



MONASH
University

MONASH
PERFORMING
ARTS
CENTRES



ON

BY CIRCA



M LIVE

Commissioned by Monash University, Circa's newest work *On* by Circa explores physical connection, relationships and touch after a long period of social distancing. Artistic Director Yaron Lifschitz investigates the gift of weight that lies at the heart of acrobatics, the simple act of giving and accepting another's mass is transformed into a profound meditation about beauty, loss and trust.

To achieve this alchemy, the stage elements are reduced to their most essential: eight extraordinary acrobats, a score by Melbourne composer Jethro Woodward and a striking lighting design by Paul Jackson. Layering complex acrobatic sequences with sharp moments of close up intimacy, the ensemble creates a stripped back circus that's uncompromisingly bold and unashamedly athletic.

Monash University Performing Arts Centres is a cultural expression of Monash University and creates art that is at the forefront of new Australian performance.



Director's Note:

And it was always the stories that needed telling that gave us the rope we could cross any river with. They balanced us high above any crevasse...They made us be natural acrobats. (Ali Smith)

Eight lives intersect across a rectangle (perhaps it is an apartment, a courtyard or maybe a sports arena). The dimensions change, the density of entanglement expands and contracts, the action happens inside or outside or simultaneously. But always there are moments of encounter.

The word encounter comes from the words *in* and *contra* - literally with and against. We meet adversaries, we fall in love, we connect, lose, love, long, grapple, hold on and sometimes, occasionally, are at peace.

I don't tell stories - I lack the gene that does that. But I create structures and spaces in which stories become possible. With our ensemble and creatives we have worked from two meanings of the word *on* - *to be raised with contact and to be ignited*. These two axes of encounter are in some sense vertical (rising up) and horizontal (running into). Shaped by these two dimensions, the stories of these eight lives emerge.

Many thanks to Paul, Tom and the Monash team for supporting this project through its multiple incarnations. I hope together we have made something moving, challenging and thrilling.

So is love the secret of acrobatics? It is trust, yes: the desire to cross over into the other. The acrobat's body is his soul. Is the crossing vertiginous? Like every crossing. Useless to contemplate or fathom what separates: the abyss is always invented by our fear. We leap and there is grace. Acrobats know: do not look at the separation. Have eyes, have bodies, only for there, for the other. (Hélène Cixous)

Yaron Lifschitz

Circa Artistic Director

Executive Director's Note:

I am delighted to be hosting the world premiere of *On* by Circa. Our team have worked closely with Circa over several years to realise the birth of this exciting new production by one of the world's foremost physical theatre companies, and its visionary director.

Now, as we emerge from restrictions of the last two years, borne equally by universities and the performing arts, it is exciting to announce the return of Monash University to the forefront of new Australian performance with this important achievement.

Paul Grabowsky

Executive Director of Monash University Performing Arts Centres

Credits:

Created by Yaron Lifschitz with the Circa Ensemble

Director Yaron Lifschitz

Composer and Sound Designer Jethro Woodward

Costume Designer Libby McDonnell

Lighting Designer Paul Jackson

Cast Holly-Rose Boyer, Rhiannon Cave Walker, Keaton Hentoff-Killian, Bridie Hooper, Gerramy Marsden, Paul O'Keeffe, Lachlan Sukroo and Billie Wilson-Coffey.

For more information on Circa, and the cast and crew **visit: circa.org.au**

To find out what else is on at Monash University Performing Arts Centres **visit: monash.edu/performing-arts-centres**

Photos by David Kelly

A Monash University Commission



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Acknowledgements

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