
21st Biennale of Sydney



Ai Weiwei
Image: Ai Weiwei
Law of the Journey, 2017
Photograph: Ai Weiwei Studio

21st Biennale of Sydney unveils artistic program

70 artists to present work at seven venues across Sydney over three months for the Biennale of Sydney's 45th anniversary Sydney, Australia: the Biennale of Sydney today announced the 70 artists who will present work at seven venues across Sydney for the 45th anniversary of Australia's most well-known contemporary art event, recognised for commissioning and showcasing innovative and thought-provoking Australian and international art. Participating artists in the 21st Biennale of Sydney hail from six continents including Africa, Asia, Australia, North and South America and Europe with a quarter of the exhibiting artists from Australia. The 21st Biennale of Sydney is a free exhibition spanning three months from 16 March until 11 June 2018

Exploring the curatorial theme of **SUPERPOSITION: Equilibrium & Engagement**, the 21st Biennale of Sydney will be presented at seven of the city's most respected museums, galleries and non-traditional exhibition spaces: Art Gallery of NSW (AGNSW), Artspace, Carriageworks, Cockatoo Island, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia (MCA), Sydney Opera House and 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art.

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Many of the artworks presented in the 21st Biennale are the result of direct engagement with communities around the globe and reflect the artists' own migrations or personal histories. **Artistic Director, Mami Kataoka** commented: *"The artists in the 21st Biennale of Sydney have been chosen to offer a panoramic view of how opposing interpretations can come together in a state of equilibrium. The history of the people of Sydney collectively reflects the history of the world in the 20th century, in particular the movements and migration of people and cultures away from conflict. My hope is that the artworks in this Biennale will serve as a catalyst for thought for all of us."*

Jo-Anne Birnie-Danzker, Director and CEO of the Biennale of Sydney, added: *"In 2018, we celebrate the 45th anniversary of the Biennale of Sydney, one of the leading contemporary art events in the Asia Pacific region. Under the artistic leadership of Mami Kataoka the 21st Biennale of Sydney promises to be a compelling exploration of the most urgent issues of our day through the eyes of exceptional international and Australian artists."*

The Art Gallery of New South Wales (AGNSW) – a Biennale Exhibition Partner since 1976 – will reflect on the Biennale's rich history through a close examination of its archive, drawing on more than four decades of encounters with art from around the globe. In addition to the archive project, the AGNSW will present 17 artists across the Gallery including celebrated Australian artists **Sydney Ball**, **Roy Wiggan** and **Roy de Maistre**. Paintings by Wathaurung elder **Marlene Gilson** overturn the colonial grasp on Australia's past by representing the involvement of Aboriginal people in significant historical events such as the 1854 Eureka Stockade. **N.S. Harsha's** twelve-metre long mirrored commission, which assembles found cardboard packaging collected from around the world with 900 hand-carved teak elephants, will be presented alongside Cambodian art collective **Sa Sa Art Projects'** collaborative work on the history of the recently demolished White Building in Phnom Penh.

Artspace in Woolloomooloo has been an Exhibition Partner since 1992 and will host five artists for the 21st Biennale of Sydney, including pre-eminent Flemish painter **Michaël Borremans** who will exhibit a selection of intimate video works, paintings and drawings. **Ai Weiwei's** *Crystal Ball*, 2017, considers the complex future of our world in the face of the current global humanitarian crisis. Indian artist **Tanya Goel** will present a selection of paintings and fresco works alongside a site-specific wall drawing. China's **Geng Xue** exhibits a video work, *Poetry of Michelangelo*, 2015, that evokes the conversation between artist and creation, whilst Vietnamese artist **Tiffany Chung** will show an embroidered textile map and other artworks delineating the patterns of diaspora.

In 2018 the Biennale of Sydney returns to the multi-arts precinct and former rail-yard **Carriageworks** for the fourth time with a series of large-scale immersive installations. UK-based duo **Semiconductor** will present a five-channel video work exploring the material nature of our world and how we experience it through the lens of science and technology. Other artworks presented at Carriageworks include video work by Vietnam's **Trinh Thi Nguyen**, new and existing works by Pintupi artist **George Tjungurrayi** and a four-channel video projection by Chinese artist **Chen Shaoxiong** depicting familiar landscapes from everyday life.

