ARTS HOUSE

The Dark Matter of Usulal by The Jo Ze spArks

Access Guide

Last Updated 10 November 2026



Image credit: Danielle Micich

Image description: A performer lies on a dark stage floor looking toward the audience. Glowing blue digital figures appear suspended behind her within a dark visual landscape.

Updates to this document

Please note, this performance is a new work and changes are being made by artists until opening.
This guide will be updated as new information becomes available.

Arts House website will contain the most up to date version of this guide. If changes have been made, all ticket holders will be sent the latest version of this guide 3 days and 1 day prior to the event.

This document was created: 2 November 2026

Revision 1: 10 November 2026

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About This Guide

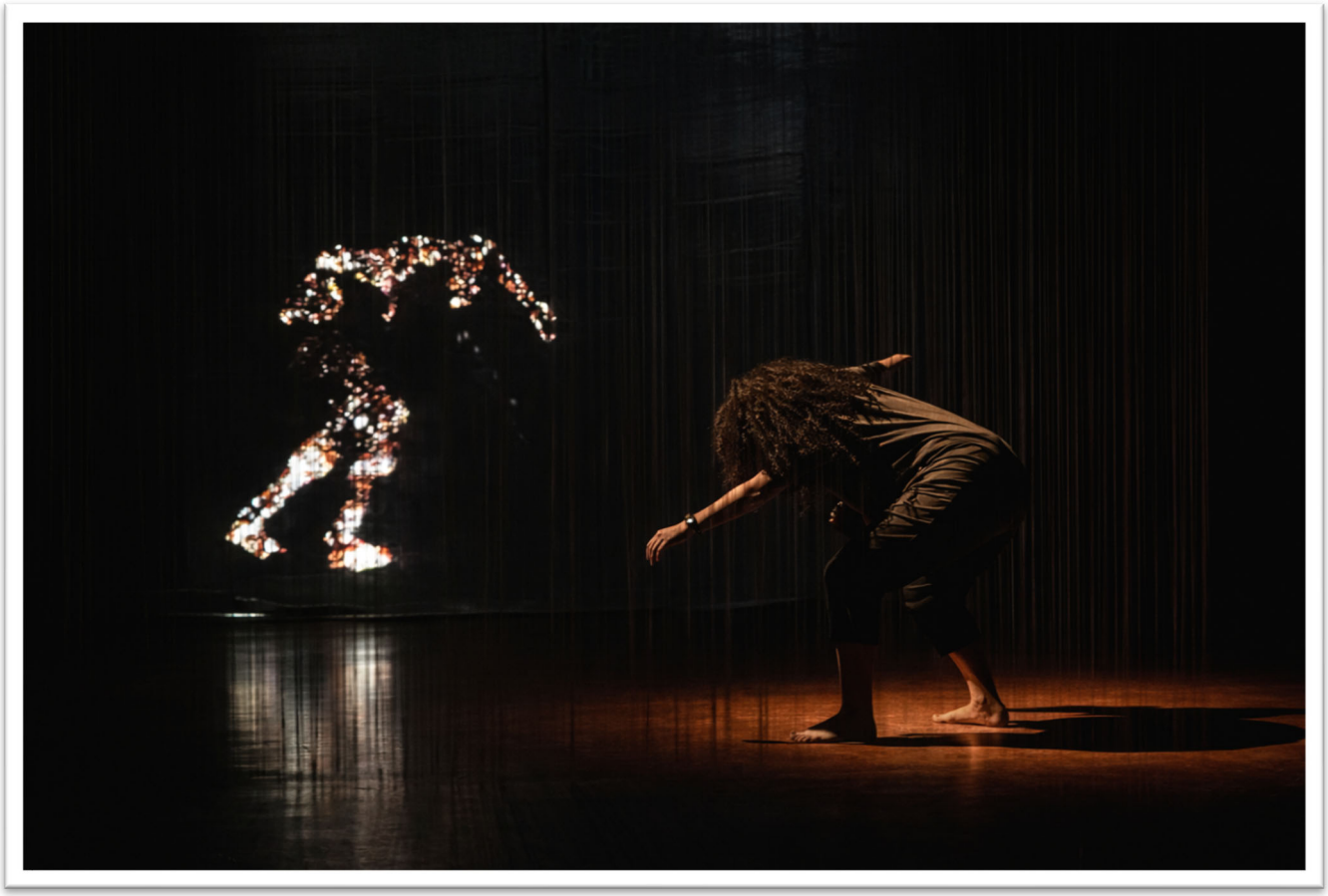
This Access Guide is a document designed to help prepare you for the experience of attending an event at Arts House.

The first few pages should give you the most important information about the show.

The section after that will tell you how to get here and what to expect from the venue.

The last section goes into detail of the experience of the event you are here to see. This may include spoilers.

