

## Long Grass WORLD PREMIERE

### ABOUT AN HOUR

#### Vicki Van Hout/Performance Space and Intimate Spectacle, Australia



Photo: Long Grass © Lucy Parakhina

*"High precision, unbelievable energy, humour and attitude... Vicki Van Hout's choreography is some of the most idiosyncratic and inventive seen in Australian dance for a long time."* **Realtime**

Indigenous choreographer **Vicki Van Hout**'s powerful new dance theatre work, *Long Grass*, combines weaving, shadow play, text and video, with an idiosyncratic dance language, to find warmth, humour and play in a community at the edge.

In a world premiere, Van Hout boldly explores the intersection between the traditional and urban experience of contemporary Aboriginal Australia. 'Long Grass' is the term for Aboriginal people perceived as being homeless and on the fringes, yet living right in the middle of the city. Inspired by this term, Van Hout creates a performance piece that raises the question – can honour, courage, solidarity and belonging exist outside the trappings of a formal postcode?

As layers of cloth are woven, a story unfolds. Day and night intersect on stage, as dark deeds and rabbit-runs are intensely brought to life by dancers only half visible in half light. The audience experiences a unique movement vocabulary, with each of the choreographed sequences inspired by Indigenous and contemporary dance practice. With the help of storyteller **Gary Lang**, a Larrakia man born and raised in Darwin, the performance is also imbued with a profound knowledge of Indigenous community customs.

*"This is ultimately an outsider's perspective, my perspective, as someone who was affected by a situation which immediately seemed mysterious and alien,"* says Van Hout.

*"There are some works that are screaming to be made, which make it impossible to keep quiet,"* she explains. *"The circumstances around Darwin's infamous indigenous 'Long Grassers' or homeless population are diverse, often looked upon with derision or scorn, walked passed, passed over or simply ignored. It is ironic that a race who has survived for thousands of years can be displaced in the country their laws were created to care for so scrupulously."* says Van Hout.

Out of these bleak circumstances, Van Hout discovers courage, resilience and unexpected humour, and renders it all in energetic, uplifting dance.

Vicki Van Hout is a Wiradjuri woman born on the south coast of NSW. An independent choreographer, performance-maker and teacher, she has worked across a range of performance mediums nationally and internationally. Her work practice emanates from the belief that all cultural information is fluid in its relevance

## MEDIA RELEASE

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and that we both exchange in and adhere to patterns of cultural behaviour and its tacit meanings. Her last show, *Briwyant*, premiered at Performance Space in 2011, and toured to Malthouse Theatre (Melbourne), Brisbane Powerhouse and Darwin Festival in 2012, the first ever national tour of a work by an independent indigenous choreographer. It was nominated for an Australian Dance Award for Best Achievement in Independent Dance. Vicki was recently awarded the 2014 NSW Dance Fellowship for established and mid-career artists – the first Indigenous winner of the Fellowship.

Director & Choreographer  
Cultural Consultant & Voice/Sound  
Sound Design  
Lighting Design  
Dancers

**Vicki Van Hout**  
**Gary Lang**  
**Phil Downing**  
**Clytie Smith**  
**Katina Olsen, Taree Sansbury, Caleena Sansbury, Thomas E Kelly, Darren Edwards**  
**Ben Graetz**

Community Liaison

Where Seymour Centre, Everest Theatre

When 14 & 16 January at 6.30pm  
17 January at 8.30pm  
18 January at 3.30pm

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