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David Bowie is

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The Australian Centre for the Moving Image, the University of Melbourne and Deakin University present

Bowie Symposium

The Stardom and Celebrity of David Bowie

Friday 17 & Saturday 18 July 2015

8.30am to 6.00pm

acmi.net.au/bowie-symposium

#bowiesymposium

Academics and artists explore the stardom and celebrity of David Bowie in this multi-discipline symposium.

The Stardom and Celebrity of David Bowie is a two-day multi-discipline symposium that brings together artists, academics and cultural commentators to reflect upon the influences of David Bowie in rock, pop, film, art, fashion and performance.

David Bowie's cultural and artistic currency is at an all-time high with the record-breaking *David Bowie is* exhibition currently showing at London's Victoria and Albert Museum and the release of his first album in almost a decade, *The Next Day* (2013), reviewed as Bowie's "greatest comeback album ever" (*The Independent*). Bowie is also experiencing a renewed wave of critical acclaim due to the recently released compilation of seminal music videos and the track 'Sue (Or in a Season of Crime)' from the album *Nothing Has Changed* (2014), celebrating 50 years of recorded work.

The symposium brings together a range of international and local scholars and performers including keynote speakers **Dr Will Brooker**, Professor of Film and Cultural Studies at Kingston University; **Robert Forster**, the Australian singer-songwriter best known for his work as a co-founder and songwriter of The Go-Betweens; **Angela Ndalianis**, Head of Screen and Cultural Studies at the University of Melbourne; **Sean Redmond** and **Toija Cinque**, of Deakin University; and **Dr Kathryn Johnson**, assistant curator of *David Bowie is* and Director's Researcher, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

The Stardom and Celebrity of David Bowie also showcases a number of national and international academics and art practitioners including keynote presentations, panel discussions, performances and workshops.

PROGRAM

Thu 16 Jul 2015

5 – 6pm

Early Registration

Welcome drink at Bowie Late Night

An opportunity to have a drink, meet other delegates and register for the symposium. The exhibition will open for extended hours from 6-9pm; exhibition tickets must be booked in advance.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, IMAGES
OR INTERVIEWS, PLEASE CONTACT:

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Exhibition organised
by the Victoria and Albert
Museum, London

SOUND EXPERIENCE BY



Album cover shoot for Aladdin Sane, 1973.
Photograph by Brian Duffy. Photo Duffy
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Day 1 – Fri 17 Jul 2015

8.30am

Registration

9am

9.25am

Opening and Welcome

Performance: 'Heroes' by tenor Marco Cinque and composer David Kram

To open the symposium, lyric tenor **Marco Cinque** joins composer **David Kram** to perform a special rendition of one of David Bowie's most memorable songs.

9.50am

Keynote presentation: Professor Will Brooker

Professor of Film and Cultural Studies at Kingston University, UK

10.40am

Break

11.00am

The Chameleon: Bowie's Creative Genius

David Bowie's music has been informed by his passion for performance and creativity. This panel explores facets of Bowie's experiences with theatre, film, acting, mime and writing, and examines ways these endeavours have creatively informed his music, charging it with a unique emotive power.

Panellists: Ian Dixon, Amedeo D'Adamo, Leah Kardos, Meagan Wilson

12.40pm

Lunch

1.10pm

The Many Faces of David Bowie: Performance and Creativity

Exploring Bowie's turns as actor and character, this panel examines the iconic power of his performances on screen. Offering an analysis of films (*The Image*, 1969; *The Hunger*, 1983; *Velvet Goldmine*, 1998), his stage characters (Ziggy Stardust, Aladdin Sane, Halloween Jack) and Tumblr Bowie gifs, these papers explore themes that have been present throughout his career: the tension between the bizarre, the dark and the sensual, fantasies of Byronic masculinity and sexuality, and personas that speak to alienation and identity and, which, in turn, have become powerful performances for fan identification.

Panellists: Alexandra Heller-Nicholas, Denis Flannery, Ian Chapman, Tim Highfield

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Break-out sessions (choose one of the following):

2.30pm

Covers and Collaborations

Presentations in this strand will include a hip hop-inspired mashup demonstrating the communicative meaning of famous soundbites reaching out to online Bowie communities, a focus on how Bowie has played with his image as part of comedy film and television to re-contextualise his celebrity, the tension between modernity and postmodernity that serves as a driver for Bowie's work as a whole, and an audiovisual deconstructive performance of Bowie tracks from the 1980s.

