



Jodee Mundy: Hello. Hi, everybody. Firstly, welcome, welcome to Kiln. Welcome to the Kiln Programme, this is here in Hamer Hall, part of the Arts Centre. It's quite a prestigious area, am I right? Pretty fancy. So, I'll introduce myself, my name is Jodee Mundy. I feel like this is such a momentous occasion. I feel so privileged to be facilitating this wonderful group of deaf artists, so let's give them a round of applause. And of course before we dive right in to the exciting discussion that I'm sure is about to follow, firstly, I would like to acknowledge that we are meeting here on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri of the Kulin nation. We'd like to pay our respects to their elders, both past, present, and emerging. And also, any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders here with us today, we would like to acknowledge you also, thank you. Also, I would like to acknowledge the deaf community who has come here today. Thank you very much for your tireless support, thanks everybody. The event we have today is completely accessible. Anybody who is blind or vision impaired, we've got audio descriptions happening. And if anybody does need those services at the moment, if you could please make yourself known and let somebody know, a staff member, I don't think we do have anybody here that needs that service. Next, we'll have captions throughout their presentations. And we have interpreters here today using the microphones. We've got David Childs interpreting today. And do you have a sign name, Linda? We have Linda D'Ornay, this is her sign name. Also, to let you know, we originally planned to have a third interpreter, however, that was unable to happen, so I'll be doing a bit of interpreting myself as well. So, I'll be wearing a few hats today. The event today goes for two hours, so please settle in, enjoy yourselves, relax. If you do need to have a bit of a chill there's some bean bags at the front here. So, just feel free to get as comfortable as you like. Relax and settle in. Okay, we might get started. Today we are talking about the state of deaf arts. So what does that mean? The state of deaf arts. The state, but really, that is talking about the situation we're in today. We do know that we have some amazing artists here with us today. We've got Jessica Moody.

Jessica Moody: Hello.

Jodee Mundy: We have Luke King.

Luke King: Hi.

Jodee Mundy: We have Irene Holub. Elvin Lam. Walter Kadiki. So, these are all deaf artists and all proud members of the Australian deaf community. Me, am I?

Everyone: Anna, you forgot Anna.

Jodee Mundy: Oh! How terrible of me. Anna Seymour, everybody. Sorry, we've got a whole wealth of artists here, too many to remember. I'm a little bit nervous myself, so, sorry Anna, you'll have to forgive me. All of our artists here today are at different stages throughout their career. Some of them are emerging while the others are more established and a bit more experienced. Perhaps you don't know who I am. I'm hearing, I am not deaf, myself. However, my family is entirely deaf, and I am the black sheep of the family, I'm the hearing one. I'm an artist as well. Also, myself, I'm a proud member of the deaf community also. So, our deaf community that we have is very small. It's a microcosm of itself, it's strong, passionate, and a proud community. We are proud of our language, Auslan, part of the Australian deaf culture. And this is the inaugural time that we have had these deaf artists, or a number of deaf artists in a state Art Centre, here on stage. So, really, that's exciting. In 2019, I can't believe it's taken this long. But, we will see more of that moving forward. For many years I can remember of my parents and my siblings just advocating and advocating for access for the deaf community. We've also seen a gap in access, and we've had to organise those things ourselves, whether that be a deaf club, deaf sports centre, whatever. Whatever it is, we're



organising it ourselves, regardless of what the hearing community's doing. So we've just gone ahead with that. Recently, though, I've seen there's been a bit of a shift. There is now more interpreters, there's a rise of captioning, the NDIS is amongst us. As well as more programmes being provided within the arts, and we're seeing more of those doors open. And what that means is that access has been granted. And that means that the deaf arts and the deaf culture is growing in that art scape. So now I think I'll stop talking. We're really here to hear from these fantastic artists. So, what's going to happen, each of our artists today will be presenting for roughly 10 minutes. They'll be talking about their works, they'll be showing some videos and some photographs, and they'll be talking about their art practise. So, I think we're ready to get going. So, I would like to ask Jess to please prepare, and she's going to be sharing, talking about her work. So, the rest of us can get a seat and get comfy. And please give Jess a warm round of applause.

Jessica Moody: Cute. Hi everyone, how are you? Thank you. Hi everyone, thank you so much for your company, thank you. My name is Jess and I would like to acknowledge that we are on Aboriginal land, always was and always will be. So, I'm a theatre maker, my context is theatre. So, I'm gonna give you a quick snapshot of my beginnings in one minute. And look, the way I began theatre was that name got drawn out of a hat in a grade one show. It was "Snow White." And, you know, coincidentally, that's where I got my arts education. And that's why we need to keep arts in schools. And, I then was in a project as part of Victorian College of the Arts. And there was a director there named Naomi Edwards. I'm nervous. Sorry! So, I knew, full stop, that I wanted to be a director. I wanted to be just like her. And so, I followed that path and I ended up in another project with the Victorian Opera. And I remember that I was in the rehearsal room and I was sitting there with this guy, he came up to me with a bag of props. And next to me was someone called Richard Gill, who is a conductor, a very renowned conductor, and he said, "Do you want them to be smaller or bigger?" And I was a little bit shocked to reply because the prop was actually a dildo. Do you want it to be bigger or smaller? The actor was like, "Well yeah, of course, "I want a bigger one." And I knew, this is the world I wanna be in. If we're gonna have a conversation over the size of a prop, that's it. So, for the next 10 years after that I was involved in a whole range of work. I directed a few shows, including one that happened in a cafe. And I was in a whole range of community events and looked like any event like this I went, I learnt, I trained myself, and I did that for 10 years. And within those 10 years I was an intern where I met someone called Alana Gilbert. So, through that friendship we together went to see different shows and all sorts of events. And afterwards we'd have conversations about my experiences as a deaf person and her experiences as a hearing person. And, for her, she'd studied being a performer, I'd studied being a director. She was hearing, and you know, I'm deaf, and we would share our perspectives on different shows, how they were made, what I liked, what she didn't like. We had these long conversations. And we realised that in the community there was some serious gaps of deaf talent. And we looked into the landscape and thought, "God, there's so few." So, we went, "Okay, well, we've gotta do something about this." "Well, I'm game if you're game." "All right, let's do it." So, in 2016 we launched our first show, "Black is the Colour." And this was in 2016 Melbourne Fringe. And one of the best things that we that we did was, because we went to meet the Melbourne Fringe Festival team beforehand, and we told them that, "Look, we really want to set up Deaifferent Theatre." And they were like, "Go for it!" "We will support you in any way that we can." So we were like, "Great!" And, you know, we needed to set up something in the independent theatre community, we needed space for that, so Melbourne Fringe offered us some professional development, a little bit of funding, and also, we applied to be as part of The Fringe Hub, and we got the venue, so that's where we were born. We jumped in deep and we did the show. Now, my practise is a little bit like, wait, wait, wait, I'll backtrack. There's three things, curiosity, community, and collaboration. And really, Deaifferent Theatre was set up out of curiosity. We were like, "What would deaf theatre look like?" "What would our art look like?" "What is my relationship to the team?" "What would we achieve?" "What does deaf theatre look like "presently in our community?" And within our community and in the theatre arts



