

BLAKADEMIA

Directed by Blayne Welsh

Created in collaboration with MUST students & grads

Produced as part of MPAC's *Kindred People Festival*

Auditions Tues Nov 25 6pm - 7.30pm OR Wed Nov 26 6pm - 7.30pm

OR Thurs Nov 27 2pm - 3.30pm 2025, at MUST - ground floor, western end of the Campus Centre (21 Chancellors Walk), Monash University, Clayton

Meet & Greet / Deep Listening Workshop Tues 16 Dec 6pm - 8pm 2025, at MUST

Rehearsals by negotiation Feb 2026 onwards

Negotiated rehearsals will increase a bit Aug 24 - Sept 3

Class requirements will be accommodated

Dress and Tech rehearsals are planned for the two evenings prior to

Performances Sat Sept 5, 2026

Various spaces around Monash University, Clayton

NB. Due to the flexible nature of most of the rehearsal period for this project, we believe it is compatible with pursuing other interests and productions, as long as key dates don't clash.

Thank you for your interest in participating in *Blakademia*, a collaborative verbatim ethnodrama being created both as part of Monash University's *Kindred People* festival in 2026. Performers will be auditioned and chosen from the wider MUST community. You don't need previous performance experience to audition! Monash students and recent grads of all skill levels, backgrounds, identities and bodies are welcome and encouraged to apply.

About *Blakademia*

This work will be a promenade work of verbatim ethnodrama in which the ensemble of MUST performers will be directly involved in deep listening, composing, devising and presenting portrayals of First Nations scholars and professionals who are sharing their experiences of their time within institutions of higher education.

The method of developing this form of research-based performance work represents an Indigenised version of the practice of Joe Salvatore, director of New York University's Verbatim Performance Lab, who Blayne Welsh, creator of *Blakademia*, studied with between 2019/2020 as part of both the Fulbright and Australian American Association scholarships.

Actors will have the opportunity to learn about and engage in a practice of deep listening, apply this knowledge in sitting with a prominent First Nations scholar, be guided in composing their own transcript, workshopping and rehearsing individually, before being supported in devising their own portrayal. These portrayals will be conducted throughout spaces around Monash Clayton relevant to the stories being shared.

About the *Kindred People* Festival

Kindred People is a new Indigenous-led arts, culture and knowledge festival, taking place in the south-east of Naarm/Melbourne in September 2026, presented by Monash University Performing Arts Centres

Led by Gunditjmara man (and exMUSTer!) Tom Molyneux, with guidance from an Indigenous Steering Committee, the inaugural festival will gather Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander creatives and knowledge-holders alongside international Indigenous guests and non-Indigenous attendees to address the existential challenges of our time through performance, ceremony and dialogue.

About ethnodrama and verbatim performance

Ethnodrama and verbatim performance both represent applications of theatre and performance practice whose effectiveness exists outside of the stage. This practice has been used for research and sharing findings, empowering marginalised voices, studying bias with respect to bodies in a space and, now, as part of First Nations Truth Speaking.

In this practice, performers seek to replicate the original first speaker's words as precisely as possible, taking the responsibility of sharing the knowledge they have been privileged to carry in a way in which reflects the original speaker's voice accurately, respectfully, and with the spirit the first speaker intended.

To achieve this, selected students / grads will also become active co-investigators, as we work together collaboratively to support performers in forming a deep, meaningful and empathetic relationship with the First Nations scholars volunteering their story. In this sense, the process is less about creative choices and more about entering into a deeper mode of understanding these different First Nations peoples.

About the Director

Blayne Welsh is a Wailwan man, a First Nations theatre maker and recently joined the Monash Arts faculty as a Lecturer in Theatre and Performance. His practice emerged from his time as a visiting Fulbright Scholar at New York University, where he was mentored by Joe Salvatore, director of the Verbatim Performance Lab and author of the recently published *Creating Ethnodrama: A theatrical approach to research*. Blayne's PhD was based in situating Salvatore's methodology within Indigenous ways

of Knowing, Being and Doing to serve Truth Speaking, revitalise orality and empower unheard voices to effect genuine change.

AUDITIONS

Monash students and recent grads of all skill levels, backgrounds, identities and bodies are welcome and encouraged to apply.

Audition Content

Auditions will be conducted workshop-style: 90 minute sessions with up to 15 participants in each session. Students should come dressed in comfortable clothes that can accommodate movement.

This process will include reading and working with verbatim transcripts which you will be given in the audition. You'll also have an opportunity to ask questions about the work and process.

Note: In limited circumstances, alternative times can be arranged for individuals who have a very specific or deep interest in this performance practice.

Requirement Pre-audition

As part of the audition, students will be asked to present a short 1 to 1.5 minute physical presentation (movement) of your story, set to a piece of music. i.e. non verbal. We aren't looking for amazing dancers or movers here, we're simply looking to meet you. Don't overprepare, don't overthink. Bring the music on your device, or a link for us to play from our device.

Applications

Interested students & grads should complete the following Google form [LINKED HERE](#), in which they will introduce themselves, speak about their own identity, and explain why they would be interested in working on a project like *Blakademia*. They will also need to book in for a session via this [SPREADSHEET LINKED HERE](#).

You must fill both of these in prior and prep your short movement story.

We hope to notify auditionees of the outcome of their audition by Fri 28 Nov.

Due to the flexible nature of most of the rehearsal period for this project, we believe it is compatible with pursuing other productions, as long as key dates don't clash.

DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE

Due to the individual and workshop based nature of the process, time involvement will be flexible in the generative phase of the work. Ensemble members will agree to set regular appointments on an individual basis once selected.

We have our initial Meet and Greet and Totems *Deep Listening Workshop* **Tuesday 16 Dec 6pm - 8pm** in The MUST Space.

One on One rehearsals will begin early February, 2026, with exact times by negotiation. Regular ensemble building sessions will follow.

Yarning

Students will need to be available to participate in a 1 - 2 hour discussion with their assigned F.N. scholar. Participants will be expected to make time where necessary to accommodate the scholar's schedule.

Workshops

Much of the development work will be conducted via regular workshops starting in early February 2026. These can be facilitated individually or as a group, subject to the ensemble's preferences & availability. The workshops will support the performers in:

1. Composing a transcript based on recorded yarn to create a 3 minute verbatim monologue which carries the spirit, intention and the voice of the original speaker.
2. Rehearsing using the recording to develop the individual students' portrayal.
3. Refining the portrayal based on feedback from the original speaker.
4. Devising the ceremony in which the student will share the portrayal within their designated space.

REHEARSAL AND PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Meet & Greet / Deep Listening Workshop Tues 16 Dec 6pm - 8pm 2025, at MUST

Rehearsals by negotiation Feb 2026 onwards

Negotiated rehearsals will increase a bit Aug 24 - Sept 3

Class requirements will be accommodated

Dress & Tech rehearsals: are likely to the two evenings directly prior:

Thurs 3 & Fri 4 Sept

Performances: Sat, 5 September 2026 (Week 6)

Promenade audiences, multiple slots. Location: Monash Clayton, various

A big gamba-ngindu (thank you) to those expressing interest in this work. This is one of several works of this form currently being developed in collaboration with New York University's verbatim performance lab, as well as ongoing work within pedagogical and truth speaking spaces.

Even if you are unsuccessful in your audition for Blakademia (or you are unavailable for this project), with your permission, Blayne will retain your contact information and keep you posted as to upcoming and future verbatim and ethnodramatic projects.

Feel free to email blayne.welsh1@monash.edu with any questions.