

**ASIA TOPA**

JANUARY — MARCH 2020



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親密

ASIA TOPA CO-COMMISSION  
ARTS CENTRE MELBOURNE AND  
VICTORIAN COLLEGE OF THE ARTS PRESENT

# Virtual Intimacy

VERY THEATRE AND ACTNOW THEATRE

WORLD PREMIERE

**12–15 MARCH**

MARTYN MYER ARENA  
VICTORIAN COLLEGE OF THE ARTS (VCA)  
THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

70 mins

Performed in English and Mandarin

Restricted to ages 18+

**Co-Director** Edwin Kemp Attrill

**Co-Director** Tung-Yen Chou

**Actors**

Jason Marsiglia  
Shih-Yi Tseng

**Dramaturg** Teddy Dunn

**Lighting Designer**

Rachel Lee  
Dazai Chen

**Sound Designer** Hai-Ting Liao

**Videography** Chien-Yu Liu

**APP Developer** Samantha E. Schaffer

**Technical Director** Ray-Pei Yu

**Stage Manager**

Jacinta Anderson  
Chi-Chun Feng

**Script Collaborator** Chi-Chun Feng

**International Producer** Rhen Soggee

**Executive Producer** Po-Shan Wu

**Marketing Coordinator** Caitlin Ellen Moore

**Interns**

Joe Dias  
Hui Zhao

**Community Members**

Cameron Magusic  
Evander Wan  
Jessi Lewis  
Jin Chong  
Kevin Chai  
Scotty So  
Ping Wen

Queer hookup culture goes under the microscope in this new performance work.

*Virtual Intimacy* explores our relationships with technology and the ways it shapes our connection with others.

Developed with artists from South Australia and Taiwan alongside queer community participants in Melbourne, the show interrogates the world through digital footprints left behind – steps taken, the Facebook friends made, Instagram photos shared and number of hookups – on the search for “virtual intimacy”.

A unique performance experiment suitable for English and Mandarin speakers, *Virtual Intimacy* explores queer stories of coming out, love, loss and finding community through technology.

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*Virtual Intimacy* has been co-commissioned by National Theater & Concert Hall, Taipei and Asia TOPA. It is supported by Arts Centre Melbourne through Asia TOPA, National Culture and Arts Foundation, the Department of Cultural Affairs Taipei City Government, the Government of South Australia through Arts South Australia, ACMI and a Playking Foundation Travel Grant.

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**Free Artist Talk**

Sunday 15 March  
12.30-1.30pm  
MPavilion

**Speakers**

Tung-Yen Chou and Edwin Kemp Attrill



Government of South Australia  
Arts South Australia



## ACTNOW THEATRE

ActNow Theatre is a South Australian theatre company that tailors socially conscious performance projects. It works with professional artists to engage diverse communities in conversations around challenging, contemporary issues. Its projects have been critically acclaimed, commended in South Australian Parliament, and highly praised by audiences, participants and community organisations.

[actnowtheatre.org.au](http://actnowtheatre.org.au)

## VERY THEATRE

Very Theatre is a Taiwanese multi-artform organisation, creating performance, video art, and exhibitions, funded through the resources of its partner company Very Mainstream Studio. Very Theatre takes new media as its core and focuses on creating interdisciplinary works with a strong emphasis on narrative and text, which strive to envision new ways of seeing and experiencing performance. Very Theatre has won multiple awards and performed throughout Europe and Asia.

[vmstudio.tw/vmtheatre](http://vmstudio.tw/vmtheatre)

