

The Blue Room Theatre & Scarlet Rose Presents

GAL PALS

You can, if you want



**The
Blue Room
Theatre**



Department of
Local Government, Sport
and Cultural Industries



CITY OF PERTH
City of Light



The Gal Pals team would like to acknowledge that this work was made and performed on Whadjuk Noongar Boodja - land that has held more than sixty thousand years of queer stories, resilience and resistance.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present and acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

We acknowledge and extend our compassion to the people of Palestine experiencing ongoing colonial violence. No one is free until all of us are free.

Always was, always will be Aboriginal Land.



photo credit: Holland Brooks

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

When you type the word 'Lesbian' into Google Trends to see the history of search trends since its creation in 2004, the first related topics that pop up are 'High-definition video' and 'Amateur'.

Sapphic love is most commonly seen in the public consciousness as a fetish. There is a severe lack of media that explores lesbianism as a valid identity for young people. Lesbianism as innocent love, as first kisses, as friendship, as summer romances and as star-crossed lovers. Lesbianism is complex, messy, layered, and varied.

At this time in my life, I identify openly as a nonbinary lesbian. It took me a really long time to come to terms with this identity- or even to know that it existed. I never grew up seeing lesbians in the media. I never knew anyone who openly identified as a lesbian. Growing up in the USA, being openly queer was incredibly dangerous for my safety. Unfortunately, this is still true for queer kids across America; the Human Rights Foundation declared the first ever national state of emergency for queer people in America in June 2022. Today, they are still living in an active state of emergency.

Gal Pals is an essential work for kids who grew up like me. Desperately wanting to find a home and community for their queerness but failing to see it platformed in any meaningful way. This is why I feel so passionately about getting young queer people as involved in the process as possible- and why we have assembled a team entirely made of queer women/nonbinary folk. Seeing meaningful representation, both onstage and offstage, is pivotal for showing young lesbians that there is a place for them. Our stories are aching to be told, and to be told right. Not as a phase or fetish. Your experience is real, and it's worth telling. I promise.

I am so grateful to Sam Nerida for trusting me with this beautiful work, and to the exquisite cast and crew of *Gal Pals* for offering their talent, their hard work, their time and their authenticity. I am equally grateful to every brilliant queer artist who was a part of this work in its many iterations. My deepest gratitude is due to the many queer artists who came before us; the ones who fought for our right to be here. The work isn't done; it's only just beginning.

From the river to the sea, none of us are free until all of us are free.



photo credit: Holland Brooks

WRITER'S NOTE

I don't really like writing in isolation. I find it difficult, and sometimes stagnant. I prefer to be in process with or in service of other artists, which really helps me feel the spark of passion for putting words on the page. That said, I'm constantly drawn back to it as a creative practice. So, I'm indebted to the passion and enthusiasm of this young team for galvanising me take what I knew was a full length work from its thirty minute life in 2022 to what it is today. I didn't have the time or energy to get this script finished and onto a stage, but they did, and boy is it a riot. I've never written something and handed it over so completely before, and I think it's safe to say that every single one of us on this project has learnt so much and had a blast doing it. I'm so proud and excited to know that Boorloo is full of so much queer talent, joy and creativity, and I'm reflecting on how much more present it feels less than a decade on from my own emergence into this industry. I hope you enjoy spending an evening with these five unlikely friends, and (queer or not) that you can find some sense of comfort and levity in their antics. Thank you so much for coming, hold onto your hats, and remember: NEVER SAY DIE!



photo credit: Holland Brooks



Production photo credit: Shae Khreish



Production photo credit: Shae Khreish



Production photo credit: Shae Khreish

LEAD CREATIVES

HOLLAND BROOKS - DIRECTOR

Holland Brooks (she/they) is an emerging Australian-American writer, director, stage manager, producer and lighting designer with a “nasty streak”, according to SeeSaw Magazine. She is a proud nonbinary lesbian nerd currently practicing on beautiful Whadjuk Noongar Boodja. They are a 2022 graduate of WAAPA’s Bachelor of Performing Arts (Performance Making) program and is currently exploring interrogating the genre of queer fabulism as a method of disrupting cisheteronormative storytelling and prioritizing queer transcendence. Their most recent projects showcase their highly diverse skill set as stage manager/lighting designer/sound designer of

How the KKK Saved the Day (2023), stage manager/lighting designer of Sweaty Girlz (2024), stage manager of SplashZone (2024), producer/lighting designer of The Late Great Andrew Tate (2023), producer/stage manager of The State (2022-2024), director of Gal Pals (2024) and writer of Unnatural (2022-2024). Holland is passionate about work that is vibrantly political, intersectional, and otherworldly. They are currently on a mission to outrun the notions of what is ‘stageable’ and ‘possible’.



