



## MEDIA RELEASE

### NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA

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## MELBOURNE NOW: HISTORY-MAKING EXHIBITION RETURNS WITH 200+ VICTORIAN-BASED ARTISTS

The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia | 24 March - 20 August 2023 | Free entry



Images: <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/q0087jetzqbm8zoqj9r5n/h?dl=0&rlkey=ffjlcbrgl68wox8fo123voa4d>

The second edition of the ground-breaking exhibition *Melbourne Now* opens at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia on 24 March 2023. Bold in scope and scale, the exhibition highlights the extraordinary work of more than 200 Victorian-based artists, designers, studios and firms whose practices are shaping the cultural landscape of Melbourne and Victoria.

With more than 200 ambitious and thought-provoking projects on display, including more than 70 world-premiere works commissioned especially by the NGV for this major presentation, the exhibition highlights the vibrant creativity of local emerging, mid-career and senior practitioners and collectives – including many who are presenting at the NGV for the very first time.

The large-scale exhibition traverses all levels of The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, including contemporary interventions across the Australian Art and First Nations permanent collection displays, and highlights a diverse range of contemporary disciplines across fashion, jewellery, painting, sculpture, architecture, ceramics, video, virtual reality, performance, photography, printmaking, product design and publishing. Exhibiting artists including **Christian Thompson AO, Esther Stewart, Atong Atem, Mia Boe, Kait James, Pitcha Makin Fellas, Layla Vardo, Nicholas Mangan, Fiona Abicare, Megan Streader, Sean Hogan, Amos Gebhardt, and Lisa Reid.**

Never-before-seen commissions include a room-sized 'temple' constructed from thousands of computer fans by emerging artist **Rel Pham**, which draws on the artist's Vietnamese heritage and interest in gaming culture. Blurring the boundaries between the digital and physical realms, this neon-lit installation combines the visual language of technology, classical Asian architecture and religious iconography.

**Lou Hubbard's** *Walkers with Dinosaurs, 2021–23*, sees a mass of inflatable walking frames tumbling out into the foyer of the Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia's third floor. Presented alongside two stacks of colourful, dinosaur-shaped children's chairs, with humour, the sculptural installation poignantly evokes the inevitabilities of our shared mortality.

Made in collaboration with Kyoto-based lantern studio Kojima Shōten, Larrakia, Wardaman and Karajarri artist **Jenna Lee** will illuminate the gallery with a series of large-scale paper lanterns. For the lantern form, Lee draws inspiration from traditional Gulumerridjin (Larrakia) dilly bags, a traditional woven bag designed and used by First Nations women. *Balarr (To become light)* expands the artist's interest in paper-based craft and provides an intricate expression of shared ancestry across oceans.

Welcoming visitors to NGV Australia, **Lee Darroch's** 10-metre-long installation *Duta Ganha Woka (Save Mother Earth Now)* comprises driftwood collected on Country. Representing men and women from the 38 Indigenous language groups of Victoria, the driftwood pieces are connected by jute string which illustrates the abiding connection between First Nations peoples from the South-East

Also on display is **Troy Emery's** largest sculptural and most ambitious work to date, standing over three metres high. In this textile-based work, bright-coloured pom-poms are assembled and pinned over an underlying form to create a large-scale feline sculpture. The work explores humankind's relationship with animals and their historical representations in museums and in taxidermied form.

The exhibition also includes focused displays that offer an in-depth exploration of particular themes, media and technical innovations. The hugely popular **Design Wall** returns with a large-scale installation celebrating consumer products designed in Melbourne over the past decade, including guitars, ladders, pillows, luggage, motorbikes and more. Representing 25 Melbourne design studios, the Design Wall brings together designers, companies and brands that are shaping the way we live, work and play, including skate wear brand **Globe International**, **Robert Gordon Pottery** and pillow manufacturer **Tontine**.

Ranging from couture to streetwear, **Fashion Now** highlights the work of 18 local designers with more than 30 recent acquisitions and loans, including **Ngali**, **Chris Ran Lin**, **Arnsdorf**, **Blair Archibald**, **Nixi Killick**, **Erik Yvon**, **Strateas Carlucci** and **Verner**. On display will be a glamorous gown by **J'Aton Couture**, commissioned by the NGV for this presentation. The selected works highlight how fashion is embedded in, and reflects, a city's identity.

**Slippery Images** challenges the representational use of photography through the work of 12 artists whose exciting images reveal the loose, fluid and slippery aspects of the photographic medium. *Slippery Images* features a surprising array of photographic works that are cut, collaged, painted and pierced, as well as those displayed in unconventional ways, including images that are suspended, three dimensional and even wearable. The artists on display continue a long-held tradition of enquiry into photography and images, presenting works that record the 'real world' while simultaneously abstracting reality.

