

# Beast

by Krishna Isthia

31 January – 2 February

World Premiere

Presented by Arts House and Midsumma Festival



Warning: Nudity, smoke effects, adult concepts and loud music



[artshouse.com.au](http://artshouse.com.au)



Artist Credits

**Krishna Isha**  
Writer and performer

**Zoë Coombs Marr**  
Mentor and dramaturg

**Emma Frankland, Lucy McCormick,  
Rhys Nicolson, Amelia Stubberfield**  
Outside eyes



Hello! Thanks for coming to Beast!

While making the show, I've been investigating what it means to carry the weight and responsibility of becoming a man in 2019 as a trans person. What does it mean to embody masculinity in an era where eradicating men could solve the world's problems. It might be a radical thought, but if we could do away with all the politicians, gate keepers and the people with the utmost power (and let's be honest, they're often men), what would the world look like?

I've also recently been trying my hand at stand up comedy, researching it, and working with comedians including my director and mentor Zoë Coombs Marr. I'm usually what you might call a performance artist, and I used to think comedy wasn't for me, which I think is something many queer and trans people, indigenous and/or people of colour, disabled people and other marginalised folx feel because we are often the butt of the joke, not the people making the jokes. Comedy has traditionally been a space dominated by white men, but I have started to believe trans people and other marginalised folx should have a space in it. They say laughter is the best medicine and to be honest, in this current political climate, we really need it!

I was keen on making a show that was fun. Why is it that often marginalized artists are expected to make work that exploits our trauma? Depictions of trans people in theatre and TV are so often written by cis people. What happens when other people write our

stories for us, is that they don't see the humour in it, and to me humour and comedy might be the secret tool in our fight for liberation. In short, what inspired me to make Beast, was the need to see trans humour represented.

A lot of jokes in the show rely on a common language, so here's a glossary to help you if you need it.

#### GLOSSARY\*

**TRANS** – An umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth.

**CIS OR CISGENDER** – Someone whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth.

**NON-BINARY** – An umbrella term for people whose gender identity doesn't sit comfortably with 'man' or 'woman'. Non-binary identities are varied and can include people who identify with some aspects of binary identities, while others reject them entirely.

**GENDER** – Often expressed in terms of masculinity and femininity, gender is largely culturally determined and is assumed from the sex assigned at birth.

**TRANSGENDER MAN** – A term used to describe someone who is assigned female at birth but identifies and lives as a man. This may be shortened to trans man, or FTM, an abbreviation for female-to-male.

**TRANSITIONING** – The steps a trans person may take to live in the gender with which they identify. Each person's transition will involve different things. For some this involves medical intervention, such as hormone therapy and surgeries, but not all trans people want or are able to have this. Transitioning also might involve things such as telling friends and family, dressing differently and changing official documents.

\*Glossary taken from Stonewall UK

**Krishna Isha**  
Writer and performer

Krishna Isha is a performer, live artist and theatre maker. Their performance work looks at transformations (physical and political), gender politics and queer culture using subversive text, cabaret elements and comedy. They have performed in works across the UK, Australia, USA and Germany.

Select titles: Bullish (National tour, UK); Sex Worker's Opera (Pleasance Theatre, London; Campagnie Theatre, Amsterdam); Wild Bore (Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne; Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh; Soho Theatre, London; Sydney Festival); The Little Prince (Arcola Theatre, London); The Butch Monologues (Abron Arts Centre & La Mama, New York; Unity Theatre, Liverpool; Southbank Centre & Chelsea Theatre, London).

Krishna was named as 'One to watch' on the Rainbow List 2015 (the annual celebration of the most influential LGBT+ people in the UK) and sits on the board of the Raze Collective, a charity that supports and develops LGBTQI performance in the UK. They are the co-producer of The Cocoa Butter Club Australia (The Melba Spiegeltent 2017-2018; Arts Centre, Midsumma Festival 2018).

**Zoë Coombs Marr**  
Mentor and director

Zoë Coombs Marr is a performer, writer, theatremaker and comedian. Her work has been seen across the world in venues and festivals ranging from stinky garages to the Sydney Opera House.

She is one third of theatre company post, whose shows include Oedipus Schmoedipus, Ich Nibber Dibber and Who's The Best? Her comedy show Trigger Warning won the 2016 Melbourne International Comedy Festival Barry Award for best show, the Golden Gibbo, was nominated for a Helpmann Award and Best Comedy at Edinburgh Fringe. In 2017 she co-wrote, directed and starred in Wild Bore, with Adrienne Truscott, Ursula Martinez and Krishna Isha, at Malthouse Theatre, Edinburgh Fringe, Soho Theatre (London) and Sydney

Festival. In 2014, her ensemble play Is This Thing On? was presented at Belvoir Theatre and won a Sydney Theatre Award for Best Ensemble and was nominated for Best New Australian Work.

Other works include And That Was The Summer That Changed My Life, Gone Off, Dave and most recently, Bossy Bottom. She is occasionally on the telly and in 2006 won the National Poetry Slam Championships under dubious circumstances.

## Upcoming at Arts House

### Dance Massive 12 – 24 March

Australia's biggest festival of contemporary dance

#### Featuring

Lucy Guerin Inc  
Marrugeku  
Force Majeure  
Antony Hamilton Projects  
Melanie Lane  
Luke George and Collaborators  
Paul White and Narelle Benjamin  
Madeleine Krenek and Frankie Snowdon

Paea Leach and Alexandra Harrison  
Joel Bray  
Karul Projects  
Alice Will Caroline  
DubaiKungkaMiyalk  
Jo Lloyd

### Spectral 11 – 18 April

Exhibitions and shows exploring light and sound

#### Featuring

Robin Fox  
Jannah Quill  
Hanna Chetwin

Kusum Normoyle  
Meagan Streader

## Thanks

Beast is supported by the City of Melbourne through Arts House and was developed through CultureLAB. It was supported by Soho Theatre, Pleasance Theatre, Arcola Theatre and by public funding from the National Lottery through Arts Council England.

Thank you to Mama Alto, Kai Bradley, Laura Bridgeman, Daivik, Hannah Gadsby, Declan Greene, Cairo Harris, Kate Jinx, Sapidah Kian, Unni Krishnan, Jem Lai, Geetha Menon, Raina Peterson, Mark Pritchard, Mick Roe Klepner, Jen Smethurst, Emily Snee, Ellie Stamp and Toby Sullivan.

## Information

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

521 Queensberry Street  
North Melbourne VIC 3051  
(03) 9322 3720

## Acknowledgement of Country

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.

[artshouse@melbourne.vic.gov.au](mailto:artshouse@melbourne.vic.gov.au)  
[artshouse.com.au](http://artshouse.com.au)

Bookings: [artshouse.com.au](http://artshouse.com.au) or  
(03) 9322 3720