

# M/other Land

# Roberta Rich

Presented by  
Arts House for  
Next Wave Festival  
2018

**World Premiere**



# Creative Team

**Creator, Director &**

**Lead Artist:**

Roberta Rich

**Lighting Design:**

Lyndon Campbell

**Camera Operators:**

Lyndon Campbell, Abyss  
& Mason Mesatywa

# Artist Statement

The veneer of a structure like that of Arts House is merely one of many examples within our visual landscape that signify the narratives that continue to dominate social and historical frameworks within so called 'Australia'. *M/other Land* seeks to disrupt our gaze from Victorian era furnishings and situate a narrative of Afro origins that explores concepts of identity, migration, self determination and southern African histories that have informed my positioning today in Narrm (Melbourne).

Image: Abyss

I wanted to deconstruct and decolonise this colonial façade and create a space that allows for the consideration and legacy of black histories that are relative to the institution of colonialism and its white heritages that is almost always told.

For *M/other Land* screens situated throughout Arts House are intended to rupture one's gaze, as the content oscillates between this building and my motherland, southern Africa. I am navigating the meaning of place within one's identity, and simultaneously the concepts of loss and reclamation. I occupy sites from where my family as 'Cape Coloureds' was forced to move, Soweto youth uprisings and where the Freedom Charter took place, the now empty mantle where Cecil Rhodes' memorial was removed, mountains where Khoi and San ancestors – the indigenous peoples of southern Africa's 'Cape' region – traversed, and places of cultural significance that represent my identity and its intricate

nuances. Remembering, acknowledging and centring brown and black histories are vital methodologies towards the project of decolonising spaces one occupies to draw upon another's story, and reflect the rich cultural fabric of contemporary identities.

*M/other Land* was created on the lands of the Boonwurrung and Woiwurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation, the lands of San, Khoi, Nguni and Basotho and I acknowledge fellow Venda and Xitshonga peoples of southern Africa and pay respect to elders past, present and emerging and recognise that sovereignty was never ceded.

— Roberta Rich



# Biography

## Roberta Rich

Creator, Director & Lead Artist

Roberta Rich is an emerging artist who responds to constructions of race and gender identity in her video, performance, installation and multi-disciplinary projects. Drawing from historical, socio-political, media and popular culture, Rich engages with notions of 'authentic' identity construction and attempts to challenge problematic representations while ascertaining empowering forms of self-determination, often referencing her own African identity and experiences.

Rich studied a MFA with an APA scholarship at Monash University and has exhibited widely throughout Melbourne including her solo exhibition *Deny/Denial/Denied* at Blak Dot (2017), interstate in Adelaide with her work *I'm Cornered*, group shows Freedman Foundation Travelling Scholarship Exhibition, UNSW Galleries (2017), *Transcendence*, Firstdraft (2018) in Sydney as well as internationally at Wits Art Museum and throughout Johannesburg with a forthcoming debut in Cape Town. An alumnus of FCAC's Emerging Cultural Leaders program, NAVA's Freedman Foundation Travelling Scholarship sees her currently completing two residencies in Johannesburg and Cape Town.



Image: Lyndon Campbell

# Thank You

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Arts House, as a key program of the City of Melbourne, is Melbourne's contemporary centre for performance and interactive artforms. We support new and diverse ways to make and experience art which is participatory and experiential, interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary, curated through a balance of provocation, responsiveness and collaboration with artists and audiences.

For more information, please contact us on the details below.

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Arts House acknowledges the traditional land upon which we are located, of the Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung people of the Kulin nation; and we pay our respects to Elders both past and present, and, through them, to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

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