

# TC

2022 Talent Camp  
New South Wales

AFTRS

The next generation  
of storytellers

# Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Film, Television and Radio School acknowledges the Traditional Custodians, the Bidjigal and Gadigal peoples of the Eora Nation, on whose unceded lands we meet, work, study, learn and teach. We pay our respects to Elders and Knowledge Holders past and present and extend our respect to all Aboriginal and Zenadth Kes (Torres Strait) Nations, who continue to occupy unceded ancestral, traditional, living lands that are now collectively known as Australia.

# What is Talent Camp?

Talent Camp is a skills development program for creatives from diverse backgrounds, designed to provide opportunities for emerging storytellers to create new content and be employment ready for the screen sector.

The week-long state workshops will focus on story development, producing and directing considerations and career pathways, culminating in a networking event with experienced screen professionals.

A selection of up to 15 participants are accepted into each State Talent Camp through a competitive application process.

This year, Talent Camp will take place in May 2022 across Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide and Hobart.

Talent Camp is a multi-partner screen industry initiative, made possible with the support of AFTRS, Screen Australia, Screen NSW, Screen Queensland, VicScreen, South Australian Film Corporation and Screen Tasmania.





## Alana Hicks

Alana is a Papua New Guinean/Australian writer, director and multi-platform creative. She was awarded first place in the 2020 SBS Emerging Writers' Competition. Her AACTA-nominated short film Chicken continues to play at festivals at home and abroad. She has just directed her first episode of broadcast TV for the ABC show PM's Daughter, and is currently in development on an original series concept about growing up mixed-raced in 90's Australia.



## Andrew Dillon

Andrew Dillon is an Indigenous filmmaker and Ngarabal man who is a descendant of both the Dharug and Kamilaroi people. He is an award-winning writer-producer and director whose USA credits include 'Battlestar Galactica', 'Supernatural' and 'Stargate Universe'. Andrew is the first Indigenous Australian to work within Screen Australia's mainstream Production and Investment management team where he recommended and managed projects that included 'Shadow Trackers', 'Leverman', 'SPEAR', 'Servant or Slave', 'Grace Beside Me', 'Goldstone', 'Bluey', 'Mystery Road TV Series', 'Danger Close', 'Hearts and Bones', 'Little J & Big Cuz' and 'Sweet Country'.



## Neil Sharma

Having cut his teeth in the film industry as an assistant director on productions such as Marvel's Shang-Chi: Legend Of The Ten Rings, Mortal Kombat, Neil Sharma has made the jump to directing. His directing credits include episodes of the forthcoming Parent Up (ABC), The Unlisted (Netflix Original Series), the web-series Terry's Talks (Network Ten) and splinter unit for Lambs Of God (Foxtel/Showtime). He has also directed music film clips for Coda Conduct (Elefant Traks Records). He has been taken under the wing of Directors Taika Waititi (Jojo Rabbit, Hunt For The Wilder People, Thor: Ragnarok) and Jeffrey Walker (Young Rock, Modern Family, Ali's Wedding), being mentored as their assistant/attachment. His extensive on-set experience and invaluable mentorships have put Neil in the perfect position to conceptualise and navigate a film production.



## George Coles

George is a Wonnarua woman from the Hunter Valley region and is the First Nations Community Engagement Manager at AFTRS. A graduate of the School's Bachelor of Arts Screen: Production, George works with the First Nations and Outreach Division to deliver skills-based workshops and custom short courses to Indigenous communities and implements cultural wellbeing strategies for the First Nations students throughout the School. As a First Nations filmmaker, telling stories has always played a significant role in Georgia's life. Previously directing documentaries for NITV and assisting on community-driven projects, George is now devoting her skills to help other people tell their stories on a much bigger platform.



## Marissa Ciampi

Within her role as Outreach Project Manager at AFTRS, Marissa supports Australia's diverse and emerging talent through initiatives like Talent Camp, Media Lab and nationwide community partnerships. Marissa has over 10 years' experience in creative management, copywriting, editing and marketing. Since 2019, she has worked within the First Nations & Outreach division at AFTRS to foster inclusion and belonging in the Australian screen industry. This is the second year she has delivered the Talent Camp workshops.

# Participants

Chika Ikogwe



✉ CHIKAIKOGWE@GMAIL.COM

A Naija girl with big dreams.

**Biography** → Chika Ikogwe is a Nigerian-Australian Actor and Writer. As an Actor, Chika has worked extensively in the industry across theatre and television. As a writer, Chika co-wrote a play called The House at Boundary Road Liverpool and has a number of works in development, including stage play Chioma's Party & TV series Just Chidi Things, which was the winner of the Screen Makers Conference Pitch-o-rama competition in 2020. She's incredibly passionate about bringing authentic Afrocentric stories to the forefront of Australian stages and screens.

## Claire Cao



✉ CLAIRESINCAO@GMAIL.COM

Fantasy novel fan with a love for ghosts, B-movies and romance.

