

The National 2021 **New Australian Art**



**Art Gallery of
New South Wales**

26 March – 5 September 2021

Carriageworks

26 March – 20 June 2021

Museum of Contemporary Art Australia

26 March – 22 August 2021

2017/2019/2021

***The National 2021* announces curators and exhibiting artists**



[Sydney, 16 November 2020] The Art Gallery of New South Wales (AGNSW), Carriageworks and the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia (MCA) today announced four curators and 39 exhibiting artists, collectives and collaboratives for *The National 2021: New Australian Art*.

Betty Muffler and Marinka Burton,
Ngangkari ngura (Healing Country)
(detail), 2020, acrylic on linen,
courtesy of the artists and Iwantja
Arts, Indulkana, © the artists

The National 2021 is the third edition of the six-year initiative presented in 2017, 2019, and 2021, exploring the latest ideas and forms in contemporary Australian art. Following the success of the initiative, AGNSW, Carriageworks and the MCA have committed to the continuation of *The National* beyond 2021.

A major collaborative venture connecting three of Sydney's key cultural precincts – The Domain, Redfern, and Circular Quay – the three editions of *The National* have created career-defining opportunities for 149 contemporary Australian artists. The 2017 and 2019 iterations of *The National* attracted over 600,000 visitors across the three institutions.

The curators for *The National 2021: New Australian Art* are AGNSW Curator of Asian art, Matt Cox with AGNSW Assistant Curator of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, Erin Vink; independent curator for Carriageworks, Abigail Moncrieff; and MCA Chief Curator, Rachel Kent.

The National 2021 will showcase 39 new and commissioned works by leading contemporary Australian artists from across the country including, urban and regional centres, as well as remote communities such as the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY Lands), Yirrkala in north-east Arnhem Land, Zendah Kes (Torres Strait Islands), and Belyuen, on the north-west coast of the Northern Territory.

The National 2021 New Australian Art

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The exhibition will display a diverse range of works and media including painting, photography, film, sculpture and textiles, as well as installation and performance. As with previous iterations, the 2021 exhibition represents a mix of emerging, mid-career and established artists who will present new and exciting works of ambitious scale. There are overlapping curatorial themes in this large-scale survey of contemporary Australian art including a focus on the environment, its destruction and our planetary responsibility; global uncertainty; and our relationship to Country, collaboration and inter-generational learning.

Co-curators Matt Cox and Erin Vink said *The National 2021* at AGNSW will present 14 artist projects that explore the potential of art to heal and care for fragile natural and social ecosystems.

“Just over 50 years ago, the American artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles wrote *Manifesto for maintenance art*, in which she proposed an exhibition entitled *CARE*. *The National 2021* at AGNSW will consider Ukeles’ three-tiered approach to care – personal, general and earth maintenance – with artists reflecting on the relationships between people and nature, as a concept and as lived experience.”

“*The National 2021* at AGNSW will examine different modes of care: how it engenders our relationships with each other, how we navigate these relationships, and in turn the relationships we have with sentient Country. Preferencing Indigenous ways of knowing, seeing and being, the exhibition will explore these ideas of care through varied forms of expression, including languages that are written, spoken or expressed by the body,” said Cox and Vink.

Over 40 artists are involved in producing the 13 projects featured in *The National 2021* at Carriageworks. Curator Abigail Moncrieff said that the artists selected for Carriageworks respond to the key issues of our time – emphasising sociality, collaborative enquiry and works that speak to history and experiences of place.

“The artists are connected across generations and brought together by a spirit of collaboration. Embedded within the collaborative relationships intrinsic to the selected artists, a constellation of networks and affinities play out across the space. With an attention to the present moment, many of the works consider responsibility and lived experience through psychological and intuitive responses, alongside some of the most urgent and activist voices from around Australia,” said Moncrieff.

Thirteen artists consider diverse approaches to the environment, storytelling and inter-generational learning through their works in *The National 2021* at the MCA. Drawing on natural materials and processes, as well as found objects and detritus, they explore notions of planetary caretaking, and our relationship to place in an era of dramatic change.

MCA Chief Curator, Rachel Kent said, “Unseen physical forces – wind, gases, emissions – power some works, whilst others transform plant matter, kangaroo teeth, echidna quills and plastic waste into powerful statements. Women’s practice is central to *The National 2021* at the MCA, explored through diasporic and familial histories, labour and learning, and wider

From left to right:

Mehwish Iqbal, *Assemblage of the Fragmented Landscape* (detail), 2020, silk screen, etching, collagraph, drawing, hand embroidery, 24k silver leaf on paper, image courtesy and © the artist, photograph: Mim Sterling

Isadora Vaughan, *Billirubin Bezoar*, 2019, installation view, Gertrude Glasshouse, Melbourne, image courtesy the artist and STATION @ the artist, photograph: Christo Crocker

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mythological narratives. Symbiosis in nature, revealed through the co-habitation of diverse creatures (termites, ants, birds and their eggs) in the termite mounds of north-east Arnhem Land is an enduring motif in the exhibition, demonstrating patterns of connection and the balance of all things in the natural world."

The National 2021: New Australian Art opens on 26 March 2021 at the AGNSW, Carriageworks and the MCA. Entry to the exhibition is free at the three institutions.

Clockwise from left to right:

Erin Vink, Matt Cox, Abigail Moncrieff,
Rachel Kent

Exhibition dates

Art Gallery of New South Wales

26 March – 5 September 2021

Carriageworks

26 March – 20 June 2021

Museum of Contemporary Art Australia

26 March – 22 August 2021

Artist List

Art Gallery of New South Wales

Fiona Hall (TAS)

Gabriella Hirst (NSW and England)

Wona Bae and Charlie Lawler exhibiting as a collaboration (VIC)

Betty Muffler and Maringka Burton exhibiting as a collaboration (SA)

Lisa Sammut (ACT)

Benjamin Sexton (VIC)

Justin Shoulder (NSW)

Leyla Stevens (NSW)

Phaptawan Suwannakudt (NSW)

Abdullah M.I. Syed (NSW and Pakistan)

Alick Tipoti (QLD)

James Tylor (ACT)

Judy Watson (QLD)

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Carriageworks

A Constructed World (VIC and France)
Vernon Ah Kee and Dalisa Pigram with Marrugeku (QLD & WA)
Janet Burchill and Jennifer McCamley (VIC)
Mitch Cairns (NSW)
Lorraine Connelly-Northey (NSW)
Alana Hunt (WA)
Karrabing Film Collective (NT)
Michelle Nikou (SA)
Sarah Rodigari (NSW)
Darren Sylvester (VIC)
Brendan Van Hek (NSW)
Isadora Vaughan (VIC)

Museum of Contemporary Art Australia

Lauren Berkowitz (VIC)
Maree Clarke (VIC)
Mehwish Iqbal (NSW)
Kate Just (VIC)
Deborah Kelly (NSW)
Betty Kuntiwa Pumani (SA)
Sancintya Mohini Simpson (QLD)
Cameron Robbins (VIC)
Caroline Rothwell (NSW)
Sally Smart (VIC)
Mulkun Wirrpanda (NT)
John Wolseley (VIC)
Judith Wright (QLD)

Agatha Gothe-Snape (NSW) (at AGNSW and Carriageworks)

A selection of high-res images of artworks can be downloaded [here](#)

Art Gallery of NSW

26 March – 5 September 2021

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26 March – 20 June 2021

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MCA Australia

26 March – 22 August 2021

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