community, but also in the deaf community, and the Auslan community. How can we merge these worlds, or build a bridge, or, we don't want them to be in silos, or are they? So through our collaboration and the other artists that I worked with, it was an exchange, and we both benefited immensely. Also, I'm really up for taking on challenges and working with a lot of other incredible collaborators in the community. "Black is the Colour," was that just a fluke, a coincidence? Well, we thought, let's go back. And so, in 2017 we were back with Melbourne Fringe and "Vagina Monologues." And yes, this is the sign for vagina, everyone. And, we thought, "Yes, let's do this." And we we learned so many lessons from the first process, and to do this again we learned even more. We also noticed that in our audience people were really curious over our process, how we worked together. And so, there was plenty of community engagement. And also, we were part of the Kiln Programme two years ago where we had an open rehearsal. And also, we had a panel event too. And also, we had some free Auslan classes before one of our shows here at the Art Centre. With my artistic practise it's really based on who I want to participate with, who I want to participate with me. Cultural expression, because, we have cultural expression in the theatre making process as well as in the rehearsal room, it's paramount. And also, who's excluded from the mainstream? Deaf people, women, people of colour, I wanna work with them. Also, I noticed that in in the rehearsal space through a whole range of reasons, deaf people didn't have equal access to training, to artistic experiences. So we set up a collective which was a one week intensive where we did a big deep dive into how the rehearsal process works, how to facilitate workshops, auditions, and how to read scripts. And again, back to these two shows, we had to translate them from English into Auslan where as "Paris is Fine" was created first in Auslan which we translated into English. So, that really was an incredible layer, deaf layer, that went into the process. Also we had parents and teachers of deaf kids that wanted to see something for children. So we created "Ollie and Rose Goes Viral." What's the time, time? And so, in terms of, these are my ingredients, 'cause to me I'm like a chef in this space, the spontaneity, intuition, and critical thinking. And for the first two, it's so important. Theatre should be fun. And then the third one, critical thinking, I always feel like I'm wearing a few hats and I have to make sure that I am the right person for the role. Because sometimes I'm the teacher in the rehearsal room, sometimes I'm the producer, or sometimes I'm the director. So I always have to be self-reflective and critical. And luckily, The Malthouse offered us a residency called "Date Night." And this is a work that we still are developing in progress. And this is an intercultural process because we have a lot of people who don't know Auslan, or don't know the deaf community, so we're working together to explore an intercultural process. And then, also, I did a directing internship. Sorry, I'll be starting in a few weeks. That goes for five weeks and that's at The Malthouse Theatre. And then finally, I wanna stay in love with theatre. I work full-time, so I want to make sure that the love, and passion, and art, and theatre is paramount. I'm still working out my aesthetic. If I get more funding with my work it would really enable me to go, well, what do Jessica Moody's shows look like with resources? And then, less talk, more work. Let's take on the action, let's just do it. I could stand here and talk about my experience, but I just wanna get my sleeves up, and get in, dive in, get dirty, and make more theatre. So, more works. Thank you very much.

Jodee Mundy: Thank you, thank you, thank you, Jess. So, the next presenter that we have is Luke. Luke Duncan King is a visual artist working predominantly in print making, also including drawings and watercolour works on paper. King recently completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts, honours Individual Arts at the Victorian College of the Arts in 2015. King participated in solo and group exhibitions at the Margaret Lawrence Gallery, City of Melbourne Library, and internationally at 3331 Arts Chiyoda as a part of the International Printmaking Conference 2014 in Tokyo, Japan, Tinning Street Presents, and Long Division Gallery. He graduated The Next Wave Kickstart Programme in 2017. And participated in The Next Wave Art Festival at The Bus Projects last year. He often collaborates with student visual artists, emerging visual artists, and dancers at the VCA. And with Adele Mills, Nicola Gunn, as well as with Luella Mae Hogan, and



Anna Seymour, to discover performances and audience experientially and encounter the artistic practise in a visceral and insightful way. So please welcome Luke.

Luke King: Great, thank you very much, Jodee, for that lovely introduction. And thank you, Jess for your fascinating talk. Hello, folks, my name is Luke. Yes, here we are, so you can see. Before I do get started I would like to acknowledge that we are meeting here on the land of the Wurundjeri people of the great Kula Nation. They have lived here and made art for timeless amounts of... So, I grew up in a Wodi Wodi, in the English speaking town of Wollongong. I was born there and I was raised in New South Wales, close to Sydney, one and a half hours south. You know, on the beaches there. So I grew up around Wollongong, and I suppose I looked around the town and I realised that art wasn't really around. So I went to West Wollongong TAFE to study art. I finished my certificate four, and I was just so curious and wanted to know more. And at that time I got really engrossed in art making, and I realised that it was something that I could just lose hours in. But I realised where I was living that it was a bit flat, it wasn't really an arts community in Wollongong at that time. So, I decided to move to Naarm, otherwise know as Melbourne in 2013. And yes, a lot has changed. That's me. I think maybe I better change that picture, here we go. So, as Jodee mentioned, I'll give you a little bit of a snapshot of my CV. I studied my honours at VCA in 2015, Victorian College of the Arts. I also work as a museum educator at the National Gallery of Victoria. I've had some shows in the New South Wales Art Gallery. I've also exhibited in various museums around the place. I was lucky to be involved in the Kickstarter Programme. Part of Next Wave, that was a one year programme, and I really learned how to work as part of a team. Learned leadership, creativity, a whole wealth of skills, and it was such a fantastic, enriching experience. Then, the following year I was exhibited in Next Wave. I'm also a board member of Arts Access Victoria, as well as the Moreland Arts Board. So through those experiences I suppose I've grown and acknowledged various networks, and I've changed throughout that time, as we all do. I might talk a bit about some of my work now as opposed to my experience. I'll give you a bit of a snapshot of some of my portfolio. These two pieces here a drawings, and the one on the far side is a print. The one closest to us, I found a pencil, which is a 10B, and I must say, it's gotta be at the softest graphite pencil I have ever seen in my life. I was lucky enough to pick that up in Japan. It's actually soft like lipstick rather than a pencil. It's an absolute joy to draw with. So, the concept of this work is, the circle represents an eye. The edges are blurred and representing lots of information coming from all sides. There's also hands working its way into the circle, which is inviting the viewer into this world. There's two faces overlapped on top of each other. And what that makes me think of is when somebody sees a person we make assumptions. And it's never until we talk to them or approach them that our prospective changes. And that's why we have the two faces here. The same concept goes for the print, which is on the far right side. This will be all right. These are watercolour paintings. And they are one of my favourite mediums to work in. So it's watercolour on paper. So they're fluid and fragile, and reminds me of the fragility of life itself. So, as life can change, so can the watercolours that we work with. These works here are bio drawings, like a pen which we use for writing with. And it's such a powerful tool, I believe. It's got a memory of it's own. Once you come up with something in your mind and you do something, it's stuck there forever. So we put these works on paper, and really, there's no turning back. There's no point of return, it's stuck there and you have to work with what you put down. So it's the same medium that we would usually write with. And these pictures that I've drawn. So, we have the city here. This is somebody that I know. Perhaps some people in the audience know as well, but, most people don't know this person. As a viewer we look at them from different angles and we're trying to work out who they are, what they're all about, and there's no way we can know for sure. This is a show that I put on in Tinning Street in Brunswick. This is the series of work I did entitled "I Am A..." It's a series that focuses on deaf individuals talking about their identity, and their language, as well as their community. So, I didn't come up with this concept on my own. I owe a lot to Next Wave for helping me generate this idea. I want to thank them for their trust as well as their willingness to



work with me. And so, they really gave me a lot of confidence. And yes, I always did have confidence, but, the confidence to explore my concepts, make different art, use different tools and get creative. I was also lucky enough to have a mentor team, somebody to collaborate with. They were able to point out where I needed to learn more and what strengths I had. And it was such an enriching experience, and I was able to put on this show. So, I mean, totally grateful to Next Wave. This show was last year as part of The Bus Project. What we see here is, there is four TV screens, you can only see three in this still, however, it is comprised of four. So, what happened is, the individuals were asked the same set of questions and they answered their own way. So they were a little bit different, but some of them had overlaps. You were able to access 'em in a number of different ways. You could read the blurbs and the subtitles, or you could listen with audio, or you could look at the Auslan. So, people were able to access it in a number of their own ways which made a bridge between the viewer. And so, obviously, without those sorts of accessibilities then somebody is going to be left out, and then they're gonna be missing out on that information. So, the language access was something that was critical to this work. This is part of the same exhibit, in the same space. This is just around the corner here, we have another print that's on the wall. And this print is a lithography print. When you look at it closely it looks like a mess of lines, however, once you distanced yourself, then you can recognise the face. So that relationship is kind of works the opposite way than you would in the real world. Perhaps, close up to somebody you get to know them a bit better, where as far away you don't know who they are. So I've inversed this in this particular work. So, printmaking, it's got a special spot in my heart. It's dirty, and complicated, and it's a lot of hard work. I think I've put my back in my wrist out in the process, but the end result is something that fills me with so much joy. I think this works so well for a deaf person because it's hands on, you see something and you put it down into something material and you see what comes out of it, and that's so special. I think that's me done. I want to thank everybody for looking at my talk and enjoying, thank you all very much.

