

Metro Arts

Annual Report 2018

Art starts HERE

Art offers a beginning. A new thought, a new experience, an opening to a new world, a re-examination of an old one.

In 2018 we offered the provocation 'Art Starts Here'. We offered audiences a connection with all of the amazing artists and art in our 2018 program.

We invited everyone to come start some art with us.

OUR PROGRAM SUPPORTS THE CREATION, DEVELOPMENT, EXPERIMENTATION AND PRESENTATION OF **EXCITING** AND **BRAVE** CONTEMPORARY WORK.

“The support offered to independent artists is not offered by any other organisation in Queensland.”
- 2018 LOCAL Performance Program Artist

“In my experience, the Metro Arts exhibition program offers something exceedingly special and rare: a large gallery space with a great reputation and generous install time which is open to emerging practitioners.

At this stage in my career (emerging), to get paid for a show in a space this big is so rare.”
- 2018 Exhibition Program Artist

“Thank you for the innovative and stimulating journey you took me on.”
- 2018 Audience Member



262 ARTISTS
217 HIRERS & TENANTS
42,444 CAFE PATRONS

f 9,600 LIKES
i 5,670 FOLLOWERS
e 2,291 SUBSCRIBERS



OUR FOLLOWERS ARE

68% FEMALE
28% MALE 4% OTHER
68% LIVE IN BRISBANE
51% UNDER 35 YEARS OLD



15 EXHIBITIONS

8 PERFORMANCE SEASONS

6 WORKS IN DEVELOPMENT

3 ARTIST RESIDENCIES

2 TAKEOVERS

1 PERFORMANCE TOUR

1 COMPANY IN RESIDENCE

1 OTHER

CEO & Creative Director Report

Jo THOMAS

What is it about Metro Arts that has allowed it to develop over almost 40 years and continue to be relevant and adventurous?

3 words...Art. Starts. Here.

As our Patron Wesley Enoch has acknowledged his career started at Metro... his first full time job, his first professional directing job, the first play he ever wrote (*The 7 Stages of Grieving*), the first company he ever ran. 30 years ago art started here for Wesley. This is what Metro Arts does and why the organisation is so crucial to the sector in Queensland and Australia – we give art, artists, creatives and arts-workers, and audiences a start! All of us need support, mentorship, opportunities, experimentations, failings and successes. Metro Arts is unique because we offer all of this and more.

2018's new art and new offerings included 15 exhibitions, 8 co-presentations, 6 new performance works in development, 3 visual artists in residence, 2 takeovers, 1 performance tour and 1 company in residence.

Kinly Grey was our year-long artist in residence with a stunning exhibition in November - proving again how crucial studio space and time is to enable artists to dream big. Our group exhibition, *Disobedient Daughters*, curated by Sophia

Cai, worked with the stunning minds, imaginations and hands of 9 female artists and invited all of us to critically examine stereotypical images of Asian women in a global context.

The performance program presented the work of Lally Katz, Counterpilot and Wightman & Stark amongst many others giving both local and national artists an opportunity to hone their craft. In a new initiative we invited Student Company in Residence Vena Cava to present a mainstage work and the *Fleshblood Festival* highlighting all new works by emerging artists. We presented works in Melbourne with both MidSumma Festival and Next Wave Festival, and partnered with Women of the World Festival 2018 to present two experimental works.

Our second iteration of *Deathfest* saw works across three sites and in partnership with SouthBank Corporation. We brought French & Mottershead from the UK to present *Bushland* and commissioned Flipside Circus to create a new work about children at end of life with partner Hummingbird House. This work, *we live here* has since received two Matilda Awards, while the Festival itself has received the Palliative Care Queensland Award for outstanding work in the community.

So, 2018 at Metro Arts was a year about fabulous, wild art and brave experimental artists and the unique community who assists such art and artists.

It was also a year of brave, audacious decisions.

In a seminal resolution the Board of Directors unanimously voted to sell our major asset, 109 Edward Street, to unlock the equity and ensure a sustainable future for the organisation and for artists into the future. Metro Arts is not just a building, it's a dynamic multi-arts organisation and suite of creative services deserving of an inspiring, well-maintained, inclusive and accessible home.