**Steve Dimopoulos MP, Minister for Creative Industries**, said: 'Art starts with the artist, and with the help of sustained government investment, Victoria is home to some of the world's best. Melbourne is the cultural capital of Australia and this exhibition is an awe-inspiring celebration of our State's creative industries.'

**Tony Ellwood AM, Director, NGV**, said: '*Melbourne Now* is a showstopping and dynamic survey of work by more than 200 leading Victorian-based practitioners, offering an exciting and thought-provoking snapshot of the limitless creativity empowering this city and its surrounds. Ranging from large-scale, never-before-seen commissions through to moments of quiet reflection and contemplation, this exhibition highlights the diverse talents of Victorian artists and designers who are at the forefront of contemporary practice world-wide.

'The 2023 exhibition marks the ten-year anniversary of the inaugural presentation and offers an unprecedented opportunity to reflect on how Melbourne and Victoria have transformed, changed and grown over the past decade. No other exhibition series reflects Victorian life and culture with such depth, nuance and breadth. We are excited to build upon this incredible legacy with this new, blockbuster presentation of Victorian creativity in 2023,' said Ellwood.

Further highlight commissions and displays include:

- *Melbourne Now* **Print Portfolio** brings together twelve new prints commissioned especially for the exhibition by established and emerging artists, including Stefan Wirihana Mau and Christine Johnson. Many of the prints in the portfolio were produced solely by the artist, while others highlight the collaborative efforts between an artist and specialist printer. The diversity of the works reflects Melbourne's dynamic and flourishing print community and will be available to purchase at the NGV design store.
- Inspired by the rich history of Australian community halls, a longstanding and ubiquitous presence in many metropolitan and regional communities, *Melbourne Now's* own **Community Hall** will bring people together through a daily rotation of both interactive and contemplative programs. Through collaborations with a range of partners – including Multicultural Arts Victoria, Play It Forward, Arts Project Australia, Moroccan Soup Bar, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, the Australian National Academy of Music, and the Australian Queer Archives – Community Hall provides an opportunity for visitors to engage with exhibiting artists and designers, to learn more about the projects in *Melbourne Now*, and experience the vibrant diversity of Melbourne's creative communities.
- *Melbourne Now's* **Performance Program** will present a suite of newly commissioned performance art works by leading Melbourne-based performance artists, choreographers and dancers, including **APHIDS, Alicia Frankovich, Jo Lloyd, and Joel Bray**. Revealing performance as an artform with deep roots and a dynamic future in Melbourne, the program will present the works across the duration of the exhibition, principally within Community Hall.
- **NGV x recess: Artist Film Program** comprises daily screenings within Community Hall. The program is co-curated with Olivia Koh from **recess** – a Melbourne-based online platform showcasing contemporary moving-image works. The films in the program are by 21 Melbourne-based filmmakers, highlighting the city's breadth of talent in art-filmmaking – an expanding arena of creative practice with a bright future.
- A collaboration between NGV and Craft Victoria, **Vessels** will showcase the work of 15 artists, craft and design practitioners whose creative practices explore the vessel, including **Vipoo Srivilasa, Zhu Ohmu, Kate Jones, Yoko Ozawa and Claire Bridge**. The vessel is an enduring cultural and social object that merges utility with form, the display features objects created using innovative and diverse materials - from ceramics and fibre to mixed media and experimental biomaterials.
- **Civic Architecture** surveys five award-winning civic projects by Melbourne architects that have been catalysts for transformation in different neighbourhoods, including in Dandenong, Broadmeadows and Geelong. The survey is accompanied by a series of models by emerging practice **Simulaa**, which captures the everyday architecture - street furniture, utilities and objects - found in these locations.
- **No House Style** assembles leading and emerging Melbourne-based furniture designers and architects whose contrasting styles are emblematic of the city's creative spirit. Refuting mainstream design trends, these designers and architects are helping to establish a picture of contemporary Melbourne architecture and design that is independent, original, plural and expressive of contemporary issues and values.
- **Jewellery Now** provides insight into Melbourne's dynamic culture of contemporary jewellery practice through the work of fifteen artists and designers. Representative of diverse backgrounds and approaches to jewellery, the practices celebrated in the exhibition reflect a wide variety of material and making traditions, including unexpected approaches that challenge conventional thinking about what constitutes jewellery and its significance today.
- A collaboration between Senior Boonwurrung Elder **N'arweet Dr Carolyn Briggs AM** and Palawa built environment practitioner **Sarah Lynn Rees**, *Gathering Space: Ngargee Djeembana* brings together First Nations philosophical knowledge, design thinking and the built environment. Comprising more than 55 materials, from timber, stone and minerals to sand, water and glass, the work invites us to consider what architecture is made of, where materials come from and how we can think differently about our relationship to materials when we 'design from Country'.
- **Georgia Banks** has created *Gee*, an AI chatbot developed using data from the questionnaires Banks completed during the process of applying for several popular Australian reality TV dating shows. Over a six-month period, Banks spoke to *Gee* every day, to see if they could fall in love with each other. During the exhibition, visitors are invited to see if they too can fall in love with *Gee*.
- For *Melbourne Now*, **Shaun Gladwell** presents a major installation that takes his career-long inquiry into the human body to dimensional extremes. Supported by Research Partner Deakin University, *Passing Electrical Storms* is a participatory extended reality (XR) experience. Through headsets, the work guides participants through a simulated life and death experience that invites the audience to contemplate the universes both within and beyond the body.
- **Mia Salsjö** has developed *A score for Fed Square*, a new composition, especially for Fed Square's architecture. Responding to the detailed architectural drawings, architects' annotations and build material selections, Salsjö has translated and interpreted these hand-drawn and machine-made lines, transforming

