

MEDIA RELEASE

25 February 2014 – for immediate release

Exposing VCA students to the lived experiences of HIV

The Victorian College of the Arts (VCA) and Living Positive Victoria are working in collaboration on a special project in the lead up to AIDS 2014. Third year Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre Practice students will engage with a program of work inspired by the lived experience of HIV.

"HIV continues to illicit a creative response from us as human beings. We have not yet defeated this virus and HIV has spurred us to think creatively across a wide range of disciplines: politics, science, research, society, community and the arts," says Brent Allan, Executive Officer of Living Positive Victoria. "This project is a wonderful coming together of young creative talent alongside the lived and personal experiences of HIV and we hope this will not only increase the students' awareness of HIV but also inspire a range of personal creative responses."

The students will work under the leadership of respected directors Noel Jordan and Maude Davey to realise two full performance works, *Plus Sign Attached*, directed by Maude Davey and *UN/clean*, directed by Noel Jordan, based on interactions with members of Living Positive Victoria's Positive Speakers Bureau, coordinated by Max Niggli.

The works will be performed 16-23 May, at the VCA Performing Arts Building, 28 Dodds St, Southbank. For bookings and more information go to www.unimelb.edu.au/events.

"HIV and AIDS have a strong history of representation in the arts, and theatre and live performance have played an important part in this in Australia, as elsewhere. This project, which engages our students intellectually, artistically and emotionally with experiences of living with HIV and how HIV and AIDS have altered our contemporary world, is exemplary in the VCA's mission to produce thinking, proactive and politically aware actors and theatre-makers who will go on to contribute hugely to Australia's performing arts culture' says Dr Alyson Campbell, Head of Graduate Studies in Theatre. 'The Theatre department has been galvanized by AIDS 2014, across our undergraduate and postgraduate programs, and we are delighted to be working in partnership with Living Positive Victoria, whose expertise is vital to the project. We are thrilled that Noel Jordan and Maude Davey have come on board for this project, as each are extraordinary talents and have a deep connection with the subject.'

Dr Alyson Campbell will lead a free public panel discussion about the cultural representations of HIV and AIDS in Australian contemporary theatre and live performance on 26 March at 6.30pm-8pm in Space 28, Ground Floor Theatre Building, VCA, 28 Dodd Street. Everyone is welcome.

For further information please contact:

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- *Encl. photograph* –



Pictured (Left to Right): Maude Davey (Director, Plus Sign Attached), Dr Alyson Campbell (Head of Graduate Studies in Theatre), Noel Jordan (Director, UN/clean), Max Niggli (Living Positive Victoria).