

Arts Activated 2021 Conference Puts Arts & Disability Centre Stage With COVID Spotlight

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on artists and audiences with disability will be the focus of Arts Activated 2021, one of Australia's leading arts and disability forums which kicks off next week with over 250 delegates and speakers attending from across Australia and around the world.

Produced by Accessible Arts – NSW's peak arts and disability organisation – the conference will feature two days of online sessions on Monday 9 and 23 August, and one day of live sessions in Sydney on Wednesday 6 October presented in partnership with the rescheduled Vivid Sydney festival.

80 speakers and presenters from across Australia and overseas – with over 70% identifying as people with disability – will take part in 20 sessions and events covering a diverse range of topics around the theme of 'Building Back For Everyone' and how the post-COVID response of creative industries can help advance access and inclusion for the 20% of Australians who live with disability or who are d/Deaf.

Acclaimed First Nations artist and writer S. J. Norman and leading UK arts and disability advocate Suzanne Bull MBE will be the keynote speakers over the two days of the biennial conference which will also feature the launch of a new online art exhibition by ten NSW artists with disability as well as the launch of a national competition for high school students to encourage sociological engagement with disability issues through academic or artistic expression.

Some of the topics to be considered include:

- The pandemic's big picture legacy for arts and disability.
- The access and inclusion implications of the pandemic's digital acceleration.
- Using post-COVID thinking to better integrate artists with disability into the mainstream.
- New methods for creative collaborations born from COVID lockdowns.
- New research on increasing cultural participation for people with disability
- How Australia's museum and gallery operators as well as festival producers – both big and small - are ramping up access and inclusion post-COVID
- How dancers, musicians and theatre-makers are reimagining disability and performance post-COVID
- Innovative approaches for boosting cultural access and inclusion in communities and neighbourhoods
- Unpacking cultural safety from a disability perspective
- Creating access riders for artists with disability
- How to use the NDIS to create new opportunities for artists with disability

The conference is being supported by the NSW Government via Create NSW, Vivid Sydney, Western Sydney University and the City of Sydney as well as a range of arts, disability, education, community and media partners.

Accessible Arts Chairperson Emeritus Professor Sharman Pretty: "People with disability make an enormous contribution to arts, culture and events in Australia as artists, arts workers, audiences and visitors. However, this is not yet appropriately reflected in the provision of opportunity and equity. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has many implications for the

arts and disability agenda and we look forward to Arts Activated 2021 shining a much needed light on these issues as well as celebrating the distinctive and compelling creativity of arts practitioners with disability.”

Accessible Arts Interim CEO Morwenna Collett: “Our programming team has worked hard to put together a really engaging line-up of speakers and content that will help set the agenda for disability-related access and inclusion in the post-COVID recovery of the arts and cultural sector.

“We’ll have leaders from across the arts, disability, community, education and government sectors mixing it up with artists and arts workers to investigate and agitate around a range of issues related to increasing opportunities and participation, unleashing creativity and improving advocacy. We now look forward to welcoming delegates to participate and network online at our two virtual days in August of at one of our FREE live Vivid Sydney events which will now take place in October.”

To register or find out more, please visit the Arts Activated 2021 conference website:
www.artsactivated2021.com

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Facebook Post: Arts Activated 2021 conference (Online 9 & 23 Aug + Sydney 6 Oct) is putting arts and disability centre stage. There’ll be 250 delegates, 80 local and international speakers, 20 sessions and events. Be part of making the post-COVID recovery of Australia’s arts and culture more accessible and inclusive for people with disability. REGISTER NOW!
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Image Description: Colour and black & white headshots of people of various ages, genders and cultural backgrounds.

