

# WHEN THE WAY OUT WAS IN: AVANT-GARDE THEATRE IN AUSTRALIA 1965 – 1985

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## Abstract

The advent of modern and postmodern theatre in Australia in the years 1965 to 1985 was stimulated by increased communication and travel between Australia and the rest of the world and this reflected international trends associated with youth culture and the counter culture. Conservative discouragement of modern theatre in Australia was overcome by broadly-based support for ‘alternative’ cultural activity in this period. The international model of the *theatre experiment* and the *theatre laboratory* were widely influential in Australia, as was the practice of the *theatre workshop*. These were key means of the production of performances within modern theatre and laid the ground for the reflection of feminist, poststructuralist and formalist discourses in the postmodern theatre of the nineteen-eighties in Australia. The college and university sector were vital in providing environments for the emergence of an Australian theatre. A nationalist theatre emerged from the anti-establishment and anti-colonial alternative theatres and was rapidly transferred to the mainstages of the state theatre companies.