

Sydney, 21 April 2016

The National: New Australian Art 2017 2019 2021



Sydney's Premier Cultural Institutions Go National

Three of Sydney's premier cultural institutions – the Art Gallery of New South Wales (AGNSW), Carriageworks and the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia (MCA) – are establishing a major new exhibition partnership surveying the latest ideas and forms in contemporary Australian art: *The National: New Australian Art*.

The National: New Australian Art will take place over a six-year period, with three editions presented in 2017, 2019 and 2021. Connecting three of the city's key cultural precincts – The Domain, Redfern and Circular Quay – it will add a new and exciting element to Sydney's calendar of major arts and cultural events.

The exhibition will continue Sydney's long and distinguished history of showcasing the art of our times and reinforce its position as the national leader in presenting relevant and engaged contemporary arts and cultural programs.

A single curated program presented across three landmark institutions, the large-scale exhibition will further extend the already significant Australian arts commitment of each institution, and enable a strategic approach to programing grounded in collaboration and innovation. It will present local artists among their national peers, bring the best work from across the country to Sydney, support artists in the realisation of new work and consolidate the profile of Australian arts practice both locally and internationally.

Dr Michael Brand, Director, Art Gallery of New South Wales, said: "This major new initiative highlights what Sydney's leading art institutions do best, that is, create a vibrant cultural life for the city and state."

"It's fantastic that through this partnership, colleagues across all three institutions are working with Australian artists at various stages of their careers to create dynamic displays of art that also express the individual voice of each institution," he added.

For each iteration of the project, the AGNSW, Carriageworks and MCA will work collaboratively to develop the curatorial rationale and select emerging, mid-career and established Australian practitioners. The project will forge close relationships with artists through commissioning and developing new work.

Artists will be drawn from across NSW and Australia including Australian artists living overseas, charting important global connections. The work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists will feature prominently.

Elizabeth Ann Macgregor OBE, Director, MCA, explained: "The project's artistic emphasis will be on profiling new work and enabling innovative new commissions over six years – providing substantial opportunities for professional development, exposure and career sustainability for our nation's living artists."

"It will also enable our three institutions to reach, engage, share and grow diverse audiences through free and low-cost public programs, fostering participation and knowledge sharing," she added.

Collaboration between the partners on delivery of audience engagement programs will continue in the periods between exhibitions, with a focus on generating meaningful encounters with artists, participatory experiences and innovative digital content.

Lisa Havilah, Director, Carriageworks, commented: "*The National: New Australian Art* will chart the rich diversity of contemporary practice featuring artists that work in dialogue with other disciplines including performance, dance, music and screen. Over the six years and three iterations, the project will make a significant investment in Australian artists through the extensive commissioning of new work that reflects contemporary Australia and our place in the world. This collaboration creates an exciting and distinctive new arts and cultural event in Sydney for local, national and international audiences."

As a counterpoint to the Biennale of Sydney, *The National: New Australian Art* will be the only large-scale multi-venue exhibition series in Sydney focused solely on contemporary Australian art.

Ben Strout, CEO, Biennale of Sydney, concluded: "This is good news for Australian artists and arts audiences in our city. *The National: New Australian Art* will provide tremendous opportunities for engagement with contemporary Australian art in the years between the Biennale's international exhibitions. We are keen to work with our exhibition partners to help make the project a success and to generate even more interest in the art of our times."

Development of *The National: New Australian Art* is led by Suhanya Raffel, Deputy Director and Director of Collections, AGNSW; Lisa Havilah, Director, Carriageworks; and Blair French, Director, Curatorial & Digital, MCA.

Curators for the 2017 edition of *The National: New Australian Art* are Anneke Jaspers, Curator Contemporary Art and Wayne Tunnicliffe, Head Curator Australian Art, AGNSW; Lisa Havilah, Director and Nina Miall, Curator, Carriageworks; and Blair French, Director, Curatorial & Digital, MCA.

The National: New Australian Art 2017

Exhibition Dates

Art Gallery of New South Wales 30 March – 16 July 2017

Carriageworks 30 March – 18 June 2017

Museum of Contemporary Art Australia 30 March – 18 June 2017

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