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ARCH — UNE 2016 SECONDARY EDUCATION KITT

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Part 1	<u>Introduction</u>	Part 2	Venues and Embassies	<u>Acknowledgements</u>
— 03	How to use this resource	— 18	Cockatoo Island: Embassy of the Real	Produced by the Biennale of Sydney
— 05	20 th Biennale of Sydney: The future is already here — it's	— 39	Museum of Contemporary Art Australia: Embassy of Translation	Alana Ambados, Public Program and Education Coordinator Melissa Ratliff, Curator and Manager
— 06	just not evenly distributed Artistic Director and Attachés	— 58	Art Gallery of New South Wales: Embassy of Spirits	of Public Programs and Education Lauren Giusti, Public Program and Education Assistant
— 07	Visual Identity and For The People	 77	Artspace: Embassy of Non-Participation	Text Consultants
		— 85	Mobile Book Stall: Embassy	Bree Richards, Nick Waterlow OAM
— 09	Behind the Scenes at the		of Stanislaw Lem	Curatorial Fellow
	Biennale of Sydney			Tai Spruyt, Curatorial
		— 93	Mortuary Station: Embassy of Transition	Research Manager
— 11	Choreographing the City:			
	Venues and Embassies	— 102	Carriageworks:	Art Direction
			Embassy of Disappearance	For The People
— 13	Questions			
		— 124	In-Between Spaces	Design
— 17	Student Newspaper			Lauren Barber and Brittney Griffiths
				Copy Editor
				Catriona Murdie
				Catholia Marale
		D		Contributors
		Principal Patr	on	Ellen Kozakiewicz

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Diluvium, 2014

Installation view (2014) at the Korean Cultural Centre UK, London. Courtesy the artist and Korean Cultural Centre UK,

London. Photograph: Junyong Cho

Lee Bul

The Secondary Education Kit has been designed to support educators in creating exciting and engaging teaching and learning opportunities before, during and after a visit to the **20**th **Biennale** of Sydney: The future is already here — it's just not evenly distributed.

This resource is divided into introductory and venue sections, supplemented by a glossary of key terms. Questions and activities can be found at the close of each section.

The **introductory** section contains information about the exhibition, the Artistic Director and key contributors to the Biennale of Sydney. This section is intended as an overview of the 20th Biennale and its approach, and is designed to provide a broader understanding of contemporary art practice and the role the venues play in the conceptualisation of the exhibition's ideas and final selection of artworks. It also provides insight into the behind-the-scenes operations of the Biennale.

The **venue** sections explore the specific context and concept associated with each exhibition venue and outline the conceptual considerations that have led to their use. Downloadable as separate sections, they feature selected artists and are particularly useful for self-guided visits to venues.

The Kit also provides information on the 20th Biennale **Student Newspaper**. In 2016, students will be invited to submit responses to set questions listed on the Biennale's website, along with submission guidelines and instructions. Selected responses received during the exhibition will be featured in digital and print versions of the publication.

Integrating resources and content

We encourage you to use the Kit as a ready-touse case study, educator resource or student handout, as a projection or in conjunction with a SMART Board.

Previous and ongoing resources may also be useful for discussions about contemporary art practice, and in relation to the history of the Biennale and its broader context.

Biennale Chapters sent periodically to subscribers to the Biennale's Education e-News reflect current issues in contemporary art, drawing on the Biennale's 40-plus-year history and its archives to illuminate these ideas. Use these articles to build a case study to complement units of work relating to contemporary art, exhibition models and curatorial practice.

Feedback

Education resources have been developed to be adaptable and practical for classroom use and to ensure content can be applied across a range of learning settings. If you have any feedback relating to our resources, please get in touch: programs@biennaleofsydney.com.au

'I remember walking past a video arcade ... and seeing kids playing those old-fashioned console-style plywood video games ... the kids who were playing them were so physically involved, it seemed to me that what they wanted was to be inside the games ... The real world had disappeared for them - it had completely lost its importance. They were in that notional space, and the machine in front of them was the brave new world.'1

¹William Gibson

interviewed by David Wallace-Wells, 'The Art of Fiction No. 211', The Paris Review, vol. 197, Summer 2011

The future is already here — it's just not evenly distributed

Lee Mingwei Guernica in Sand, 2006 / 2015

Mixed-media interactive installation; sand, wooden island, lighting, 1300 x 643 cm. Courtesy of JUT Museum Pre-Opening Office, Taipei. Photograph: Taipei Fine Arts Museum



This exhibition starts with a question: if each era suggests a different view of reality – what is ours?

