

First Nations Creatives commence journey towards future arts leaders and community role models

An architecture student who dreams of creating spaces that reflect her cultural values and connection to country, an LGBTIQA+ artist whose art is deeply informed by its lived experience, a makeup artist working on building a business to transform young lives through makeup artistry and a duo of budding film industry stars are shaking up our artistic landscape after setting off on an inspirational 18-month professional development journey.

The five creatives – Jasmine Kerdel, Bedlam Rigney, Joshua Barbo, Keith Gilbey-Warrior and Zoe Kopp – are the inaugural class in Carclew’s exciting new Emerging First Nations Creatives (EFNC) program and kicked off the program this past weekend with an On-Country residency on Ramindjeri Country on the Fleurieu Peninsula.

Following a Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony by Elder and environmental activist, Uncle Moogy, the cohort spent time among other Blak artists and creatives to sample a taste of what lies ahead, bond and take part in creative and cultural activities together.

Carclew, home of youth arts and creativity, is South Australia’s largest multi-art form and cultural not-for-profit organisation for children and young people and presents the unique EFNC program in partnership with Arts South Australia and Creative Australia.

In leading the residency with co-facilitator multi-disciplinary artist James Cubillo (Larrakia), Carclew’s manager of First Nations Programs, Lilla Berry (Yankunytjatjarra), stressed the importance of supporting the next generation of First Nations creative leaders.

“It was quite serendipitous that the program has launched on the eve of Reconciliation Week. The 2024 theme ‘Now More Than Ever’ speaks to Carclew’s dedication to supporting and working with community to ensure the strength of the First Nations Arts and Culture sector in the future, continuing our long history of creating programs by and with First Nations artist. There is a huge demand for First Nations creatives across the sector, and this program aims to meet those demands by sustainably supporting the next generation of cultural creative leaders.” she said.

Carclew board member, proud Wirangu, Kokatha and Larrakia woman based on Peramangk country in the Adelaide Hills and prominent voice in the First Nations film space, Nara Wilson, added that the EFNC program highlights Carclew’s ongoing pledge to support the creative cultural leaders of tomorrow by creating pathways for emerging First Nations artists.

“First Nations artists are some of the leading contemporary Australian artists today and this program is timely and deeply connected to the national Cultural Policy Revive’s pillar of First Nations First and Carclew’s guiding principle of First Nations respect.

“I know we all look forward to following the creatives’ journey over the next 18 months and seeing their talents further blossom as they begin to emerge as future arts leaders and role models for their communities,” she added.

Jasmine Kerdel (Mirning, Wirangu, and Kokotha) has always expressed herself through art, be it sketching and painting or creating miniature house models from scrap materials. She hopes her experience on the course will deepen her art as an expression of her culture and identity, a manifestation that led her to study architecture and design buildings – such as an Aboriginal arts centre in Ceduna – that reflect her cultural values and connection to country.

Bedlam Rigney (Karna and Ngarrindjeri), in turn, has been singing ever since it could talk and believes the program offers a wonderful opportunity to deepen the honesty of its art. As a mentally ill, disabled and queer person whose art is informed by its lived experience, it hopes the experience will allow it to be someone it could have looked up to when it was younger and propel it to the forefront of making gigs more accessible and art easier to understand for those who feel left out of the scene.

Creative Arts Screen graduate from Flinders University, Joshua Barbo (Whadjuk Noongar) is excited at the opportunity to further expand his skills set and expertise on the program, having already participated in Channel 44's Indigenous Volunteer Program, where he gained hands-on experience as a camera operator and sound assistant. More recently, he has worked on two short films funded by the South Australian Film Corporation (SAFC), where he honed his skills in location sound recording.

Keith Gilbey-Warrior (Kokatha, Narungga, Alywarre, Ngarrinjderi) is another emerging filmmaker and UniSA Media Arts graduate with a strong and keen interest in fictional filmmaking and storytelling. In his short career thus far, he has worked in post-production at the ABC while also co-producing and co-directing the television series, Mob Talks. He aims to use the EFNC experience to strengthen his ability to create not just narratives that overtly tell a story but new and complex concepts that leave a lasting impression.

Finally, Zoe Kopp (Arrente, Anangu Pitjantjatjarra Yankunyatjarra) is the holder of a diploma of Screen and Media (Specialist Makeup) and has worked on Yirramboi Festival and Short Films with TAFE SA students. She aims to establish a successful makeup artistry business and believes the EFNC program will help her realise her dream of being a role model for the younger mob within her community who wish to pursue their own passions and interests in the arts field.

Following the initial development period, the five creatives will be placed at various arts organisations that align with their skills and interest, where they will further their firsthand experience in the creative industries.

The Emerging First Nations Creatives program is open to First Nations people of all backgrounds across SA who are aged between 18 and 30 and are interested in a creative career. Further information on the program can be found at carclew.com.au/programs/emerging-first-nations-creatives.

Image credit: James Cubillo

For further information and interviews:

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