**Biography** → Claire is a writer and editor living on Darug land with a penchant for tragicomedies about intergenerational relationships, memory and place. Her work has been published in Meanjin, The Guardian, ArtReview, SBS Voices, Voiceworks and more. In 2019, she was mentored at MIFF's Critics Campus 2019 and the runner-up for LIMINAL Fiction Prize. She is currently the Small Screens editor for The Big Issue Australia, an assistant program advisor for Sydney Film Festival and Kill Your Darlings' 2022 New Critic. She is one of eight screenwriters for the feature film HERE OUT WEST (Opening Night Film, SFF 2021).

## Dean Nash



✉ DEAN@DEANNASHVOCALCOACH.COM

A sucker for a sad song or a funny story.

**Biography** → A multidisciplinary Artist, Dean is a songwriter, composer, actor, emerging writer and disability advocate. Any avenue for telling stories Dean wants to explore it. Dean studied a Bachelor of Music at WSU and UNE and has spent the last decade writing music and performing on the stage and screen. Most recently; releasing his EP "In The Autumn" streaming on all platforms, collaborating with nine other writers on a concept musical called "The Breaths in Between" with Eleven O'Clock theatre company, and - where pandemic has permitted - performed his one man cabaret act around NSW.

## Debbie Zhou



✉ DZHOUPRODUCTION@GMAIL.COM

Small but loud producer who loves the creativity and storytelling building blocks behind making films and telly (yes, even the contracts).

**Biography** → Debbie Zhou is a Chinese-Australian producer and Law graduate, who currently works across in-house Business & Legal Affairs and Production at Matchbox Pictures. Her recent credits include Producers Assistant (Post-Production & Marketing) on feature film, Here Out West (2022) and Post-production Clearance Coordinator on Netflix's Clickbait (2021). She has also worked on the impact campaigns for ABC drama, The Heights (2019) and feature documentary, Ghosthunter (2018). As an arts journalist and film & theatre critic, she is a Berlinale Talent Press alumna, and appears in The Guardian and ABC Sydney & Melbourne radio, amongst other publications.

## Divya Vaman



✉ DIVYAVAMAN1@GMAIL.COM

Confident in my own voice and very interested in listening to yours.

**Biography** → Divya Vaman is an actor, standup comedian and writer. She was recently selected as a performer the 2020 CurryTraits Virtual Comedy Festival. She has had roles in Stan's The Other Guy, SBS' Dead Lucky and the film Suburban Wildlife, which had premiered at the 2019 Sydney Film Festival. She has written and performed in comedy sketches that are accessible on her YouTube Channel, Divya Vaman. Her channel has had over 8000 views. In 2021, she was selected for Cinespace's 'Package to Pitch' program.



## Erica Brennan



✉ ERICAJOSEPHINEBRENNAN@GMAIL.COM

I write with optimism, a cracking sense of humour and a profound respect for all that has come before me.

**Biography** → Erica J Brennan is a writer, director and actor of Gamilaroi ancestry and living on Gadigal land. She has a Bachelor of Performance from Theatre Nepean (WSU 2008) and a Masters of Applied Theatre Studies (UNE 2019). She has written three full-length play produced for the Old 505 Theatre including, A FEAT INCOMPLETE, HERO AND COMPANION and THIS IS NOT MILLS AND BOON. In 2020 she was awarded an ABC Fresh Start Grant to develop a new animated series entitled PREGNANT DETECTIVE. Directing credits include UNCOVER DOGS, METAFOUR-FOUR SHORT PLAYS BY SAMUEL BECKETT, and EYELAND a co-pro with the Woodford Folk Festival. In 2022 she participated in the inaugural First Stories Festival at Theatre Works (Melb).

## Grace Tan



✉ TAN.GRACE.YT@GMAIL.COM

Keep your eye on the doughnut, not the hole.

**Biography** → Grace is a writer and director with a deep interest in character-driven stories that explore memory, identity and the surreal. Her previous queer short film Fish Head toured the international film festival circuit with screenings including NewFest New York LGBTQ+ Film Festival, Atlanta Film Festival, Hong Kong Lesbian & Gay Film Festival, Toronto Shorts and more. Currently she is writing on the online mystery series Appetite (SBS) and has just completed her Masters of Arts Screen in Directing at the Australian Film, Television and Radio School.



## Jacob Jansz



✉ JANSZJACOB@GMAIL.COM

I'm a creative who loves storytelling, being fuelled by my desire to tell stories that entertain, inspire and impact people.

**Biography** → As a young Indigenous Australian creative, I've long aspired to share my stories with a wider audience. Following two years of studying IT and working in unfulfilling jobs, I made the choice to follow my creative instincts and pursue a Certificate IV and Diploma in Screen and Media. Having completed both over the course of 2020 and 2021 respectively, I'm currently looking to dive deeper into the industry and connect with other creatives who share my passion for storytelling that entertains while also evoking emotion and challenging perspectives.

## Jayden Jansz



✉ JAYJAN311@GMAIL.COM

I am a young Indigenous Australian storyteller with a passion for creating compelling stories, who wants to share new ideas with the world that are yet to be explored.