Jodee Mundy: Okay, thank you. Next we have Irene Holub. Irene Holub was born deaf into a hearing family. She became a social product of segregation and mainstreaming. She's a sculptor, printmaker, and painter. And as an outsider searching for identity she would use different mediums to capture and create the symbolic language within her hands. Patents, connections, fragments, and memories appear in Irene's work as many layers of perceptions from within and from others. Her works have been shot at St Heliers Gallery, Flow Festival, Women's Gallery, Fire Station Gallery, Melbourne Fringe Festival, and local contemporary events. Deafness, for Irene, is a gift. She's passionate about education and empowerment. Throughout her art career and as a teacher, educator, and adviser she's advocated for the rights of deaf people to have a voice. She's worked as a curator, workshop presenter, and board director of Arts Access Victoria, and currently working as a creative producer for the Flow Festival, which is a deaf arts festival. Her art is a social movement, a documentation of those influenced by the mainstream who have intentionally or unintentionally removed the rights of people to be different, deaf, and proud. So please welcome Irene.

Irene Holub: Thank you, thank you, Jodee. Thank you, Luke, congratulations to you. Before I start I'd like to acknowledge the First Nations people of Australia. Plus, I would like to acknowledge deaf people around the world, 'cause we are all one. I was thinking about what I would talk about today. I'd like to start with my driver, and that's politics. I grew up with art in my life. I studied art at RMIT, but I encountered barriers along the way. So, I became involved as an advocate with deaf organisations for deaf rights, and education of deaf people. So, a lot of my background up until now has involved advocacy and the arts. And I could see that today we were talking about arts advocacy. So, for a start I'd like to, I made this print work a long time ago, I was around 20. My face is not clear because at that time I was undecided about my own identity. I didn't know whether I was hearing, hard-of-hearing, deaf, hearing impaired, which was the term that was used at that time. So it was a very confusing time. And, I'm not the only one with that experience, many



deaf people share that same experience. 90% of deaf people are born into hearing families. So their own families don't know about deafness, and they are learning along the journey, both people at the same time. So the word, "Their invisible skin," that is something that you will see throughout my art. And, if you see a group of people, how do you know whether they're deaf or hearing? Because if you just look at them on the surface, you can't tell. So it's really interesting about community perception and expectation that deaf are the same as hearing people because physically, for example, we look the same. But, so we look at a person who has a visual impairment, do you expect them to become assimilated like a sighted person, or a person in a wheelchair? We don't expect those people to get up and walk. Or, for example, an indigenous person, we don't say to them, "Oh, no, you're not indigenous at all, "you're a white person." We respect their own identity, their right to be who they are. But for deaf people I found that we encounter invisibility. Meaning that hearing people, I'm not saying it's a deliberate action, but labels are placed upon us by hearing people. So many of us as deaf people are walking through this path that we're trying to navigate with an unknown identity. I've never used one of these before. Here we are. My work is a mix of mediums and varied projects that are all quite diverse. This is called "The Good Girl." And, I talk a lot about my past experience, my personal experience, and my professional experience as a teacher of deaf students. For deaf adults, there's no real problem, I imagine. They can be quite assertive, they can communicate. Also, now, in 2019, we have lots of advantages for deaf adults, but for deaf children in 2019 there has been very little improvement. You go to a school where the literacy levels are as they are for hearing people, that doesn't happen. They don't have access to language in early years, it's a very frustrating business, and it breaks my heart. Anyway, I grew up as a good girl. You know, off I went to appointment after appointment fixated on my audiological positivities or abilities, did I pass their speech assessments? And that's how I sought acceptance. That is not a unique experience just to me, many deaf people have the same experience. In this piece of work, how I learnt to swim. We're not innately born with the ability to swim, so, for deaf people, how do you swim if your hands are tied? You can't, you can't swim. And people go, "Oh well, bad luck, you drown then." So, for me, I grew up not signing. I used verbal communication, I was oral. And so, that's a representation of my childhood. I asked an audience of people, please look at this piece and tell me what's missing. And some people say, "Oh, they don't have faces." That's a bit curious, that's what's missing. Some are related to doctor's appointments, hearing aids, stethoscope, testing, but what is missing? And, do you know the answer as to what's missing, deaf people? Hands, that's right. Can you tell me a little bit more about that? Mouths to lip read. The most important thing. Facial expression, that is the most connection. What do you mean by that? Communication that is the central point that's missing for deaf people in that illustration. This work is my experience working in deaf education. Again, as I said before, with deaf adults they can assert themselves, but deaf children don't have that opportunity. They don't have a knowledge of deaf rights. And they come from hearing families who are privy to certain privileges that deaf people aren't, and there's very little collaborative effort between the two communities. And so many of those children don't have any rights at all. They don't have any faces because they don't yet have an identity. I know it sounds really negative, but, it's important to bring attention to this. This is a different material, I made this from ceramics. And I ask people to have a look at that in relation to not having an identity. But I ask them to please pick it up and have a look at the words within the pieces, because they are the voices of deaf children. So this print work is about deaf and hearing communities, and the emergence of a deaf identity. This artwork, I like. The baby represents the pureness, and the development. They haven't yet been in receipt of signed languages, but it's an innate thing for a deaf person, it's within their DNA. This work, it was recently made by myself. I looked at my experience and sometimes as a deaf person I feel like will you reject me or accept me? Is it something I have to think about? And this is an everyday experience for me. I will have a show, which is very exciting, as part of Melbourne Fringe. So please come along in September and at the Loop Bar, and I'll talk about more about that then. That's a mixed art performance piece. And I'm aware of time, so in summary, I'm very excited for this event in 2020, the Flow Festival, Ramas McRae and



Medina Sumovic, the three of us set up Flow Festival in 2018, and it was a really well-attended event. We had internationals attend. And it was a variety of art, performance, and different mediums, it was really amazing. Next year it will occur again, and we want to encourage people. Jess said before, we're looking at where are the deaf people in the art scape? And we would like to give deaf people the opportunity to come out and show what kind of deaf artists we have. That will be on at Northcote, at the Townhall. Same as last year. And we've started planning for the event, and I think we we'll have any information evening on August 10th at our Access Victoria offices in South Melbourne, so that will be publicised more. So please come along, if you're an artist, a performance artist, a producer, or you have any creative ideas and you want to be involved in the plans, please come along. Thank you very much.

Jodee Mundy: Thank you, thank you so much, Irene. It's fantastic to know about these works, so I hope everyone's enjoying the presentation today. So, we've got three more artists, we're only halfway! Can you believe it? Wow, time just flies, doesn't it? Next, we would like to invite Elvin Lam to the stage. So, Elvin was born in Hong Kong. And he began dancing in his late teenage years. Prior to this, he trained in the figure skating for 10 years attending different competitions before strapping on his first pair of dance shoes. He studied various forms of dance, including Latin, ballroom, jazz, hip-hop, contemporary dance, and ballet. In 2016 Elvin joined Deaf Can Dance. And later, The Delta Project. A dance company with deaf and hearing dancers. With these companies he has performed in Melbourne, South Australia, Queensland, and his most recent performance was in "Under My Skin," which is part of Next Wave at Arts House in 2016. Currently, he's a student in the adult class at the Australia Ballet. And earlier this year in January, he ran a deaf signed ballet workshop. So please welcome Elvin Lam.

Elvin Lam: Thank you, thank you. Thanks, Jodee. I'm very excited to be here, my name is Elvin, and I am profoundly deaf. I was born in Hong Kong and grew up oral, speaking Cantonese. I never signed, and when I move to Australia I learned Auslan, and that is my preferred language now. Growing up I never played sport. I loved drawing. And when I went to high school in the summer holidays I thought, oh, I need something active and fun. And I saw in a brochure that they had an ice skating workshop, and I thought, oh, that's interesting, I might go ahead and learn. So, I took part in that six-week programme, and I loved it. I was totally immersed in figure skating. So when the figure skating workshop finished, I had private tuition one-on-one to learn different tricks, spins, jumps, and it's very hard. Next, I involved myself in different competitions. And it was a fabulous experience. And when I moved to Australia I continued figure skating. In 2002 I thought I needed something to challenge myself. I thought why not go to the World Gay Games in Sydney? And that was an immense experience. I met so many different people. There were no deaf ice skaters in the world, I think. It was quite disappointing, but it was a great experience for me as a deaf ice skater. And I would like to show some of my skating, it's a short clip.