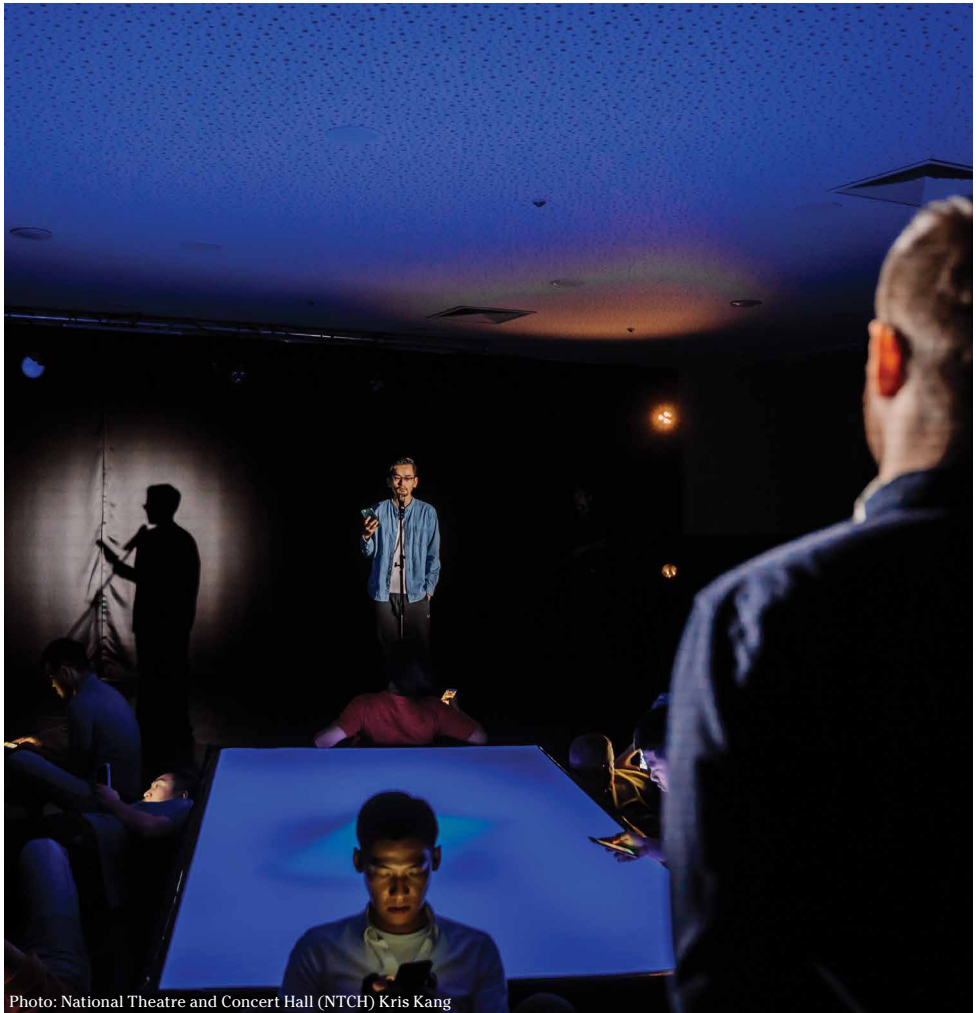


Photo: National Theatre and Concert Hall (NTCH) Kris Kang

*We both run theatre companies,  
we're both workaholics.*

*We're both gay men, and single.*

*We've both created work about Grindr and  
online dating.*

*That is – we create work based on our singleness.*

*But we're also very different – particularly in the  
work that we create.*

Community has been at the heart of this piece at every stage in the development of this work – in Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Taipei.

As well as community, it's about us as individuals. The first week of development – the first week Yen and I met – we went to a gay beat in the Melbourne parklands, a nude party at a pool hall and a gay sauna. These were not

intimate experiences, but they prompted us to ask: In an increasingly virtual world, how is intimacy changing?

Queer culture has paved the way for mainstream society through a technology-based sexual liberation, with the popularity of online dating and apps such as Grindr. *Virtual Intimacy's* world is one of abundance and ambivalence – of multiple voices and multiple narratives, juxtaposing the hyper sexualised 'meat market' of gay hookup culture with the ethereal, ephemeral relationships of intimacy in online spaces. Created as a bilingual work between Australia and the new queer centre of Asia, Taiwan, it is about the future of queerness and of relationships in the Asian century.

