

ABOARD THE *ARTS TRAIN*

What's an old rail yard got to do with Sydney's thriving contemporary art culture? A lot, apparently. Join **Sue White** as she hops inside Carriageworks for a venture about this industrial wonderland



WAY BACK WHEN

It's not the first time that the old railway played an integral role to the Sydney community. In fact, Eveleigh Rail Yard at Wilson Street has always been present in the lives of locals since the nineteenth century – long before its current iteration as a 12,000-square-metre arts hub. Back in the late 1800s, over 6,000 workers a day arrived in this side of town to build train carriages, and Eveleigh Rail Yard's management was known to employ indigenous people on an equal basis. It was also the place where many new Australian migrants found their first job, making the old rail yard a truly diverse workplace.

It's worth noting that 70 percent of Carriageworks' artists come from culturally varied backgrounds. "We have a firm commitment in our program to indigenous practice and cultural diversity," says Havilah. "People want to see work that is relevant to them and their own lives, so we try to hone our programme to reflect the cultural and social demographics of the communities around us."

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PHOTOGRAPHY CARRIAGEWORKSSELECTS, ZANWIMBERLEY, JAMES PRINZ

A conversation about Carriageworks is a topic that anyone would find interesting because of the numerous thrilling activities going on in that arts-centric place. Apart from being a burgeoning venue for homegrown artists, Australia's largest contemporary multi-arts centre boasts a comprehensive artistic programme that commissions and presents works ranging from visual arts, dance performances, contemporary culture, food (yes, food – more on that later), and many

more. Moreover, the programme is replete with breadth and depth that helps the old Eveleigh Rail Yard building attract 1.3 million visitors a year.

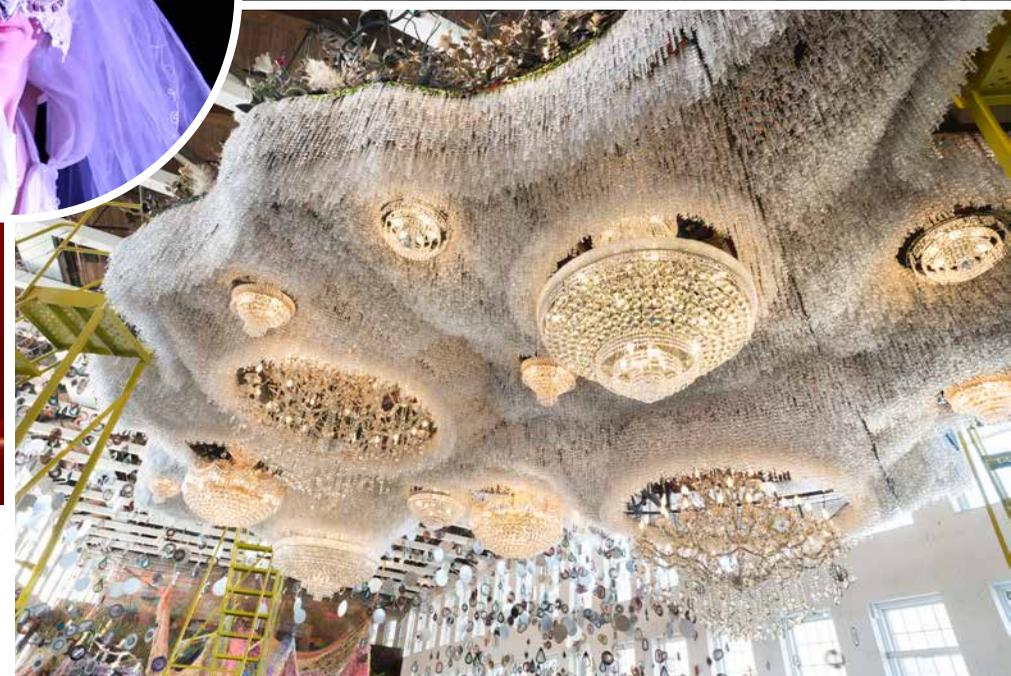
"We look at contemporary culture, creativity, and art in a very broad way that is inclusive, collaborative, and reflects contemporary life," says Lisa Havilah, Director of Carriageworks for over six years. Also, the artistic programme is artist-led and solidifies the establishment's commitment to encouraging social and cultural diversity.

