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MEDIA ALERT: For immediate release

No More Fairy Tales: *Keep Sleeping, Beauty* Delivers an Enraged Wake-Up Call

Sedated women are everywhere. In fairy tales, in art, in bars and nightclubs, in psych wards, in chat rooms, in porn - it seems society loves to see a woman who's out of it but conveniently, into it at the same time.

Following the international smash hit BATSHIT, artist Leah Shelton reunites with Olivier award-winning Ursula Martinez (UK) for ***Keep Sleeping, Beauty*** - a fierce new theatre work storming the stage to tackle misogyny, consent and the disturbing rise of online "sleep content."

Using the familiar story of 'Sleeping Beauty' to confront a more nightmarish reality, ***Keep Sleeping, Beauty*** exposes a culture that attempts to tranquilise, restrain and contain women, even in their sleep.

The work arrives at a moment when violence against women (cis, trans and beyond), aggressive gender policing, and the underbelly of the 'manosphere' dominate our media. The trial surrounding Gisele Pelicot shocked the world by exposing a systematic abuse that unfolded over many years; while recent investigative reporting has revealed online communities where men share so-called 'sleep content' - sexual material featuring unconscious and non-consenting women. Against this backdrop, ***Keep Sleeping Beauty*** asks how has this nightmare scenario become a reality, and what do we do now?

Shelton describes her purpose for making ***Keep Sleeping, Beauty***: "I am creating this work because I am angry and shocked by the explosion of 'sleep content' online, featuring women who have been drugged (and more) without their consent. I'm angry at the imbalances of power. Angry about the vilification of women, angry about the casual sexism, angry about the implied ownership of women's bodies and the heteronormativity that is so entrenched in the ways that we interact with each other.

"And I want to create ways to have conversations about how we can change for the better." - Shelton.

The new performance combines that passionate investigation with Shelton's signature theatricality, dark humour and high-camp performance art. Olivier Award-winning Director Ursula Martinez joins Shelton, continuing a creative partnership that has delivered world-touring performances (UK, USA, Canada); international awards (Edinburgh's The Scotsman Fringe First Award; Mental Health

Foundation Award); and local accolades (Matilda Awards: Best Independent Production, Best Actor in a Leading Role; Adelaide Fringe Innovation Award, Darwin Fringe Best Cabaret).

Metro Arts CEO Kieran Swann says, "Leah is one of Queensland's most fearless contemporary performance artists. She asks difficult questions and transforms them into theatre that is sharply satirical, darkly humorous, and deeply riveting. We're proud to support another searing critique that confronts an urgent social issue with disarming humour, absurdity and high camp; opening up conversations about consent and power in a way that only Leah Shelton can."

Following the premiere of *Keep Sleeping Beauty* at Metro Arts, as part of this year's Melt Festival - a city-wide celebration of queer art and culture - an international tour is in the pipelines; taking this new Queensland work to audiences around the world.

PRAISE FOR SHELTON'S WORKS

"an all-guns blazing, brute force demolition of sexual politics" ★★★★★ ([Gutter Culture](#) for ON HEAT)

Simply magnificent ... don't think I've ever seen an audience so totally gobsmacked." (Seesaw Magazine for ON HEAT)

"moving and thought-provoking visual theatre that's also terrific fun." ★★★★★ [The Age](#) for BATSHIT

"powerfully calls out the centuries-old monsterization of women" ★★★★★½ A Youngish Perspective for BATSHIT

"intensely theatrical and deeply moving" ★★★★★ The Scotsman for BATSHIT

"An exquisitely put-together show, directed with customary care and sharp humour by Ursula Martinez" Lyn Gardner for BATSHIT

"A maelstrom of female history and rage ... an iconic performance" ★★★★★ Corr Blimey for BATSHIT

"subversive, moving and thought-provoking ... terrific fun." ★★★★★ [The Age](#) for BATSHIT

"glam horror & subversive visual antics ... illustrates the long shadow of patriarchal oppression" ★★★★★ The Age for BATSHIT

Accolades for Batshit

WINNER The Scotsman Fringe First 2024

WINNER Mental Health Foundation Edinburgh Fringe Award 2024

WINNER Summerhall Edinburgh Touring Award

WINNER Matilda Awards:

BEST DESIGN – COSTUME Leah Shelton
BEST DESIGN – VIDEO Grace Uther and Freddy Komp
BEST ACTOR IN A LEADING ROLE (INDEPENDENT) Leah Shelton
BEST INDEPENDENT PRODUCTION

NOMINEE Best Theatre Melbourne Fringe

NOMINEE Matilda Awards:

BEST DESIGN – SOUND OR COMPOSITION Kenneth Lyons
BEST DESIGN – LIGHTING Jason Glenwright
THE LORD MAYOR'S AWARD FOR BEST NEW AUSTRALIAN WORK

Accolades for Bitch On Heat

NOMINEE Green Room Awards, Best Contemporary & Experimental Performer; Matilda Awards Best Costume Design.

WINNER Theatre Award – Fringe World Weekly Award Winner

Accolades for Terror Australis

WINNER Adelaide Fringe Innovation Award, Matilda Awards Best Set Design, Darwin Fringe Best Cabaret.

NOMINEE Green Room Awards, Best Contemporary & Experimental Performer; Melbourne Fringe Performance Award.

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PRESS KIT

Images available, editorial and hero images credit Joel Devereux - [Press Kit](#)

Leah Shelton headshot credit Claudio Raschella

Ursula Martinez headshot credit Daniel Hambury

More information now available via <https://metroarts.com.au/event/keep-sleeping-beauty/>

EVENT INFORMATION

Keep Sleeping, Beauty

Created by Leah Shelton, directed by Ursula Martinez

Presented by Metro Arts in association with Melt Festival and Quiet Riot

4-14 November 2026

New Benner Theatre

Metro Arts, Factory Lane, West Village, West End, Brisbane.

Opening night Thursday 5 November 7.30pm

Season runs

Wednesday 4 - Saturday 7 November

Wednesday 11 - Saturday 14 November

Start times vary
Duration 50 mins

This project is supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland. Developed with the assistance of Metro Arts and Vulcana.

Keep Sleeping, Beauty is presented by Metro Arts and Quiet Riot as part of Melt Festival.

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Get in touch:

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About Metro Arts

Metro Arts centres Australian artists and experimentation.

In 2026-27, Metro Arts is embarking on a deliberate “rewiring” of our operations, programming and partnerships. This transformational process is strengthening internal systems, deepening philanthropic relationships, embedding entrepreneurial and sustainable practices, and refining strategy to better support artists and future-focused practice. These efforts lay the foundation for the organisation’s next chapter as we approach our 50th anniversary and Brisbane’s Cultural Olympiad for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

With a profound 45 year legacy, Metro Arts is at the forefront of nurturing Australian creative talent, serving as an incubator and launchpad for some of the country's finest artists. Metro Arts is equipped with state-of-the-art galleries, artist studios and theatre facilities, all located along the old Peters Ice-cream Factory Lane, within the thriving West Village precinct in West End. Their workshop facility at Norman Park provides vital space for visual artists to create, build and experiment supported by Brisbane City Council.



Metro Arts Program is supported by the Australian Government through Creative Australia, its funding and advisory body. Metro Arts is supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland and the Visual Art, Craft and Design Framework, an initiative of the Australian, state and territory governments. The Metro Arts Creative Development Program and Artist in Residence Program is proudly supported by Brisbane City Council. Metro Arts Visual Arts (MAVA) Substation is assisted by Brisbane City Council.