

Acclaimed First Nations Artist S.J. Norman Heads Ups Final Program For Arts Activated 2021 Conference

S.J. Norman – one of Australia’s most intriguing creative forces – has been announced as the opening keynote speaker at next month’s Arts Activated 2021 conference, Australia’s leading arts and disability forum.

The final program has also been revealed and includes a mix of 20 virtual and live sessions featuring over 80 artists, arts workers, disability advocates and researchers from across Australia and around the world with over 70% identifying as people with disability.

Attracting up to 200 delegates, the conference will be held over three Mondays in August – August 9, 16 and 23. 14 virtual sessions will be live streamed from a broadcast studio at Western Sydney University and four FREE live sessions will be presented in partnership with the Vivid Sydney festival. Artists, arts workers, disability advocates, government workers and researchers are all being encouraged to attend to share ideas and approaches for ‘Building Back For Everyone’ which is the theme of this year’s conference. www.artsactivated2021.com

S.J. – who has an 18-year internationally celebrated career as a cross-disciplinary artist and writer – will headline the first day of the conference which this year is focused on ensuring the post-COVID recovery of Australia’s arts and cultural sector is inclusive of arts practitioners and audiences with disability or who are d/Deaf.

S.J. has been described as ‘a fearless experimenter, a rigorous researcher, a critically engaged maker and a formidable performer’. He is a non-binary transmasculine person and a diasporic Koori of Wiradjuri descent, born on Gadigal land. Since 2006 he has lived and worked between Australia, Germany, the UK and the United States. One of his primary artistic inspirations is the human body – which he explores through a range of creative approaches and practices – and he’s been mentored by esteemed performance artists such as Guillermo Gomez-Peña, Yoshito Ohno, Akaji Maro and Marina Abramovic. In addition to major commissions and awards from leading cultural institutions and festivals across the world, S.J. is an award-winning writer of fiction, essays and poetry and the founder of Knowledge of Wounds, a multi-disciplinary cultural festival and knowledge exchange for queer First Nations people based in New York City.

During his keynote session, S.J. will explore his work, creative practice and career, what it means to be an artist with multiple intersecting identities and the impact of the COVID-pandemic on artists and other people with disability.

S.J. Norman: “I’m humbled to be taking part in such an important event for Australia’s arts and disability community. There are so many incredible voices in this community and so much compelling creativity that I feel quite honoured to be included in this way. I’m looking forward to examining how my work and the work of other artists with disability can respond to the rapidly changing world we’re all now inhabiting.”

Conference organiser Accessible Arts – NSW’s peak arts and disability organisation – says the program has been developed over the last few months and provides over 20 hours of enlightening, provocative and entertaining discussions about the intersection of art, culture and disability.

Accessible Arts Interim CEO Morwenna Collett: “Our programming team has worked hard to put together a really engaging line-up of speakers and content that will help set the agenda for

disability-related access and inclusion in the post-COVID recovery of the arts and cultural sector.

“We’ll have leaders from across the arts, disability, community, education and government sectors mixing it up with artists and arts workers to investigate and agitate around a range of issues related to increasing opportunities and participation, unleashing creativity and improving advocacy. We now look forward to welcoming delegates to participate and network online, as a member of our studio audience at WSU or at one of our FREE live Vivid Sydney events.”

To register or find out more, please visit the Arts Activated 2021 conference website:
www.artsactivated2021.com

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Contact:

Michael Badorrek | Marketing & Development Manager
+61 0431 594 007 | marketing@aarts.net.au

Facebook Post: Acclaimed First Nations artist S. J. Norman has been announced as the opening keynote speaker at the upcoming Arts Activated 2021 conference, Australia’s leading forum for making arts, culture and events more accessible and inclusive for arts practitioners and audiences with disability (Sydney + Online | Aug 9, 16 & 23). The final program for the conference has also been revealed and includes 20 sessions, workshops and events for artists, industry workers, researchers and policymakers. Delegates can join online or live at WSU and UTS in Sydney. Places are limited. Don’t miss out. REGISTER NOW!
www.artsactivated2021.com

Twitter Post: Acclaimed First Nations artist S.J. Norman set to be opening keynote speaker at Arts Activated 2021, Australia’s leading forum for arts & disability (Sydney + Online | Aug 9, 16 & 23). Final program also announced. Places are limited. Don’t miss out. REGISTER NOW!
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