On **Cockatoo Island**, 20 artists will present works echoing the history of the UNESCO-listed site around movement, migration, production and participation, including works that grow or morph over the course of the Biennale. **Ai Weiwei's** *Law of the Journey*, 2017, a 60-metre inflatable boat filled with more than 250 oversized figures, made from the same rubber used to manufacture the precarious vessels that carry refugees across the Aegean Sea from Turkey to Greece, will fill a cavernous space on the Island. Thai artist, **Mit Jai Inn** will create a series of new works in which the visible process of creation will be as important as the final product. Sydney artist **Yasmin Smith** will create a ceramics studio and open-air kiln alongside a ceramic installation featuring cast mangrove branches finished in a hand-made wood ash glaze and Melbourne artist **Nicholas Mangan** will present a work which dismantles accepted histories to reveal the complex dynamic between human action and the state of nature.

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Scottish artist **Anya Gallaccio**'s sculptural work will comprise a 3D printed clay mountain range, whilst Thai artist **Tawatthai Puntusawasdi** will present metal sculptures and two-dimensional drawings as a replica of his studio. The Island will host a series of site-specific large-scale installations: in the Turbine Hall, Japan's **Yukinori Yanagi** will present *Icarus Container*, 2018, an immersive maze-like artwork created with shipping containers that will use mirrors to reflect the light of the sun. Japanese-born, Sydney-based artist **Koji Ryui** will present a site-specific work that expands on his experimentation with geometric abstraction and the spatial potential of everyday objects. British artist **Ryan Gander** will install a new commission, creating his own universe with replica models of artefacts from his life. Lebanese-born, Sydney-based artist **Khaled Sabsabi** presents *Bring the Silence*, 2018, a five-channel audio visual installation that offers an intimate insight into practiced customs at sacred Sufi burial sites.

The **Museum of Contemporary Art Australia (MCA)** will present the work of 18 artists across two levels of the museum, including interdisciplinary Australian artist Brook Andrew with a new commission of five sculptures, each representing one of the five elements of the universe according to the philosophy of Wuxing – central to the 21st Biennale of Sydney curatorial concept. The MCA exhibition features South Australian Ngarrindjeri artist **Yvonne Koolmatjie**'s intricate sedge-woven burial baskets which are a synthesis of traditional knowledge and contemporary innovation, a new work by **Yarrenyty Arltere Artists** from the Western Arrernte community arts enterprise in Alice Springs and shell-worked slippers by Bidjigal artist and elder **Esme Timbery**. From Finland, **Tuomas Aleksander Laitinen** will present a new commission, continuing his research-driven practice which scrutinises global systems, focusing on the correlation between large-scale networks and local events utilising light, sound installation and the moving image. American artist Liza Lou collaborates with KwaZulu-Natal women to present a complex, hand-woven bead installation representing clouds, whilst Australian artist **Tom Nicholson** will add to an existing wall drawing: a matrix of painstakingly handwritten words narrating a geo-political history of the 20th century. Canadian artist **Ciara Phillips** presents a working printmaking studio and Swiss artist **Marc Bauer** will present an installation incorporating a site-specific wall drawing, works on paper and ceramics. Hong Kong artist **Nicole Wong** will exhibit marble works that draw on google searches.

The 21st Biennale of Sydney returns to the **Sydney Opera House** in 2018, marking 45 years since the two Australian cultural institutions were both inaugurated in 1973, with the first Biennale forming part of the opening celebrations of the Sydney Opera House. Together with the Biennale, the Opera House will co-present the Biennale's keynote address by internationally-celebrated Chinese artist **Ai Weiwei** on 15 March. The Sydney premiere of **Ai Weiwei**'s new feature-length film *Human Flow*, 2017 – his heartbreaking exploration of the global refugee crisis, filmed over the course of a year in 23 countries – will also be presented on 15 March at the Sydney Opera House in partnership with Roadshow. With April 2018 marking 100 years since Sydney Opera House architect Jørn Utzon's birth, Lebanese artist **Rayyane Tabet** will present a performance reflecting on Utzon's architectural and design practice. British artist, **Oliver Beer** presents a new iteration of his ongoing *Resonance Project* within Utzon's masterpiece, exploring the complex relationship between sound and space. 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art will present a video work that documents a participatory event by Japanese theatre-director and artist Akira Takayama who has invited residents of Sydney to perform a song passed down through their family, at Sydney Town Hall.

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The Biennale invites community engagement through a comprehensive schedule of public programs including daily guided-tours, artist and curator-led talks, lectures, workshops, panels and screenings as well as the opportunity to contribute memories to the archive. The full public program of events will be announced in early 2018.