OPPOSITE (CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT),

Bird Fox Monster, Carriageworks Selects, MASS MoCA 2016



Amrita Hepi, A Caltex Spectrum, Keir Choreographic Award





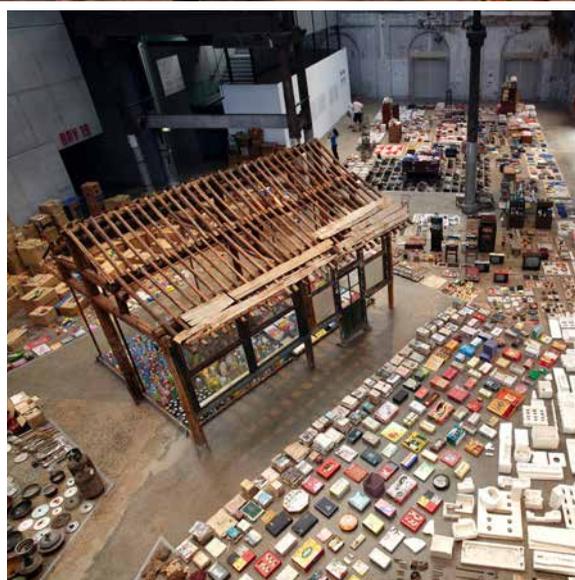
SIDE DETOURS

In case the need for extra hits of arts and culture arises, don't fret; there are plenty more art spots near Carriageworks. A 15-minute stroll north east, for one, will land you at the doors of the Chippendale's much-loved **White Rabbit Gallery**. Alternatively, you can walk 20 minutes south along Wilson Street, and you'll arrive at Sydney's longest-running live music venue, the **Enmore Theatre**.



▲ Melanie Lane performs her award-winning piece, *Personal Effigies*

◀ The Farmers Market abuzz with art aficionados and hungry foodies



BEYOND ART

To outsiders, curating a contemporary arts programme as an entrepreneurial pursuit may seem like a risky business. For Havilah, however, that is a vital part of the attraction: "[We like] exciting ideas that are culturally relevant and ambitious," she says. With such a busy schedule, the artistic programme initially appears anomalous because Carriageworks also extends its offerings to include food. But as Havilah explains, the wildly popular weekly outdoor



Farmers Market (open on Saturdays from 8 am to 1 pm) also embraces the venue's artistic ethos.

"We take a very curatorial approach to how we do that market, and a solid commitment to supporting producers," she says. "We apply the same practice whether it's a food programme, a visual arts programme and so on... there's a commitment not only to authenticity but also to excellence."

The Farmers Market even has a Creative Director (Market

Charter) who collates the line-up of events. This month, it will include a cooking demonstration which will feature Sri Lankan chef O Tama Carey from Lankan Filling Station.

Back inside the central space, Havilah estimates that she sees around 50 shows in a span of 12 months. Despite clocking in long hours, she doesn't mind that her typical week doesn't distinguish between work and play because there is a lot of fun and excitement involved in the job. "There's no real stopping and starting," she says.

OPPOSITE (CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT): The Farmers Market; Syd Contemporary; 'Waste Not' by Song Dong



KEEPING THE OLD



Most Carriageworks visitors may come from various backgrounds, yet they all notice one thing: the distinct, industrial atmosphere that is highly visible in all corners. Clearly, the venue's mechanical roots are fully embraced, as it retains many of the original iron and brick materials from the time when it was first built. It also helps that Arts NSW and the NSW Government continue to support the regeneration of Carriageworks via numerous preservation projects.

While Carriageworks' architectural appeal is widely appreciated by many, it's not the main star of the art establishment. The primary purpose of its visitors is to check out what the centre's artistic programme has to offer.

"We give audiences the opportunity to engage with artists, see the process of creating work, and experience artistic work that is very new," Havilah says. And by artists, she means big names including Grammy award-winning musician St. Vincent who will be performing at Vivid Sydney, an annual outdoor lighting festival, on 17 June. "There's always exhibitions happening," adds Havilah.

carriageworks.com.au



Grammy award-winning musician St. Vincent is set to perform at Vivid Sydney, Australia's largest outdoor lighting festival



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LEFT:

St. Vincent; Sydney Chamber Opera, The Howling Girls (Circle)