



SEQUINS, SONG AND SUBSTANCE: MELT FESTIVAL SET TO SPARKLE AT BRISBANE POWERHOUSE IN 2019

Arm the confetti cannon and break out the Bedazzler, **MELT: Festival of Queer Arts and Culture** has raised the curtain on another program of spectacular events, dazzling performances and provocative discussions.

The 10-day festival runs from 28 June to 7 July 2019 with a packed program designed to celebrate LGBTIQ+ arts and culture and promote visibility and inclusivity among the LGBTIQ+ community.

Close to 35 productions, exhibitions and events will inject both sparkle and substance into Brisbane Powerhouse when the premier arts organization presents *MELT* for its fifth year.

Guest Director **Emily Gilhome** said *MELT* would again roll out the rainbow carpet to welcome everyone, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, ability and artistic interest.

"We've worked really hard this year to produce a program that represents all segments of the LGBTIQ+ arts community," Ms Gilhome said.

"This year's festival also offers incredible diversity across its content so we're seeing outrageous cabaret, over-the-top comedy and a bigger and better *MELT Beauty Pageant* sitting alongside deeply introspective visual art exhibitions, though-provoking panels and talks, and powerful first-person pieces."

MELT's 2019 program shines the spotlight on talented local artists as well as national and international drawcards and features a mix of free and ticketed events across the 10 days.

Highlights include international cabaret superstar **Reuben Kaye** showcasing his signature blend of lavish storytelling and gilded song; Australian cabaret queen **Dolly Diamond** bringing classic TV game show *Bl*nkety Bl*inks* to the stage; and the *MELT Comedy Gala*, hosted by **Rhys Nicholson** and pairing queer comedy legends with emerging comedians for a night of non-stop laughs.

Killer Queens is guaranteed to blow your mind with five ferocious females embracing glam rock and immersing audiences in the music of Freddie Mercury while *Six Inches* pulls some of theatre's most beloved characters from the closet and through the musical gender-blender in a high voltage history lesson in drag from the creative team behind the BOY&GIRL series.

A collection of vastly different theatre pieces play out across Brisbane Powerhouse stages; from *Baby Bi Bi Bi*, a wickedly funny cabaret about being a bisexual woman; to *La Silhouette*, an immersive performance that brings to life Brisbane's queer history; and *Yank!*, a musical love story based on the real-life experiences of gay soldiers in World War II.

MELT again provides a platform to hear the voices of Brisbane's LGBTIQ+ community tell their unique stories across all mediums including *The Trailblazers – Elders Panel*; first-person piece, *My Trans Story*; improvisational work, *Trade*; and verbatim theatre production, *Letters I Never Sent*.

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Festival favourites returning in 2019 include the show stopping *MELT Beauty Pageant* – expanding to include heats and a final – *Tragic Trivia*, *Gayming*, *MELT With Us* opening night party and *The Bowery Haus* closing night costume soiree.

Brisbane Powerhouse Artistic Director **Kris Stewart** said *MELT* was an annual invitation to celebrate Brisbane's wonderfully diverse queer communities and its guest list was growing each year.

"Brisbane Powerhouse has been a home for the LGBTIQ+ community since we opened our doors, so it's been brilliant to watch *MELT* thrive, attracting more than 8,500 attendees in 2018," Mr Stewart said.

"*MELT*'s 2019 program is a celebration of love, pride, humour, humanity and rebellion but above all, it's one of acceptance and inclusivity."

MELT: Festival of Queer Arts and Culture is supported by Tourism and Events Queensland.

www.meltfestival.com.au

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About MELT Festival

Conceived in 2015 by Brisbane Powerhouse, *MELT: Festival of Queer Arts and Culture* is an annual celebration of LGBTIQ+ voices. Each year's program is unique and features a diverse mix of burlesque, theatre, cabaret, music, talks and visual arts; spotlighting local, national and international artists and performances. Audiences are drawn from the LGBTIQ+ community, their allies and performing arts patrons and continue to swell with the 2018 festival attracting 8500 attendees.

About Emily Gilhorne

Emily is a producer and director with an unwavering passion for bringing local artists to the fore of Brisbane's entertainment scene. Director and co-creator of the *BOY&GIRL* series (Brisbane Powerhouse & The Tivoli), now in its sixth year and nominated for a Pride Award in 2015, Emily created *Oscar Production Company* in 2007 as a hub for queer and local creatives, producing and directing working including the Queensland premiere of Broadway musicals *Spring Awakening* (2011) and *Next To Normal* (2012) at QPAC, as well as *[title of show]* at Brisbane Powerhouse (2010/2011) and *Noosa Long Weekend Festival* (2011). She also produced *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* at Roundhouse Theatre, awarded the 2008 Matilda for Best Musical, and *The Last Five Years* (2007) at the Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts. Most recently, Emily oversaw *CGEN* (2017/18), Queensland's largest youth performing arts event involving more than 1800 young artists and professionals, and produced *The Renegades* roving entertainment at the 2018 *Brisbane Festival Treasury* Brisbane Arcadia precinct as well as working across a number of other festivals including Queensland Cabaret festival, Sydney Cabaret Festival and MELT.

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