Panellists: Liz Giuffre, David Baker, Leah Kardos

2.30pm

Creative Pieces: Music

Bowie has been a major figure in the popular music world for over four decades, and is renowned as an innovator and influencer. This panel presents a lyrical piece about the poetic standards of two of his songs: 'Money' and his cover of Paul Simon's 'America' performed at The Concert for New York City, six weeks after 9/11. There will also be a reading of an excerpt from Mike Dawson's book *Life on Mars* originally conceived as a musical production inspired by Bowie's music and characters.

Panellists: Mary J. Mahoney, Mike Dawson

3.35pm

Fashion: Bowie Style

Bowie has always maintained that he isn't interested in fashion but in wanting his music "to look how it sounds." However, from the metallic bodysuits and knitted leotards to the sharp-shouldered suits and shocks of lightning bolt makeup, fashion has undeniably been part of Bowie's projected self-expression, a powerful tool in communicating his individuality at its most creative, transgressive and theatrical. Join key fashion experts as they explore the interaction between Bowie and fashion, and the ways in which he pushed sartorial boundaries and style conventions to become a fashionable icon of modern self-invention.

Panellists: Robert Buckingham, Shaun Cole, Robin Healy, Paola Di Trocchio

5pm

Keynote Presentation: Dr Kathryn Johnson

Director's Researcher, Victoria and Albert Museum, London
Assistant curator of *David Bowie is*

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6pm

Drinks at Bowie Late Nights

8.30pm

Conference Dinner

BokchoyTang, Federation Square

*Tickets for the symposium dinner must be purchased in advance.
Numbers are limited.*

Day Two – Sat 18 Jul 2015

9am

Performance: Thin White Ukes, *Bowie Restrung*

The Thin White Ukes are the world's first ukulele/harmony tribute to the shape-shifting prince of art-pop. From Major Tom to Ziggy Stardust, 'Golden Years' to 'Ashes to Ashes', rock's most radically ch-ch-changeable songbook is ripped up and restrung for deftly fingered ukes and ethereal three-part harmony.

9.20am

Keynote Presentation: Robert Forster

Writer and musician

10.00am

Loving the Alien: Bowie's Gender Transgressions

Transgression is at the core of David Bowie - the man, the celebrity, the pop icon. This first of three panels explores diverse aspects of Bowie's gender transgressions – from his appropriation and re-assemblage of iconic stars (Dietrich, Hepburn, Bacall) to his adoption of the glam persona Ziggy Stardust, the third-gendered, bisexual alien – relating how Bowie's gender fluidity opened a dialogue with society and dominant ideologies about gender norms.

Panellists: Lisa Perrott, Rebecca Sheehan, Peri Bradley, Toija Cinque

11.20am

Rebel Rebel: Bowie at the Margins

In this return to the theme of transgression, panel members look at the way David Bowie positively negotiates minority identity positions. Gender, sexuality, race and class are all addressed but are exquisitely tied to particular periods of time (the 1970s and '80s) and to material objects, memories, and rituals. Each panel member unearths the way Bowie's polymorphous star image impacted upon identity formation, collective belonging and desire and longing. Bowie emerges as a key subcultural figure and an intimate stranger in ordinary lives, investing the everyday with transgressive potentiality.

Panellists: Alison Blair, Associate Professor Sean Redmond, Dr Daniel Marshall

12.30pm

Lunch

Book Launch: *Enchanting David Bowie*

(eds. Toija Cinque, Christopher Moore, Sean Redmond)

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1pm

Capturing the Zeitgeist: Bowie's Music and Culture on the Edge

The final panel discussion around the theme of transgressions examines diverse examples of Bowie's groundbreaking approach to his music, performance and the world around him. Papers explore the relationship between 'Space Oddity', space rock, the Space Race and the Cold War; Bowie's appropriation of science fiction to explore transgressive themes and unsettle the boundaries of pop/rock music; the year 1980 as a creative pivot that saw the releases of David Lynch's film *The Elephant Man* and Bowie's album *Scary Monsters (and Super Creeps)*, plus the murder of John Lennon marking the beginnings of new directions; and the local impact of Bowie's first tour of Melbourne in 1978, which brought together diverse groups and reflected the zeitgeist of an era.

Panellists: Tyne Daile Sumner, Angela Ndalianis, Matthew Richards, David Collins

2.15pm

The Dark Side of the City: Revisiting Bowie's Berlin

Bowie's Berlin period (1976-1979) is considered to be one of his most successful and prolific, producing a number of albums (*Low*, 1977, *Heroes*, 1977, and *Lodger*, 1979) that experimented with musical form and idiom. Berlin, however, was much more than a laboratory for experimentation for Bowie – it was a landscape, a traumatic space and a carnival of possibility that seeped its way into Bowie's own persona, politics and artwork. In this nostalgic stream, panel members explore the way the city, the German art scene and the maddening genius of Bowie collided and colluded in exciting and provocative ways.