We live in a world where the distinction between the virtual and the physical has become increasingly difficult to define. We understand 'virtual' as that part of our lives that is spent on computers, devices and on the internet – a **simulated** reality – and the 'physical' as 'real life'. But is it really the case that one is more real than the other? Is there something in-between these two realities? Think about when you talk on the phone, when you are on the internet or when you see yourself in a mirror – these are all times when you are neither here nor there.

The title of the 20th Biennale of Sydney: The future is already here — it's just not evenly distributed is inspired by a quote from science fiction author William Gibson. Artworks in the 20th Biennale prompt us to think about in-between spaces, our interactions with the digital world and how we live today. They blur the boundaries between different art forms and investigate how things can be simultaneously interconnected and disconnected, whether it be in our local area or globally.

To develop and help realise these ideas, each exhibition venue is imagined as an 'embassy'. An embassy is an office or official residence set up by one country within a foreign country. The host country allows the embassy to control and occupy the territory it is on so that the embassy can help or protect the citizens of its home country.

Just as an embassy is a safe space for these citizens, the Embassies of the 20th Biennale offer a safe space for thinking. They aim to promote dialogue and understanding, providing a temporary home where different thoughts and ideas can come together. These Embassies are located within both traditional and non-traditional settings for art, ranging from museums to unique locations, including an old train station and book stall. For Stephanie Rosenthal, the Artistic Director of the 20th Biennale, art is something that can confront, surprise and even be 'stumbled over'. Visitors can follow a path from venue to venue that allows for the in-between spaces of the city to be experienced and for art to be encountered unexpectedly, outside the museum context.

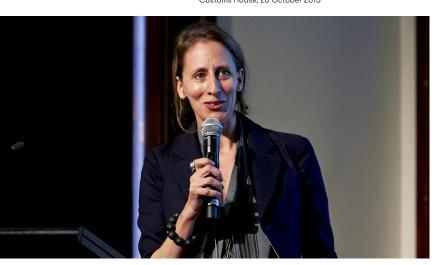
Glossary

Simulate: To pretend, imitate or create something that has the appearance of being something else.

Dialogue: A conversation or discussion.

Stephanie Rosenthal

Stephanie Rosenthal Biennale of Sydney Media Launch, Customs House, 28 October 2015



Stephanie Rosenthal is an internationally acclaimed curator who joins the 20th Biennale from her current position as Chief Curator at the Hayward Gallery in London, England. Prior to this, she worked at the Haus der Kunst in Munich, Germany.

A focus of Rosenthal's curatorial practice is an exploration of the relationship between visual art and **performance**. Her exhibitions have highlighted key figures in the history of performance, such as the American artist Allan Kaprow, who helped to create 'happenings' and 'environments' as new kinds of art in the 1950s and 1960s, and the Cuban-American artist Ana Mendieta, who used her own body in performances and actions that explored her relationship with nature. In 2010, Rosenthal curated MOVE: Choreographing You, an exhibition featuring interactive artworks that aimed to make visitors aware of their own bodies, while at the same time bringing attention to the ways artists have used choreography as a means to encourage audiences to experience art with their whole body.

Not only interested in bringing 'live art' into the gallery or institution, Rosenthal is also fascinated by the potential of art in public spaces and the idea that the cities and towns we live in choreograph and manipulate our everyday behaviour – that our environments make us move, act and do particular things. It is, however, not only cities but digital spaces, too, that affect our experience of the world.

For Rosenthal, working with other curators and peers is a way of bringing a range of knowledge and viewpoints into her exhibitions. An advisory group made up of 13 curators, writers and theorists from diverse backgrounds have been invited to assist Rosenthal by contributing advice, ideas and their own projects to the exhibition. Called Attachés, the members of this group are: Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath (Munich/New York), Geraldine Kirrihi Barlow (Brisbane), Jessica Cerasi (London), Stephen Gilchrist (Sydney), Anna Gritz (London), Adrian Heathfield (London/New York), Mami Kataoka (Tokyo), Hicham Khalidi (Paris), Pablo Léon de la Barra (New York/Rio de Janeiro), André Lepecki (New York), Markus Miessen (Berlin) and Aveek Sen (Kolkata).

