

Why we are here

Brisbane Visual Arts Advocacy began as a group of artist-artswokers who gathered in early 2020. Covid had triggered the daisy-chain collapse of the arts industry, and instead of responding supportively, Brisbane City Council funnelled artist grant money into other areas of the budget. We were similarly disappointed in the state and federal responses. Already burned out from interfacing with the funding system, we simultaneously witnessed just how precarious it was.

We realised that not only are artists consistently the hardest hit in all of these contexts, but our voices are often not represented in policy and funding decisions. Advocacy committees typically contain lawyers, developers, and artistic directors of various institutions and festivals, rather than the primary producers of the arts industry: artists.

In addition, members of our founding group had been struggling with issues of hierarchy and interpersonal dynamics in small, semi-professional and/or volunteer-based contexts. In an industry ecosystem so small, interpersonal struggles can profoundly affect future opportunities for practice. It's sometimes scary when our relationships and our careers become so tangled up together, and can compound the sense of precarity in artistic work.

Our realisation is that, despite our sheen of ideological progressivism, our (local and broader) industry has yet to deal with issues of social capital, the politics of visibility, and the complexity of ways that interpersonal and systemic flows of power converge and diverge across micro and macro levels. This often culminates in individuals (too-often 'the good eggs') quietly leaving the industry.

WHO ARE WE?

MARISA GEORGIU

I've been around a while but never really worked out how I'm meant to be in the scene. What even is networking I don't understand? I hate how capitalism seems to have infused every crevice of experience... ew, get out of me!



THEY/THEM
#social work
#industry critique
#plagued by constant sense of injustice

AMELIA MCLEISH

I am quite lame, but you know... I try????????? I just want everyone to live out and enact their passion in their life and think that people shouldn't be gatekept by institutional power.



SHE/HER
#ARIs
#Meanjin Arts Community
#Likes fun

NOAM O'REILLY

Generally confuddled by their conservative christian coming-of-age that got queered up and nerodiversified, Noam has suffered from an obsessive compulsion to be good and do good, and what that means and looks like to other people.



THEY/THEM
#arts worker
#sorta lawyer
#only communicates through playlists



CONTACT US:
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OUR NEWSLETTER!

THE ARTIST-RUN INITIATIVE CURRENTLY KNOWN AS



(BRISBANE VISUAL ARTS ADVOCACY)

What happened?

Marisa and Noam were part of the original group who initially conceived of BVAA to be a peak body for the Brisbane artist-run scene, engaging in advocacy to Council and other funding bodies. We held a few meetings, established the need, and made some plans.

Amelia attended and thought they were a bit overwhelming with too many people, with an institutional manner of gathering (A: it was just a lot). We wrote some fabulous submissions to Council, Arts Queensland, the 2020 National Enquiry into the Arts and to the Queensland College of Art who were planning to close the print studios. Then, as Covid developed, we all burned out again and Marisa felt too scared to check the inbox for approximately two years.

RADICAL RESTRUCTURE:

HOW HAS OUR IMAGINATION AND SENSE OF WHAT'S POSSIBLE BEEN

Our Questions

LOCALISM & GATHERING:

HOW CAN WE SUPPORT ART THAT REFLECTS WHO WE ARE, WHERE WE'VE COME FROM, AND WHO WE WANT TO BE, IN THIS PLACE RIGHT HERE, TOGETHER?

ARTIST LED, ARTIST CENTRED, ARTIST FIRST:

WHAT WOULD AN ART WORLD LOOK LIKE IF ARTISTS HAD AGENCY AROUND THE FUNCTIONS OF THEIR OWN INDUSTRY?

PRE- FIGURATIVE:

HOW CAN WE CREATE THE WORLD WE WANT TO SEE IN OURSELVES, OUR RELATIONSHIPS, AND THE STRUCTURES WE BUILD AROUND US?

WELLBEING:

HOW CAN ARTS AND POLITICAL WORK SUPPORT OUR OWN WELLBEING THROUGH THE PROCESS?

Who We Are Now?

With some new energy and some new awareness of the world, we are reviving the ARI currently known as BVAA with a different approach!

We (Amelia, Marisa and Noam) are keen to speak as ourselves, rather than as the voice of the artist-run scene. Instead of presenting professional for those we are advocating to, we want to present as who we are: artists ('professional' is a social construct anyway!). We'll respond to what emerges without too many preconceived ideas in mind. We're happy to poke and make ripples rather than concentrate solely on concrete advocacy outcomes.

What We Are Keen To Do

- Share content from a variety of voices that candidly discusses what we're doing and where we want to go as artists (let us know what you'd like to start a conversation about...)
- Facilitate supportive discussions on arts work (let's get together...)
- Write submissions to funding bodies (tell us how you'd like funding structures to change...)
- Be a confidential place to go for peer support (approach us if you'd like to do a critical reflection on an ethically swampy experience, get some advice from some folks who've run ARI's before, or would like a supportive soundboard for difficult or distressing situations...)
- Compile a massive, responsive email list for those moments that we need an instant collective voice (join our mailing list...)
- Continue hosting our advocacy resource list (check out our website...)