

Lu Guang Rong

Head of Circus Studies
National Institute of Circus Arts

Lu Guang Rong graduated from the Nanjing Drama School in the early 1970's. Following this, he performed and toured with the *Nanjing Acrobatic Troupe* around the world until 1987. Mr. Lu was an original member of "Nanjing I" and "Nanjing II", a cultural exchange project between Australia and China in 1983-84 and 1985-86.

Since moving to Australia, Mr. Lu has worked with Australian traditional and contemporary circus companies and has been actively involved with the development of contemporary circus within Australia. Highlights of Mr. Lu's work include the creation of the Flying Fruit Fly Circus training program, designing and creating the Pole Act for 2000 Sydney Olympic Games Opening Ceremony, and his position as lead trainer in the pilot project which led to the establishment of the National Institute of Circus Arts (NICA).

Mr Lu's passion for teaching and imparting his knowledge to students and staff alike has seen NICA develop into Australia's Centre of Excellence in contemporary circus arts training. In 2013, Mr Lu created and directed the opening sequence for the 34th Mondial du Cirque de Demain Festival in Paris, France. The performance featured fifteen graduates and Bachelor of Circus Arts students. Lewis West, a 2008 NICA graduate and former student of Mr. Lu also won gold at the festival for his Aerial Straps Routine.

Meredith Kitchen

Certificate III and Movement Studies Coordinator
National Institute of Circus Arts

Meredith Kitchen trained as a dancer graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in dance. She worked with Australian Dance Theatre, Dance North, Chrissie Parrot Dance Collective and The One Extra Company, before joining Compagnie Philippe Genty, based in Paris, France, where she remained for over 12 years.

She created a full length solo work, "Disappearing Acts" which toured in Portugal and Spain. On returning to Australia in 2010, she took up the position of head of movement studies at NICA and works on productions both in choreographic and director roles.

William Meager

Tired of Will getting in trouble at school for climbing on anything he couldn't see over, a relieved Mr and Mrs Meager found a constructive outlet for his boundless energy; circus classes every Saturday started off as enough, but soon he needed more. When he's not on his hands, Will keeps busy spinning around on his Roue Cyr and somersaulting off anything he can find. At NICA, William specialises in Korean Plank, Hand Balancing and Roue Cyr. After graduating Will hopes to travel around the world with a career in circus.

Reece Cooper

Reece Cooper competed in gymnastics and trampolining throughout his adolescence. In 2009 he started training and performing with the circus youth group called Pulse WA. After performing two big productions with Pulse WA called Dreamweaver (2009) and Harmonike (2012), he then moved on to the National Institute of Circus Arts (NICA) where he is currently undergoing his third and final year of intensive training. Reece's specialties are Hand Balancing, Chinese Pole and Roue Cyr. During his time at NICA he has also performed with Madhouse Circus, travelling to the Perth and Adelaide Fringe festivals and most likely to the Melbourne Fringe later this year.

Yonnas Gebremedhin

Prior to his studies at NICA, Yonnas already had a strong history of circus performance. He has previously performed with the National Circus of Ethiopia, touring with the group in Europe and the USA. In 2010 Yonnas toured Europe and Australia performing in Mother Africa Circus. Yonnas hopes to perform with Circus Oz and Multicultural Victoria after graduating from NICA.

Rowan Thomas

Originally from Broome, WA, Rowan learned Juggling, Tumbling and Clowning through social circus at the age of 7. He was later introduced to the more theatrical side of clowning and circus by the Lunar Circus. Rowan toured with Stalker Theatre Company overseas and enjoys teaching in remote communities to children who wouldn't usually get to experience circus arts. Rowan specialises in Roue Cyr and clowning at NICA. After graduating he plans to find work broadening his knowledge and love for circus and one day bring what he has learned to as many people as he possibly can through teaching.