Entry to the Biennale of Sydney is free to the public. For further information on the 21st Biennale of Sydney, please visit: biennaleofsydney.art

21st Biennale of Sydney

Key Dates

- Media Preview: Tuesday 13 March 2018
- Preview Days: Tuesday, 13 March until Thursday 15 March 2018
- Public dates: Friday, 16 March until Monday, 11 June 2018

Media Contacts

For further information and to request interviews with Mami Kataoka, Biennale artists or Biennale spokespersons, please contact: Kym Elphinstone, kym@articulatepr.com.au +61 421 106 139, Julia Barnes, julia@articulatepr.com.au +61 402 678 589, or Jasmine Hersee, jasmine@articulatepr.com.au +61 406 649 393.

Media Images

Media images are available at <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1fUpalVOGMZ1fCOkG6BMSQy627YDehJ88>. For high resolution images, please contact our media representatives.

Professional Preview

Media images are available at <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1fUpalVOGMZ1fCOkG6BMSQy627YDehJ88>. For high resolution images, please contact our media representatives.

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Artists of the 21st Biennale:

Art Gallery of New South Wales

Eija-Liisa Ahtila: Born 1959 in Hämeenlinna, Finland. Lives and works in Helsinki, Finland
Sydney Ball: Born 1933 in Adelaide, Australia. Died 2017 in Sydney, Australia
Oliver Beer: Born 1985 in England. Lives and works in Paris, France and Kent, England
Miriam Cahn: Born 1949 in Basel, Switzerland. Lives and works in Stampa, Switzerland
Francisco Camacho Herrera: Born 1979 in Bogota, Colombia. Lives and works in Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Cercle d'Art des Travailleurs de Plantation Congolaise (CATPC) with Baloji and Renzo Martens: Founded in 2014
Roy de Maistre: Born 1894 in Bowral, Australia. Died 1968 in London, England
Lili Dujourie: Born 1941 in Roeselare, Belgium. Lives and works in Lovendegem, Belgium
Luciano Fabro: Born 1936 in Turin, Italy. Died 2007 in Milan, Italy
Marlene Gilson: Born 1944 in Warrnambool, Victoria. Lives and works in Gordon, Victoria. Wathaurung people
N.S. Harsha: Born 1969 in Mysore, India. Lives and works in Mysore
Noguchi Rika: Born 1971 in Saitama, Japan. Lives and works in Okinawa, Japan
Sa Sa Art Projects: Founded in 2010. Live and work in Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Semiconductor: Founded in 1999. Live and work in Brighton, England
Roy Wiggan: Born 1930 in Sunday Island, Australia. Died 2015 in Broome, Australia. Bardi people
Riet Wijnen: Born 1988 in Venray, The Netherlands. Lives and works in Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Samson Young: Born 1979 in Hong Kong. Lives and works in Hong Kong
Biennale of Sydney Archive



Samson Young
We Are The World As Performed by the Federation of Trade Union Choir, 2017
video
5: 27 mins
Courtesy the artist; Edouard Malingue Gallery, Hong Kong; Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne; and
TeamGallery, New York
Commissioned by M+, Hong Kong, 2017
Photograph: Simon Vogel

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Artspace

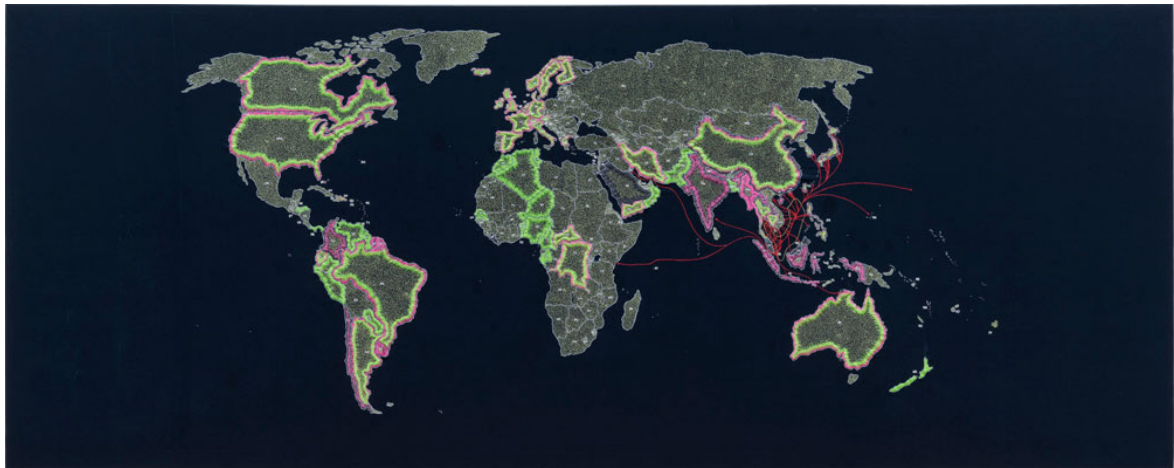
Ai Weiwei: Born 1957 in Beijing, China. Lives and works in Berlin, Germany