them into a code. The work is commissioned by Fed Square & NGV in collaboration with Mia Salsjö and the MSO.

- *Settlement and the gatekeepers* by **Elvis Richardson** comprises a series of powder pink gates wrought with the most commonly used synonyms of the word 'settlement'. As visitors interact with the functional gates in the gallery space, they are prompted to reflect on the question: who are the gatekeepers?
- Part playground and part photobooth, **James Lemon's** participatory work *Swarming* invites audiences of all ages to learn through play about the importance and fragility of bee life in our ecosystems – and to human survival. Combining ceramics, painting, textiles and digital media, *Swarming* is an ultraviolet hive of activity and features interactive soft pupae forms.
- **Babel Bookcase**, curated by Brad Haylock, gathers a selection of Melbourne's best graphic design and communication design of the past decade, from posters, books, typefaces, websites, and apps, to branding, placemaking, and experimental practices. The display is inspired by the Tower of Babel, a mythical structure from which all the languages of the world emanate.
- Situated within the Impressionism galleries will be an immersive installation of **Julia Ciccarone's** meticulously detailed paintings. Ciccarone's metaphorical imagery suggests that nature contains the transcendent and mystical truths of human connectedness and renewal. The viewer will be invited to sit within, and become part of, the artist's panorama.

*Melbourne Now* is on display from 24 March to 20 August 2023 at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia at Fed Square, Melbourne. Free entry. Further information is available via the NGV website: [NGV.MELBOURNE](https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/melbourne-now)

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SUPPORTERS

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#### Image credit:

Kait James, *Unjustified & Ancient 2022*; Rel Pham, *TEMPLE 2022*; Vipoo Srivilasa, *My Sunshine Doesn't Come From The Sky 2022*; James Lemon, *Swarming 2023*; Troy Emery, *Mountain climber 2022*; Christopher Day, *In history 2022*

#### LIST OF ARTISTS IN MELBOURNE NOW 2023

Adam Lee

Alicia Frankovich

Amalia Lindo

Amos Gebhardt

Anna Finlayson

Anu Kumar

Ashley Perry

Atong Atem

Babel Bookcase by Brad Haylock

Christian Thompson

Claire Lambe

Collection Interventions

Cyrus Tang

Daniel Church

Deanne Gilson

Elvis Richardson

Esther Stewart

Fiona Abicare

George Egerton Warburton

Georgia Banks

Gracia & Louise

Grant Nimmo  
Hannah Gartside  
Helen Johnson  
Heidi Yardley  
J Davies  
James Lemon  
Jan Murray  
Jan Nelson  
Jenna Lee  
Jon Campbell  
John Wardle and Simon Lloyd  
Julia Ciccarone  
Julia Trybala  
Kait James  
Katherine Hattam  
Kelly Koumalatsos  
Kenny Pittock  
Kojima Shouten  
Laresa Kosloff  
Layla Vardo  
Lane Cormick  
Lee Darroch  
Lesley Dumbrell  
Lisa Reid  
Lou Hubbard  
Madeleine Joy Dawes  
Mark Smith  
Martin Bell  
Matlok Griffiths  
Matthew Harris  
Meagan Streader  
Megan Evans  
Mia Boe  
Mia Salsjö  
Misha Hollenbach  
N'arweet Dr Carolyn Briggs AM  
Nabilah Nordin  
Nicholas Mangan  
Pitcha Makin Fellas  
Raf McDonald  
Rel Pham  
Ruth Höflich  
Sarah Brasier  
Sarah crowEST  
Sarah Lynn Rees  
Scotty So  
Sean Hogan  
Shaun Gladwell  
Shauna Toohey  
Shea Kirk  
Stewart Russell  
Taree Mackenzie  
Teelah George  
Troy Emery  
Vivienne Shark Lewitt  
William Mackinnon  
Ying Ang  
Yuria Okamura  
Zilverster