Please use the contents page to navigate to which ever part of the guide is most useful to you.



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Show Overview

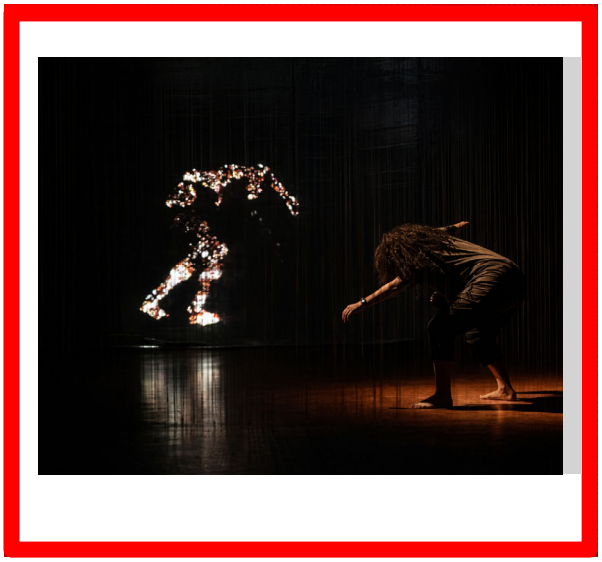


Image Description: A solo performer on stage with digital figures projected behind them.

Where

Arts House
521 Queensberry Street
North Melbourne VIC

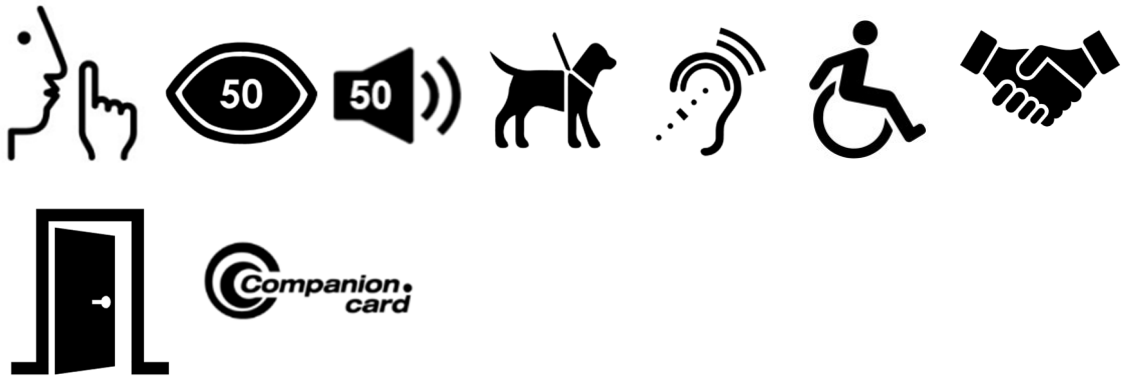
When

Thursday 12 – Sunday 15 November 2026
Thu – Sat, 7:30pm
Sun, 5pm

Duration: 55 mins, no interval

Fri 13 November
Post-show artist talk for all ticket holders

Overview



This show is a one-woman theatre show performed on stage.

The show is about the stories we inherit. It came about after Margaret Harvey was entrusted with an ancestral story by her Elders on Saibai Island. They instructed her to "Go and interpret" this story. This performance work is Margaret's response to that instruction.

At the centre of the work is the character WOMXN. The ground beneath her is shifting. Her child speaks of moon lilies, black holes and a treehouse in the sky. A black cockatoo appears at the kitchen window. Beneath the ordinary rhythms of everyday life, something begins to hum. Then WOMXN falls through the world, and as the cracks begin to widen, what was always there begins to emerge.

Through a rich interplay of movement, sound, motion-capture imagery and spatial design, *The Dark Matter of Usulal* asks us to consider what remains as the world changes, and how we hold onto these things as we move into the future.

Important Notes

Content Notes

Suitable for ages 15+

This work features loud low-frequency sound, immersive audiovisual effects, bright lights and periods of darkness.

The second scene features 20 minutes of consistent loud sound. This is electronic, atmospheric music with distorted sounds and strong bass. Earplugs are available in the foyer.

During this scene with loud sound, a very bright floodlight will illuminate the audience four times. Each time, the flood light flashes on, it fades to darkness over a couple of seconds.

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General Notes

The theatre doors will open at 7:15pm for patrons to start taking their seats.

Margaret will casually interact with people as they enter the theatre. Once the audience are seated, she will close the door and give an Acknowledgement of Country in language. While this happens there will be a lock-out. Once the work commences, any latecomers will be let inside by FOH staff.

There will be a couple of moments of audience interaction close to the start of the performance. At one point Margaret will ask someone in the front row to hold a kettle. At another point, she will ask to borrow someone’s show program to read from it.