(Video plays)

Elvin Lam: Thank you very much, that was incredible. It was very difficult, but the learning experience was fantastic, it was interesting. And I set up a deaf figure skating workshop, and taught deaf people. 10 years later, I thought, okay, it was time to move on, something different. And at that time a friend of mine said, "Oh, would you like to involve yourself in dance? And I'd never done that before. She wanted to learn Latin. Lapop is what it's called, which is a modern jive. So I thought, oh yeah, okay, you needed a partner. So the two of us rehearsed and it was a really interesting process, there were only two of us who were deaf. And we went and involved ourselves in different competitions. So this is us. This the friend of mine that we were in competitions, we were number one! We bought the other hearing people. We beat them, which was fantastic. And then later, we had time clashes. So unfortunately, that partnership dissolved. But we had a



variety of deaf dance workshops, and doing hip-hop, for the genre of hip-hop. After that workshop finished a number of us got together and thought, "Why don't we set up a performance?" So, we set up the group called Deaf Can Dance, and we were in The Fringe Festival and toured Australia. We went to Queensland, Brisbane, Adelaide, and it was a very enjoyable experience. A few years later Deaf Can Dance changed to The Delta Project. And it was a collaboration between hearing and deaf dancers because of the deaf dancers can learn from hearing dancers, and hearing dancers can learn from the deaf dancers. You know, it was mutually beneficial. And we had a variety of performances, "Collisions," "Under My Skin," and it was a really fabulous experience. When I grew up and I was a young person, I enjoyed watching old movies, "Gone With The Wind," in particular. It's a very old movie, but I loved it. I was totally absorbed, their costumes were so beautiful, their backdrops, and I learned about history through that film. So I would draw lots of a representation of that time period, and a few years later I would look back on all the costumes throughout the different eras and make pieces for all of those eras. In Hong Kong and The Academy of Performing Arts, like here in Victoria, you have VCA, I studied there and learnt so much more. And when I moved to Australia my hobby was really to learn to sew, that's what I did for fun. And sometimes I helped make costumes for friends. At the top there, a friend of mine, I made a ballet costume for. And the other costumes there, last year as part of Flow Festival that Irene just talked about, we showed that deaf people can do anything, dance, make costumes, sew, model, what have you. So, I loved this, this is my favourite hobby. And why am I focused on ballet? Why is that something I really enjoyed? My mother used to take me to watch ballet, "The Nutcracker" was the performance, and I was totally gobsmacked. I loved every second of it. And after that show I said to my mom, I want to learn ballet! And my mom said, "Why?" She said, "Deaf people can't do ballet." "Ballet dancers need to be hearing, "you can't survive in that environment." When I moved to Australia I was more determined to learn ballet. So I looked for different avenues that I could experience it. And I'm encountered some barriers along the way, but at last I was accepted to learn ballet. That's how it's all started. And through determination I wanted to learn more. So I applied to the Australian Council of the Arts and received some funding to give me the opportunity to involve myself in a mentorship, and learned so much more in the class. With a one-on-one mentor I learned so much more because they totally focused on me. The skills and deliverance of that information is totally specific to me. And my mentor mentored me in performance. And through performance that was a really wonderful experience because when I said I'm going to watch a ballet show, it doesn't matter hearing or deaf people, they all say the same thing, "Do you have an interpreter there?" I'm like, not for ballet, no, it's no need. Ballet is art, it's the language of the body, you don't need an interpreter. And they'd say, "Oh, but you can't hear the music!" And I'm like, yes, so? But ballet, the dancing is the music itself. So that's the description of the story. You don't have to hear the specific music. Next I have a small video. Jo Hall from Channel 9 interviewed me. I was quite shocked that she would want to do that. And the interview would describe my ballet experience.

Video News Presenter: Dancing is no easy task, and for Elvin Lam, born deaf, his journey has been inspiring for others. He overcame doubters, including members of his own family to achieve a dream of learning ballet. Now he wants to achieve much more. And we'll have Jo Hall's special report later in this bulletin. A man with a love of music born deaf who has overcome adversity to take it to the dance floor. Elvin Lam has always wanted to perform, and as Jo Hall discovered, he's not stopping there.

Voice in Video: Dancing is moving to the rhythm of music. Which is what makes Elvin Lam's story so remarkable.

Elvin in Video: I'm profoundly deaf. But if the music is loud, for example, with the piano, I do feel a bit of vibration on the floor.



Video News Presenter: He fell in love with "The Nutcracker" at six, but, hit a roadblock.

Elvin in Video: So I asked my mom if I could learn. She said "No, unfortunately, being deaf, "that's not something you can do."

Video News Presenter: 20 years passed before he decided to give it a go. He started with hip-hop.

Elvin in Video: I really enjoyed that, but I'm more interested in contemporary and ballet.

Video News Presenter: And to pursue his love of ballet, he applied for and received a government grant to work with a mentor in adult classes.

Voice in Video: He's a really dedicated artist in the sense that he loves to learn.

Voice in Video: Jane Casson, formally with the Australian Ballet Company is full of praise for her student. They've developed a language of their own.

Voice in Video: We tend to make up our own little signs. So, for example, if I wanted him to stretch his leg, I just scratch the back of my elbow like so.

Voice in Video: Jane has also learned a bit of Auslan, the deaf sign language, and she's not on her own.

Voice in Video: We're all trying to learn sign language.

Voice in Video: So we're doing some sign classes with him before class every week.

Voice in Video: The other dancers in Jane's sessions marvel at Elvin's attitude and ability.

Voice in Video: He's really good. He gets it. He's so subtle and graceful for somebody who can't hear the music, he puts the rest of us to shame, I think.

Elvin in Video: I guess I'm following my heart. So, does it feel like a fast movement or a slow emotion?

Voice in Video: Elvin works in the government purchasing department, but most of his spare time is spent perfecting his ballet technique.

Voice in Video: He's definitely an inspiration to all of us.

Voice in Video: I'm always copying him.

Voice in Video: I do too!

Voice in Video: Oh, they love him, yeah, he is the darling. And what he's done is he's brought the deaf community into the hearing community.

Voice in Video: But Elvin is not satisfied with just being a dance student, his dream is to teach so he can share his passion with young deaf children.



Elvin in Video: I would also love to let deaf children know that they shouldn't feel barriers to being a dancer. And I can be a good example for them.

Video News Presenter: Jo Hall, 9 News.

Voice in Video: Extraordinary story.

Elvin Lam: So, that was my first time being interviewed on TV, which was a phenomenal experience. So, thank you for having me here, and I hope you enjoyed the presentation.

Jodee Mundy: Walter Kadiki is our next presenter. He has a fluid use of the visual vernacular, and a strong poetic performance. He's known for his profound and engaging signed poetry, and storytelling that bridges cultures and is accessible for deaf and hearing audiences. He has delivered workshops for young people across Australia in deaf slam poetry. He has worked with community groups to create the poem such as "Butterfly Hands," which was performed at Federation Square in Melbourne, and in Geelong. He has performed his signed poetry at the Melbourne Fringe Festival, Salt Lake City, USA, and various events across Australia. Please give him a warm welcome, Walter.