Michaël Borremans: Born 1963 in Geraardsbergen, Belgium. Lives and works in Ghent, Belgium

Tiffany Chung: Born 1969 in Da Nang, Vietnam. Lives and works in Houston, USA and Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam

Geng Xue: Born 1983 in Baishan, China. Lives and works in Beijing, China

Tanya Goel: Born 1985 in New Delhi, India. Lives and works in New Delhi



Tiffany Chung

water dreamscape – the gangster named Jacky, the sleepers, and the exodus, 2017

seven watercolours on paper

83 x 114 cm (each)

Courtesy the artist and Tyler Rollins Fine Art, New York

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Carriageworks

Chen Shaoxiong: Born 1962 in Shantou, Guangdong Province, China. Died 2016 in Beijing, China

Sam Falls: Born in 1984 San Diego, USA. Lives and works Los Angeles

Marco Fusinato: Born 1964 in Melbourne, Australia. Lives and works in Melbourne

Laurent Grasso: Born 1972 in Mulhouse, France Lives and works in Paris, France and New York, USA

Trinh Thi Nguyen: Born 1973 in Hanoi, Vietnam. Lives and works in Hanoi

Semiconductor: Founded in 1999. Live and work in Brighton, England

Michael Stevenson: Born 1964 in Inglewood, New Zealand. Lives and works in Berlin, Germany

George Tjungurrayi: Born c.1943 in Kiwirrkura, Australia. Lives and works in Kintore, Australia. Pintupi people

Chen Shaoxiong: Born 1962 in Shantou, Guangdong Province, China. Died 2016 in Beijing, China

Sam Falls: Born in 1984 San Diego, USA. Lives and works Los Angeles

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Semiconductor

Earthworks, 2016

five-channel computer generated animation with four-channel surround sound, 11:20 mins

Installation view (2016) at SónarPLANTA, Barcelona Courtesy the artist

Commissioned by SónarPLANTA

Produced by Advanced Music

Photograph: Semiconductor

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Cockatoo Island

Julian Abraham 'Togar': Born 1987 in Medan, Indonesia. Lives and works in Medan and Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Ai Weiwei: Born 1957 in Beijing, China. Lives and works in Berlin, Germany
Abraham Cruzvillegas: Born 1968 in Mexico City, Mexico. Lives and works in Mexico City
Anya Gallaccio: Born 1963 in Paisley, Scotland. Lives and works in London, England and San Diego, USA
Ryan Gander: Born 1976 in Chester, England. Lives and works in London, England
Ami Inoue: Born 1991 in Miyagi Prefecture, Japan. Lives and works in Kyoto, Japan
Mit Jai Inn: Born 1960 in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Lives and works in Chiang Mai
Suzanne Lacy: Born 1945 in Wasco, USA. Lives and works in Los Angeles, USA
Nicholas Mangan: Born 1979 in Geelong, Australia. Lives and works in Melbourne, Australia
Prabhavathi Meppayil: Born 1965 in Bangalore, India. Lives and works in Bangalore
Kate Newby: Born 1979 in Auckland, New Zealand. Lives and works in Auckland, New Zealand and New York, USA
Tawatchai Puntusawasdi: Born 1971 in Bangkok, Thailand. Lives and works in Chiang Mai, Thailand
Koji Ryui: Born 1976 in Kyoto, Japan. Lives and works in Sydney, Australia
Khaled Sabsabi: Born 1965 in Tripoli, Lebanon. Lives and works in Sydney, Australia
Yasmin Smith: Born 1984 in Sydney, Australia. Lives and works in Sydney
Dimitar Solakov: Born 1987 in Sofia, Bulgaria. Lives and works in Sofia
Su-Mei Tse: Born 1973 in Luxembourg. Lives and works in Luxembourg
Martin Walde: Born 1957 in Innsbruck, Austria. Lives and works in Vienna, Austria
Wong Hoy Cheong: Born 1960 in Penang, Malaysia. Lives and works in George Town and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Yanagi Yukinori: Born 1959 in Fukuoka, Japan. Lives and works in Hiroshima, Japan