Glossary

Performance: A form of art that typically uses the body as its primary medium. It can be scripted or unscripted, spontaneous or carefully planned, and sometimes involves audience participation. Often taking place live and in front of an audience, the performance may 'live on' in the memories of those who experience it, or as 'documentation' in photography, video, audio and writing.

Happenings: Happenings: A term coined by Allan Kaprow in 1958 for a performance, event or series of events that often relate to everyday actions and gestures. Whether improvised or scripted, happenings are intended to disrupt the traditional roles of the artist, artwork and observer, making each as important as the other. Audiences are simultaneously viewers of and an active part of the artwork.

Choreography: The art of arranging sequences of steps and movements as instruction for people to follow or perform, such as a gesture or a dance.

'Often branding for cultural events can be either **impenetrable** or apologetic, and neither help [to] involve audiences. We have been a lot more playful and expressive with our solution, experimenting with the conventions of branding to surprise and engage people.'²

Jason Little

For The People

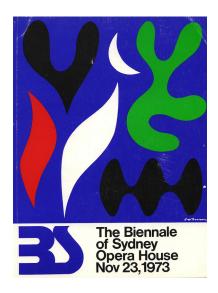
As an event that is reinvented every two years, it is important that the **visual identity** of each Biennale is specific to, and representative of, the ideas, artists and artworks that make up the current exhibition. The Artistic Director and marketing department of the Biennale are responsible for setting a **design brief** to which different design firms may choose to submit a tender or proposal outlining how they would approach the design needs of the exhibition. The visual identity must generate attention and convey the festival's scale, diversity and atmosphere, while also communicating that the Biennale is an event that occurs over multiple venues across the city of Sydney. The design needs to present information in a number of ways, use images of artworks appropriately and be adaptable across print and digital publications, websites, outdoor signage and advertising.

For The People developed the visual identity for the 20th Biennale of Sydney:
The future is already here — it's just not evenly distributed. The visual identity seeks to encapsulate the key ideas and

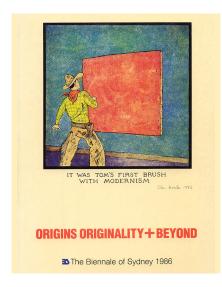
themes of the exhibition through graphic solutions, drawing on such aspects as the title and the metaphor of the 'embassy' – the name given to the exhibition venues.

Because each Embassy explores a different theme, a group of custom fonts have been designed to complement those ideas. Each font has its own character but can 'crossbreed' and merge with other fonts to highlight notions of the 'in-between' and the blurring of boundaries, which is central to the 20th Biennale exhibition concept. Each Embassy has a particular colour associated with it, as well as an accompanying graphic character called a 'delegate'. These delegates act as visual identifiers for the venues and can be animated and brought to life on posters and billboards in the city or on the Biennale's website. The visual identity is intended to be repeatable, adaptive and to inspire participation. It has been carefully planned to connect the conceptual and physical aspects of the exhibition while also bringing visitors and the wider community together.

²'Biennale of Sydney Appoints New Agency: For the People' (Media Release, 20th Biennale of Sydney, 20 July 2015), biennaleofsydney.com.au/20bos/ wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2015/11/Biennale-of-Sydney-appoints-new-agency-FOR-THE-PEOPLE.pdf



1st Biennale of Sydney Catalogue



6th Biennale of Sydney Catalogue 1986



17th Biennale of Sydney Catalogue 2010



20th Biennale of Sydney Catalogue 2016

Glossary

Impenetrable: Impossible to pass through or enter; impossible to understand.

Visual Identity: The visible or designed elements of a brand, company or event, where aspects such as colour, form and shape are used to create a recognisable 'look' that captures and conveys the messages, information and symbolic meanings about the brand, company or event.

Design Brief: A planning document that specifies what a design project has to achieve, by what means and within what timeframe.

