistical, technical and conceptual skills, while building their professional creative networks.

Recipient Rasha Tayeh presents *compost: compose*, featuring a performance and public program, across various ecologies and geographies. Taking inspiration from the soil, Rasha invites artists to make meaning of how we can compost old structures, let go, tend to grief, and decompose old ways of thinking, doing and being to find ways to compose new imaginaries for reparative futures and collective liberation.

Participating Artists: Allara, Yusuke Akai, Mohamed Chamas Public Program: Mwaffaq Alhajjar, Sarah Iman, DT, and participating artists

Rasha Tayeh is a transdisciplinary artist, writer, curator, researcher, herbalist, and founding director of Beit e'Shai Teahouse. Her practice is land-based, focusing on telling stories about people's relationships in community and ecology. With over 20 years experience as an exhibiting artist in Australia and abroad, and through her pop-up teahouse since 2017, Rasha has curated and hosted a range of art exhibitions, workshops, community events, live gigs and listening sessions, tea ceremonies, and poetry nights.

Performance: 20 February, tickets from \$10

Public program: 21 February, Free

In partnership with Blindside



Rasha Tayeh, Olive Leaves cyanotype, 2025. Courtesy the artist.

Festival / Community /

Brunswick Music Festival

We're teaming up with <u>Brunswick Music Festival</u> in 2026 to present performances and special events at Brunswick Mechanics Institute. This includes during Sydney Road Street Party! The program will be confirmed soon – watch this space.

1 – 8 March, Free In partnership with Merri-bek City Council

Screenings /

Civic Cinema

Civic Cinema is a new monthly screening series presented by Composite and Next Wave at the Brunswick Mechanics Institute. Drawing on the building's history as a civic hall and site of public learning, the program brings together contemporary moving image, experimental film, documentary, and historical works from Australia and overseas. Each screening creates space for shared viewing, conversation, and reflection, connecting audiences with artists and filmmakers who expand the possibilities of cinema today. Civic Cinema foregrounds the breadth of moving-image culture, from artist films and archival rediscoveries to new works that blur the boundaries between cinema, visual art, and documentary practice. Across the year, the series invites viewers to engage with bold ideas, diverse perspectives, and the changing languages of screen culture within a dedicated community setting.

May – November, ticket details to come In partnership with Composite



Residency / Workshops /

THINKING GROUND presented by Voice in my Hands

Led by <u>VIMH</u> (Liv Satchell and Julian Dibley-Hall), *THINKING GROUND* is an annual residency with a difference – inviting independent theatre artists to gather, connect and share ideas through communal learning and exchange.

Fridays in July, Free

Theatre / VCE Playlist /

Rakali presented by Lily Fish

A young couple move from suburban Narrm/Melbourne to live on a houseboat in remote Tasmania with their newborn baby. They think they've found paradise. But life on the river is less than idyllic. Enter the mysterious, charismatic Rocko – a man claiming to be their neighbour. Each of the couple are enchanted by Rocko; seduced by his attention and ability to reflect and affirm their secret yearnings. But Rocko is a shapeshifter – a carnivorous water rat, whose only desire is to steal and eat their baby.

"a comedic thriller of the highest degree" - Theatre Travels

3 – 14 June, <u>tickets from \$25</u>

This performance is supported by Next Wave

Visual Art / Festival /

Around the Block

Merri-Bek Moving-Image Outdoor Festival

Around the Block returns in 2026! This program will show new works by 12 artists across Blak Dot Gallery in Balam Balam Place and the Next Wave's windows along the iconic Sydney Road – with new artists showcased every fortnight over six weeks.

July – August In partnership with Blak Dot Gallery, and supported by Merri-bek City Council



Exhibition / Photography /

Art is not going to help this town, Rachel Morley

Art is not going to help this town is a love letter to family, car trips, suburban housing estates and train stations. Reflecting on the ways that housing and travel infrastructure shape our lives, Rachel Morley and her family recreate their shared memories of Narrm/Melbourne's western suburbs through a series of photographs and short films on super 8.

Through the use of "old" film cameras, nostalgia is employed as a means to shift the common narrative of outer suburban life. What is often labelled as an underprivileged and under-resourced region is viewed instead through the artist's rose-coloured childhood memories. It's cool to do donuts in the carpark with your dad, to do a drive-by and spy on the old house with your mum. With love and admiration at its core, this project draws connections between identity, behaviour and infrastructure through the lens of familial relationships.

Rachel Morley is an artist and arts worker based in Narrm/Melbourne. Through analogue photography and photo-collage, her practice explores relationships to place and the construction of memory. Drawing on her experiences growing up, her past photographic works reflect on how power and inequality is created both within housing and through urban planning in Narrm/Melbourne's outer western suburbs. She is currently exploring how familial relationships, behaviours and identities are shaped by suburban environments and infrastructure.

