

# New Light

## 2023 Programme



Art  
Gallery  
NSW

An Art Gallery of  
New South Wales  
touring exhibition

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# A walking tour of 8 short 'n' sharp new dance works by 8 NT Choreographers

Archie 100 - A Century of the Archibald Prize is an Art Gallery of New South Wales national touring exhibition showcasing portraits from a century of the Archibald Prize, Australia's most prestigious arts award. In an exciting partnership with MAGNT, Tracks presents New Light, a choreographic response to 100 years of Australian portraiture.

New Light is a bold and collaborative partnership between Tracks Dance Company and the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory and enlivens both inside and outside spaces in and around the gallery precinct. Eight Northern Territory choreographers have created eight short works in response to the Archies 100 exhibition. They come from diverse ages, training, and cultural backgrounds, from Bharata Natyam Indian classical, contemporary, hip-hop, and Indigenous Australian styles. The dances draw on particular paintings or the overarching conceptual themes of the Archies.

The choreographers, although creating individually, were curated into a multi-venue dance exhibition. Starting points varied: the actual portraits, the Archies themes, and the sites of performance themselves. As each choreographer is performing in their own work, there is an added layer of the Self Portrait. All the works are site responsive and the audience moves from place to place, much like travelling through an exhibition.

## Site 1

# David McMicken

**Title:** It Always Rains In April.

**Archie 100 Theme:** How it all began

**Music:** April Showers - 1921 version by Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra

1921, the first Archibald Prize: the first female parliamentarian (Edith Cowan), Australia's Population was 5.44 Million, and Those April Showers, written in 1920, was a number one song. From the theme, 'How It All Began', I find myself in a position where I look a bit like the early portrait of Jules François Archibald painted by Florence Rodway in 1921. Exhibited in 1921 it also marked Archibald's death. I was also drawn to the self-portrait by George Lambert, representing himself as self-assured and peacockish. Combining these two opposing personalities, I became interested in how multiplicities of personalities often lie behind a portrait. I also drew on how I began in the Northern Territory revisiting some early choreography from when I was 30. My title alludes to the late wet season rain we always get in late April, when Territorians love going camping at Easter, the speargrass is browning off, and knock 'em downs open up the country, and the Dry Season marks another beginning.



*"I became interested in how multiplicities of personalities often lie behind a portrait."*



*"The journey to greatness  
is travelled alone."*



## Site 2

# Gary Lang

**Title:** Loneliness

**Archie 100 Theme:** Self-Portrait

**Music:** Nocturne in C Sharp Minor by Frédéric Chopin (Olafur Arnalds and Alice Sara Ott)

Loneliness is a solo dance work performed by Gary Lang. Portraits can have the effect of feeling so cold and lonely. What is truly caught in the subject's eyes? The journey to greatness is travelled alone. Even if there has been the support and love of family it can still be a lonely experience.



## Site 3

# Venaska Cheliah

**Title:** AAA

**Archie 100 Themes:** How It All Began, Intimacy of Familiarity, War and Its Aftermath.

**Music:** Komang Rosie Clynes

I started with Nora Heysen's Robert H Black, MD as a visual inspiration and then went off themes and colours. Komang is a Balinese-Australian singer, music producer and storyteller based on Wurundjeri Country (Melbourne), whose groove-based production with Indonesian sonic influences help her create vibrant electronic R&B described as 'neo-soul with Balinese spirit'. Her music weaves stories of kinship and mysticism with lush dreamscapes, and in the last year has seen her play Boiler Room Festival (Bali), NGV Friday Nights (Naarm/Melbourne) and We Out Here (UK).

Mixing (or Mix Engineer) - Robert P. Downie





*"I love the very early emergence of self-portraiture as a tool of empowerment and reclamation of the female identity and form"*



## Site 4

# Kate Mornane

**Title:** Unrest

**Themes:** Recasting the Gaze, Portrait of an Artist, and Self-portraiture

**Sound:** Interview with Dorothy Thornhill and Lemniscate laurel by Aphir

**Creative eye and the why:** Jenelle Saunders

**Video:** Kate Mornane

**Video effects:** Dan Hartney and AI

**Image:** Kindly reproduced with permission of Matilda Quera, Estate of Dorothy Thornhill

A thank you to the women who paved the way and to the conservation that continues. My work mashes together a whole lot of inspirations around representation and equality. I was delighted by the female artists in the 1920s and 1930s. The bravery in breaking traditions, defining and supporting themselves, embracing early modernism with brighter colours and thicker more textural layers. I was drawn to the sitters' hands, reflecting the ease or tension they may have felt, posed and deeply observed by their artist. Outside of the Archies, I love the very early emergence of self-portraiture as a tool of empowerment and reclamation of the female identity and form. A personal side is a belief in body positivity. A contrast to the age of the selfie as self-portraiture and the tools that homogenise and distort further a worn-out vision of the ideal female form. Overlying this a response to a conversation with Australian artist, Dorothy Thornhill and her subversive work *Diana Resting* (1932). Dorothy exhibited in the Wynne prize for landscape and is the subject of Archibald portraits in 1940 and 1944.