It's time for this bold new direction and a new, modern, fit-for-purpose home will allow us to refocus our priorities on supporting more artists, developing more new work, invigorating Queensland's cultural scene and providing exceptional experiences to audiences.

Choreographer and dancer Isadora Duncan is credited with saying: *You were once wild here. Don't let them tame you.* I offer this promise to all who come in contact with Metro Arts, the art and the artists – we will not be tamed! Our commitment is for the organisation to be around for another 40 years offering wild experiences and starting contemporary multidisciplinary art.



We Live Here by Flipside Circus at *Deathfest 2.0: a duel with death*, 2018. Image by Michael Cook.



Disobedient Daughters curated by Sophia Cai, 2018. Image by Louis Lim.

“

A thank you to all of the artists, our patron Wesley Enoch, the Metro team and Board of Directors and especially to our Chair who is stepping down after many years of commitment to the organisation. John, your work will long be remembered. You leave us in a great position.

”

- Jo Thomas, CEO & Creative Director

Chairman Report

JOHN DUNLEAVY

I am pleased to present our Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2018.

This year has seen further advances on a number of issues we have been working on for some time as well as progress on a number of new issues.

Notably when I reflect upon 2018 the following themes are evident:

- A continued and regular commitment to good financial management and system changes in this area;
- Further work to seek to leverage value from our main asset being our building at 109 Edward Street Brisbane;
- Significant work to review our governance as an organisation with a view to achieving improvements and modernizing our processes in this area; and
- Setting the foundations for fundamental change to allow Metro to grow, diversify and refresh its position in the Queensland and national Arts landscape.

DILIGENT FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Building on the good work of the past few years we continued a deliberate focus on careful financial management of Metro's affairs. The 2018 accounting surplus is a direct function of this focus and the good

work of the Finance Committee including Michael Cottier and Jo Thomas. I take this opportunity to highlight the efforts of the Financial team at Metro for this good result, particularly given a period of strategic change and distraction.

LEVERAGE VALUE FROM OUR KEY PROPERTY ASSET

We continued progress to identify ways to leverage value from our main organisational asset – 109 Edward Street. A number of key external advisors provided guidance during this reporting period on a range of issues affecting the value of our building. The results of this work directly contributes to the intrinsic value of our property asset, our knowledge in these areas and how best to extract value from our building asset in a way that stays true to our mission.

GOVERNANCE AND DIGITAL

I extend a thanks to my fellow Board colleagues, CEO and all of the Metro team for their considerable input into refreshing our practices in many areas associated with the Governance and strategy of the organisation. In addition I extend a thanks to Arts Queensland for financial and other support given to Metro to review its practices in this area and also your help on a range of matters affecting our Strategic change. Considerable investment has

been made to modernize our documents, processes and future policies in a range of Governance and administrative matters. Notably, this work has, among other things resulted in a contemporary constitutional document that better reflects modern practice. All of these deliberate efforts are a testament to our desire for Metro to progress to its nextphase of growth.

Technology changes are impacting on all of our everyday lives. With the addition of new skills to the Board in the area of Information Technology we have been able to develop a new digital strategy for the organisation that improves efficiencies as well as helps (hopefully) the Metro team work "smarter" not "harder". There is new energy around the potential these changes may have.

TOWARDS FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE

There is a saying that there is "no gain without pain". Making major changes unfortunately can attract criticism and can take time for mindsets to be accepting. Whilst not obvious there has been a longstanding process both internally but also externally to gain acceptance that Metro is more than our building but is about "who we are" and "what we do". It is equally important that an organisation stays true to its aims and the stakeholders it serves. I am pleased to advise that 2018 was a watershed year in terms of an alignment of minds for change at Metro but also a re-commitment to our foundational aims and purpose. I would expect 2019 to be a test of the success of this thinking.

BOARD SUCCESSION PLANNING

I am proud to report that Metro is far more than the input of any one person in the organisation but the genuine outcomes of a team based result. At different times during my tenure at Metro individuals have sought to dominate proceedings but in all cases the collective thinking has prevailed. As a Board member and Chair for many years at Metro I have strived to do my best to perpetuate a team effort.

It is important that any organisation goes through a process of renewal and revitalization. Such developments can encourage new thinking, perspectives and opportunities.