August – September, Free



What more do you want from me?, Kat Kats

A deeply compelling and radical act of exposure, exploring trauma, invisible disability, and the impacts of childhood sexual abuse, planned for presentation at Next Wave in 2026.

Kat Kats is a Naarm/Melbourne-based emerging artist, writer and theatre maker. This exhibition transforms her personal phone photo archive into a participatory installation that challenges conventional modes of spectatorship and authorship. This project's powerful and nuanced interrogation of identity, consent, and memory—through the lens of trauma and invisible disability—marks a bold and significant evolution in Kat Kat's practice, from text-based performance to large-scale visual installation.

October, Free

Visit our website for the latest information and tickets

Please note that tickets for some events/programs are yet to be released, but will be available closer to the event date.



Kat Kats, What More Do You Want From Me? (detail), 2025. Courtesy the Artist. Photo: Ascent Media.

Rehearse, test, develop, and share new works with us in 2026!

Next Wave's studio and theatre can be hired by artists, creative practitioners and cultural organisations for in-kind or affordable community rates.

We provide venue hire to support artists/creative practitioners as well as not-for-profits and small-to-medium arts organisations to undertake creative developments and/or deliver community arts initiatives in our space.

When you book venue hire with Next Wave, you help us continue to support early career artists through our mentorship programs and deliver artist-led workshops, events and activities.

Learn more about our spaces and rates on our online booking platform

You can also view live availability of the venue, making booking requests and more.



Yellow Wheel, $POLL\ DANCE$, 2025, Narrm/Melbourne. Choreographed by Kyall Shanks and Jacqui Maida in collaboration with the 2025 Yellow Wheel Company. Courtesy the artists. Photo: Lord Media.

Support Kickstart Celebrating 25 years

Since 2001, Kickstart by Next Wave has been the only dedicated platform in Victoria providing early-career artists, across disciplines, with financial, curatorial, and production support to create new work at scale.

Your donation will support up to 10 artists from across Victoria to develop and present bold new work in 2026-27.

For many, Kickstart is the first time their ideas are resourced, their practice recognised, and their voice heard.

Every contribution directly supports an artist's creative journey:

\$500 helps fund mentoring and materials for one artist \$1,000 supports professional development mentorships \$5,000 supports public presentation costs \$15,000 funds one artist's entire Kickstart experience



"To be connected to other artists and people in the industry is really important, particularly as a regional artist trying to find where I fit in or belong. As a POC and emerging artist, Kickstart was a really valuable experience to be part of a majority, for once. That's huge."

Ellamay Khongroj Fitzgerald, 2024–25 Kickstart artist

Show your support by making a donation

All donations are valued, and any amount over \$2 is tax deductible.



Over the past 25 years Kickstart has supported hundreds of artists, including some of Australia's most vital and celebrated contemporary artists and curators:

Nana Biluš Abaffy Eva Heikv Olga **Abbinga** Natalie Abbott Abdul Abdullah Sarah Aiken Celeste Aldahn Joshua Allen An Other collective Lee Anantawat Rachael Anderson Asphyxia Sarah Austin Casev Ayres Sean Bailey Azja Kulpinska & Timmah Ball **Bridget Balodis** Thomas Banks Kristy Barnes-Cullen Frances Barrett Kat Barron Jacklyn Bassanelli Nathan Beard Katherine Beckett Katerina Bell Amais Hanley & Devika Bilmoria Black Birds Kate Blackmore Matt Aitken & Lyndon Blue David Blumenstein Bruno Booth Make or Break 28

Nicole Breedon Nigel Brown Ben Brooker Fiona Bryant Michael Candy Rebecca Cannon Laura Castagnini Jane Caught Anaus Cerini Shaun Clarke Danielle Clei Annaliese Constable Zoë Coombs Marr Hannah Brontë Megan Cope Martyn Coutts Jesse Cox Elly Coyle Alex Cuffe Alison Currie Tim Darbyshire Jen Datu Zoey Dawson Keg de Souza Kalanjay Dhir Amy Dobson Kelly Doley Marcel Dorney Nic Dorward Lz Dunn Sophie Dumaresq Holly Durant Ashley Dyer Timothy Edser

George Egerton-Warburton Atlanta Fke Rachael Feery Emma Fishwick Ellamay Khongroj Fitzgerald Trevor Flinn Cecilia Fogelberg Cait Foran Danielle Freakely Lady Producer Gang Ghenoa Gela Luke George Dara Gill Kel Glaister Angela Goh Ed Gould Madeleine Griffith Mish Grigor Elham Eshragian-Haakansson Raghav Handa Libby Harward Christina Haves Esther Hayes Rebecca Haves Ngioka Bunda-Heath Terry Helme Melinda Hetzel Rarriwuy Hick Mark Hilton Madeleine Hodge Robin Hungerford