For The People: A Sydney-based design agency established in early 2015 by co-founders Damian Borchok, Jason Little and Andy Wright. For The People are experienced strategists and designers dedicated to creating new models, theories and ways of working in their field for this century.

Delegate: A person sent or authorised to represent others.

The Biennale of Sydney

Stephanie Rosenthal and Adrian Heathfield in conversation after a film screening at the Golden Age Cinema, Surry Hills, 9 September 2015. Photograph: Julia Bavyka



The Biennale is a **non-profit** organisation responsible for producing an international contemporary visual arts festival every two years. In order to mount an exhibition visited by over 600,000 people, the Biennale is staffed by a number of skilled people who each play a crucial role in planning, developing and realising the large-scale exhibition and accompanying events that take place across multiple venues over a three-month period. The Biennale is made up of a mix of permanent and temporary staff members. Some members of the team work full-time over the two-year period necessary for organising the exhibition, and up to 50 contracted and part-time positions are created closer to the time of the exhibition. In addition, over 400 volunteers work with the Biennale during the exhibition itself.

The Biennale is overseen by a Board of Directors – a group of advisors with expertise in a range of areas with relevance to the operations of the organisation, such as law, management, finance, technology, the arts and culture. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the overall performance of the

organisation and its key relationships, such as those between the Board, staff and major **stakeholders**, which might include government partners and sponsors, or venue management teams. The Artistic Director is a curator (or, at times, curatorial team) invited by the Biennale to define the theme or concept of each edition of the Biennale. They are responsible for selecting artists and artworks appropriate to that concept, as well as working with the artists, other colleagues and staff to realise this vision.

Glossary

Non-profit: Not established for the purpose of making a profit, not entered into for money.

Stakeholders: A person, group or organisation that has an interest in, or can be affected by, the activities of an organisation.

Cultural funding: Financial support for projects generally of an artistic or cultural nature received from governments and foreign representatives of countries, whose citizens or residents are participating in the project. These representative bodies include consulates and Embassies.

Grant: A sum of money given by a government or other organisation for an artistic or cultural project.

Freight: Goods transported in bulk by truck, train, ship or aircraft.

Philanthropist: A person who seeks to promote the welfare of others, especially by the generous donation of money to good causes.

In-kind support: Goods and services are provided instead of financial support. For example, donating art-making materials or technology, such as projectors and screens for audiovisual artworks.

The organisation is made up of different departments that work together in the lead up to and during each exhibition:

Administration and Planning

Administration and Planning are responsible for general office administration and management, staffing, finances and bookkeeping, and finding support for the organisation and exhibition through **cultural funding** bodies and applying for **grants**.

Benefaction

Benefaction seek financial support for the organisation and its projects by building relationships with private donors and **philanthropists**.

Sponsorship

Sponsorship works with a range of organisations in the corporate sector, whose financial and **in-kind support** contributes to the success and delivery of the exhibition.

Marketing

Marketing communicates the Biennale's ideas to the wider community through a range of different means, such as arranging the design elements or visual identity of the exhibition; working with media and advertising partners to promote the Biennale; producing catalogues, guidebooks and websites; and generating content for different print and digital communication tools, including social media.

Curatorial

Curatorial support the Artistic Director by researching the exhibition's ideas and artists, writing interpretative texts for publications, the website and exhibition wall labels, and by assisting artists in the development of their works.

Exhibition

The Exhibition team works closely with artists to research, produce, organise and install their artworks and projects, coordinating the construction of artworks as well as preparing the spaces and architectural and display elements. They work with the Biennale's colleagues at the exhibition venues and sites, and organise freight and insurance for artworks.

Public Programs and Education

Public Programs and Education develops programs, events and resources designed to create positive experiences, stimulate discussion and provide access to the exhibition's ideas for a variety of different audiences. 'I felt a real urgency to go into the city and expand the Biennale beyond the public institutions. For me, it's the reason why Biennales are so important – we can go into spaces that are usually unoccupied by art and engage a different audience.'3

— Stephanie Rosenthal

Institutions such as the Art Gallery of New South Wales and Museum of Contemporary Art Australia (MCA) are purpose-built institutions dedicated to exhibiting, collecting and interpreting art. In addition to housing and presenting their own collections of art, they mount dynamic temporary exhibitions and engage audiences with other activities designed to illuminate the experience of art. Biennials can take place within a wide variety of spaces including museums, and in one or more different locations at the same time. Quite often, they offer alternative ways of experiencing art and seek out nontraditional venues, creating new ways for people to explore and rediscover their city.