SAM NERIDA - WRITER



Sam Nerida (they/them) is a writer, maker, facilitator and producer/programmer, often working in arts x disability and arts x education spaces, most recently as the Associate Producer: Creative Learning for Perth Festival. They teach into the BPA Performance Making at WAAPA in ‘Devising’ and ‘Playwriting’, and they directed The Jellyman for which they were nominated for Best Director (PAWA 2020.) Plays include One of Us, Tissue and See You Next Tuesday, (Best New Work and Best Independent Production, PAWA Awards, 2019). In 2020 they were commissioned to contribute to APT’s Dear Australia monologue project. Sam’s latest performance credit is TOAST (Black Swan State Theatre Company & TBRT, 2022) and they are currently the Secretary of the Board of The Blue Room Theatre.

CREATIVE TEAM

SCARLET ROSE - PRODUCER

Scarlet (they/them) is a theatre maker and co-founder of Undercurrent Theatre Company. Graduating WAAPA in 2020, they have also studied at the Intercultural Theatre Institute, Singapore. They devised and performed in UTC's debut work, *My Shout* at The Blue Room Theatre receiving critical acclaim and Judges award and recently toured the work to the Red Earth Arts Festival. They directed *Ask Again Tomorrow*, written by Lily Baitup as a part of the 2020 TILT Season and assistant directed *The Augmented* at Spare Parts Puppet Theatre (2021). They have recently completed a collaborative development between UTC and Indian theatre company, VOiD funded by the Maitri Cultural Partnership Grant. Scarlet wrote, performed and produced short solo work *Call Me Mother* for 600 Seconds and was dramaturg for *Conception* for The Blue Room's Summer Nights Program, both in 2023. They also participated in the Perth Festival 2023 Emerging Artist Lab and The Last Great Hunt Writing Workshop, resulting in a new work, *Terra*. Scarlet continues to work with the body in their own theatre research practice exploring themes of motherhood, gender, feminism and environmentalism.



SIMONNE MATTHEWS - STAGE MANAGER



Simonne (She/They) is a seasoned Stage Manager, Theatre Technician, and Producer in the Perth arts sector. Since 2022 Simone has honed her skills in prestigious venues like Crown Theatre and the Heath Ledger Theatre, most recently completing her first season with Perth Festival as the festival's production assistant, quickly parlaying into the role of 'Technical Coordinator' at the Blueroom Theatre. Simone's creative credits include two independent seasons with Greyscale Theatre Company, showcasing her ability to bring artistic visions to life. With a strategic approach and a passion for the arts, Simone continues to blend her technical experience with her passion for the arts to deliver works she can stand behind.

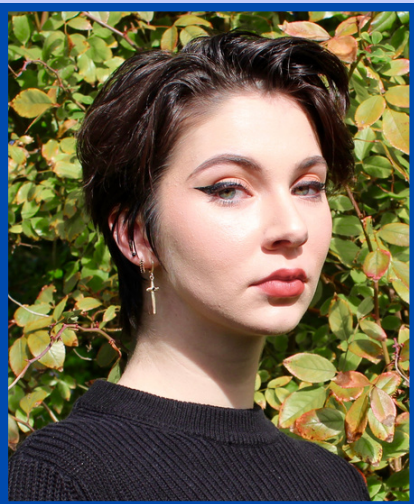
CREATIVE TEAM

RHI PETERSEN - LIGHTING DESIGN

Rhi (she/they) is a performance maker, visual designer, and technician, who makes fun, weird, genre bending art. Since completing a BA in Performance Studies in 2015 (Curtin University), Rhi has been a prolific collaborator across the Boorloo art scene. Previous creations include *The Jellyman* (TBRT, 2020), *Survive the Apocalypse!!* (TBRT Online, 2020), *The Big Dark* (TBRT, 2018), and *Shout Lab* (Crack Theatre Festival, 2016). Previous lighting designs include *Homeward Bound* (Lazy Yarns, 2022, TBRT), *Little Women* (Mel and Sal, 2021, TBRT), *Bite the Hand* (The Last Great Hunt, 2021, Subiaco Arts Centre); and previous scenography includes *Las Hormigas* (Pilar Mata Dupont, 2022, PICA), and *See You Next Tuesday* (Static Drive Co., 2022, Subiaco Arts Centre Studio). Rhi's work has been described as 'exciting, pertinent and ambitious theatre' (Seesaw Mag, 2020).



ABI RUSSELL - SET AND SOUND DESIGN



Abi Russell (she/her) is a young and bright writer, designer, from performer in Boorloo (Perth). Having graduated with a Bachelor of Performing Arts in Performance Making at WAAPA, she has been enjoyed gaining experience in all forms of theatre technology via taking part in 'Beginning at the End (of Capitalism)' by Phoebe Sullivan, and set/sound designing *The HMS-Wilson Smith* at TILT 2022 (for which her team won a BPA Blue Room award), as well as overseeing the design team, and writing, set and sound designing *Bad Feminist* at Blue Room Summer Nights 2023. She has a particular interest in technological dramaturgy, and innovating the ways in which theatre technology is used to elevate her work. Abi loves and flourishes in pushing the boundaries of how theatre design can be an active player in the world of the work and is excited to commit fully to designing *One Of Us* in a way that uplifts, the characters, and there for the often-quietened voices of those they represent. As a queer woman, Abi is beyond thrilled to be involved in curating a world of a work that elevates the experiences of her community.

