

MEDIA RELEASE

28 April 2020

New grants to strengthen art and culture careers in regional WA

Regional Arts WA is delivering more than \$225,000 directly to artists and arts workers in regional WA through the State Government's Regional Arts and Cultural Investment Program.

The Next Level Regional Grant program supports emerging artists and arts workers whilst the Regional Artist Fellowships are for those who are already established in the industry. Both grants are offered across a range of art forms, enabling creatives to develop their skills and deliver arts and cultural activities in their local communities.

Next Level Regional Grants will fund up to \$5,000 to support young emerging regional artists and arts workers between the ages of 18 – 26. It will inject a 12-month investment into each recipient's creative activity and professional development. Since 2017, Next Level has supported seven young emerging artists who have now firmly woven themselves into the fabric of the regional arts sector:

- Casey Thornton, visual artist and community engagement officer at Arts Narrogin (Wheatbelt)
- Cassie Turner, circus artist and trainer at Southern Edge Arts (Great Southern)
- Minna Hinton, Associate Producer at Euphorium Creative (Mid West)
- Mitchell Martin, Independent Musician (South West)
- Rita Bush, Professional Dancer (Great Southern)
- Ruby Liddelow, Artistic Director Trainee at Riptide Youth Theatre (Peel)
- Samara Ghosh, Visual Artist (Great Southern)

For established regional artists and arts workers, the **Regional Artist Fellowship** is a new initiative and will provide \$50,000 for a period of two years. The Fellowships will financially support the empowerment of individual artists and arts workers to support the development of their careers in their chosen professional artforms.

Regional Arts WA CEO Paul MacPhail says both programs will provide regional artists and arts workers with the opportunity to focus on a self-directed program that will build their capacity to develop and sustain a career in regional WA.

“Individual artists lie at the heart of all our work. These grants are recognition of the vital role individual artists and arts workers play in the sector and an acknowledgement of their value as one of the drivers of sustainable arts activity in the regions.

The Regional Artist Fellowship in particular is designed on the success of past individual recipients of the Regional Arts Legacy Grants. Artists such as Alex Mickle and Annette Carmichael were able to cement sustainable careers in the arts and contribute to communities across regional WA through self-directed creative development of arts practice and community involvement activities.”

Both programs are now open for application. Next Level Regional Grants will close 5pm Monday 8 June and Regional Artist Fellowships will close 5pm, Thursday 11 June 2020.

For more information visit www.regionalartswa.org.au/funding

The program is supported by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, with Royalties for Regions funding from the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.

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SUPPORT MATERIAL

Next Level Alumni

Cassandra (Cassy) Turner | Albany

In 2018, Albany based circus performer Cassy Turner attended the Circus Training Australia (CTA) circus coaching masterclasses and in 2019, took the opportunity to share the new skills and knowledge learnt with her team at Southern Edge Arts through a formal Trainers Coaching Workshop and informally through weekly hands-on circus classes. With the support of her mentor, Nel Simpson, Cassy has gained a greater understanding of the business side of her practice and has begun building her business as a solo performer. This guidance has given her greater access to work opportunities in her region as a circus performer.

Mitchell Martin | Bunbury

Bunbury-based singer songwriter Mitchell Martin recorded a 6 track EP with Bunbury Producer James Newhouse and Sundown Studios Elliot Smith. After launching the new tracks in May at The Sewing Room, Perth, Mitchell completed a solo tour to Bunbury, Margaret River and Denmark. Through the project Mitchell has continued to grow his network within the WA Music Industry and has been working with mentor and Bunbury producer Kelsie Miller to further develop his skills as a solo performer. Mitchell went on to perform at the 2020 Nannup Music Festival.

Minna Hilton | Geraldton

Emerging producer and arts worker Minna utilised this grant to explore the different aspects of arts management and build her capacity to deliver projects through mentorships, group and one-on-one training, shadowing producers, producing and attending events that provide valuable networking opportunities. In 2019, Minna took on the role as a full-time Producer at Euphorium Creative in Geraldton and continues to make a valuable contribution to the delivery of arts projects in the region.

"I have been able to upskill myself which has led to me be able to lead more projects with Euphorium. I also know that this has set me up well which means I will be able to continue working in the industry." Minna Hilton

Casey Thornton | Narrogin

Through an intensive period of creative development emerging visual artist Casey Thornton created a body of 28 oil paintings and held her first solo exhibition at NEXUS Narrogin in May 2019, with support and guidance from mentor Karen Keeley. Casey photographed and framed all paintings herself; and installed the exhibition to which more than 400 people visited. During exhibition development Casey developed strong partnerships and networks through Arts Narrogin and Southern Forest Arts (Creative Grid). Having a professionally documented body of work on hand, has equipped Casey with the knowledge and confidence to apply for future opportunities.

Rita Bush | Albany

Emerging contemporary dancer and choreographer Rita Bush was supported to undertake a residency at Vancouver Arts Centre completing a studio development with mentor and choreographer Symantha Parr and dancer Emma Leggett. Building on her work with mentor Sym, Rita developed a new dance work 'Retrieve Your Jeans', in collaboration with regional artists in South Australia. The work was performed at Adelaide Fringe winning the 'Adelaide Festival Centre In Space Development Award'.

Samala Ghosh | Denmark

Emerging Denmark visual artist Samala Ghosh developed a series of works, and held a solo exhibition “Still Dreaming” at her studio/gallery. The series incorporated new skills and techniques learnt through mentorships with Kaye Embleton and Nikki Green supported by the Next Level grant. Through the development of her new works and exploration of new art forms Samala built a partnership with contemporary photographer Cameron Langridge. Samala has continued to work with her mentors to further develop her understanding of the different art forms they work with and how the techniques used can be incorporated into her work.

<http://www.samalaghoshcreations.com/>

Ruby Liddelow | Mandurah

Emerging director and theatre maker Ruby Liddelow completed a month-long internship with the Australian Youth Theatre Company [ATYP] as assistant director on the show “Impending Everyone”. Ruby has continued to build on the partnership built with the Australian Theatre for Young People through her Next Level project, working with them on a creative development and mentorship project with a group of young emerging directors in the Peel region. With the Next Level support Ruby was also mentored by Riptide Youth Theatre Director Kathryn Osborne and has taken on a leadership role as Artistic Director Trainee, while continuing to work on her solo projects.

About Regional Arts and Culture Investment Program

The Regional Arts and Culture Investment Program will deliver \$18.9 million over four years to regional WA. Through strategic investments, it will build capacity in the regions and contribute to liveability and vibrancy of regional communities. This program will deliver on Our Priorities: Sharing Prosperity to strengthen economies, create jobs and nurture prosperity in the regions.

About Regional Arts WA

Established in 1994, Regional Arts WA (formerly Country Arts WA) is the State’s only multi-arts organisation with a purely regional focus. As an independent, membership-based, not-for-profit organisation our purpose is to celebrate and strengthen a powerful regional arts sector to contribute to connected and creative regional communities. More at: www.regionalartswa.org.au