Panellists: Hans Peter Frühauf, Professor Lisa Gotto, Andrea Baker

3.25pm

Break

3.45pm

Selling 'David Bowie'

Can a celebrity ever emancipate themselves from their performance persona and the market? Is the Space Race and David Bowie inextricably linked, even today? This panel explores the recurrence of space, science fiction and alien motifs in Bowie's work, his emergence during a period of intense space dreaming and Bowie's public image through the lens of the media, from film and TV to current social media platforms. How has this changed the way that 'David Bowie' is owned by his fans and audience, and who constructs celebrity – the individual or the market?

Panellists: Mitch Goodwin, Stephen Stockwell, Susan Bye, Toni Eagar

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Performances

Jesse Fultone

One Flash of Light but No Smoking Pistol: The seamless transition from glam provocateur to mainstream juggernaut

Melbourne musician Jesse Fultone performs a deconstructive mashup of the Bowie tracks which serve as the celestial body around which Bowie slungshot himself into the 1980s. Three tracks in particular demarcate an important shift in Bowie's music – 'Moonage Daydream', 'Ashes to

Ashes' and 'Let's Dance' with 'Ashes' serving as the fulcrum between the lingering 1970s "power to the people" ideology and the stark individualism that would come to define the 1980s.

The performance is a collaboration between Fultone, media artist Andrea Russell and motion designer Simon Burgin. Projections that respond to the performer co-explore the themes of character, transition, and identity. Both Fultone and Russell will draw on their previous experiments with projections as costume. Combined with movement-generated visuals, this promises to be a playful and engaging romp that explores the musical, technical and aesthetic legacy of a major musical influence.

Creative Workshops and Art Experiences

Jamie O'Connell

Golden Years

Golden Years is a system built to track data from online auctions of David Bowie memorabilia. Melbourne artist Jamie O'Connell recalibrates his previous work *The Elvis Story* for the Bowie symposium, to focus on David Bowie and discover what data this may produce. From this data set, produced in essence by fans both investing and divesting in Bowie, there is some sense in which we may see both Bowie's legacy and his identity as it is produced by his audience. The system monitors online auction sites, counting down the final seconds of the most immediate auction before printing and proceeding to the next. What is produced is a physical archive recording the movements of Bowie memorabilia, relics and related commodities, reconstituting some part of Bowie's identity. The work runs during the two-day symposium.

Mark Cox

Bowie Duffy Photo Shoot

Originally used for the *Aladdin Sane* album cover, photographer Brian Duffy's striking images of Bowie still evoke the excitement, enigma and sexuality of the great performer 40 years after their first collaborations. Known as 'the Mona Lisa of pop', Duffy's image (above) featuring a headshot of a young Bowie complete with lightning bolt makeup and cropped hairstyle typified the Bowie zeitgeist. This workshop re-enacts this iconic moment in the evolution of Bowie's style by staging a Duffy-esque photo shoot. It's a fun and interactive activity allowing people to express themselves in a creative way.

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Shae Spry

The art of cut-up writing: Burroughs and Bowie

In 1974 when David Bowie met William S. Burroughs, grandfather of the Beat Generation, he was introduced to the 'cut-up technique' of writing whereby words are cut from 'normal' texts and rearranged. In this workshop participants produce their own song lyrics, poem or story using this cut-up technique.

Tanja Stark

The Artist's Labyrinth

Bowie famously invited us into the *Labyrinth* in 1986 on a metaphorical quest around wisdom and integration. Historically circuitous walking paths that circle inward then out again, labyrinths have been found across many cultures and traditions to represent the twists and turns of significant life journeys. Great artists, musicians and poets have always explored

archetypally existential themes around the journey of life in their work and Bowie is no exception. His creative expression often touches upon the numinous and the sublime, the torturous depths of alienation and despair and the struggle to overcome darkness in a fascinating voyage of discovery which has taken many turns across the decades. Artist Tanja Stark has created a contemporary labyrinthine walk of sound and vision that invites us to participate and reflect upon some of these themes explored both in classic and contemporary art, including the work of Bowie.

Tickets: Full \$150, Concession \$120, Member \$110 Symposium Dinner \$50

Tickets for the two-day symposium include all sessions, lunch each day, and drinks on each evening at David Bowie Late Nights program. Tickets do not include entry to the exhibition.

Book at acmi.net.au/bowie or call 03 8663 2583.

***The Stardom and Celebrity of David Bowie* is presented in partnership with The University of Melbourne and Deakin University with the support of the Naomi Milgrom Foundation.**

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