Yukinori Yanagi
Icarus Cell, 2016
steel, mirror, sanded glass, video, sound
approximately 16.50 m x 11.73 m
Courtesy the artist
Photograph: Tatsuhiko Nakagawa

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Museum of Contemporary Art Australia

Brook Andrew: Born 1970 in Sydney, Australia. Lives and works Berlin, Germany; Melbourne, Australia; and Oxford, England
Marc Bauer: Born 1975 in Geneva, Switzerland. Lives and works in Berlin, Germany and Zurich, Switzerland
Marjolijn Dijkman: Born 1978 in Groningen, Netherlands. Lives and works in Brussels, Belgium
Simryn Gill: Born 1959 in Singapore. Lives and works in Port Dickson, Malaysia and Sydney, Australia
Hsu Chia-Wei: Born 1983 in Taichung, Taiwan. Lives and works in Taipei, Taiwan
Sosa Joseph: Born 1971 in Parumala, India. Lives and works in Kochi, India
Jacob Kirkegaard: Born 1975 in Esbjerg, Denmark. Lives and works in Jyderup, Denmark
Yvonne Koolmatrie: Born 1944 in Wudinna, Australia. Lives and works in Berri, Australia. Ngarrindjeri people
Tuomas Aleksander Laitinen: Born 1976 in Riihimäki, Finland. Lives and works in Helsinki, Finland
Liza Lou: Born 1969 in New York, USA. Lives and works in Los Angeles, USA and KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
Tom Nicholson: Born 1973 in Melbourne, Australia. Lives and works in Melbourne
Ciara Phillips: Born 1976 in Ottawa, Canada. Lives and works in Glasgow, Scotland
Svay Sareth: Born 1972 in Battambang, Cambodia. Lives and works in Siem Reap, Cambodia
Maria Taniguchi: Born 1981 in Dumaguete City, Philippines. Lives and works in Manila, Philippines
Esme Timbery: Born 1931 in Port Kembla, Australia. Lives and works in La Perouse, Australia. Bidjigal people
Nicole Wong: Born 1990 in Hong Kong. Lives and works in Hong Kong
Haegue Yang: Born 1971 in Seoul, South Korea. Lives and works in Berlin, Germany and Seoul
Yarrenyty Arltere Artists: Founded 2000. Alice Springs, Australia



Ciara Phillips
Workshop (2010–ongoing)
installation and print studio
Installation view (2013) at The Showroom, London with Justice for Domestic Workers
Courtesy the artist
Commissioned by The Showroom, London
Photograph: Ciara Phillips

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Sydney Opera House

Oliver Beer: Born 1985 in Kent, England. Lives and works in Paris, France and Kent, England
Rayyane Tabet: Born 1983 in Ashqout, Lebanon. Lives and works in Beirut, Lebanon



Oliver Beer
The Resonance Project, 2014
architectural acoustic performance
Installation view at Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London
Photograph: Oliver Beer

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4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art

Akira Takayama: Born 1969 in Saitama, Japan. Lives and works in Tokyo, Japan; Yokohama, Japan; and Frankfurt, Germany

Jun Yang, Born 1975 in Qingtian, China. Lives and works in Vienna, Austria; Taipei, Taiwan; and Yokohama, Japan



Akira Takayama
McDonald's Radio University, 2017
urban project/performance, three weeks
Courtesy the artist and Misa Shin Gallery, Tokyo
Commissioned by Künstlerhaus Mousonturm Frankfurt am Main
Photograph: Masahiro Hasunuma

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About the 21st Biennale

2018 marks the 45th anniversary of the Biennale of Sydney and its 21st edition. The Biennale of Sydney provides a platform for art and ideas and is internationally recognised for commissioning and presenting innovative, thought-provoking art from Australia and around the world. A leading international art event, the Biennale of Sydney has showcased the work of nearly 1,800 artists from more than 100 countries. It has attracted over 4 million visitors since its inception in 1973 and holds an important place on both the national and international stage. The Biennale of Sydney is located on the traditional lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Land and pay respect to Elders, both past and present

About Mami Kataoka, Artistic Director

Internationally renowned curator Mami Kataoka is a key figure in analysing socio-historical and generational trends, particularly in the context of Japanese and Asian art. **Mami Kataoka** is Chief Curator of Mori Art Museum in Tokyo where she has curated a number of exhibitions since 2003, including 'Ai Weiwei: According to What?' (2009/ US Tour 2012-14), 'Lee Bul' (2012), 'Makoto Aida' (2012), 'Lee Mingwei and His Relations' (2014-15) and 'N.S. Harsha' (2017). Prior to this position, Kataoka was Chief Curator at Tokyo Opera City Art Gallery (1997-2002) and researcher at the NLI Research Institute on cultural policies and urban development projects (1992-1997). She was also International Curator at the Hayward Gallery in London from 2007 to 2009.

