

# Case study

## The Gloaming

### Details

**What:**

Arts Queensland funding supported Ellen Belloo's creative development of a new work titled *The Gloaming*. The project engaged professional arts makers from different fields as mentors and provocateurs and culminated in a script reading performance to industry peers.

Katherine Lyall-Watson and co-collaborator Caroline Dunphy are the core artists behind the independent ensemble Ellen Belloo. Their artistic mission is to find new ways of exploring text and space via the medium of the human body and to create vibrant new theatre works.

The aim of the three-week creative development was to edit an existing script of a gothic play written by Katherine Lyall-Watson and draw in a team of experts to explore the possibilities for movement, soundscapes and puppetry in its conception and execution with a view of future production.

A partnership with the Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts through the Fresh Ground program and support through Projects and Program Funding allowed the artists to discover demand for the work.

**When:**

June – July 2014

**Where:**

Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts, Brisbane



Yaron Lifschitz, Barbara Lowing and Tim Dashwood in development for *The Gloaming*

**Key stats:**

- Script development and script reading performance
- 30 participants and audience members
- 90 per cent of attendees surveyed rated the showcase as good or excellent

**Arts Queensland contribution:**

\$21,824 – Projects and Programs Fund

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## Outcomes

- A brand new play is in development with positive feedback from participants and audience members.
- The creative development built key collaborations and brought together a high calibre core creative team. Relationships were also developed between Queensland artists who hadn't worked together before, exploring ideas across artforms. Artists brought in as mentors or provocateurs have expressed their interest in staying with the project as it goes to production.
- Ellen Belloo had a clearer understanding of where and how the work could be placed and clarity of potential partnerships. The project targeted interstate and local producers to attend the script reading performance and has received strong interest for a full scale production. The work also garnered local interest from key players including La Boite Theatre Company, Queensland Theatre Company and Brisbane Festival.



Christine Johnston developing the soundscape for *The Gloaming*

## Audience Feedback

- *Like a Greek myth, this plays seems to be an exploration and something we still don't understand. And like myths it is represented in the guise of a wild, fascinating and sometimes brutal tale.*
- *I commit myself to projects fully and they are generally my own chosen collaborations. Because I admire these artists I wanted to challenge myself and be part of their project. I am very pleased I did.* Christine Johnston
- *My involvement was really to disrupt the process and add some new flavours and perspectives. I found Katherine and the group super open and supportive and thought all our work was strong.* Yaron Lifschitz

## Learnings and reflections

A decision was made early on in the creative development for changes to the performance outcomes. Participants found it more beneficial and effective to show the work to a handful of industry peers and critical friends, who gave specific and detailed feedback, as opposed to a larger audience.

The script changed during the development phase based on the provocations of Yaron Lifschitz, Artistic Director of Circa, and Christine Johnston, Queensland Performing Artist/Vocalist/Writer/Musician, whose input opened new ways of creating, writing and realising the work.

Caroline Dunphy took the work further into a stylised, highly imagined realm. Some of the risks taken in the development included playing with horror genre technique and utilising Christine Johnston's unique set of skills to work as a foley artist in the live performance.

Ellen Bello had the following tips for other people undertaking a creative development:

- Be open to other ideas; and
- Try it before you argue against it.