Matt Huynh Estelle Ihasz Georgia Lucy Ingall Rosie Isaac Daniel Jenatsch Rebecca Jensen Kerrie-Dee Johns Colin Kinchela Luke Duncan King Matthew Kneale Sime Knezevic Ben Kolaitis Loren Kronemyer Shivaniani Lal Kenzie Larsen Alex Last Shian I aw Christian Leavesley Michele Lee Neika Lehman Rosie Leverton Anna Liebzeit Eugenia Lim Keith I im Jessica Little Morgan Little Belinda Locke Karl Logge Nicolas Low Que Minh Luu Alisdair Macindoe Brienna Macnish fine print magazine Frank Mainoo

Georgie Mattingley Moreblessina Maturure Katarnya Maynard Fiona Maxwell Dan McCabe Anna McCarthy Patrick McCarthy Andrew McCellan **Ruth McConchie** Rob McCredie Rafaella McDonald Rennie McDougall Georgie Meyer Rachel Meyers Tanja Milbourne Bennett Miller Sebastian Moody Rachel Morley Louise Morris Alice Mrongovius Martina Mrongovius Ivy Mukutu Phip Murray Phuong Ngo Que Nguyen Joseph O'Farrell Miles O'Neill Jessica O'Brian Jessica Olivieri Andy Butler & Nanette Orly Lav the Mystic & Efren Pamilacan Steaphan Paton

Martyn Pedlar Oscar Perry Christie Petsinis Teik-Kim Pok Rani Pramesti Ryan Presley Matthew Prest Michael Prior Mark Pritchard Zachary Pidd & Charles Purcell Hannah Raisin Nat Randall Tessa Rapaport Re-Right Collective Kiah Reading Peter Reid Bec Reid Danielle Revnolds Josh Muir & Adam Ridgeway Harriet Ritchie Harrison Ritchie-Jones Claire Robertson Phoebe Robinson Julia Robinson Sarah Rodigari Phil Rolfe Natalie Rose Sam Routledge Taree Sansbury Daniel Santangeli Zoe Scoglio

Jessie Scott

Eddie Sharp Carly Sheppard Ian Sinclair Sancintya Mohini Simpson Diana Smith Brendan Snow Ria Soemardio Rhen Soggee **Amy Spiers** Roderick Sprigg Pip Stafford Giselle Stanborough Kate Stanley Prue Stevenson **Esther Stewart** Lisa Stewart Billie Stone Kate Sulan Kim Swalwell Kieran Swann **Embittered Swish** Hiromi Tango Shireen Taweel Alex Tate & Olivia Tartaglia Lauren Taylor TextaQueen Athena Thebus Lara Thoms Jensen Tihung Steven Toulmin Jessie Tucker Jocelyn Tribe

Louris van der Geer Nick Verginis Rhanjell Villanueva Henry Jock Walker Pip Wallis Tricky Walsh Gavin Walters Glen Walton Roshelle Fong & Keziah Warner Sapna Chandu & Michael Warnock New Wayfinders Isabella Whāwhai Waru Geoffrey Watson Ivey Wawn Warraba Weatherall Willoh S Weiland James Welsby Katie West Malcolm Whittaker Mike Williams Alice Williams Jayda Wilson Allison Wiltshire Benny Woo Delali Zevon-Aniakwah Joel Zika Liesel 7ink

+ more to come

Our partners

Program Partners



BLINDAGIS CAST









UNDERARTS **☆**



Funding Partners







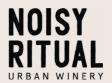






Bar partners







Zela Papageorgiou, *Tidelines*, 2025, Next Wave, Melbourne. Presented in collaboraiton with Speak Percussion. Courtesy the artist. Photo: Darren Gill.



Our home

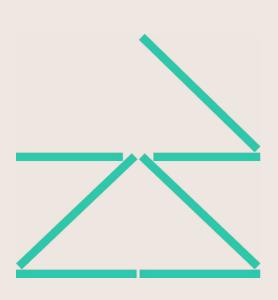
Brunswick Mechanics Institute 270 Sydney Road Bulleke-bek (Brunswick) Wurundjeri Country VIC 3056

Get in touch

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Join the community

Instagram: @next_wave
Facebook: @next-wave-arts
LinkedIn: @next_wave



Next Wave acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation, the traditional custodians of the unceded lands and waterways on which we work and create. We pay our respects to all First Peoples and their Elders, past and present, as the custodians of the world's oldest continuous living culture. We are privileged to share in the act of art making and culture building – grounded on justice, friendship and care. This always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.