

For immediate release: 20 July 2026

Theatre Works and Aperture Productions
present

Savages

By Patricia Cornelius

Directed by Kitan Petkovski

2 to 12 September 2026

Theatre Works: 14 Acland Street, St Kilda

www.theatreworks.org.au



One of Australia's most uncompromising playwrights, **Patricia Cornelius** returns to

Theatre Works this September with a new season of her remarkable play **Savages** - a blistering, provocative work that tears into the rituals of mateship, violence, and power.

Directed by acclaimed theatre-maker **Kitan Petkovski** (*In The Club*, *The Inheritance*), this electrifying production places an ensemble of women and non-binary actors in the roles of "ordinary Aussie blokes", exposing the performance of masculinity with startling theatrical force and unsettling humour. Part of the 2026 **By Theatre Works** programming, **Savages** promises an unforgettable night of theatre that is as confronting as it is exhilarating.

Launching as a carefree holiday among friends, **Savages** charts the rapid descent from celebration into cruelty as casual banter gives way to intimidation, aggression, and brutality. Inspired by a tragic death aboard a cruise ship in 2002, **Cornelius'** razor-sharp writing examines the fragile foundations of male identity, asking difficult questions about the social codes that encourage violence, while rewarding conformity. The result is an urgent, contemporary work that refuses easy answers, inviting audiences to acknowledge the systems that shape behaviour beneath the surface of everyday Australian life.

"I am very much attracted to plays that reflect some of the hard truths about our current times", explains Director Kitan Petkovski. "Savages was written in 2013, but feels like it could have been penned today. The language that some men use towards women has not shifted, and neither has their behaviour. The rise in ultra-masculine networks and philosophies such as the 'manosphere' is alarming. With Patricia's signature style, there are punchy moments in the play where powerful lines are quickfire and fly off the page, both hilarious and brutal within seconds. It's works like this that truly excite me as a theatre maker."

Long recognised as one of Australia's most important dramatic voices, **Patricia Cornelius** is celebrated for her fearless exploration of class, gender, and social injustice. Her plays have earned national and international acclaim for their muscular language and uncompromising humanity. This upcoming production sees an exceptional ensemble comprised of lauded actors **Nicci Wilks, AYA, Zoe Boesen, and Laila Thaker** bring her words to life. Under **Kitan Petkovski's** dynamic direction, it promises to be a visceral theatrical experience that blurs gender expectations while revealing uncomfortable truths about power, privilege, and violence.

A natural home for bold new Australian writing, **Theatre Works** consistently champions artists who challenge audiences and expand the possibilities of contemporary performance. This new staging of **Savages** represents yet another significant milestone in **Theatre Works'** ambitious 2026 program, reaffirming the organisations commitment to presenting work that is artistically adventurous, and socially vital. With tickets now on sale, audiences are encouraged to book early for what is expected to be one of the standout productions of this years' inhouse season.

Based in St Kilda, **Theatre Works** has been home to bold, independent theatre for more than 40 years. They give artists the space, support, and freedom to take risks, and audiences the chance to discover powerful new stories. Each year, they present dozens of productions across their three venues, created in partnership with some of the country's most exciting theatre makers, solidifying their reputation as a vital ecosystem for independent artists.

Other 2026 **By Theatre Works** productions include *Australian Open*, *Beyond The Neck*, *Mara*, *Red Sky Morning*, *Lazarus*, *Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity*, *The Wolves*, and *Lord of the Flies*.

Praise for Kitan Petkovski's work:

★★★★★ "An extraordinary ensemble performance" - **The Age** (*The Inheritance*)

★★★★★ "Some of the year's best theatre" - **The Age** (*In the Club*)

★★★★★ "Hot-button theatre" - **Limelight** (*In the Club*)

Written by Patricia Cornelius

Directed by Kitan Petkovski

Assistant direction by Belinda McClory

Performed by Nicci Wilks, AYA, Zoe Boesen and Laila Thaker

Lighting design by Harrie Hogan

Sound design by Jess Keeffe

Set and costume design by Bianca Pardo

Stage management by Charlotte Fischer

Produced by Dianne Toulson for Theatre Works

2 to 12 September 2026

Tues to Sat 7:30pm

Previews: Wed 2 and Thurs 3 September 7:30pm

Opening Night: Fri 4 September 7:30pm

Tickets: \$55 Full, \$48 Concession, \$40 Preview, \$35 Tues (8 Sept only)

Bookings: www.theatreworks.org.au/2026/savages

Venue: Theatre Works – 14 Acland Street, St Kilda

www.theatreworks.org.au

Duration: 80 minutes no intermission

Age suitability: Ages 16+

Warnings: Contains coarse language, themes of misogyny and gendered violence

Accessibility: Theatre Works is a wheelchair-accessible venue. A full-access guide will be available closer to the date