## Site 5


# Jess Devereux

**Title:** Dancers by Dancer, Calm Smooth Waters

**Archie 100 Theme:** Artist by Artist

**Music:** Forgiven, Kris Keogh

I was drawn to the idea that a portrait of an artist painted by an artist affirms artistic friendship and camaraderie. In the Archie exhibition, the paintings in this group tend to have more than one subject in the frame and the artists' statements hold an admiration and deep respect for the sitters. Translating that feeling into my approach to making and performing this work, I have combined memories of three artists: people I have met in my own life, and have attempted to capture their movement qualities, mood and their mystery. A moving portrait of Kelly Beneforti, Trevor Patrick and Kino McHugh. To me there is some magic in embodying and moving like fellow creative practitioners, to interpret their dance into a live portrait that celebrates multiplicity.



*"I have combined memories of three artists: people I have met in my own life, and have attempted to capture their movement qualities, mood and their mystery"*



## Site 6

# Steph Spillett

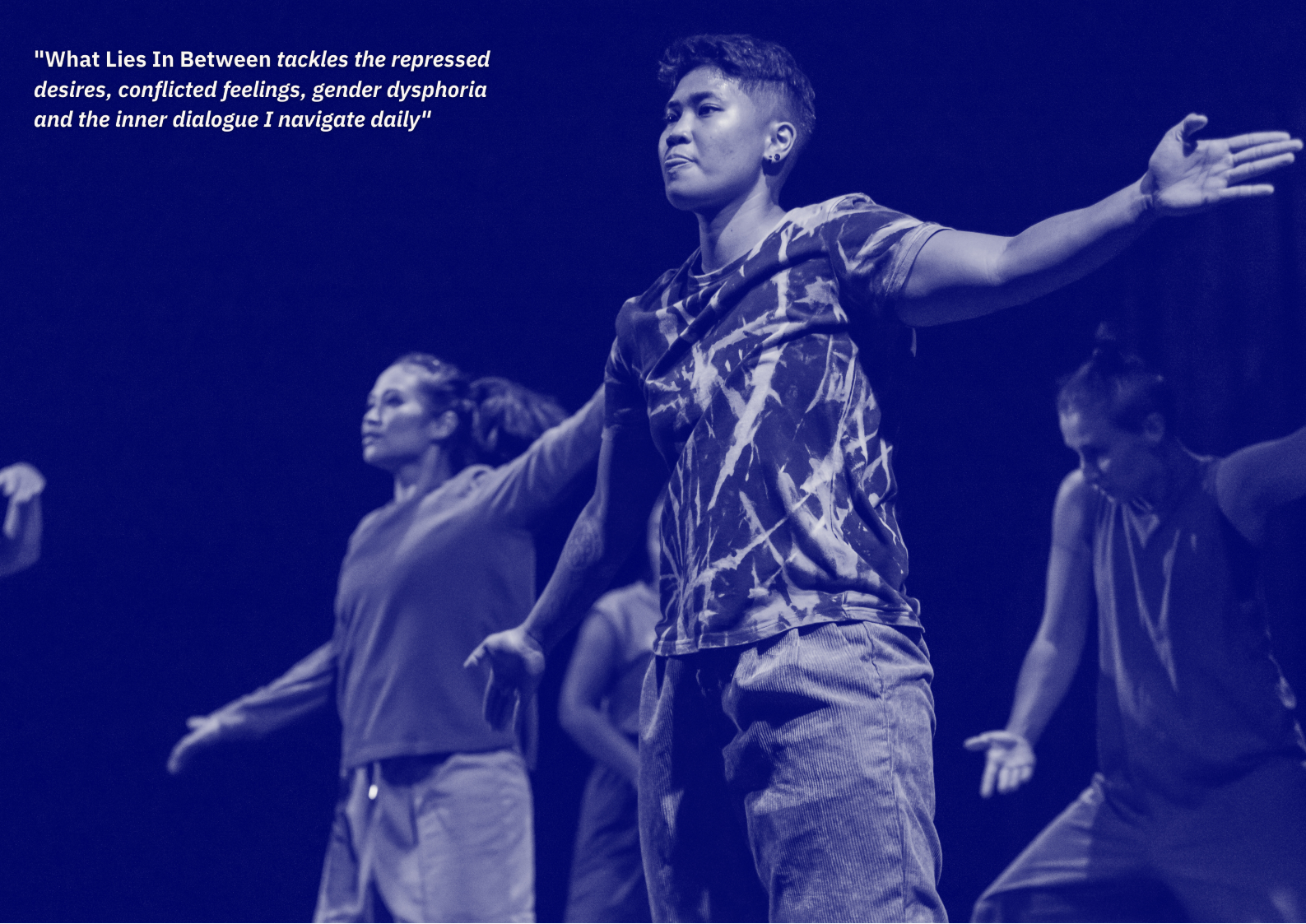
**Title:** What Lies In Between

**Archie 100 Theme:** What Lies Beneath

**Music:** No Way Out - mzet, narcotics, 7J

Drawing inspiration from the Dora Toovey, Archibald Prize 1945 'Mr and Mrs Horace Keats in the 'Christopher Brennan Cycle'- the Archibald 100 theme 'What Lies Beneath'. Toovey was determined to study portraiture when she saw it was possible for a woman to win. Utilising the poem that Barbara Russell and her husband last performed together 'I am Shut out of Mine Own Heart' and dancing near the boat that my grandfather was involved in 'Hati Marege' (Heart of Northern Australia) as choreographic tools. In my dive of self-reflection, healing and discovery - this statement made me think of all the strong, ambitious and amazing women in my life. But it also unravelled the ongoing tug-of-war of who I am and not practising self-love. *What Lies In Between* tackles the repressed desires, conflicted feelings, gender dysphoria and the inner dialogue I navigate daily. The portrayal of who I am wanting to be and what I suppress for the comfortability of others.

**"What Lies In Between *tackles the repressed desires, conflicted feelings, gender dysphoria and the inner dialogue I navigate daily*"**







## Site 7

# Kelly Beneforti

**Choreographer:** Jess Devereux with Kelly Beneforti

**Title:** Intertwine

**Archie 100 Theme:** The Intimacy of Familiarity

**Music:** James Mangohig

**Videographer:** Steven Hoare

A film portrait of dance artist Kelly Beneforti. Playing with proximity, pervading senses and persistence, the intimacy of a single body performing against a vast space of human construction harnesses the forces of the natural world, fuelling a quiet ferocity, and leaving imperceptible traces of constant change and cyclical occurrences.