Walter Kadiki: Hello there. My name is Walter and this is my sign name. I think I recognise most of the faces here in the room with us today. So, I am a deaf poet. So, I write poetry myself. And when somebody thinks about the word poet, people often think in their mind of reams and reams of paper filled with English. And people think, "Well this is such an old thing, "500, 600 years ago." We think of people like Shakespeare. That's what people think of when they hear poetry and its power. Richard Tennyson wrote a lot of poems. And the poems that he wrote, they were language. We would look at the language and we would unpack it, and we would try to make sense of it. And it became ideas that we could see in front of us, and visualise a beautiful expression. So, do I write poetry? No, mine's a little different. I use my hands in my poetry. So what does that mean? People say, "Walter, how can you call that poetry "without any written words?" We look at these pages and pages of poems that we have and there's strict rules and grammar that you have to follow for it to be poems. It needs a tempo, it needs rhythm, it needs to have this. How can you do that with Auslan? "It simply isn't there," they say. But, I think of the world, and I think of the variety of languages that we have throughout the world, Spanish, Greek, Italian. And all of those languages have a rich history that is treasured and cherished, and people feel a connection to that. They think that it's part of them. It fills them up and they express themselves in that language through a variety of methods. Through singing, through poetry, and I think, well, I have a language, how can I express it? So, I better put the brake on there a little bit, and go back in time. I grew up similar to Irene. I was born deaf and my family is hearing, and I was the one deaf person plunked there in the middle, and I started my life like that. And I thought, well, what is this life? I looked around me and I turned to people and I realised that their communication wasn't there. But my mind and my eyes became acutely aware of seeing things and taking in that information, and I wanted to know what is that? And I explored it further. And I think of the evening time, people sitting around the dining room table. My mother would always be there with candles, setting the mood, it was a lovely time to spend with the family, sharing a meal. And of course all around me was a language that I could not access. I was just transfixed on the flame of the candle. I could see the different colours with in it. There was reds and blues, and I saw it moving and dancing, and when you blew it out, it went out too. And I realised there's power in that, there's expression in that, there's expression in me. So then we think of the winter, everyone sitting around in the lounge room, we've got the fire there, we've got the TV there, and the fire is just crackling away in the corner. And again, it completely took me away. Each individual ember has got its own



story to tell. So I took that in, and I wanted to express that. So I moved throughout my life and I went to school. I went to hearing school. As you can imagine, in those sorts of times, people looking at deaf people thinking, "We better try and normalise this person, "let's send them to a hearing school and make them normal." So of course, like any other students, I would open up these books. And there was pictures within these books, and I treasured them. I remember approaching a teacher, saying, I want to sign, I want to sign poetry. And the teacher said, "Sure, go ahead." "You can write some poetry." And there was that first barrier that I had faced in my life, the first major roadblock, I finally wanted to express myself, I've got ideas, I've got thoughts, I want to express them, and what I heard was, "No." And that fights still rages. When I'm speaking with deaf people I talk to them and I'd say, I'm a deaf poet. And they'll give me a quizzical glance. They say, "You're a poet, are you hearing?" And they think this is the world and the realm of hearing people. And I say, look at me, I've got hands. I can express myself, come with me. But, this idea of poetry is firmly entrenched in the world of hearing. So, did I give up? Of course not. I started my life in the UK, and there was a school that invited me to give some workshops with some children. I was showing them examples. I was giving them small poems, and they were signing them on their hands. They were watching me, and, they couldn't believe it. And you can see in the eyes of children when something really clicks to them. I said to them, now it's your turn, and it was such a massive moment. From there I moved from the UK to Australia, keen and excited to bring the wealth of what I've learned to this new country, and express myself with my hands, and play around, and be creative. I looked around me and I realised that there wasn't anybody else quite like me doing this. At that time, in 2005, thereabouts, the Deaf Olympics was happening. And they then approached me and asked if I was able to do a poem for the Deaf Olympics. I had to do this in two weeks and send that up to be projected for everyone to see. Of course this was thrilling and exciting for me. Such a great opportunity to be entrusted. And from that time on, I've been heavily involved. And with a strong determination to keep doing this. So, fast forward to 2010, we had the first deaf poetry workshop. We invited a number of deaf people to get together. And what we did is we talked about deaf poetry, and we taught everybody about deaf poems. Unfortunately, it wasn't something that was completely out there in the world at that time. But, everyone was keen to come along that journey with me. And so, now, to 2018, I was fortunate to travel to the United States with an American company. They saw one of my deaf poems on YouTube, they then invited me to come and work with them. And now I would like to show you a few stills from the workshop that we conducted. Here are some stills from both overseas and locally, here in Australia. There is a video that I would like to show you.

(Video plays)

This video of Walter performing poetry has no captions.

Walter Kadiki: I would like to thank you all for your time today. Thanks very much.

Jodee Mundy: Thank you, Walter. Wow, that was so beautiful to learn about deaf poetry. It's really rare to see, and we need more people, maybe one of you out there is a poet inside waiting to take the stage. The next presenter, and lucky last presenter is Anna, Anna Seymour. Anna is a Melbourne based performing artist, dance maker and teacher. Anna is bilingual in Auslan and English. She is a proud deaf woman with a passion for her community, culture, and language. Completing a Bachelor of Creative Arts in Dance in 2012 she has worked for various companies and choreographers including Ballet Lab and Kage.Co. Founder of The Delta Project, a dance company of deaf and hearing performers. Anna's choreographic credits include "Destruction Society," part of Melbourne Fringe Festival in 2016. "Spin" Melbourne Fringe Festival 2018. Receiving the Spirit of Fringe Award. Anna has worked as an actress for TV in ABC's "Get Krack!n." Film and theatre, with Deafferent Theatre she performed in "Black is the Colour" part of Melbourne Fringe, earning



her a Green Room Award nomination for Best Performer in Independent Theatre. Anna is currently working as an assistant producer for Melbourne Fringe Festival. Please welcome Anna.

Anna Seymour: Hello everyone, I would like to acknowledge the work of deaf elders for the work that they have done in the arts for the deaf community, culture, and for our language, Auslan. Those of you in the deaf community may have seen this building. It's a deaf site. This is at Melbourne Polytechnic in Prahran. And it's a really important space in our deaf community because this is where the Auslan course is taught. And also, they have a deaf organisation there called Deaf Connect. And also the Victorian College of the Deaf is around the corner. And also, The John Pierce Centre which is a deaf ministry is around the corner too. So, Prahran has a lot of deaf history. And so, when Guido van Helten approached me to do this mural and asked me to work with him on a new project, I didn't know where he would be doing this painting. And then when he told me where it was my jaw dropped, I couldn't believe it. Right there in the area that is our deaf sight? So, it's wonderful that this artwork of me is in this space, in such a large mural, large scale building. So, as you know, the deaf community is quite hidden. Our languages are created and our stories are often in deaf clubs. Or in places where deaf people gather. And only say, maybe the last 10 or 15 years, we're starting to see visibility of deaf people, and deaf artists, and deaf professional art workers within the arts sector. Which is real exciting. Jodee already mentioned this, I won't speak too much, but I'm a contemporary dancer and that's my main area. But also, I'm an actress and I've worked in television, film, and theatre. And also, I've collaborated a lot with many different artists from various art forms. And I've worked with most of the speakers here, I haven't worked with you yet, Walter, we gotta jam. I work for Melbourne Fringe as assistant producer. So we could work together that way. So I'm doing the creative and arts administration, I use both parts of the brain. I was born profoundly deaf, everyone in my family can hear. And they had never met a deaf person when I was born, they knew about the deaf community, or even how to speak with a deaf person, so it was quite a surprise. But I was so lucky, they all learned Auslan, which is very rare for a family to learn Auslan for their deaf child. And that was because our first teacher, Kate Curtain, she has a second cousin who is Trevor Johnston, who is a well-known linguist. He has deaf parents and he made the Auslan dictionary. And that was his second cousin, and he said to her, "You gotta tell Anna's family "the only way to connect with Anna is if they learn Auslan." So this is my first teacher. And this is where I learned to sign from a baby. And I also had a bit of speech therapy, and you can see my hearing aids, they're massive! They've got like wires that run all the way down. This is my family, there's no artistic bones in our family, I'm the only one. And the only influence we had was when the Australian Theatre of the Deaf travelled to Lismore once a year, that was our annual theatre event, 'cause, I grew up in Lismore, Northern New South Wales, and Lismore has the second largest deaf community in New South Wales after Sydney. And that's where I got my influence, from The Australian Theatre of the Deaf. I started dancing when I was six, but, at high school I stopped. And then when I was 19 or 20 I saw a ballet company called Bangarra, which is an indigenous dance company. And when I saw them perform I thought, I know that this is it, that I wanna do this, I want to be a professional dancer. It pulled me and it was my calling. So, from then I moved to Melbourne, and that was 13 years ago. To cut a long story short, over the last 10 years has been hectic. I've been doing art works, I've been collaborating, collaborative developments, I've been travelling, I've been touring, I've been doing artist residencies, an enormous amount of training, and a lot of admin, and developing my artistic practise. And in 2012 myself and Jo Dunbar, she's a deaf choreographer from the UK, we co-founded The Delta Project, which is a dance company of deaf and hearing dancers. Our first work had four deaf dancers and four hearing dancers, and one deaf choreographer, and one hearing choreographer. And Elvin was involved, and it was called "Collision." And the second work is called "Under My Skin." That had four dancers, two deaf, two hearing, which Elvin was also in as well. And that was part of Next Wave Festival in 2016. I will talk a little bit about my work, "Distraction Society" but I just wanna say, we live in such an audio dominant world, everyone's so focused



on sound. A lot of us rely on our ears and our voices to connect and communicate with one another. And we do that in art as well. So whenever I go to dance shows there's always someone talking or someone singing. It's always, for me, a line that I cannot enter. And so, I thought, I'm gonna make a duet with one of, which duet is my favourite kind of dance, with my long-term dance partner, which is visual, physical, and has no talking in it. And, we did the choreography without any sound. We added the sound after, the sound design was overlaid in response to the visual choreography. So, we were connected physically, but emotionally detached, and at times we're emotionally connected, but physically detached. So the rhythm came from our pulses, not from sound or any external audio source. I'm just gonna play a video. Great.

