

Regional Arts Fund

Community Grant

Case study:

DIRt#4



Project Summary

DIRt (Dance In Regional disaster zones) develops a dance that responds to environmental issues of significance to the local community, fostering sustainable arts practice by regional performance artists living in far East Gippsland.

DIRt #4 was a three-week project with East Gippsland professional dancer/choreographer Rosalind Crisp and regional NSW multi-media artist Vic McEwan working in the Swift's Creek community and on nearby Mt. Delusion, where widespread logging is converting mixed-aged native forests into vast agricultural mono-crops. The artists will develop dance, video, photo and sound recording materials for a performance on site and two installations at East Gippsland Art Gallery.

Artist Benefits

One significant benefit of DIRt #4 was the high level of artistic excellence achieved by the artists. Their practices have been strengthened and broadened by the intensive research period and expanded through sharing with local audiences. The supported time to develop their work has given the artists a strong base for the ongoing development of the DIRt project and will be highly beneficial to the long-term viability of their artistic careers in the region. The benefits of DIRt #4 will also flow on into the artists' performances and exchanges with other communities in Victoria, nationally and internationally.

Public Outcome

Four dance performance installations were given and one short video was made. These performances combined dance, spoken word, film and sound materials developed by Rosalind Crisp and Vic McEwan on Mt Delusion. Rosalind and Vic wove a journey for the audience between the different materials, shifting lightly between conversational and performative modes. Audiences were extremely appreciative and many expressed how touched they were by the poetry and the locally relevant 'message' of the work.

The performance installation went on to be performed at Critical Path in Sydney, and then Artlands in Bendigo in 2018. It has also been invited to other venues in East Gippsland (Orbost Exhibition Centre), in Melbourne (Dance Massive festival) and in Ireland (Dance Limerick).

Community Benefits

The performances gave the community access to free, high quality dance and video art from professional regional artists. Discussions around the performances gave the community an intimate understanding of the artists' processes. That Rosalind Crisp is a locally born and raised dancer having gone on to a significant international career, was very affirming and empowering for other local artists and for the community as a whole. There was a palpable sense of decreased social isolation felt by other local artists. DIRt #4 has given an injection of hope to the local artistic community particularly those working for low or no pay to develop arts in the region. It has given inspiration to other local artists to continue their work, which is not easy, far from the cultural hubs of the big cities. It has given an increased sense of well-being to the community that attended, with a ripple on effect to friends, family, colleagues. All this means greater social cohesion and increased capacity to support each other.

The project also increased understanding of the issues of local deforestation and of ways to deal with this crisis artistically.



Australian Government
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Project Start Date	06/08/2018
Project End Date	28/08/2018
Project Location	Swift's Creek, Mt. Delusion and Bairnsdale
Federal Electorate	Gippsland
No. Audience	350
No. Participants	3
Project Beneficiary	Artists and arts workers
Main Art Form	Dance
No. Artists Paid	3
No. Artists Unpaid	0
No. Arts Worker Paid	0
No. Arts Worker Unpaid	0

Image: Mt Delusion logged coupe winter 2018
Photographer: Vic McEwan