



# **SUPERPOSITION**

## **Equilibrium & Engagement**

### **16 March – 11 June, 2018**

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### **21st Biennale of Sydney**

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#### **Collaboration**

The modernist idea of the artist as 'lone creator' outside considerations of time and context has long been contested by artists and critics alike. We now think about art – art-making and exhibition, sale and display, reception, critique and discussion – as a system that involves many stages, forms, practices and people. Another shift has been to focus on the audience or viewer and their participation to realise or complete the work. Artistic practice based on interactivity and participation has been described in numerous terms, more recently as 'relational aesthetics' or 'socially engaged practice'. These terms imply direct interaction with individuals and communities, with many artists interested in breaking down barriers between creator and audience, shifting the focus away from the object of modern art and toward the joint production of experiences.

We might think of collaboration in several ways: as a model of artists working together to realise a creative project; as a way of artists working with non-artists, other disciplines, and communities to realise joint projects; as a model for exploring the relationship between the artist/artwork and viewer/audience; and, in a Biennale context, as a way to think about the staging of large-scale-event exhibitions across institutions, locations and even cultural sectors, in

ways that could not be achieved creatively, financially or logistically by a single institution alone. This can allow the realisation of experimental works on a large scale that would not be possible within the limits of a single institutional context.

These processes of co-production have evolved alongside the increasing circulation of art internationally, and they form a significant part of the post 1960s trajectories of art practice. We can see them as an extension of the social and community art practices of the 1960s on, and of the exploration of interactive, immaterial and performative work from the same period.

**These forms of art practice have always challenged disciplinary limits and asked us to think about social and political context.**

At the same time, many artists love working with other artists, and many alternative art schools have emerged in response to the recent commodification and privatisation of art education, which has seen a marked reduction in its accessibility in many Western countries.