**Edwin Kemp Attrill & Tung-Yen Chou  
(co-directors)**

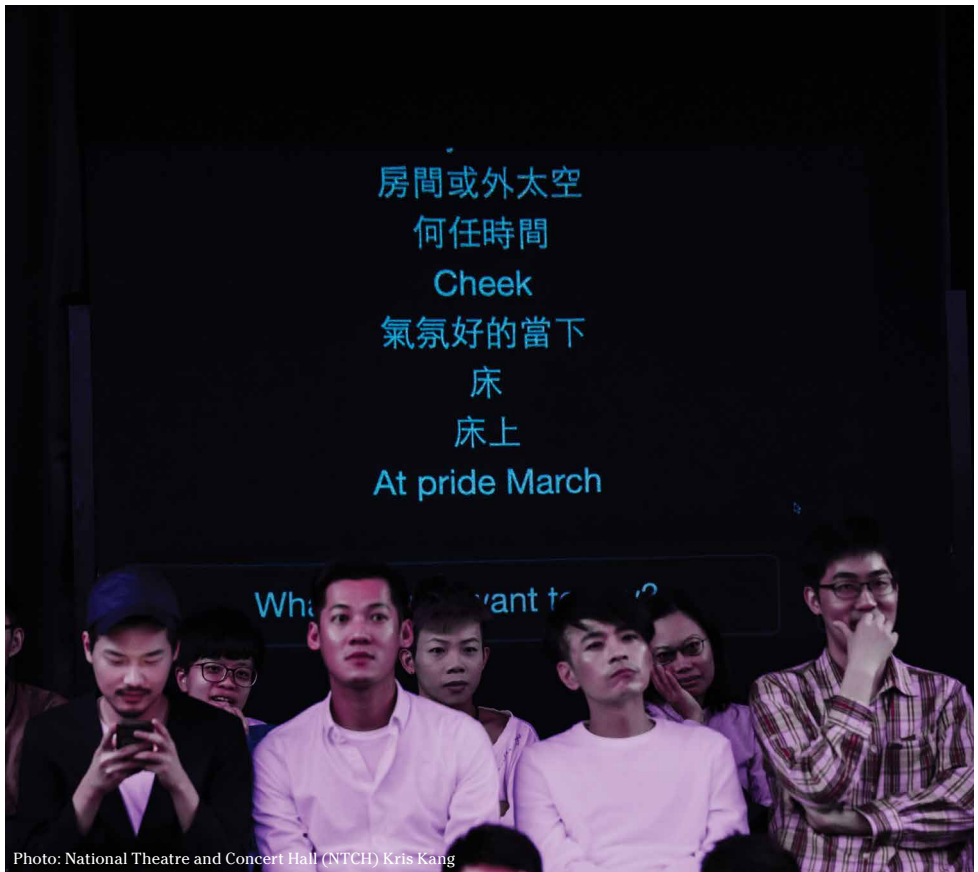


Photo: National Theatre and Concert Hall (NTCH) Kris Kang

## EDWIN KEMP ATTRILL

### Co-Director

Edwin Kemp Attrill is a South Australian theatre maker. He is the founder and Artistic Director of ActNow Theatre and the former Artistic Director of the University of Adelaide Theatre Guild. Edwin's work focuses on interactive theatre and participatory storytelling, exploring social justice themes. As a community arts practitioner, Edwin works with people with disabilities, prisoners, LGBTIQ communities, young people, refugees and migrants, with organisations including Urban Myth Theatre of Youth, No Strings Attached Theatre of Disability, Tutti Arts, Company @, Flinders University, Vitalstatistix, Feast Festival and NIDA Open. He holds a Diploma in Theatre Arts through Victoria University and a Graduate Certificate in Arts and Community Engagement through Victorian College for the Arts. Edwin was the recipient of the 2013 Channel 9 Young Achievers Award for Career Leadership, 2015 Geoff Crowhurst Memorial Award at the South Australian Ruby Awards and 2018 Australia Council Kirk Robson Award.

## TUNG-YEN CHOU

### Co-Director

Tung-Yen Chou holds a MA in Scenography with distinction from Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design in London and a BFA in Theatre Directing from Taipei National University of the Arts (TNUA). He is the founder and director of Very Theatre and Very Mainstream Studio. Focusing on theatre and moving image, he makes interdisciplinary works of performance, installation and music video. The latest international co-production with Culture Yard in Denmark, *Chronicle of Lightyear – Taipei, Copenhagen*, premiered at Taipei Art Festival and presented at Ars Electronica Festival, Linz, in 2018. He is currently working on *Facing Cities* which premieres at Noorderzon Festival in the Netherlands in 2020.

## TEDDY DUNN

### Dramaturg

Teddy Dunn is an independent director and dramaturg who graduated from Flinders Drama Centre in 2015 with First Class Honours and a University Medal. He has a keen interest in new Australian and international plays and adaptation.