With this in mind I consider it time for me to step down as Chairman to allow for the next generation to take over. I will be available to assist my successor in this transition and with this in mind am currently working with Board to determine how this may be best achieved. I am cognizant that I want to give my successor every chance to imprint their own style onto the position of Chair but also ensure appropriate support and prior knowledge is available from me whenever required.

Financial Report

MICHAEL COTTIER

It is a pleasure to present my 7th annual Metro Arts Treasurer's report.

2018 may prove to be a momentous year for Metro Arts. As reported elsewhere (see Chairman and CEO reports), in late November 2018 the Board announced its proposal to pursue options to potentially sell the Metro Arts building at 109 Edward Street ("the building") and establish a vibrant new Metro home for art and artists in Brisbane. Any net proceeds from a sale of the building must be applied in accordance with Metro's Constitution. Ideally Metro Arts plans to fund arts projects and initiatives over the long term using some of any net building sale proceeds as a catalyst.

The financial position of the company, including its cash position, is described in the financial statements. The current economic and arts funding environment in which the company operates remains challenging.

Metro recorded a 2018 operating profit of \$118,407 (2017: profit of \$6,254). I am pleased to note that the 2018 result was a significant improvement on each of the last three years 2015-2017.

Accounting revenues for the year were up 19% at \$1,427,248. The result reflects bringing to account recent successful fundraising efforts. However, café sales were flat compared with 2017. Tenancy

income was down 12%, reflecting softer local commercial conditions.

Total expenses were up 9.7% to \$1,308,841. While employee benefit expenses were 5.4% lower than 2017, consultants and contractor costs were significantly higher this year. This increase primarily related to two areas: Board strategic considerations relating to the building, and corporate governance initiatives including redrafting the company's Constitution and other Board governance matters. These initiatives received significant funding support from our key government funders, and we are grateful to them all. However, we particularly want to thank the Queensland Government for its support in relation to these specific initiatives.

Total grants expended were up 40% on 2017. This partly reflects acquittal of funding for the new lift in the building, and the strategic and governance matters referred to above.

Private philanthropic fundraising activities continued to be otherwise negatively impacted by relatively weak economic conditions and a very competitive environment to attract contemporary arts funding.

The Directors consider that the outlook is improving, but still presents significant challenges in terms of funding and other

revenue generation, as well as continuing to contain costs while still delivering quality contemporary art programs and services. For example, for the next year (at least), Metro continues to occupy an aging, heritage-featured building in Edward Street, as well as leasing other properties for artists' use outside the Brisbane cbd. Edward Street in particular demands ongoing repairs and maintenance just to "keep the lights on".

While the Directors have instituted measures and have approved plans to preserve cash and secure additional sources of funds, these circumstances create material uncertainties over future operating results and cash flows. Liquidity remains tight and requires continuous oversight by both the Board and management via the Finance Working Group.

Having regard to the above, and after making enquiries, the Directors have a reasonable expectation that the company will have adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

These resources include:

- the potential net proceeds of the sale of the building, less the cost of moving to and then occupying new premises (this is not expected to be finalized in 2019); and
- the remaining two years of four-year 2017-2020 funding of \$1.8M, from both the Queensland (\$1.2m) and Commonwealth Governments (\$0.6m) awarded in 2016.

Accordingly, the Directors continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial report.

I would like to acknowledge and thank our CEO and Creative Director Jo Thomas and all of the Metro staff and supporters for their hard work, dedication, focus and significant artistic and administrative delivery in the continuing challenging conditions during 2018.

I thank Chairman John Dunleavy and the other members of the Board for their dedication, hard work and support.



Something Like Dancing by Jacqui Shelton, 2018. Image by Jacqui Shelton.

2018 Presentations



Grasp The Nettle by Dana Lawrie, 2018. Image by Louis Lim.

