

EMMA LOUISE PURSEY – BIO

www.emmalouisepursey.com

Emma Louise Pursey is a critically acclaimed, award-winning, Green Room Award-nominated actor, writer, producer and educator with three decades of professional experience across theatre, screen and interdisciplinary performance.

In 2025, Emma premiered her solo work *WHERE IS JOY?*—based on the life and work of Melbourne modernist Joy Hester—directed by Susie Dee. The inaugural season at fortyfivedownstairs sold out prior to opening and received national media coverage and critical acclaim. In 2026, she received a Green Room Award nomination for Outstanding Performance (Independent Theatre) and was selected as a featured artist at [Showcase Victoria](#), and has also been selected for the *First Base* program in September at APAX, Australia's premiere arts market.

With 30 years' experience in the Suzuki Method of Actor Training (SMAT), Emma is core faculty at 16th Street Actors Studio, was faculty at The National Theatre, and has been an industry guest at Howard Fine Acting Studio Australia, Film & Television Studio International, the National Institute of Circus Arts and the Victorian College of the Arts.

The first decade of her career was with Frank Theatre, a repertory ensemble that trained exclusively in the SMAT in Australia and Japan. Emma toured regularly to numerous theatre festivals in Japan, Europe and the UK, playing principal roles such as Lady Macbeth, Juliet, Gertrude and Jocasta, some of which were in bilingual productions. Festivals include the International Theatre Olympics (Shizuoka, Japan), Shizuoka Spring Arts Festival (Japan), International Youth Theatre Festival (Pula, Croatia), Toga Spring Arts Festival (Japan), European Regions Festival (Hradec Králové, Czech Republic), Hluboká Castle (Czech Republic), Adana International Arts Festival (Turkey), Aberystwyth University Theatre Festival (Wales), and London Festival (UK).

Emma was directed by the late, great Diane Cilento in her production of *Myrrah*, performed alongside renowned concert pianist David Helfgott, and spent over a decade as co-director of satirical theatre ensemble The Brides of Frank alongside Caroline Dunphy, Lisa O'Neill, Leah Shelton and Neridah Waters. Emma's final performance with Frank Theatre saw her perform for Tadashi Suzuki at La Boite Theatre.

Emma subsequently moved into independent and mainstage work for Queensland Theatre Company, La Boite Theatre Company, Brisbane Powerhouse, Queensland Performing Arts Centre, Metro Arts, Melbourne Shakespeare Company, and numerous independent productions across Australia. She is a two-time Dell'Arte Award winner for her roles in Frank Theatre's *Rashomon* and La Boite Theatre's *Oodgeroo*.

Relocating to Melbourne, Emma expanded into screen work, including roles on *Neighbours*, *Winners & Losers*, *Underbelly: Squizzy* and numerous award-winning short films. Melbourne independent theatre highlights include playing Character A in North of Eight's *Terminus*, being directed by John Gauci in *The Process*, Prospero in Melbourne Shakespeare Company's *The Tempest*, and Belinda in *The Man of Mode* at Chapel Off Chapel.

Early in her career, Emma was also a vinyl electronic music DJ who played in Beijing for the Millennium at the infamous Club Vogue and toured nationally and internationally performing a live-mixed soundscape to contemporary dancer Lisa O'Neill's solo work, *Fugu San*, at Dancehouse (Melbourne), The Performance Space (Sydney), New Territories Festival (Glasgow), and the Asia Contemporary Dance Festival (Osaka).

Emma produced, assistant-directed and starred in photographer Peter Milne's *The Oddfellow's Daughter* commissioned by MICF at ACMI, and directed Helen Smith's Butoh-inspired interpretation of *Lady Macbeth* at the Asia Pacific Triennial of Performing Arts (AsiaTOPA).

She also produced and cast the 2018 Tropfest short film *The Last Time I Saw You*, which won Third Prize, along with four of the seven craft awards, Best Film at Port Shorts Film Festival, Director's Top Ten Picks at Encounters Short Film Festival (UK), and Best Short Film at Peninsula Film Festival.

As an artist living with invisible disability, Emma actively engages in the ongoing practice of disability pride and self-advocacy.