## SHIH-YI (DEAN) TSENG

### Actor

Dean Tseng graduated in Theatre Performing from Taipei National University of the Arts (Taiwan) in 2010. His performance experiences include: *The Monsters* (Young Theatre Artist's Competition at 2014 WuZhen Theatre Festival) and *Allez* (the Young Theatre Artist's Competition at 2015 WuZhen Theatre Festival). Both were competition finalists. *Zuò Zuò Tea House* (Taipei Free Art Fair in 2015) won the Critics' Choice Award for best performance and was invited to Macao City Fringe Festival and World Stage Design in 2017. He has also performed in *Come Together* (Kuan-Du Arts Festival in 2016), *Chaos In Chronicling* (Young Stars, Taipei New Vision in 2016), *Macbeth: Paint it, Black!* (Sibiu International Theatre Festival in 2017) and *Unspeakable* (Immersive Theatre X Live Exhibition in 2017.) *Still Air* won best play of Taipei Fringe Festival in 2016, was nominated for the TaiShin Arts Award in 2016 and was invited to Bangkok International Performing Arts Meeting (BIPAM) in 2018.

## JASON MARSIGLIA

### Actor

Jason Marsiglia is a performer, writer and festival producer, with a passion for theatre and performance poetry. He studied performance at the Adelaide College of the Arts and has completed a Bachelor of Communications and Media. Jason represented South Australia at the 2015 and 2016 National Poetry Slam held at the Sydney Opera House. In 2017, he was a part of the collaborative team that devised and performed in ActNow Theatre's *Zero Feet Away*. He has also created theatre works for Adelaide Fringe, including *The Market* (2014) and *Prince Pipsqueak* (2016).

## JUI-PEI YU

### Devvisor & Set Design

Jui-Pei Yu is a freelancer and graduated from the Department of Drama at Taiwan University, and from the Institute of Performing Arts Design and Practice at Central Saint Martins College, University of the Arts London. He is engaged in theatre, dance, film, television, exhibition activities, music festival concerts and other art scenes, working in space design, technical planning and set drawing of cultural projects.

## DAZAI CHEN

### Set & Lighting Designer

Dazai Chen graduated from the Department of Drama at Taiwan University, majoring in computer lighting design. In 2016, he began his career in lighting design. His works include drama, dance, opera, musicals and entertainment. Recently, he has focused on the development of science and technology, integrating traditional theatre lighting and computers, using lamps, lasers and images to create new experiences of visual art in new media, constructing the imagination of this generation and the future.

## CHI-CHUN FENG

### Collaborator/Technician

Chi-Chun Feng graduated from the School of Theatre Arts, Taipei National University of the Arts, with a major in Playwriting. She has worked as a stage manager and worked with several theatres, dance and music groups across Taiwan. In recent years, she has completed several creative theatre works including: *Ever Never* in 2015, *Still Air* in 2017 and participatory interactive performance work *P.T.O (Please Turn Over)* in 2018 in collaboration with Chien-Han Hung and Ya-ting Kang. Currently, Feng is a freelance artistic creator.

## RACHEL LEE

### Lighting Designer

Based in Melbourne and her hometown Singapore, Rachel Lee is an emerging artist and lighting designer. Her design credits include: *Forgotten Places* (Citizen Theatre, 2019), *Red Stitch's Ulster American* (Brett Cousins, 2019); *The Three Graces* (The Anchor, 2019); *The Honouring* (Jack Sheppard, 2019) and *Blood Quantum* (Ngioka-Bunda Heath, 2019) at The Yirramboi Festival 2019; *World Problems* (Emma Hall, 2019); *Rent The Musical* (Take The Mic Australia, 2018); associate lighting designer on *Moral Panic* (Double Water Sign, 2018), *Fallen* (She Said Theatre, 2018); *Truly Madly Britney* (Stage Mom, 2019); *Baby Bi Bi Bi* (Flesh Coloured Panties, 2018); *Romeo Is Not The Only Fruit* (dir. Jean Tong, 2017-2019); *Tandem* (Gravity Dolls, 2018) *Bread Crumbs* (On The Fence Productions, 2017); and several 2018 Melbourne Fringe productions, including *Born to Achieve: A Little Sister Proves Her Big Sister Wrong* and *Lou Wall's Drag Race*. Rachel has completed internships with Nigel Levings, Nick Schlieper and Paul Jackson. She is also part of 2019 Melbourne Theatre Company's Women In Theatre Program and works closely with Western Edge Youth Arts (WEYA) on various productions.

