



**ADELAIDE  
FESTIVAL**

**28 FEB - 15 MAR 2020**



Image: Rebecca Stella

DANCE / USA & BRAZIL

# Black Velvet

TRIBE

**AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE /  
AUSTRALIAN EXCLUSIVE**

**28 February - 2 March 2020  
ODEON THEATRE**

**Duration** 55 mins, no interval

**Choreography** Shamel Pitts

**Creation and performance** Shamel Pitts and  
Mirelle Martins

**Light Artist and video mapping** Lucca Del Carlo

**Costume Designer** David Gap, Naomi Maaravi

**Photos and videos** Maurício Pisani, Alex Apt,  
Willian Aguiar, Rebecca Stella, Itai Zwecker

**Audio** Tentáculo Áudio (Ed Côrtes)

**Graphic design** Idan Epshtein

**Artistic Manager** Elizabeth Schmuhl

**Production and Stage Manager** Derek Van Heel

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## SHAMEL PITTS



*"I am a teacher of Gaga, the movement language created by Israeli choreographer and director Ohad Naharin of Batsheva Dance Company, of which I was a member for six years. Dancing with Batsheva in Israel and touring with them around the world has opened up my palette towards the many tastes and paths which dance encompasses. Upon leaving the company, I began creating my own work which contains elements of spoken word and other theatrical elements. My first show was an autobiographical solo Black Box; it had its New York premiere in 2017. Mirelle and I met in 2013 when she came to Brooklyn to do her first dance course in Gaga. She was a student and I was the teacher."*

*Black Velvet is a texture of material. The title has to do with a nuanced research and sharing of the qualities between Mirelle and I as well as the relationship to the viewer. Black Velvet can be a very soft and delicate material but also extremely powerful due to its ability to absorb light and how it reflects light.*

*Black Velvet was born from the many conversations and dialogue between Mirelle and I. It felt as if from our first encounter in 2013, the work and content of Black Velvet started to brew. Mirelle and I drew closer due to our similarities, and even closer through the shared intrigue of our differences.*

*It deals with a lot of structures and archetypes. It questions many of these things and it blurs them so that something new can arrive between how one person can connect so deeply to another. It also aims to share and reflect on the colorfulness of blackness—especially in regards to black women—in a relationship of love, compassion, and camaraderie."*

## MIRELLE MARTINS



*"As a Brazilian, dance was always part of my life, but as entertainment mostly. I started to see dance as a possible art expression for me after 2013. In this year, I was 28 years old and really unhappy with my work and my life at that time. During recovery after a broken knee, I started to think in ways to pay more attention to my body. So dance comes to my mind like something to start to explore. When my knee got better, I was searching for a professional dance course to do during my vacations and found Gaga (thanks Google!). So I went to New York City in August to do the Gaga Summer intensive and it was an incredible six days that really changed my life. So powerful. I met Shamel and a language to express some things that words cannot reach. When I got back to Brazil I was fired from my work (thanks, ex-boss!) and started to do courses and experimentation in dance."*