

Arts Centre Melbourne appoints curator, artistic director and writer Jeff Khan as new Asia TOPA Creative Director



Photo credit: Liz Ham

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, 4 AUGUST 2022 – Arts Centre Melbourne announced today that curator, Artistic Director and writer Jeff Khan has been appointed new Creative Director of [Asia TOPA: Asia-Pacific Triennial of Performing Arts](#). The outgoing Performance Space Artistic Director and CEO is an experienced arts leader recognised for creating innovative artistic programs across diverse contemporary artforms including performance, visual art, dance and new media.

“We are thrilled to welcome Jeff Khan as the new Creative Director of Asia TOPA. His arts leadership, reputation and passion for contemporary Asia-Pacific arts make him a perfect fit to lead this innovative and imaginative festival that has achieved so much since it launched in 2017,” said Arts Centre Melbourne Executive Director, Performing Arts Melanie Smith.

“The team at Arts Centre Melbourne have reflected and listened to community on the future of the festival and recognise that Asia TOPA must be led by an individual with a lived experience of this region.

“Asia TOPA is an increasingly significant platform for Australian artists working in international Asian and Pacific collaborations and partnerships. And we’re excited to be entering a new phase of the festival with Jeff. Our shared ambition to continue to grow opportunities for artists from the region, with Asian-Pacific heritage and the diaspora to present their work in an international context, is thrilling to consider,” continued Smith.

Jeff Khan has an impressive track record as an exciting contemporary curator and Artistic Director with a reputation in the region as a cutting-edge visionary in experimental performance. He brings with him an exciting vision for the future of Asia TOPA, having worked across performance, dance and the visual arts with a particular interest in interdisciplinary projects and experimental practices.

“I’m beyond excited to be returning to Naarm to take up the Creative Directorship of Asia TOPA. We live in a dynamic and exciting region with an extraordinarily rich and diverse array of artistic cultures – and I look forward to collaborating widely with artists, partners and the Arts Centre Melbourne team to bring brilliant artistic experiences to Melbourne from across the Asia-Pacific,” said Jeff Khan.

"It's a true honour to be continuing the exceptional work of Stephen Armstrong and his team, who have established Asia TOPA as an internationally-recognised festival for Asia-Pacific performance. As the world opens up again, I can't wait to get started on Asia TOPA's next phase."

For more than a decade at Performance Space, Khan oversaw the development and delivery of the annual *Liveworks Festival of Experimental Art* and programs that situates Australian practice in an Asia-Pacific context. Prior to Performance Space, he was the Artistic Director of Melbourne's *Next Wave Festival* from 2007-2010, Guest Curator of *NEW12* (Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, 2012) and *Primavera 09* (Museum of Contemporary Art, 2009). He has also held roles and guest curatorships at the Fusebox Festival (Texas), *RISING*, Gertrude Contemporary, Perth Institute of Contemporary Art, John Curtin Gallery, and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New York).

Khan has a distinguished history working with artists from the region and presenting their work with a sharp curatorial vision. He creates a space and place for the dynamic connection between artists and audience across multiple artforms.

Sidney Myer Fund CEO Leonard Vary said the Sidney Myer Fund was delighted that Jeff Khan has been appointed to lead Asia TOPA.

"He brings with him the perfect mix of experience, vision and networks to build on the festival's wonderful history. With our borders reopened and international tensions in the news, the need to develop positive and collaborative cultural connections with our regional neighbours has never been more pressing," said Leonard Vary.

Asia TOPA's role in telling our stories, building people to people links across our geopolitical region, with our local diaspora and welcoming new and increasingly diverse audiences into our venues has been made possible by the generous support of the Victorian Government.

Arts Centre Melbourne would like to acknowledge the outstanding work and contribution of outgoing founding Creative Director Stephen Armstrong who led its first two highly successful festivals in 2017 and 2020. Asia TOPA 2020 engaged artists from 22 countries and regions who performed across 56 cultural venues and spaces. The festival was presented in partnership with 72 Australian and 50 international cultural partners featuring 960 artists from the Asia-Pacific and around the world.

Asia TOPA: Asia-Pacific Triennial of Performing Arts – a joint initiative of the Sidney Myer Fund and Arts Centre Melbourne – is a three-month long festival celebrating the creative imagination of artists and cultures in the Asia-Pacific region. Created by Arts Centre Melbourne and presented by a consortium of Melbourne's leading cultural institutions, Asia TOPA features new works from ground-breaking contemporary performance to the boldly iconic and sublimely classical. The next Asia TOPA festival will be held between January and March 2025. Jeff will commence in his role as Creative Director on 13 September.

Notes to Editors

The founding Asia TOPA Consortium consists of Arts Centre Melbourne, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Chunky Move, Federation Square, Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne Recital Centre, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Melbourne Theatre Company, Museums Victoria, National Gallery of Victoria, State Library of Victoria, The Australian Ballet, Victorian College of the Arts and the Victorian Opera.

Asia TOPA is a joint initiative of the Sidney Myer Fund and Arts Centre Melbourne with support from the Australian and Victorian governments. With major seed funding from the Sidney Myer Fund, Arts Centre Melbourne has initiated a landmark collaboration with Melbourne's community of culture makers and national arts leaders to introduce powerful new voices from Asia to our stages.

Images can be found [here](#).



Media Release

Arts Centre Melbourne acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which we stand, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, and pays respect to their Elders, past and present.

We're excited to be welcoming visitors back to all our venues for live experiences in line with the most recent Victorian Government guidelines on COVID-19. We will continue to offer engaging online experiences via our digital hub – [Together With You](#).

For more information including: our current health and safety policies; bookings for free and ticketed events; and other digital content and experiences, please visit artscentremelbourne.com.au.

For more information about Arts Centre Melbourne, please visit artscentremelbourne.com.au or phone 1300 182 183. Become a fan of Arts Centre Melbourne on [Facebook](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Tik Tok](#).

For further media information and interviews, please contact Senior Advisor, Media and Communications, Suzanne Robson on 0407 443 271 or suzanne.robson@artscentremelbourne.com.au.