**Biography** → For as long as I can remember, I have always been very creative. In my early years, I spent most of my free time making stop-motions and other video projects with the minimal resources I had. When I got to High School, my Photography class drove me towards aspirations of filmmaking and Directing. Upon completion of High School, I studied for two years at TAFE, acquiring both a Certificate IV and Diploma in Screen & Media. There I refined my craft and technical skills, providing myself with the foundations necessary to achieve my goal of becoming a filmmaker.

## Katie Tonkin



✉ KATIETONK@HOTMAIL.COM

Single mum of Triplets that has a passion of bringing stories to life Through the amazing world of film.

**Biography** → Writer/Director Katie Willow Tonkin, is a proud Indigenous Wiradjuri woman based in the Northern Rivers and a mother to 12 year old Triplets. Completing her Certificate IV in Screen and Media at Kingscliff TAFE in 2020, her Diploma in Screen and Media in 2021. Katie was selected for the 2021 Screenworks Writer's Pathway and was selected to make a short documentary for Screenworks and Feros care's fearless films season 3. In 2022 Katie was selected for the Screenworks Directors Pathway. Katie is working on a 6 Episode Horror series, a Feature film and a short Indigenous film with drama elements.

## Levi Lamour



✉ LEVILAMOUR@HOTMAIL.COM

Lover of all things cinema.

**Biography** → Levi Lamour is a South African immigrant who completed his Master's in Media Arts Production at UTS with a passion for writing and directing narrative drama. After gaining experience working on sets, making music videos and DIY short films, he is finalising his debut short film Migration for the film festival circuit. It follows the story of a young African immigrant struggling to find his sense of place in Blacktown, Western Sydney. Projects to follow are another short film and writing a pilot for a narrative series about the youths of Western Sydney. His goal is to become an established writer-director contributing to the Australian screen sector in both feature film and series form, telling gritty authentic stories whilst also immersing himself in subverting conventional genres.

## Miranda Aguilar



✉ MIRANDAAGUILAR.COM

Writer, etc. for screen,  
stage and beyond.

**Biography** → Miranda Aguilar is a queer, Filipinx writer, creative producer and community arts worker. Their credits include acting as showrunner and one of the lead writers for *Las Rosas* (2017), producing *Prone to the Drone* (2019), and writing 'Let Me Know When You Get Home', their first full-length play. They are a member of Ka-Ilective, a group of Asia-Australian multidisciplinary artists currently developing their first theatre work, *Salt Baby*. Their work has been previously supported by Australia Council of Arts, CreateNSW, Blacktown Arts, PACT, and APT among others. They currently produce community arts programs with CuriousWorks.

## Rizcel Gagawanan



✉ RGAGAWANAN@GMAIL.COM

Creative all-rounder  
and professional slashie:  
Actor/Writer/Producer/  
Collaborator/Coordinator.

**Biography** → Rizcel Gagawanan is Gadigal-based actor/writer/producer born in the Philippines but grew up in Meanjin. She has performed on stage and screen, and has worked behind the scenes for TV show writers rooms. She is the co-founder and co-producer of Kollective, a group of Asian-Australian multidisciplinary artists whose latest theatre work 'Salt Baby' is proudly supported by Create NSW, Australian Council for the Arts, PACT, and Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre. Rizcel is a proud member of SWEATSHOP and was previously the Treasurer for Women in Theatre and Screen. She currently works for BuzzFeed Australia as a production coordinator.

## Sarah Carroll



✉ SARAHLEIGHCARROLL@GMAIL.COM

My last show I wrote and performed someone said “it’s a little bit comedy, a little bit cabaret and a whole lot of Katy Perry.” I feel like that encapsulates me and then just add lots of sparkle and sass.

**Biography** → Sarah Carroll (she/they) is a Polynesian/Australian queer multidisciplinary artist working across live performance, writing, film/tv and movement. In 2019 Sarah placed in the top 10 out of 175 in Vancouver’s Artist2Artist showcase. In 2021 Sarah was part of Sport for Jove’s inaugural director mentorship with Damien Ryan and a creative attachment for Kalaga Atu presented at the Art Gallery of NSW written by Emele Ugavule. In 2022 Sarah debuted her one woman show Cherry at KXT Bakehouse to a sold out showing. A deep dive into obsessive fandoms, self discovery and sexuality. Sarah is deeply passionate about creating work that pushes for female queer representation and the intersectionality of queer identities. Sarah is also interested in focusing on neurodiverse and mental health experiences and cultural identity interweaving her experiences coming from a mixed race background and growing up in Australia and Fiji.

## Vaishnavi Suryaparakash



✉ VAISH.SURYAPRAKASH@GMAIL.COM

Activate left and right brain...now.

**Biography** → Vaishnavi is an Indian-born, South-West-Sydney-raised artist. She is an actor, Bharathnatyam dancer, and emerging writer and dramaturg. She’s passionate about creating work exploring complex female figures; minority heritage explorations (especially South Asian); and big ideas refracted through an intimate personal or humorous lens. Vaishnavi is currently a Literary Associate at Belvoir Theatre Company, and received the Helpmann Award for Best Female Actress in a Supporting Role for COUNTING AND CRACKING. Before starting her professional creative practice, she trained as a lawyer, working in environments as varied as the US Congress and university classrooms.



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