## Site 8

# Rachael Wallis

**Choreographer:** Rachael Wallis with Banula Marika

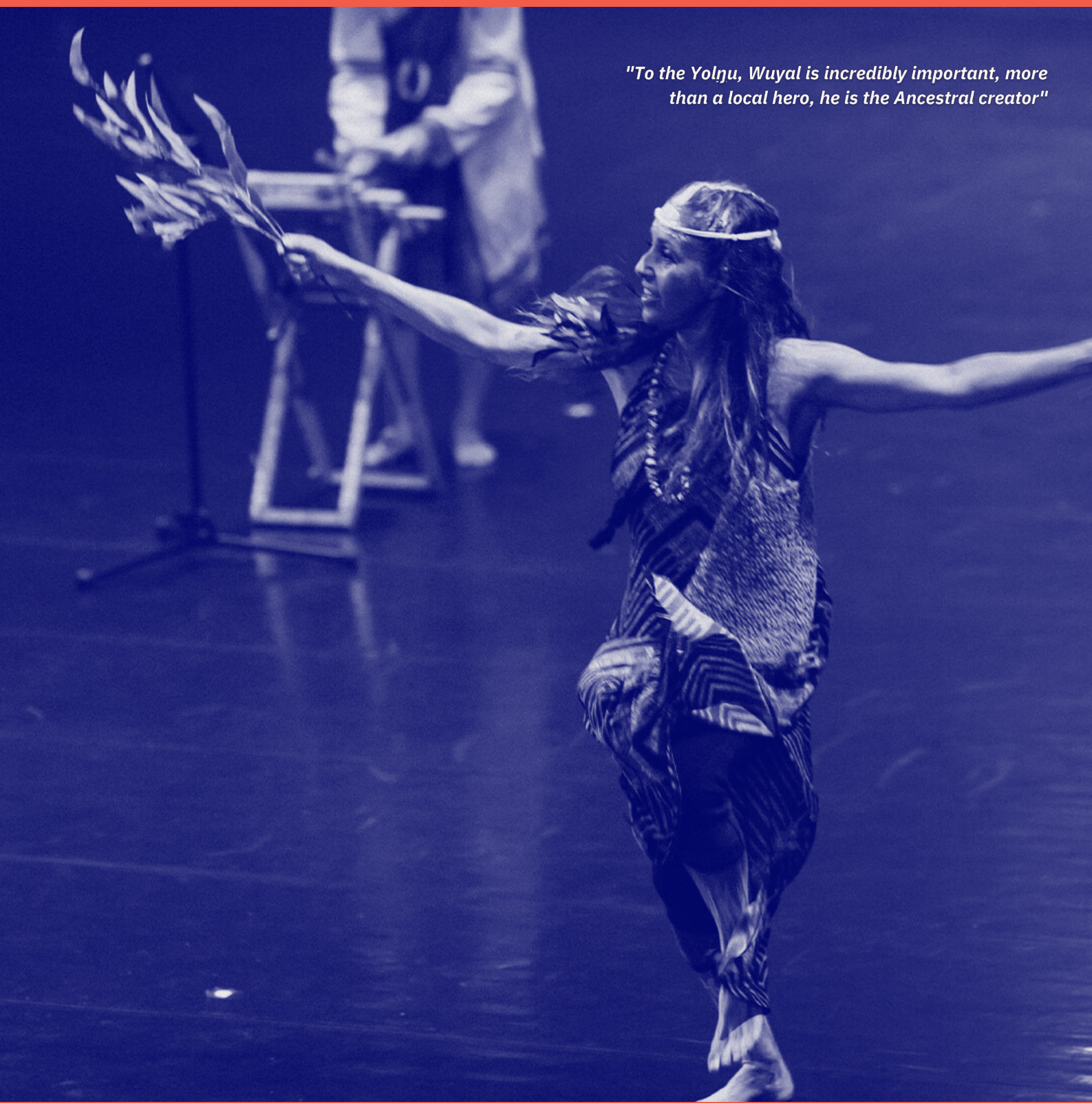
**Title:** Wuyal

**Archie 100 Theme:** Local Heroes

**Music:** Songs from Wuyal - (Sugarbag Man) song cycle - Rirratjingu Clan. Vocals and Bilma - Banula Marika. Yidaki Player - Malngay Kevin Yunupingu. Sound

**Engineering:** Arian Pearson

*"To the Yolngu, Wuyal is incredibly important, more than a local hero, he is the Ancestral creator"*





Wuyal is the Ancestral creator, spirit-like, he carries many Sacred Dilly bags (bandak) to carry sugarbag (guku), sacred stone axe (djalpa), he wears a sacred headband, and a sacred armband. He has a kangaroo bone in his nose. Ear like a frilled neck lizard. He carries spears with lots of different names, and feathers. He has everything, paint, ochre. He travels around and names everything, names all the beaches. He throws the spear to get oysters.

To the Yolngu, Wuyal is incredibly important, more than a local hero, he is the Ancestral creator. And yet away from his community, not many Australians know of this important ancestral being.



**Banula Marika will be performing along  
with Rachael Wallis in "Wayul"**

# Credits

**New Light Choreographic Curators:**

Jess Devereux and David McMicken

