

MEDIA RELEASE: Saturday 20 February, 2021

A MEDITATION ON HUMAN EXISTENCE

Archives of Humanity
Co3 Contemporary Dance
WORLD PREMIERE
PERTH FESTIVAL COMMISSION



Cr. Daniel Carson

Archives of Humanity is Co3 Contemporary Dance's compassionate and empowering new dance work conceived and directed by **Artistic Director Raewyn Hill**.

Making its world premiere at **Perth Festival 2021**, this emotive meditation of movement, grace and truth features a cast of more than 20 exceptional inter-generational dancers, a stunning score and a striking set comprising hundreds of black birds created by the people of Western Australia.

The audience is led into the theatre under a flock of black fabric birds – a remarkable installation and performance set from Japanese sculptural artist **Naoko Yoshimoto**, WA designer **Bruce McKinven** and lighting designer **Mark Haslam**.

Made from black garments by individuals, school and community groups across WA as part of Co3's ***The Bird Makers Project***, these birds carry the stories of the people who made them. They embody experiences of isolation, migration, memories, desires and aspirations, and soar skyward in a collective symbol of endurance and hope.

A stunning score from award-winning New Zealand composer **Eden Mulholland** opens *Archives of Humanity*, marking the next migration, echoing the movements of the dancers in a gradual and persistent climbing arc of cyclical patterns.

Through her dancers, Hill reimagines some of the art world's most striking scenes of humanity's tumultuous bid to transcend, including Bill Viola's *The Raft* and works by Caravaggio. To rise, to fall, but to always try to rise again – together.

Hill said it has been one of the most challenging and poignant experiences of her 25-year artistic career. 'For me, this new work is a visceral shared experience of human calamity. An exploration of responses to crisis, where human bodies become battlegrounds as nature presses its indignities upon them. They move relentlessly alongside each other, looking to others, to work together to overcome.'

Working with an intergenerational cast was inspiring, she said. 'The years spent learning, growing, developing and performing allow an immeasurable amount of knowledge about the body, its movement and modes of expression that can be shared with upcoming generations.'

Perth Festival Artistic Director Iain Grandage said *Archives of Humanity* was a significant Festival commission that celebrated our State's contemporary dance company in a centrepiece Festival event for the first time.

'*Archives of Humanity* promises to be brilliant,' he said, 'In every rehearsal and workshop I've had the privilege of attending, the work has moved me to tears. Not only are the dancers a living embodiment of what care and community look like, those performers are supported by the most extraordinary and moving score from Eden Mulholland. It is a thrill to have such a major work from Co3 represented in the Festival.'

The Bird Makers Project was an initiative devised by Raewyn Hill and Naoko Yoshimoto in 2019. In 2020 it became a core focus for Co3 in the initial stages of the pandemic, to be able to provide an opportunity for engagement and to connect with the WA community. Purposeful and creative it gave us all a time for reflection. Participants followed instructional videos and attended workshops both virtually and in person, to make a bird from their donated piece of black clothing for the set.

These black birds and shared stories of isolation and migration represent the courage and hope of those months and for the future of the world that is unfolding before us. This tactile and experiential set will be available for the general public to experience for free. The archive of these stories lay the foundation for our future.

Supported by Wesfarmers Arts.

www.co3.org.au

WHAT: Archives of Humanity

WHERE: Studio Underground / Yandilup / Northbridge

WHEN: Fri 19 Feb – Sat 27 Feb

HOW MUCH: \$25-\$49

BOOKINGS AND FESTIVAL INFO: perthfestival.com.au

Click [here](#) for images. For further information, interviews or images please contact:

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Perth Festival acknowledges the Noongar people who continue to practise their values, language, beliefs and knowledge on their kwobidak boodjar. They remain the spiritual and cultural birdiyangara of this place and we honour and respect their caretakers and custodians and the vital role Noongar people play for our community and our Festival to flourish.

ABOUT PERTH FESTIVAL

Founded in 1953 by The University of Western Australia, Perth Festival is the longest running international arts festival in Australia and Western Australia's premier cultural event. The Festival has developed a worldwide reputation for excellence in its international program, the presentation of new works and the highest quality artistic experiences for its audience. For 67 years, the Festival has welcomed to Perth some of the world's greatest living artists and now connects with hundreds of thousands of people each year. *Iain Grandage is the Artistic Director 2020–23.*