(Video plays)

Anna Seymour: Also, I love lifts in dance. Who says a woman can't lift, right? Yes! So, the next work I made is called "Spin." I made this last year as part of Melbourne Fringe Festival. And the idea, wait, hang on, let me backtrack, let me go back. The "Distraction Society" was in Melbourne Fringe 2016, and then in 2017, it performed at The International Deaf Arts Festival in San Francisco. And then last year at the Australian Deaf Opening Games ceremony. And, at the International Deaf Arts Dance Festival in San Francisco, that gave me the idea for "Spin." And what it is, is it's a dance party led by deaf people. And I thought, what would that look like? Really, "Spin" is like an intersection of deaf and party culture. Let me find my notes, and dance culture. So, it's the intersection of deaf, party, and dance culture. And it's an interactive participatory performance with a DJ and deaf hosts. And the deaf hosts were Luke King, and also Robbie Burrows, who's also here. Now, they're both non-dancers, they're not trained. They hadn't really performed in dance, so I was so proud of the way they hosted 80 audience members through a participatory dance party. And, it was entirely visual. It's not verbal, the dance isn't led by the music, it's done by the body. So to finish off I'll play this video.

(Video plays)

Music Lyrics in Video: Let me rock, Let me have a good night, Mr. DJ burn it up, Mr. DJ burn it up, Mr. DJ burn it up, Mr. DJ burn it up, Mr. DJ burn it up, burn it up, Burn it up, burn it up, burn it up.

Anna Seymour: Thank you so much, thank you.

Jodee Mundy: All right, let's give all of our panel members a round of applause, thanks everybody. Okay, so, I've prepared a few questions and we'll just have a bit of an open discussion about that. So, anybody's free to answer these questions. So I'm going to be the one keeping the time, and at the end we're gonna open up to the audience for a Q&A. Okay, are we all ready to dive in?

Irene Holub: Can you just move back a little bit, Walter?

Jodee Mundy: Can you see me all right? A bit cramped up here, I hope I don't fall off.

Luke Duncan King: No, you're all right.



Jodee Mundy: Okay, so, everybody has mentioned various organisations as well as people who have been supports to you throughout your lives and careers. Can go through a little bit of how that's worked, whether that's been through funding, or mentorships, or just a bit snapshot of who supported you, and how, in what ways? So, what kind of supports you've received. So, who'd like to start?

Luke King: I will. Throughout my time studying at VCA I learnt how to ask. That students have the right to ask and it will be provided. And that's how I developed the acknowledgement that asking is a necessary part of getting what I needed, and to provide a safe space. It's a tiring enterprise, but, throughout Next Wave I developed trust, the ability to trust, the opportunity to listen, and recognising that people don't listen. And being collaborative, working with other people to get other people to listen.

Anna Seymour: So, for myself, I suppose the breakthrough was receiving some funding from the Australia Council. As well as Fiona Cook through Arts Access Victoria has been a great help. She actually approached me and said, "Anna, you should approach some funders." And she actually assisted me to receive \$13,000, which helped to pay for interpreters. That meant that I was able to be involved in workshops, and training, and finally, voila, I was granted access. And that was really that breakthrough moment for me, and it just carried on from there.

Walter Kadiki: A little bit similarly with Luke. I established things myself at first. I had to ask community organisations whether they wanted me to present. And with Fiona Cook from Arts Access Victoria, she said, "You could do more." She gave me that power. So other businesses then in Sydney approached me and asked me to film. Brought in other people and used their knowledge, and experience, and how to gain funding for events like that. So AAV was a huge support, and the Arts Council of Australia was also a massive support.

Irene Holub: I'd like to add to that, in regards to councils, I know that now you're seeing these, kind of open minds happen.

Jodee Mundy: Local councils, do you mean?

Irene Holub: And I've been involved with Darebin Council, and I have to say they are fantastic. They're really progressive, they're really keen to get things happening. They're open-minded and they're welcoming of the deaf community. So, they were instrumental in us setting up Flow Festival, and I thank them so much for their support.

Elvin Lam: For me, similarly to Anna, I got funding through the Australia Council application because it wasn't fair for deaf people to have to pay all those interpreter costs, and really massive costs to enable communication. So, through grants that's how we gained access to interpreter funding, and we then could access mentorships, et cetera, and that was a massive help.

Jessica Moody: For me, I mean, I wasn't always making art, So I was having colleagues involved, and getting involved in festivals. And really, I thought, well, am I ready to start making art, can I do it? And the answer was yes, and from that moment on the door started opening. But I think similar to the rest of the panel, it's about talking with people. Finding the right people who will listen that will support you. And, it's not always about funds. Sometimes it's about relationships and networking. That sort of skill is so invaluable.



Jodee Mundy: Thank you for sharing. The next question I'd like to ask. In the future do you see your success or future barriers for you? Do you think that there will still be barriers or how can we break through those barriers to achieve successes? What kinds of barriers, and what types of advocacy do you think's needed?

Walter Kadiki: Well, I think the community perception of deaf people and Auslan hasn't really reached its full maturity yet. Sometimes I say to people, yes, I've got skills, however I use Auslan, and they sideline me. Sometimes I say, okay, well, here I am, and I can see the vibe is a little bit patronising. And they think, "Well, that's pretty good "for a deaf person." They kinda think, "Oh, well that's cute." But no, I've got skills. So if the wider community and the rest of the world recognise sign language it would be a massive gift. And we have a massive gift to give to the world as well.

Jodee Mundy: Anymore comments?

Jessica Moody: From my reflective practise, sometimes I feel like bits of me are taken away by interpreters, by other things, and I'm really depleted by that experience. I'm already halfway empty before I even begin. So, advocacy work, I think is a necessary part of the future.

Anna Seymour: I have to agree with Jess, being an artist is a challenge, we all know that. However, on top of that, we have to think about advocacy. We have to think about educating people. And we have to protect our culture and our community as well. And so, there is a lot of artists that approach people such as myself, and say, "They want to work with us." Which is fantastic, I appreciate that. But, sometimes they're not involved in the community, they're not involved in our culture. And you have to be aware of tokenism. So, that is something that I see as a barrier. So, we have to be wary of that, I think.

Jodee Mundy: Anybody else? Elvin.

Elvin Lam: A big barrier for me is English because it's not my first language. Auslan is my preferred language, and through application for funding, they're all in sophisticated English, all those applications, and I need a lot more assistance to rectify my English structure, and that's a massive barrier to me.

Luke King: Yes, well, I am always focused on producing work. But I suppose one of my bug there is, that networking flow. Say you go to a gallery, or you go to a museum, everyone gets together and you sorta say, "G'day, g'day." You have your champagne and you say, "Yep, I'm doing pretty good." But, where's the meat in that conversation? I wanna be able to in network with people in my own preferred language so I can hear about these opportunities, or I can say yes, I can put my hand up for that. Perhaps six months later I find out about an opportunity that I've missed out on because I haven't had a chance to engage in that networking. So, that flow. I mean, I'm not criticising that, but it's something that we have to work on. So, I suppose I busy myself in making work and I don't want to burn myself out. I don't really think that's worth it. I mean, I do have fun, but yeah it's a challenge.