#### **Babel Bookcase**

Alter  
A Friend of Mine

James Vinciguerra  
JESWRI  
Nina Gibbes  
Round  
Sahra Martin  
Studio Ongarato  
U-P  
Vincent Chan  
Wei Huang

#### **Civic Architecture**

ARM Architecture  
ASPECT Studios  
Cox Architecture  
Harrison and White  
Kerstin Thompson Architects  
Lyons  
Maddison Architects  
MvS Architects  
NMBW Architecture Studio  
Simulaa

#### **Community Hall**

Arts Project Australia  
Australian National Academy of Music  
Australian Queer Archives  
Melbourne Symphony Orchestra  
Minus18  
Moroccan Soup Bar  
Multicultural Arts Victoria  
Play It Forward

#### **Design Wall**

Adam Cornish Design for Alessi  
Cyclone and Nylex, AMES  
Australasia  
Great Wrap  
Bayly Design for Great Wrap  
Branach  
Cobalt Design for HumidiFlyer Technologies  
Edward Linacre Studio  
Fungi Solutions  
Gecko Traxx  
Globe International  
July  
Katapult Group Pty Ltd for Active Mask  
Kookaburra Sport  
Maton Guitars  
ONE PLANET  
outerspace design for Rx Smart Gear  
Robert Gordon Pottery  
Savic Motorcycles  
SBW Australia  
Studio Periscope for Lockwood / ASSA Abloy Australia  
SurefLO2 Trading  
Sussex Taps  
Tontine Group

#### **Fashion Now**

Arnsdorf  
Blair Archibald  
Chris Ran Lin  
Collective Closets  
E.Nolan  
Erik Yvon  
Homie  
Ingrid Verner  
J'aton Couture  
Kara Baker  
Micky In The Van  
Nevada Duffy  
Ngali  
Nixi Killick  
Nobody Denim  
P.A.M (PERKS AND MINI)  
Social Studio  
Strateas Carlucci

#### **Jewellery Now**

Anke Kindle  
Aphra Cheesman  
Beverley Meldrum  
Cassie Leatham  
Claire McArdle  
Danielle Brustman  
Inari Kiuru  
Katherine Hubble  
Katheryn Leopoldseeder  
Laura Deakin  
Lisa Waup  
Marcos Guzman  
Paul McCann  
Sim Lüttin  
Tessa Blazey

#### **No House Style**

Ash Allen  
Austin Maynard Architects  
Baracco+Wright Architects  
Brud Studia  
Charlie White  
Chris Connell  
Clare Cousins Architects  
Dale Hardiman  
Dean Norton  
denHolm  
Edition Office  
Ella Saddington  
Fiona Lynch  
James Lemon  
Jordan Fleming  
Julian Leigh May  
Kennedy Nolan  
Marta Figueiredo  
Rosanna Ceravolo  
Studio Bright  
Thomas Coward  
Thomas Lentini  
Volker Haug

#### **Print Portfolio**

Andrew Clapham  
Artek Halpern-Lawrence  
Aylsa McHugh  
Christine Johnson  
Deanna Hitti  
Emma Armstrong-Porter  
Kent Morris  
Matthew Clarke  
Robert Hague  
Rubii Red (Ruby Kulla Kulla)  
Sophie Westerman  
Stefan Wirihana Mau

Ara Dolatian  
Caro Pattle  
Clairpe Bridge  
Craig Murphy  
Danielle Thiris  
Jessie French  
Kate Jones  
Lorraine Brigdale  
Vipoo Srivilasa  
Yoko Ozawa

**NGV x recess: Artist Film Program**

Nikki Lam  
Adele Wilkes  
Olivia Koh  
Jen Rae & Claire G. Coleman

Liang Luscombe  
Moorina Bonini  
Trent Crawford & Stanton Cornish  
Ward  
Erin Crouch  
Matthew Sleeth  
James Nguyen  
Diego Ramirez  
Jacqui Shelton  
Tina Stefanou  
Rosie Isaac  
Chi Tran  
Peter Waples-Crowe  
Sonia Leber & David Chesworth  
Carmen Sibha-Keiso  
Arini Byng  
Michelle Mantsio  
Tony Yap

**Performance Program**

Alicia Frankovich  
APHIDS  
Jo Lloyd  
Joel Bray

**Slippery Images**

Aaron Christopher Rees  
Ali McCann  
Christopher Day  
Danica Chappell  
Grace Wood  
Janina Green  
Katrin Koenning  
Kiron Robinson  
Kirsten Lyttle  
Peta Clancy  
Rudi Williams  
Sanja Pahoki

**Vessels**

Adam John Cullen  
Anna Varendorff