**Choreographers (in order of show):**

David McMicken, Gary Lang, Venaska Cheliah, Kate Mornane, Jess Devereux, Steph Spillett, Kelly Beneforti, Rachael Wallis and Banula Marika

**Production Manager:**

Duane Preston

**Technicians:**

Miki Ensbey, Shaun Trainor

**Marketing and Administration:**

Debbie Jane Micairan

**Creative Producer:**

Britt Guy

**Front of House Volunteers:**

Mandy Trueman, Matheesha Katuwawala, Helen De Silva, Nikki Charlesworth-Canning, Lucy Owen, Darryl Butler, Peter Stretton, Amanda Denton

**Head Ushers:**

David Taylor, Maari Gray, Bryn Wackett

# Tracks 2023

**Artistic Director:**

David McMicken

**Associate Artistic Director:**

Jess Devereux

**Creative Producer:**

Britt Guy

**Production Manager:**

Duane Preston

**Dance Animators:**

Kelly Beneforti and Steph Spillett

**Administrator:**

Debbie Jane Micairan

**Bookkeeper:**

It Figures

**Auditors:**

Brian Tucker Audit

**Committee Members****Chairperson:**

Max Dewa Stretton

**Treasurer:**

Glenn Bernardin

**Ordinary Members:**

David Taylor, Ken Conway, Lachlan Peattie, Venaska Cheliah, Rachael Wallis, Andrea Wicking, Anna Lindsay

**Ex-Officio:**

David McMicken, Tim Newth

**Public Fund Trustees:**

Maari Gray and Michael Grant

# Thank You

**MAGNT Staff** especially Alison Copley,  
Louise Partos, Fabiola Martinez-Hinojosa,  
Wendy Wood, Bryony Nainby, Kate Fennell

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