Jodee Mundy: The next question, I'm mindful of time. as deaf artists it's a small community and the movement of that community of deaf artists, it's now a growth community. You have seen it grow. And there will be more and more members of that community, and then mainstream hearing people will be able to recognise, "Oh, it's not one deaf dancer, "maybe there's two or three." Or one painter who's deaf, "Oh, there a special person, "they're a token." When there's more of those poets, you, yourselves, as audience members may able to be involved in the movement that is deaf artists, and become a movement. You see black people, they have a movement, a very strong artist movement, a strong culture. They're really mobile



as a group. But, artists with disabilities too, are becoming very strong and involved in mobilisation. Women, feminists, feminist art groups. Do you think now it is time for deaf artists to become a movement?

Irene Holub: I have to second that Jodee, I've been involved in the arts community for a number of years. And I agree, there has been a shift. Of course there has always been deaf art, but where has it been? It's been hidden away in the deaf community. The mainstream community doesn't know we exist. But now, we're saying that emergence happen. And you're right, the community is growing. So, I think over the last 10 years, we're seeing a large shift, yeah, I agree with you Jodee.

Jodee Munde: Anybody else?

Luke King: Yeah, slowly, very, very slowly. I think if we go back to teaching children to appreciate visual arts and language, that's an open door. Museum education provided in sign language, seeing that experience as children and opening that art world is really important too, that's part of the link.

Jessica Moody: Yeah, I do think it's slow, but I think some of that reason is 'cause we're still paving the way for that movement, we're clawing our way through, and we're making those pathways open for other people to access.

Anna Seymour: Yeah, slowly, it's a very, very slow process. It's happening. But I remember, I was talking with Jodee, I think maybe five years ago, Jodee said, "We are pushing and pulling" the movement both ways." "We are pushing things to happen." "and pulling other people along with us, "come on, join this movement."

Jodee Mundy: Did I say that? That's pretty cool, I forgot about that. I must've been drunk.

Anna Seymour: Yeah, yeah, I think you were.

Jodee Mundy: Any other comments on that?

Walter Kadiki: I agree with what people have said, it is quite a slow process. I wish it would hurry up, but, unfortunately, the widespread knowledge is not out there. We have to advocate and make people aware of the art that we have. And now technology that we didn't have before will enable that growth, perhaps. Technology takes people's time though, too. People are immersed in that and not aware in the process of engaging in the real world and furthering art that way.

Anna Seymour: If I can add another comment to that. How do I put this? The deaf arts community, it's a microcosm. Within the deaf community we see sports, people love their sports. They look at dance and they think, "Well, that's not part of our community." But, it is. So, I think the attitude from within our own community needs to change and those things don't happen overnight.

Jodee Mundy: That is a great example. The deaf community has a really strong sports focus. World Deaf Games, for example, the Australian Deaf Games, art is a very small part. And it maybe takes 10 or 15 years for arts to come to the forefront. We're training artists, and 15 years in the future this is the emergence of this panel. And I'd like to, if all of us have worked on this for 15 years, I don't know maths very well, but that's over 100 years' worth of experience sitting on this stage. And the emergence of culture is there. And culture takes time to grow. It's like we have to water a very precious plant. And that leads to my next



question, how is each of your works influenced by deaf art, deaf culture in Australia? So how do you influence that by your work? What is your art in question? What are you asking in your artwork? What sorts of questions are you asking in relation to deaf culture?

Jessica Moody: Well, for me, I am a theatre maker, and I think we have space in the arts community, without interpreters, sorry, interpreters. But, it'd be lovely to have a world where we didn't need them. And we could be completely integrated. We could make art in our preferred language. See deaf artists onstage, and to be visible, and get sign language out there. As well as audiences members as well. For them to be able to tell their stories, 'cause it's about time that we hear those stories.

Anna Seymour: Sorry, were you wanting to go first, Elvin? As deaf people what can we bring, what can we teach? Throughout time, comments have been made, and I've seen these happen repeatedly, it's good for deaf artists to work with hearing professionals, because the deaf can learn from those hearing people. But hang on a second, we can teach hearing people as well, they have a lot to learn from us. So, I would like to encourage that within art. Raise the expectations in the deaf community. I think for myself, oh, I can't, I can't. No, that's not true. I don't want people to think that, we raise the bar.

Elvin Lam: Definitely, I agree with you Anna. I think we really need to stand up. We need to be visible whether that be on TV, or in a newspaper, and get the hearing community to really understand that, hey, we're out there. And we can do anything, we can do anything in the arts arena. And we want people to get that understanding that we're not below anybody else, that were equal and we can do everything that anybody else can. I believe that once that happens then we'll see a rise in the deaf arts community.

Irene Holub: One dream that I have from Flow Festival was that deaf people would set up a platform for future deaf artists, producers, makers, but also inclusive of hearing community and expose them to deaf art and what's out there. And with the hope that the festival would become a mainstream festival in the future.

Walter Kadiki: Yes, in addition to that we have to respect our language. It's an immersive language and it's something that we're proud of. I involve that in my art, and it's something that's so beautiful and unique. And that's a dream that I want to see happen more and more.

Jodee Mundy: Quickly, I just want to go through the panel in terms of what do you envisage for the future, what's next?

Elvin Lam: I wanna set up a deaf sign ballet class. Doesn't matter if hearing or deaf people are in the class, classes and workshops. And having my own ballet performance in the future, that's what I would like.

Anna Seymour: Well, of course I'm going to be continuing to make work, whether that be dance, theatre performance. And I want to produce my skills as being a producer.

Jessica Moody: Same. Same.

Jodee Mundy: Expand on that?

Jessica Moody: Um... I would like to travel the world and see how other deaf theatre makers do their work. And how they go about achieving those successes, and the process involved in that.



Luke King: Well, I suppose there's plenty. I would like to get a million dollars, I suppose. But no, that's not what I mean. More collaboration, more acceptance, more respect, and encourage that art community to grow. None of that tall poppy syndrome, you know? Cutting the heads off those that have kind of risen above us. I want people to learn how to express themselves and how to interpret their work. As well as workshops, I want to see them grow in the future as well.

Irene Holub: I would like to still be making art, and hopefully encourage and train future producers of the Flow Festival, and integrated festivals.

Walter Kadiki: Well, I suppose I will second what's been said by the panel. But, number one for me, my bucket list, is to see children in the deaf community, and pass on that gift to them, to get them signing, and feel proud, and have them feel proud of their language. So hopefully they can be the next ones to be the next deaf Tennyson's.

Jodee Mundy: Wow, the panel is just incredible, so beautiful, their responses. We have time for audience questions, but only a few. So who is desperately yearning to ask a question? Anyone? You, are you deaf or hearing?

Audience Member One: I'm hearing.

Jodee Mundy: Hearing, okay, so we'll grab the microphone for you, and someone will come up and sign your question.

Audience Member One: Sure, I'm just looking for the person who's signing. Yep. I was wondering how come Auslan is not taught as a second language throughout schools?

Jodee Mundy: Well, would someone like to respond to that? Irene?

Irene Holub: Yes, well, I suppose it comes back time and time again to the emotional response that hearing people have, hearing professionals, whether that be parents. As a child they don't have rights, we're seeing that out there. And we're seeing these people grow up to become adults being deprived of their rights to language. So, that's where the deaf community needs to work more closely and collaboratively with the hearing community.

Jodee Mundy: There's a lot of information on the internet for that. So you can have a look about that information there's a plethora. Are there any questions related to deaf artists and deaf arts? Are you hearing or deaf? Deaf? Do you mind... are you hearing?

Audience Member Two: It's very, very exciting to hear about, and as much as I can to watch the presentations and understand the diversity and strength of artistic practise here. I'm an artist myself, but also work in the kind of artistic curatorial space with some of the people who are here on the stage. But my day job, to support my own art is with Asialink Arts. And I'm constantly coming across opportunities. And I would love to find ways to extend those opportunities to the deaf artists here, and others within the community. But while you've been talking, I am low vision, so it is harder for me to say all the signs. And so, I've been trying to Google some of the people on the panel. And actually, it's not that easy to find specific information about you all. So one of the things I would love to know is, I've got specific notes about some of you, opportunities that I can think of, how will I connect with or find out more about your practises?



