

Creative leaders Naomi Velaphi and Tam Nguyen to complete Asia TOPA leadership team



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, 15 MARCH 2023 – Arts Centre Melbourne today announced Naomi Velaphi and Tam Nguyen have been appointed Executive Producer and Creative Associate respectively of the new [Asia TOPA: Asia-Pacific Triennial of Performing Arts](#) leadership team. Velaphi and Nguyen join Creative Director Jeff Khan who was appointed in August last year.

“I could not be more thrilled to announce the appointment of these two brilliant arts leaders to complete the leadership team of Asia TOPA,” said Khan.

“Naomi and Tam are exceptional practitioners who are widely respected across the sector: locally, nationally, and internationally. They have both blazed a trail for contemporary Asia Pacific performance and have deep expertise that spans many different artforms and places.”

Naomi Velaphi, an experienced arts producer, said her curatorial interests were drawn from her experiences as a woman of Asian and African identities and the communities she represented.

Velaphi has worked in the arts cultural sector for more than ten years across producing, programming, strategy, and artist development. She has held senior producing roles at organisations and festivals including Next Wave, APAM, Arts House and Abbotsford Convent. Focussed on producing the work of contemporary, diverse, and interdisciplinary artists her experience spans working for and amongst festivals (Melbourne Festival, Perth Festival), galleries and performance spaces (Arts Centre Melbourne).

“I’m delighted to join Jeff as a part of the leadership team of Asia TOPA. This role is a chance to support and grow opportunities for artists, collaborate and amplify the rich stories, cultures, and communities here in Naarm, nationally and across the Asia-Pacific region,” Velaphi said.

Tam Nguyen, Co-Director of Turning World, a boutique cultural agency connecting contemporary cultures in Australia

and the Asia Pacific has established a distinctive multidisciplinary practice over twenty years, working across the performing arts, film and large-scale festivals in the UK, USA, and Australia.

Tam has worked in senior programming and producing roles for large festivals across artforms including Asia TOPA; MONA FOMA; Doc/Fest (UK); Australia Week Festival (USA); International Society for the Performing Arts World Congress, Adelaide Festival, and the Australian International Documentary Conference.

“Asia TOPA has long been a festival close to my heart,” said Nguyen.

“I’m delighted to be returning to the festival to join Jeff Khan for this next chapter and look forward to collaborating with artists, our sector colleagues, and the team at Arts Centre Melbourne to build the next festival.”

In the coming weeks the new leadership will continue planning the development of the 2025 Asia TOPA festival including a range of imminent projects and creative developments which will be shared soon.

Asia TOPA: Asia-Pacific Triennial of Performing Arts – a joint initiative of the Sidney Myer Fund and Arts Centre Melbourne – is a major triennial festival of Asia Pacific performance. Created by Arts Centre Melbourne and presented in collaboration with Melbourne’s leading cultural institutions, small-to-medium organisations and independent artists, Asia TOPA features ground-breaking new works and provides captivating insights into the current art and thinking of our diverse and dynamic region.

The next Asia TOPA festival will be held in February-March 2025.

Notes to Editors

The founding Asia TOPA Consortium consists of Arts Centre Melbourne, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Chunky Move, Federation Square, Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne Recital Centre, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Melbourne Theatre Company, Museums Victoria, National Gallery of Victoria, State Library of Victoria, The Australian Ballet, Victorian College of the Arts, and the Victorian Opera.

Asia TOPA is a joint initiative of the Sidney Myer Fund and Arts Centre Melbourne with support from the Australian and Victorian governments. With major seed funding from the Sidney Myer Fund, Arts Centre Melbourne has initiated a landmark collaboration with Melbourne’s community of culture makers and national arts leaders to introduce powerful new voices from Asia to our stages.

Images can be found [here](#).

Arts Centre Melbourne acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which we stand, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, and pays respect to their Elders, past and present.

We continue to offer engaging online experiences via our digital hub – [Together With You](#).

For more information including: our current health and safety policies; bookings for free and ticketed events; and other digital content and experiences, please visit artscentremelbourne.com.au.

For more information about Arts Centre Melbourne, please visit artscentremelbourne.com.au or phone 1300 182 183. Become a fan of Arts Centre Melbourne on [Facebook](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Tik Tok](#).

For further media information and interviews, please contact Senior Advisor, Media and Communications, Suzanne Robson on 0407 443 271 or suzanne.robson@artscentremelbourne.com.au.