

Exhale

Black Birds

Presented by
Arts House for
Next Wave Festival
2018

World Premiere
6.30pm, Wed 9 May
6.30pm, Thu 10 May
6.30pm, Fri 11 May
5.30pm, Sat 12 May
50 mins
\$20 / \$15



Creative Team

Creator & Performer

Emele Ugavule

Creator & Performer

Ayeesha Ash

Image: Josh Bentley



Artist Statement

I am the only child of a second eldest son. After my Tutu (grandfather) died, my Bubu (grandmother) raised seven children on her own. My Tata (Father) is the hardest working person I know. He is Bu's main financial provider, sending money every month for her goods and food, for things to be fixed or when someone passes. His love language is financially providing for his family. Because of this, and because I was raised outside of Viti, I am treated differently to other women in my family. But when my Tata dies, my position in my family will shift. *Exhale* is my acknowledgement of the trauma my body carries. It is my simultaneous rejection and complicity of Viti's colonial inheritance, a brutal displacement of traditional gender roles. It is code switching and it is healing on my ancestral lands and the foreign lands I was raised on.

— Emele Ugavule

I was a serious child. I didn't have time for silliness, hated dirt and was so shy that I struggled to make eye contact. I always felt like part of me was missing and until I found it I would struggle to truly be myself. It was only when I got older and learnt about the traumas of my ancestors that I could recognise my youthful front of 'serious' as my way of coping with these traumas. *Exhale* is an exploration of traumas which, although they are not my lived experience, can continue to live within us. Almost all of us live with traumas – our own or inherited – but it is the ways we move through them that shape and strengthen us. Through *Exhale*, I am humbled to share with you a small part of a healing process; one that connects places, stories and people through time and space.

— Ayeesha Ash

Biographies

Emele Ugavule

Creator & Performer

Emele Ugavule is a Tokelauan (Te Kaiga o Fagatiale, Nukunonu & Te Kaiga o Kolo'i, Uea) Fijian (Kaideuba, Navua) interdisciplinary artist living on Gadigal lands of the Eora Nation. She is a graduate of WAAPA and NIDA working in photography, visual art, live performance, film, television and production and has worked with numerous companies including working with The Chinati Foundation, The Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre, Griffin Theatre Company, Belvoir St Theatre, YIRRAMBOI: First Nations Arts Festival, Transoceanic Visual Exchange, Pacific Islanders in Communications, ABC & Playmaker Media. She is currently the Co-Artistic Director of Black Birds, the Creative Director of Talanoa and Associate Producer at Q Theatre.



Ayeesha Ash

Creator & Performer

Ayeesha was born in Grenada to parents of Grenadian and Maori heritage. Raised in Queensland, Ayeesha attended the Queensland Academy for Creative Industries before studying acting at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (2011-2013). Ayeesha's credits include *Th(i)rd C(u)lture* (Community Reading Room), *Puss In Boots* (City Recital Hall), *The Players* (Bell Shakespeare), *Daisy Moon Was Born This Way* (The Q), *The Seagull* (Now Look Here Theatre Co.), *Rent* (Hayes Theatre Co.) and *Drift* (Two Peas). Ayeesha has performed in, co-written, co-directed and co-produced *Black Birds* (The Joan and Festival Fatale), *Pehe* (Bondi Feast and Transoceanic Visual Exchange) and *Counterface* (Footscray Community Arts Centre, aMBUSH and Transoceanic Visual Exchange). In 2017 Ayeesha was part of La Boite's Assistant Creatives program as Assistant Director (*The Village*). She also appeared in the feature film *We're Not Here To F*** Spiders*. Ayeesha is studying a Bachelor of Communications (Social & Political Studies) at UTS.

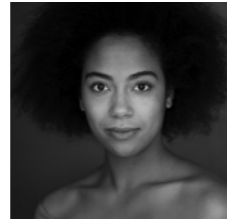


Image: Josh Bentley

Thank You

Ayeesha Ash — With utmost thanks to Emele Ugavule for her hard work and patience; Georgia Ash, Lee Ash and Maureen Ash for their constant love and support.

Emele Ugavule — Vinaka vakalevu to my collaborator Ayeesha Ash for sticking with me through this journey, and Lesina Ateli-Ugavule, Litia Ratukadreu and Emosi Ugavule – everything I do is to make you proud.

Black Birds acknowledge that this work was developed with the support of Arts House and Next Wave on the Eora Nation and Kulin Nations. We pay our deepest respects to Elders past, present and future of these lands and through them to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Arts House, as a key program of the City of Melbourne, is Melbourne's contemporary centre for performance and interactive artforms. We support new and diverse ways to make and experience art which is participatory and experiential, interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary, curated through a balance of provocation, responsiveness and collaboration with artists and audiences.

For more information, please contact us on the details below.

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Arts House acknowledges the traditional land upon which we are located, of the Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung people of the Kulin nation; and we pay our respects to Elders both past and present, and, through them, to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

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