23 - 27 January
PERFORMANCE: Gasworks Arts Park as
part of Midsumma Festival
Oscar Wilde's De Profundis
David Fenton & Brian Lucas

21 February - 10 March
EXHIBITION: Gallery
Grasp The Nettle
Dana Lawrie

21 February - 10 March
EXHIBITION: Gallery 2
Future Skinned
Madeleine Stack

4 - 21 April
EXHIBITION: Gallery
Disobedient Daughters
Mihyun Kang, Gwan Tung Dorothy Lau, Pixy Liao,
Janelle Low, Andy Mullens, Ma Qiusha, Sancintya
Mohini Simpson, Sad Asian Girls and Zoe Wong.
Curated by Sophia Cai

7 April
WOW at Festival 2018:
Brisbane Powerhouse
Femioke
MC'ed by Amy-Clare McCarthy

8 April
WOW at Festival 2018: Brisbane Powerhouse
Doing Dancing
Rhiannon Newton



Doing Dancing by Rhiannon Newton
with Benjamin Forster, 2018. Image by Jenni Large.

9 - 19 May
LOCAL PERFORMANCE:
Sue Benner Theatre
Poison by Lot Vekemans
EG

9 - 26 May
EXHIBITION: Gallery
Fantasies
Hannah Gartside

9 - 26 May
EXHIBITION: Gallery 2
Conversation in Two Parts
Sarah Poulgrain

14 - 24 March
LOCAL PERFORMANCE:
Sue Benner Theatre
The Eisteddfod by Lally Katz
Room To Play



POOFTA by Callum McGrath, 2018. Image by Sam Cranstoun.

“The exposure of my practice through Metro
has helped my career as a visual artist to
grow, expand and develop in ways I had
not even thought possible.”

- Exhibition Artist

30 May - 9 June
LOCAL PERFORMANCE:
The Lumen Room
Wheel of Fortune
after La Ronde by Arthur Schnitzler
 TAM Presents

13 - 30 June
EXHIBITION: Gallery
POOFTA
 Callum McGrath

13 - 30 June
EXHIBITION: Gallery 2
Wanblut
 Claudia Greathead

11 - 28 July
EXHIBITION: Gallery
Speaking Beyond the Vitrine
 Mandy Quadrio

12 - 14 July
TAKEOVER: Metro Arts
Fresh Blood Festival
 Vena Cava Productions

8 - 25 August
EXHIBITION: Gallery
Something Like Dancing
 Jacqui Shelton

8 - 25 August
EXHIBITION: Gallery 2
Into Another
 Parallel Park

9 - 18 August
PERFORMANCE: Sue Benner
Theatre
Love Letters to Fuckbois
 Wightman and Stark

5 - 22 September
EXHIBITION: Gallery
Bloodlines
 Sancintya Mohini Simpson

15 October - 4 November
TAKEOVER: Metro Arts, Flowstate South
Bank & The Ferryman's Hut Teneriffe
DEATHFEST 2.0: a duel with death
 Metro Arts

14 November - 8 December
EXHIBITION: Gallery
slow burn
 Kinly Grey

5 - 15 December
PERFORMANCE: TAFE South Bank
Crunch Time
 Coutnerpilot



Bloodlines by Sancintya Mohini Simpson, 2018. Image by Louis Lim.



Love Letters to Fuckbois by Wightman & Stark, 2018. Image by Yasmin Jansen.



Crunch Time by Counterpilot, 2018. Image by Dave D'Arcy.

“Inclusion in the Performance Program at Metro Arts was an invaluable opportunity for us to develop our artistic practices.”
 - Performance Artist

“One of the most unique and entertaining experiences I have had.”
 - Performance Audience Member

2018 Residencies

Student Company in Residence
Vena Cava Productions

12 Month Artist in Residence
Kinly Grey

5 Month Artist in Residence
Annelize Mulder

5 Month Artist in Residence
Melissa Matveyeff

slow burn by Kinly Grey, 2018. Image by Louis Lim.

2018 Producing Hub

Artists produced by Metro Arts

The Human Company
Brian Lucas
David Megarrity
Nathan Sibthorpe
Lisa Wilson

Oscar Wilde's De Profundis by David Fenton & Brian Lucas, Midsumma Festival, 2018.

2018 Creative Developments



Explain Normal by Danielle Constance, 2018. Image by Jorge Serra.