## PO-SHAN WU

### Producer

Po-Shan Wu graduated from the Department of Diplomacy, National Chengchi University in 2014. He previously held positions as a promoting and planning executive at Taipei Digital Art Center and Taipei Digital Art Festival, as a marketing executive at Arts Taipei; and as leader of the Digital Art Foundation International Exchange Group. Since 2017, his focus has shifted from visual arts to performance arts. He is currently freelancing and working as Executive Producer for Very Theatre and Move Theatre.

## RHEN SOGGEE

### Producer

Rhen Soggee is an arts manager interested in contemporary, multicultural, inter/multi-disciplinary and participatory arts to affect social change through the arts, specifically with multicultural, intersectional, feminist and queer agendas.

## CAITLIN ELLEN MOORE

### Marketing & Development Coordinator

Caitlin Ellen Moore is a writer, activist, freelancer and general noise maker. A global citizen who's lived in Asia, Africa, the UK and the South Pacific, she is now based in Adelaide, South Australia. Previously, Caitlin has been the SA Outreach Coordinator for Oaktree, the Access and Diversity Assistant for the Adelaide Fringe and worked with Radio Adelaide as hosts for both *Global Generation* and *Film Fatale*. As a writer she has written for *StudentEdge*, *The Ladies Network*, *This is Radelaiide* and *OnDit*, and she dabbles in spoken word poetry. Currently, she is the co-host and producer of Radio Adelaide's *Pride and Prejudice* and *Thirty Minute City*. As a freelance producer, Caitlin creates podcasts under the name *Wickedly Good Productions*, including a highly praised podcast about alcoholism, addiction and mental health within the arts scene titled *WHY AM I LIKE THIS?!*

## HUI ZHAO

### Intern

Hui Zhao is an enthusiastic translating intern who joined *Virtual Intimacy* from her Master's program placement and has continued to work with the project past her placement. She loves fitness, language and Japan.

## JO DIAS

### Intern

Jo Dias is tri-lingual, being born in Melbourne, of Portuguese heritage and having majored in Mandarin at university. He trained as an actor on three different continents: in Australia at Deakin University (Rusden) and Victorian College of Arts (VCA), in China at Nanjing University of the Arts, and the United Kingdom at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts. In China, Joe performed mainly in Mandarin for TV programs and commercials, and wrote/co-presented a weekly bi-lingual radio show introducing Australia, which was also broadcast in Japan. In Australia, Joe has performed in over 20 plays and pantomimes, portraying a wide variety of dramatic and comic characters. He

was awarded Excellence in Acting at the 2017 Mansfield Festival for his performance as Dimitri Papavasiliopoulos in *The Stanley Parkers* by Geraldine Aron. He has been awarded a number of Victorian Drama League and Lyrebird acting awards. Joe has a Master's degree in Applied Linguistics and Management. He has taken a break from completing his law degree to study Directing at VCA.

## SAMANTHA E. SCHAFFER

### App Developer

Samantha E. Schaffer is an American artist and software developer based in Adelaide. Their passion is exploring the intersection of art and technology, as well as minimising its barriers to entry to help others do the same. A current Creative Consultant with Carclew, Sam is also an independent game developer. Sam creates art-games that blur the line between gaming and poetry. In their free time, they can be found wandering around taking photos, playing too much Pokemon Go, and judging you.

## COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Special thanks to all the community members that have joined *Virtual Intimacy* across workshop programs in Adelaide, Melbourne and Taipei in the development of this work.

A huge thank you to the following community members who will be joining us on stage for the premiere of this work, following a series of lead up workshops.

The production values your generosity in contributing, both in time and sharing your experiences, and how those experiences have helped to shape and sharpen the focus of this work.

Cameron Magusic  
Evander Wan  
Jessi Lewis  
Jin Chong  
Kevin Chai  
Ping Wen  
Scotty So

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Asia TOPA is a joint initiative of the Sidney Myer Fund and Arts Centre Melbourne and is supported by the Australian and Victorian governments.

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