

# Case study

## Vis and Ramin

### Details

#### What:

A new theatre work, *Vis and Ramin*, was developed by the newly established Iranian-Australian theatre collective Baran, led by Artistic Director Nasim Khosravi.

Over a number of creative developments Baran experimented with form, translated, drafted and dramaturged a new script. The final stage of the creative development focused on preparing the work to be received by an audience: Farsi and non-Farsi speaking alike. At the end of this process, industry peers and guests were invited to a showing of the work.

The collective explored digital technology to translate the work through surtitles. Industry peer, Freddy Komp, was introduced to the team via Metro Arts and assisted in experimenting with surtitles triggered by body movement through camera's and digital signals.

Metro Arts supported the Baran collective through the provision of artistic support, venue and equipment and project management. Following the showing, and based in part on the dialogue and feedback generated by the project, Metro Arts offered Baran the opportunity to stay with the work-in-residence program in 2015 to complete the work and help to position it for future markets.



Baran, *Vis and Ramin*, 2014. Image courtesy of the artist.

#### When:

February to August 2014

#### Where:

Metro Arts, Brisbane

#### Key stats:

- 160 attendees
- 97 per cent of respondents rated the work as good or excellent
- 13 paid artists and cultural workers

#### Arts Queensland contribution:

\$14,000 – Projects and Programs Fund

#### Contact for further information:

Email: [katrina@metroarts.com.au](mailto:katrina@metroarts.com.au)

Phone: 07 3002 7100

Website: <http://www.metroarts.com.au/posts/vis-and-ramin/>

# Outcomes

- **Establishment of the 'Baran' collective:** The project brought together a group of known and unknown artists who identify as Iranian-Australians. Assembled by Artistic Director, Nasim Khosravi, through a series of workshops and the creative development process, a strong connection has formed amongst the collaborating artists resulting in the 'Baran' collective.
- **Development of a new work with an engaged community and audience:** The creative development resulted in a new work bi-lingual work which was well received by audience members. Audience feedback included:  
*"Thank you very much for this opportunity. Hopefully Iranians as a large non-English community could get more and more chance to share thoughts and talents with Australians!"*  
*As an Iranian I felt happiness with the Iranian story in Brisbane. I really enjoyed it."*
- **Support from community:** The collective has garnered significant support from the Iranian community in Brisbane, which has provided rehearsal and workshop space, volunteers and been advocates for audience development.
- **Extension of artists' networks:** Introductions to a number of Australian artists both assisted the creative team with their aesthetic choices as well as extending the artists, peer and critical friends networks.



Baran, *Vis and Ramin*, 2014. Image courtesy of the artist.

# Learnings and reflections

The process of translating and adapting an ancient text into a new 21st century script can be challenging.

The creative team reflected that one of the greatest learnings of the process was the concept of 'showing' the work.

*"Initially the team resisted the idea of inviting people in to see something that wasn't finished, but as time went by, and the provocateurs, Metro Arts staff and Chris Kohn began coming in more regularly, everyone became more used to the idea. Inviting an audience in to something that was 'in-development' was also unfamiliar but with support from Metro Arts the experience was turned into something most positive with so much excellent feedback collected which will inform the next phase of development."*

As part of the process, the creative team tested surtitles with the audience and gathered some great feedback from them about their effectiveness.

*"I enjoyed the whole experience from foyer story-telling/introduction right through to tea and sweets. Thank you. Interested to see how the technology will develop."*

The team had the following reflection on using the surtitles technology:

*"A majority of the audience believed they were important and should be utilised, but didn't understand the notion of censorship through their 'design' – in the next development the creative team need to work on how they are presented. They also want to use more sophisticated technology with the surtitles so they appear on different surfaces, close to the actor who is speaking, triggered by the actor's movement."*