Unplugged
Damian Tatum

Stonewall
The Sui Ensemble

Waters & Boyle
Debase Productions

Explain Normal
Danielle Constance

Deaf Body in Space
Racheal Missingham

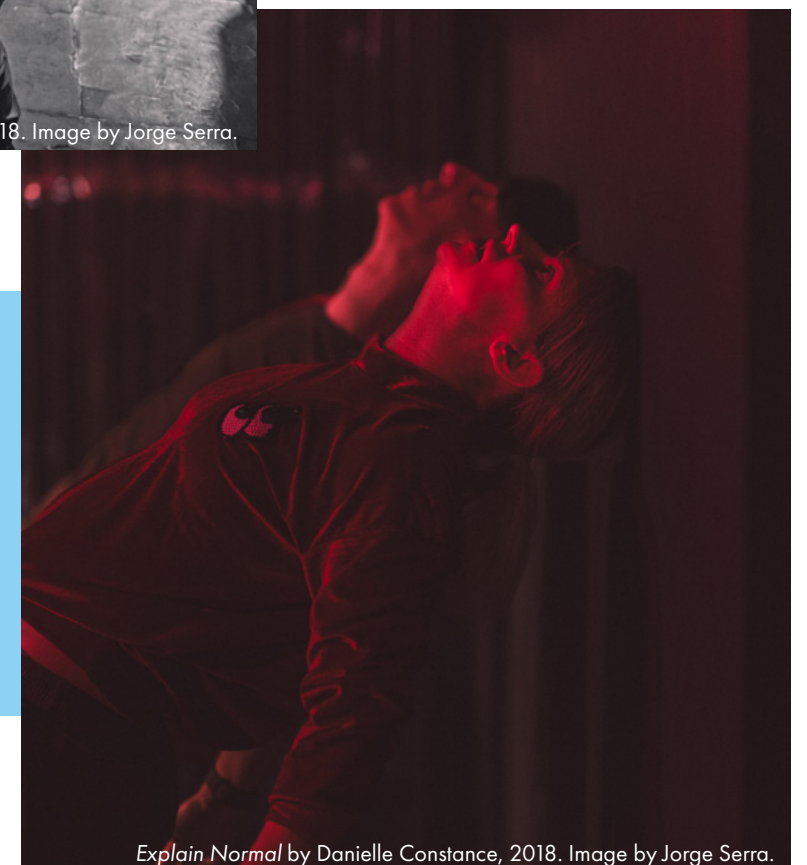
Tower of Babel
Baran Theatre

“

The ability to try an angle with the work that was completely untested was very valuable to see what worked, what didn't, and to see what we could take forward into creative developments.

”

- Creative Development Artist



Explain Normal by Danielle Constance, 2018. Image by Jorge Serra.

DEATHFEST 2.0: a duel with death



2,500 Attendees
47 Creatives

3 Performances
3 Exhibitions
3 Talks & Discussions

2 Social Events
2 Other Events



2018 Development

In 2018 we continued to receive generous support from our Metro Arts community. We acknowledge all who support Metro Arts and our artists through donations, sponsorship and grants.

We were particularly grateful to receive major gifts towards two new works commissioned by Metro Arts. Lynn Rainbow Reid AM and John B Reid AO sponsored our 2018 Performance in Residence, *Crunch Time* created by Counterpilot, which we co-commissioned with Next Wave Festival. Dr David and Rachel Hayes supported *we live here*, the Flipside Circus, Metro Arts and Hummingbird House collaboration which premiered during *Deathfest 2.0: a duel with death*.

Cutting Edge and Dendy Coorparoo provided sponsorship support to produce and screen three commercials, which was a very welcome contribution to our audience development, and Tone Pacer assisted us with equipment support. The Australia Council for the Arts supported three new works for *Deathfest 2.0* and Arts Queensland provided project funding for infrastructure works, and business and Governance review.

We were delighted to welcome the Hon Leeanne Enoch MP, Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts to a function on 3 November to celebrate the success of *Deathfest 2.0: a duel with death* with artists, donors, supporters and stakeholders.



Culture of Death by Alea Monsour, Navin Sam Regi & Anna Whitaker, 2018. Image by Alana Esposito. Pictured: Anna Whitaker, Alea Monsour, the Hon Leeanne Enoch MP and Metro Arts' CEO & Creative Director Jo Thomas.

Metro On The Move



Metro on the Move Meeting, 2018.

