

RACHAEL MAZA AM

Doctor of Fine Arts and Music, *honoris causa*

Rachael Maza is Yidinji from North Queensland, Meriam from the Torres Strait Island of Mer, and Dutch on her mother's side. Both born into a movement and carving out her own legacy, she stands strong for First Nations theatre making as a powerful tool for social justice and has a highly regarded track record in the non-traditional research outputs of acting, directing, and dramaturgy. A prolific artist, she is known internationally for her work on stage and screen, which has brought Indigenous stories, history, and cultures to global audiences.

Rachael Maza joined ILBIJERRI as Artistic Director in 2008 with a fierce commitment to First Peoples' self-determined storytelling. Her strategic and artistic vision has been instrumental in positioning the organisation as one of Australia's most respected theatre companies, dedicated to amplifying First Peoples voices.

Her leadership has transformed the cultural landscape of First Nation's theatre, and the Australian performing arts sector. During her time as Artistic Director she has furthered ILBIJERRI's vision of creating Indigenous theatre that is both universal and uniquely Indigenous in its themes, resonating with local, national and international audiences.

As a performer, she has contributed to several milestone productions, including *Radiance* (for Belvoir St Theatre), *The Aboriginal Protester* (directed by Noel Tovey), *The Dreamers* (written by Jack Davis and directed by Wesley Enoch), *The Sapphires* (for MTC, Playbox Theatre & Belvoir St Theatre), and *Beautiful One Day* with ILBIJERRI Theatre & Version 1.0 as a co-devisor and performer.

Rachael's directing credits include *Big Name, No Blankets, Stolen* (ILBIJERRI Theatre), *Chopped Liver* (ILBIJERRI), *YANDY* (Black Swan Theatre Company), *Show Us Your Tiddas!* (Melbourne Workers Theatre), *Jack Charles V the Crown* (ILBIJERRI), *Foley* (ILBIJERRI), *Which Way Home* (ILBIJERRI), and *My URRWAI* (Performing Lines/Belvoir/ ILBIJERRI).

Her awards include: Uncle Bob Maza Memorial Award for Outstanding Contribution to Victorian Indigenous Theatre at the Victorian Indigenous Performing Arts Awards in 2003; The Drover Award – Touring Legend in 2017; a Australia Council Theatre Award in 2019; and an Honorary Doctorate for Performing Arts ECU and Inaugural Alumni Award at ECU. She received an AM (Order of Australia) in recognition for her work in the Performing Arts in 2020, and was the recipient of the Greenroom Lifetime Achievement Award in 2021.

Rachael Maza contributes to arts leadership in her many advisory roles and currently holds the important role of co-chair of the First Nations Arts and Culture Board of Creative Australia.