Jodee Mundy: So, do the panel members here have a website?

Anna Seymour: Yes, I have a website. www.AnnaSeymour.com, you can find me on there.

Irene Holub: And the same goes for me. Mine is IreneHolub.com.

Walter Kadiki: With myself I don't have that. But if you Google my name, Walter Kadiki, there'll be information about me.

Elvin Lam: I have a Facebook page, no website, but you can link to me through my Facebook page.

Anna Seymour: Is it just your name?

Elvin Lam: No, it's DeafDancerJourney.

Jodee Mundy: So, perhaps we can have a bit of a chat after the presentation if you like? Yeah, we can get together and give some contact information. Asialink is such an amazing programme. They have a residency, actually. So, you can have a look throughout. So there's travel throughout Asia, and have a look and live there for say three months, and make art with amazing people. It's such a great opportunity. Thank you for sharing. So, yes, you do have to apply and it is quite competitive, but yes, thank you for coming. All right, we might have time for one more question. Ooh, there's a number of hands up here. Can I get you there? Yes, if you'd like to come up to the front to sign your question. If you're able to stand over here, please, that would be great.

Audience Member Three: Hi everybody, my name is Malachi. And I'm really keen to be an actor. I go to high school, I'm in year nine at the moment. And I would love to become an actor, but of course I don't know how to achieve that. So that's one of my questions. I do face a number of barriers, and would love to understand more about how I can overcome these. So I wanna know how I can achieve my dreams. Any advice on that?

Jodee Mundy: Fantastic.

Jessica Moody: You start.

Anna Seymour: No, you.

Jessica Moody: Oh, come on, acting's your gig, come on.

Anna Seymour: All right, all right. So, start small. What I mean by that is, well, good advice, someone told me a long time ago, is just, just show up, just arrive, turn up at a show, or a workshop, or a class. Make sure that there's interpreters at that the class for you, and see what workshops you're interested in. Book an interpreter to go, and you start small, and then it progresses from there. When you finish school you could apply to go to VCA in their theatre course, or another university that has a theatre course, or do short courses. At NIDA, they have a short course for acting, so you could do that.



Jessica Moody: Yeah, I think there's plenty of opportunities out there and it's important to say "Yes." Get involved in productions. If you've got friends, perhaps, that want to do some rehearsals at home, just do it. Read scripts, watch movies, find out what you like. What's your type of art? What really fills you up? And you can always ask other people as well, and Deaifferent Theatre is always here as a support also.

Jodee Mundy: I think you guys are the perfect match, you two, contact, regarding theatre.

Luke King: Some other advice I would say is if somebody says "No," ignore them, persevere, keep going.

Jodee Mundy: Yes, absolutely, that's fantastic advice. One more question. Do you sign? Yep, come.

Audience Member Four: Okay, I've got a question as to how hearing people can be allies to the deaf community? Not having tokenism, making sure that we provide the right amount of support and the right collaboration?

Jodee Mundy: Good question. Somebody like to respond?

Luke King: I guess I've got a lot to say on that. May I? Well, I can talk from my experience and my experience working with Next Wave. I suppose, initially I was a little bit suspicious. But then I realised most of the people that worked there, they asked me, what works best for me? And that really made me feel comfortable for them to ask me. They were asking me what I needed, what it was that they could provide, and they worked hard to suit my needs. And I didn't see any semblance of tokenism there. So, collaboration really comes from listening and just sitting down and having a chat, being direct, and being curious, finding out where you stand or where you don't stand, and working on that journey together. Tokenism, I suppose is taking from a community without asking permission. And that's different, but I'm interested to hear what the rest of the panel has to say.

Jessica Moody: I think you need to be prepared to have those really difficult conversations. I've worked a long time with some people, you have to put it into words and allow the response. It's important to decide whether you want a future relationship working with those people or not.

Anna Seymour: Yeah, it all comes back to communications and conversations. Do your research, find out what the community and the culture is all about, and ask yourself, why do you want to work with that community, what's the driving force behind that? What's your motives, underlying?

Irene Holub: Yeah, one thing to add. From my prior experience with hearing artists or hearing organisations, sometimes they contact us and they say "Oh, I'd like to work with you," and I'm so excited by that." And I ask them straightaway, why? Why do you want to work with us? And they're like, "Oh, you're so interesting" and your sign language is amazing." And you can see that's a red light straight away. Would you like to work with us? Meaning, you have something to share, some collaboration, some interest that you're willing to share, or you just wanna work with deaf people?

Jodee Mundy: Fantastic, okay, so, we are running out of time now, but I know that the people here, many of us artists, whether they're deaf, hearing, can sign, and they love art, so who like to put their hand up, who fits into that category? Artists here, oh great, well we've got a big number.

Irene Holub: I'm gonna take fight of all of that. Did you put your hand up? Put your hand up.



Jodee Mundy: So, I would like to ask you and invite you all to please contact the Flow Festival. How can they get in touch with you Irene?

Irene Holub: They can email flowfestivalaustralia@gmail.com, that's it. And that's how we can connect, okay? But I'll put out on Facebook and connect with Instagram as well about August the 10th, that evening.

Jodee Mundy: Anna have the Fringe applications closed now?

Anna Seymour: Yes, they have.

Jodee Mundy: And what about next year? So, I suppose I'd encourage you to get in touch for the next year's Fringe Festival, that's another option. Any other deaf theatre events going on out there? I suppose I want everybody to be curious, if people like acting then they can come and get in touch with our panel members here.

Jessica Moody: We have a project up and coming for next year, but it's not a theatre show, it's something a little bit different, so watch this space.

Jodee Mundy: Great, well, keep an eye out, you never know, there's opportunities all around the corner. What about ballet, Elvin?

Elvin Lam: I will have, for an example, a signed ballet workshop soon and next year in Midsumma, hopefully we'll have a ballet show.

Jodee Mundy: Anna anything to add from you?

Anna Seymour: I forgot to mention in my presentation about The Delta Project, we actually received funding for a creative development which will be taking place in November. So, at the moment, well, I'm the new artistic director of Delta Project and I want this project to be really deaf lead. Involve signing, I mean, it doesn't matter if there's hearing people involved, but I want it to be a part of the deaf community. So, if anyone's interested in working with The Delta Project, we do have a website that is under development, or any admin, or anything like that. Of course I do want to do less admin, I must say. But, if anyone would like to volunteer to help doing that, then do let me know.

Walter Kadiki: For those people who, storytellers, or poets, please contact me because I'd love to set up a performance and have your involvement.

Jodee Mundy: Luke?

Luke King: I think for me...

Jodee Mundy: Luke? Well, he's got some solo artists.

Luke King: Instagram, follow me on that.

Jodee Mundy: What's your Instagram handle?



Irene Holub: It's the same as for me.

Luke King: Look, my name.

Jodee Mundy: Okay, so, welcome to the movement, and we're all welcome to join the movement. We're seeing it gain momentum and get some traction. So thanks very much. So, time's really gotten away from us, and it is time to close out the panel, but I want to say a massive thanks to Art Centre Melbourne, thank you. A big thank you to The Kiln Programme as well for inviting us to take part. A big thank you to Natasha as well, Natasha and Phillip. And as well as Holly Wollard. So thank you very much, they're an amazing team. They've been helping out on the tech side of things, as well as the videography. I want to say a big thank you as well to our audio descriptions, Description Victoria, and the captioning as well that's been happening behind us at The Caption Studio. Big thanks to Auslan Stage Left for our interpreters here at the front, we've got Dave and Linda. So, they've been talking away for two hours, so, hats off to them. Of course I want to thank our amazing panel, thank you very much. And thank you, the audience for coming and sharing time with us today. If you would like to come and have a drink with us after, a bit of a chat, a bit of networking then, we'll kind of be around a bit. We'll be hanging out. We're going to actually be going to the bar next door, just right near the Art Centre. So, once you go to the top onto Swanson Street, you'll see there at the front door. It's called The Barre, but it's spelled B-A-R-R-E, so you'll see that right near the Arts Centre, and it's just next door. So, thank you everybody, enjoy your evening, try and keep as warm as you can, thanks very much.