On 26 November 2018 Metro Arts publicly announced a new direction for the organisation. Metro Arts' vision for the next 40 years promises to be as bold, brave and daring as its artists and audiences.

As CEO and Creative Director Jo Thomas said:

"Metro Arts is not just a building, it's a dynamic multi-arts organisation and suite of creative services deserving of an inspiring, well-maintained, inclusive and accessible home.

"It's time for a bold new direction and a new, modern, fit-for-purpose home will allow us to refocus our priorities on supporting more artists, developing more new work, invigorating Brisbane's cultural scene and providing exceptional experiences to audiences."

Following the Public Meeting, a survey was opened for all to complete. 217 artists and audiences from the community offered their

input and ideas on what they love about Metro Arts and what could be done better.

Respected cultural leader and Metro Arts patron Wesley Enoch gave his support to the organisation's proposal to sell the State Heritage-listed building and establish a vibrant new home.

"Metro gave me a start 30 years ago and, like many artists, I am sad and nostalgic to hear this announcement but I am a big believer in strengthening our independent artists and giving the next generation a chance to build their careers their way."

"The real assets at Metro Arts are the memories, the careers, the art being made and the vision for a future. Artists need spaces to make work and curious audiences need a home."

"Though I will grieve for the loss, I am excited by the future."

2018 BOARD & STAFF

Alex Anderson
Maintenance Coordinator

Amida Callinicos
Finance Officer

Penny Challen
Communications Manager, until May

Jonathon Coutts
Venue & Facilities Coordinator

Olivia Dean-Jones
Food & Beverage Attendant, from August

Celestine Doyle
Development Consultant, from August

Bri Ellison
Bookings Coordinator

Shani Gould
Programming & Marketing Coordinator

Isabella Fredheim
Espresso Bar Staff, until December

Christine Johnstone
Interim Operations & Business Director, from October

Liam Lowth
Box Office Coordinator

Jess Murphy
Business and Operations Manager, until September

Xanthe Peters
Barista

Shani Pickering
Espresso Bar Staff, until September

Matthew Seery
Associate Producer, from September

Nicholas Seery
Technical Coordinator, from December

Bella Teggin
Administration Coordinator, from March

Jo Thomas
CEO & Creative Director

Genevieve Trace
Development Coordinator

Kyle Weise
Curator (Exhibition Program)

Melina Wightman
Venue & Cafe Attendant, from September

Verity Woodford
Senior Producer

Patron: Wesley Enoch.

A total of 9 board meetings were held in 2018.

CHAIRMAN
John Dunleavy

TREASURER
Michael Cottier

DIRECTORS
James Gauci, from July
Fiona Hawthorne, from July
Brian Lucas
Maira McGarva, from September
Daniel McKewen
Andrea Moor
Margo Powell, until September

Metro Arts acknowledges the traditional custodians of Brisbane, the Turrbal and Jagera people and their unique relationship with their ancestral country. We pay respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, and recognise their strength, wisdom and creativity.

POOFTA by Callum McGrath, 2018. Image by Callum McGrath.

SUPPORTERS

We are truly grateful for the support of all our partners in 2018, whose assistance enables us to continue to support the development and presentation of ambitious contemporary art. Work created at Metro Arts goes on to national and international platforms, connecting with audiences from around the globe.

Government Partners



Proudly supported by



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

Metro Arts is supported by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body. Metro Arts is supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland, part of the Department of Environment and Science. Metro Arts is proudly supported by Brisbane City Council. Norman Park Substation No. 9 and Teneriffe Ferryman's Hut are assisted by Brisbane City Council.

Partners



Lift Supporters

A very special thank you to all contributors to our Lift the Lift Campaign, especially the major supporters.

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**Queensland
Government**



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**creative
partnerships
australia**



**PHILIP BACON
GALLERIES**

Michael Cottier

Wesley Enoch

Lynn Rainbow-Reid AM

John Reid AO



Andrew and Julianna Carey **Cleanaway** **John Dunleavy**
Interpacific Insurance Brokers **Susan Learmonth & Bernard Curran**
Andrea Moor **Brian Tucker**



Moving Through by Kellie O'Dempsey at Deathfest 2.0: a duel with death. 2018. Image by Thomas Oliver.

Metro Arts

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