Access Services



The quiet space will be available for you to use before, during and after the show.

More information about the quiet space can be found later in this guide.



Visual Rating 50%

A mixture of visual and auditory components including dialogue, music, other sounds.



Aural Rating 50%

A mixture of both sound and visual components like lighting, movement and physical design.



Assistance Animals are welcome.



Assistive Listening is available free of charge. Ask staff for assistance on arrival.



This performance is fully wheelchair accessible.

More information on wheelchair accessible entrances and bathrooms can be found later in this guide.



We offer a Meet and Assist service.

Please Contact Us so we can arrange this for you.



Patrons who need to can gain Early Access to the venue.

Please approach Ushers to let them know you would like to utilise this.



Companion cards are accepted for this event.

Tickets, Refunds and Viral Safety

Tickets can be purchased online, over the phone or at our Box Office desk.

You **must not attend** our venue or programs in person if you have any signs of transmissible illness.

We will provide a refund if you need to cancel your attendance due to illness. Please contact us by 9am on the day of the event. This helps our staff process your refund during off-peak times.

We cannot provide refunds to events that have already passed.

To minimise the risk of viral transmission, we encourage you to **wear a well fitted respirator** of P2 or comparable standards.

Outside of masked events/hours. this is not something Arts House enforces. Because of this, it is reasonable to expect that most others in the building will not be masking.

For more information on booking tickets, ticket types and viral safety measures we recommend, please visit our website or read our Access Key.

Getting to Arts House

Arts House is located in the North Melbourne Town Hall, at the corner of Queensberry Street and Errol Street in North Melbourne.

We have some resources that can help you with navigation throughout the building, including our Access Key, a video guide and a verbal map.

The nearest **Tram** stop is Stop 12 on Route 57. (Please note, this is not a level access tram stop and is only occasionally serviced by low floor trams.)

Nearby **Train** stations include North Melbourne, Flagstaff Station and Arden Station (each a 15 - 20 minute walk)

If travelling by **Car, t**here is paid street parking around Arts House. There are two accessible parking spaces on Queensberry Street and two on Errol Street.

Arts House is a 35 minute **Walk** from Flinders Street Station, (a 35 minute walk) or an 11 minute walk from Queen Victoria Markets.



Image: a map of Arts House and its surrounding area.
LINK TO MAP

The Venue

This is a summary of your experience of the venue. For more detail please view our Access Key.

Arrival and Entrances

Arts House has three entrances.

- One with stairs on **Queensberry St**



ID: North Melbourne Town Hall view from Queensberry Street which features giant red letters that say ARTS HOUSE out the front of it.

- Accessible entrance on **Errol St** (next to the post office)



ID: View of door at Post office entrance. Button to open automated door is on the right.

- Accessible entrance via **George Johnson Lane.**



ID: View of the left turn from George Johnson Lane to the accessible entrance ramp. A large painted sign points the way and reads 'Town Hall Arts House Errol Street Entrance'

The Foyer

When you enter Arts House, you will find yourself in the foyer. Please gather and wait in the foyer if your show is in the Studios, Supper Room or the Main Hall.

In and near the foyer you can find:

Seating
(Limited Availability)

A bar serving drinks
(no cash payments)

Toilets
(Gender neutral and Accessible bathrooms available)

Friendly Staff who can answer questions
(wearing black Arts House uniforms)

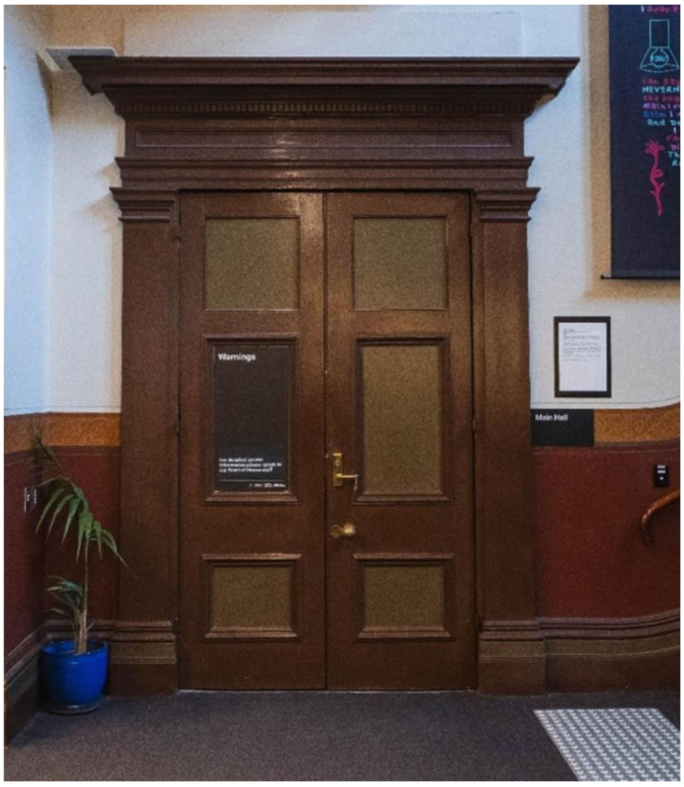
Quiet Space
(Chill out, prayer or parenting space)

Lift to other floors

Main Hall

The Performance is in the Main Hall. It is on the ground floor. It is to the left of the box office desk and right of the bar.