In 2012, she guest-curated 'Phantoms of Asia: Contemporary Awakens the Past' at Asian Art Museum in San Francisco, and was a Co-Artistic Director for the 9th Gwangju Biennale in South Korea. She also serves as Board Member of CIMAM [International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art] (since 2014) and Odawara Art Foundation (since 2009 founded by Hiroshi Sugimoto). Kataoka is also a professor at Kyoto University of Art and Design, Graduate School of Art and Design Studies.

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Curatorial Statement from the Artistic Director

The 21st Biennale of Sydney examines the world today by borrowing the word 'superposition', the quantum mechanical term that refers to an overlapping situation. Microscopic substances like electrons are said to be dualistic in nature: they paradoxically exist in the form of waves and granular particles simultaneously. The state of 'superposition' lies across all conceptual levels: from different climates and cultures to views of nature and the cosmic orders, conceptions of Mother Earth and interpretations of land ownership, readings of human history and conditions, the history of modern and contemporary art and the meaning of abstractions. The 21st Biennale of Sydney offers a panoramic view of how they all come together in a state of 'equilibrium,' while delving into the workings of individual phenomena, considering the equivalence of these opposing notions through the lens of "engagement."

According to the theory of Wuxing in ancient Chinese natural philosophy, everything in this world is made up five main elements: wood, fire, earth, metal, and water. Each of these elements gives rise to the next element, either through a process of symbiosis, where one element encourages the formation of the others, or a situation of mutual conflict and antagonism, in which each element resists and suppresses the others. These reciprocal relationships are regulating the cardinal directions, the seasons, colors, our bodily organs and functions, and emotions. In reality, a diversity of elements come together in a state of repeated collision, collapse, and rebirth at each level, and today we seem to be witnessing an accelerated process of antagonistic conflict between different standards of value, faiths and beliefs, and political systems.

The participating artists in the 21st Biennale of Sydney were not chosen to represent or symbolise a particular theme. By placing these artworks, oriented towards diverse concerns and issues which resonate with overall perspectives of the Biennale on multiple levels, across seven venues in the city of Sydney, it is my hope that the Biennale as a whole will serve as a microcosm of the history of Earth, the human race, and a condensed version of the history of Sydney. From the repeatedly overlapping value systems contained within, the Biennale will encourage us to consider how all things in this world interact with complementarity in a state of equilibrium and engagement. Taking Sydney in 2018 as a starting point, the 21st Biennale of Sydney **SUPERPOSITION: Equilibrium & Engagement** promises to be a creative and critical experience for observing the world.

- Mami Kataoka, Artistic Director, 21st Biennale of Sydney

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Ai Weiwei in conversation with Mami Kataoka **Thursday 15 March, 2018 — 6–7pm** **CONCERT HALL, SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE**

To mark the opening of the Biennale, Ai Weiwei appears in conversation with Artistic Director Mami Kataoka in a personal and political discussion that charts changes in the artist's work since he left China, and his current engagement with the issue of global forced migration through his artworks and films. Presented in partnership with Sydney Opera House.

Tickets on sale Friday, 15 December 2017:

<https://www.sydneyoperahouse.com/events/whats-on/ideas-and-talks/2018/ai-weiwei-in-conversation.html>

Sydney Premier: HUMAN FLOW, a film by Ai Weiwei **Thursday 15 March, 2018 — 8.30pm** **CONCERT HALL, SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE**

The Biennale of Sydney and Roadshow present the Sydney premiere of Ai Weiwei's Oscar-nominated documentary *Human Flow*, a powerful feature that attempts to communicate the scale and human impact of mass displacement, filmed over the course of a year in 23 countries.

Tickets on sale Friday, 15 December 2017:

<https://www.sydneyoperahouse.com/events/whats-on/ideas-and-talks/2018/ai-weiwei-human-flow.html>

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