



Max Burgess (they/them). Photo: Collection Saturday (2021), By Hahna Nichols and Max Burgess, commissioned by play_station space Wellington NZ, photographed by Amit Noy

ARTIST BIO: MAX BURGESS (THEY/THEM)

Max Burgess (they/them) is a queer artist based between Naarm (Melbourne) and Ngannawal and Ngambri Country (Canberra), whose practice spans the realms of contemporary dance, poetry, and dramaturgy.

Max's love for dance grew from training in street styles and commercial choreography as a child and adolescent through the Tuggeranong Arts Centre's Fresh Funk dance program. Max spent 10 years at the program under the nurturing eye of Caroline 'Leena' Wall, having many opportunities to dance, compete, and create. Max acknowledges their time at Fresh Funk as the catalyst for their creative career, as it instilled a love of gathering, creating, and exchanging.

At the age of 20, Max pursued full-time training in contemporary dance and ballet at Ev & Bow Full-time Dance Training Centre in Dharawal Country (Kirawee NSW) attaining a Certificate IV in Dance and then a Diploma in Dance Performance in 2021 from The New Zealand School of Dance in Te Whanganui-a-Tara, Aotearoa (Wellington, New Zealand).

Max's practice covers a wide breadth of the contemporary dance discipline, involving work as a dancer, choreographer, teacher, and facilitator. Max has had the privilege of collaborating with artists and companies across Aotearoa and Australia such as Stephanie Lake Company, Melanie Lane, Shaun Parker and Company, Felicity Nicol, Eliza Sanders, Australian Dance Party, Jeremy Beck, and InPlay Dance Collective.

Max developed their own solo work titled 'Synthesise Me' with the generous support of Canberra Dance Theatre and Performance Space. Max was able to premiere this work through Performance Space's annual Queer Nu Werk program.

Furthermore, Max has had the chance to develop their artistic practice with an awarded bursary through Ausdance ACT to undertake a course in dramaturgy facilitated by CoAD, and an eight month artistic development program with You Are Here Canberra.

At the heart of Max's practice lies queerness.

In life and art they aim to seek flexibility in the structures that exist, reorganising, reshaping, so as to breathe new possibility through a rigorous process of metamorphosis. It is a constant act of searching, an affirmation of the grey area, a seeking and exploration of what is unknown.

Max is eager to return to the Tuggeranong Arts Centre for the 25th anniversary celebration. From their time at Fresh Funk, to working behind the scenes as TAC's front of house, Max has an adoration for the work of Tuggeranong Arts Centre, bringing a vibrancy and love for culture, art, and community, to the south side of Canberra.

Max's performance for the evening is a physical manifestation of what drives them to move. It is a body oscillating between dichotomies, an analogy that all in existence is an enmeshment of opposites; And that within this, there is beauty.