An artist statement is available on signage and warnings on the door.





Images:

(Top) The closed doors to the Main Hall. They are heavy brown double doors. A large black sign on the left door lists show warnings.

(Bottom) This image shows tiered seating and looks out to a large hall with wooden floor and raised stage along back wall. For The Dark Matter of Usulal, the performance will take place on the floor space which will be covered with black tarket.

The Dark Matter of Usulal

Sensory Notes



Sound

- Loud sound
- Low frequency
- Electronic and atmospheric
- Distorted
- Strong bass
- Wailing
- Spoken monologue
- Voice-over by a child



Lighting

- Very bright lights
- Intensity changes
- LED tube lights moved by performer on stage
- Periods of low light
- Moments of darkness



Smell

- None



Physical

- Movement
- Some audience interaction
- Proximity to audience
- The performer interacts with the audience at points through-out the performance.
- Moving set pieces



Visual

- Projections
- Geometric and amorphous shapes
- Black stage floor
- Black rope curtains and gauze drape used for projection surface.
- Large hanging square set-piece
- Medium rectangle platform on stage floor

Audience Experience



Entering the Space

- Main doors
- Sit on seating bank



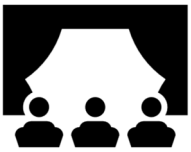
Shocks or Surprises

- Wailing voice
- Bright flood light on audience



Social Expectations

- Sit and watch the performance.
- You can choose to respond to the performer if they prompt you to interact.



Performance Expectations

- One-woman performance
- No linear narrative.
- Movement
- Some audience interaction



Relaxed Elements

- Stimming

Performers

Margaret Harvey – Lead Performer



Image: A performer lies on a dark stage floor looking toward the audience. Glowing blue digital figures appear suspended behind her within a dark visual landscape.

Stage and Props

The stage area has a black tarket floor. Towards the front of the stage, there are two curtains made from black rope hanging from the ceiling to the floor. There is another one black rope curtain mid stage. There is a black gauze drape toward the back of the stage. The curtains and gauze are used as a projection surface.

On the floor, there is a timber rectangle platform which the performer moves around the stage space. There is a floor rug, a table, a chair and 8 kettles on the stage, which are moved around the space by the performer. The performer uses a pole to steer herself as she moves the platform. There are four tube lights, which are moved around the space by the performer.

There is a large square timber set-piece hanging in the center of the space, which is slowly lowered and raised at one point in the performance.

The performer wears a light green t-shirt and dark pants. She also wears a jacket that she removes at one point. She is wearing sneakers, that she removes early on in the performance.

Synopsis

The Dark Matter of Usulal is a performance work, with movement, dialogue, projection, lighting and sound.

The narrative of the work is not linear. It is told from the perspective of the performer, a Torres Strait Islander woman, Margaret Harvey. It came about after Margaret was entrusted with an ancestral story by her Elders on Saibai Island. They instructed her to "Go and interpret" this story. This performance work is Margaret's response to that instruction.

At the centre of the work is the character WOMXN. The ground beneath her is shifting. Her child speaks of moon lilies, black holes and a treehouse in the sky. A black cockatoo appears at the kitchen window. Beneath the ordinary rhythms of everyday life, something begins to hum. Then WOMXN falls through the world, and as the cracks begin to widen, what was always there begins to emerge.

Through elements of dialogue, movement, sound, motion-capture imagery and spatial design, *The Dark Matter of Usulal* asks us to consider what remains as the world changes, and how we hold onto these things as we move into the future.

Contact Us

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North Melbourne
Victoria 3051

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Text Enquiries: 0447 570 178

Email: artshouse@melbourne.vic.gov.au
Website: https://www.artshouse.com.au

TTY users:
phone 13 36 77 – then ask for – 03 9322 3720

Speak and Listen users:
phone 1300 555 727 – then ask for – 03 9322 3720

Internet relay users:
connect to the NRS – then type in: 03 9322 3720

Video relay users:
connect to the VRS – then type in: 03 9322 3720

Was this Access Guide helpful?

Your feedback can help us improve. Please call, text, or email us to provide feedback.

ARTS HOUSE

CITY OF MELBOURNE

Thank-you for using this Access Guide