CREATIVE TEAM

MELISSA CANTWELL - DIRECTING MENTOR



Melissa is a director, writer, Co-Artistic Director of Lost and Found Opera Company, and Creative Director of The Kabuki Drop. She has a BA (Film, ECU) and Bachelor of Performing Arts (Directing, WAAPA). Commissioned by Black Swan; Barking Gecko; Playlab; Lotterywest and City of Perth, her plays have been produced by PIAF; Barking Gecko; JUTE; QTC; PTC and others. Previous roles include Artistic Director (Perth Theatre Company); Associate Director (PTC); Program Manager (The Blue Room). She received an Emerging Leader's fellowship from the International Society for Performing Arts and has been a guest artist for numerous organisations. Her directorial work has been documented in Stephen Curtis' Staging Ideas and her writing has been published by the Australian Script Centre.

ALEXA TAYLOR - SCRIPT DRAMATURG

Alexa has been making, thinking-about, and supporting-the-making-of theatre and performance in Boorloo for the last 15 years. They work as a director, dramaturg, and maker, with recent works including See You Next Tuesday (Static Drive Company, 2019 and 2022); Growing Voices (WAYTCO 2022); Watch and Act (Katie McAllister 2021 and 2023); Love (Eat Life Productions, 2021 PAWA Award for Best Independent Director), and Two Canaries (Alexa Taylor Productions, 2019). Alexa is a Lecturer in the Bachelor of Performing Arts – Performance Making course at WAAPA, where they love being part



of the development of creative devising practice/s (from overseeing site specific projects to mentoring the graduating cohort's annual season of TILT at The Blue Room Theatre), as well as deep-diving into ideas about performance with students and colleagues. She has worked on research projects about creativity and sense of place, new media dramaturgy, and theatre and politics; and in 2016 completed a PhD at Murdoch University exploring how art and performance can spark and enable responses to global challenges like the climate crisis. She is still thinking about this, and appreciates the immense privilege of doing so on Whadjuk Noongar Boodjar.

THE CAST

IONIA VENOUTSOS - HEZ

Ionia (she/her) is an emerging performing artist, born and raised in Boorloo. She has been performing in and creating work since leaving high school and is currently studying her second year of performance making at WAAPA. As a Queer, Greek-Italian woman, she is keen to explore how her identity intersects with her art as she continues her journey in creating new and exciting theatre.



HAYLEY PERRIN - CASSIE



Hayley is an emerging theatre maker originally from the south eastern suburbs of Naarm. After completing a year of acting training, Hayley realised that she wanted to be involved in developing new work with new voices and moved to Boorloo at the beginning of 2023 to study a Bachelor of Performing Arts. Hayley has a keen interest in writing and acting with future hopes to further develop her craft by undertaking a Post Graduate Degree in (Theatre) Writing.

SOPHIE QUIN - ZARA

Sophie Quin (she/her) is an emerging artist and theatre maker currently studying the Bachelor of Performing Arts at WAAPA, after completing the Diploma of Acting in 2022. She made her professional debut in 2021 in Black Swan STC 'York', and since then has been involved with WA Youth Theatre Company as a part of their Ensembles and in multiple performances. She's excited to be making her Blue Room Theatre Debut in Gal Pals!



THE CAST

RHIANNON BRYAN - KAT

Rhiannon Bryan (they/she) is a multidisciplinary theatre artist with skills in performing, writing, intimacy and producing. A graduate from WAAPA's Bachelor of Performing Arts, they completed their Honours in 2023 with research in intimacy coordination and theatrical consent. Recent credits include *Bad Feminist* (TBRT; 2023) *My Shout* (REAF; 2023) and *XxHornySlug69xX* (TBRT; 2024). In 2024 they will tour *The State*, a satire that they wrote and are performing in Perth (TRBT) and Melbourne (Theatreworks).



CRYSTAL NGUYEN - SLOANE

Crystal Nguyen is a Viet-born actor, singer, and theatre-maker living with Brittle Bones disease. Crystal's credits span from stage to screen, including acting in the AACTA nominated anthology series *Erotic Stories* (Lingo Pictures), voicing *Decks* in the ground-breaking animated series *Eddie's Lil' Homies* (Highly Spirited Pictures) and performing in *The Complete Show of Waterskiing* (dir. Laura Liu) which was awarded Best Ensemble at the Performing Arts WA Awards 2023. Crystal desires to create works thriving in the in-between spaces of discomfort and bliss, bringing marginalised communities together through the universal message of belonging.



THANKYOU

The team of Gal Pals would like to extend their thanks to:

Tim Russell

Georgi Ivers

Shae Khreish

Jo Cooper

Jasper Rose-Senz

Dian Hadi

Alexa Taylor

Georgia Sassenfeld of Cherry Bomb and Club Sappho

The actors who staged versions of this work in 2019 and 2022

WAYTCO

Pride Foundation Australia

The Blue Room Theatre and staff

*This production is proudly supported by the Department of Local Government
Sports and Cultural Industries*



photo credit: Holland Brooks