Every two years, the Biennale takes over both traditional institutions for art and the broader landscape of Sydney, situating art in unexpected and non-museum sites that, in its 40-plus-year history, have included: Pier 2/3 in Walsh Bay, a wharf first built in the early 1900s; the Sydney Opera House, an architectural icon of the city and the location of the first Biennale in 1973; the Royal Botanic Gardens, among natural beauty; and Cockatoo Island, a former prison and shipyard. This approach to 'exhibition making', common to similarly recurring exhibitions, enables curators and artists to respond to the unique characteristics of each site. Exhibition themes and artworks directly or indirectly reflect or engage with the history, geographic location and former uses of each carefully chosen location.

Due to the differing natures of these sites, the Biennale needs to be inventive yet responsible in the way it exhibits and takes care of the artworks in the exhibition. Steps need to be taken in order to make these spaces suitable for the presentation of art and safe for both the artworks and the visitors to the exhibition. The Biennale enters into

agreements with the owners and caretakers of each location, first negotiating their use and then agreeing on how to prepare and manage the operation of these venues in the lead up to and during the exhibition. Lighting, audiovisual equipment, furniture, construction of temporary walls, signage, arranging accessible entry points and organising volunteers or security guards to invigilate works are all important considerations when using new and alternative exhibition spaces.

³ Stephanie Rosenthal (speech delivered at the 20th Biennale of Sydney Media Launch, Customs House, 28 October 2015)

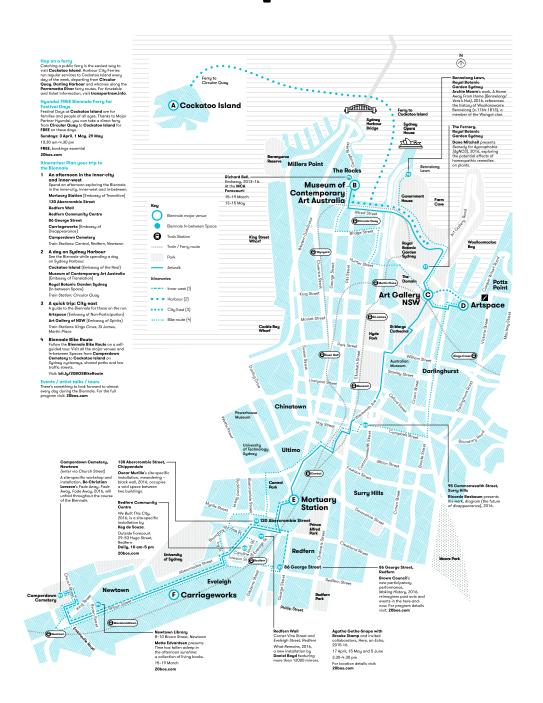
Choreographing the city for the 20th Biennale of Sydney

Rosenthal considers the use of new non-museum venues and 'in-between' spaces as integral to the 20th Biennale, as they allow for people to encounter art in their day-to-day lives while linking city spaces with an imagined pathway, or 'corridor'. Rosenthal has worked with artists to engage with and explore different areas in Sydney in the hope that visitors will consider contemporary works of art in relation to the history of these neighbourhoods and spaces.

Audiences are invited to reflect on the changes that have occurred there over time and to experience their city in different ways. This edition of the exhibition extends from Cockatoo Island in Sydney Harbour through to major museums and art spaces, such as the MCA, Art Gallery of NSW, Artspace and Carriageworks. Along and around this 'corridor', art pops up in unusual spaces, such as a disused train station, a cemetery, a library and a book stall.

Glossary

Invigilate: To keep watch over artworks in a gallery or exhibition space to ensure they are interacted with in a safe and appropriate manner.



Biennales Past and Present

Rosenthal believes that a strength of biennials is their ability to take art out of conventional gallery spaces and museums, and introduce it into other parts of the city. Charles Merewether's 15th Biennale of Sydney: Zones of Contact (2006) used many alternative venues and sites in and around Sydney.

Compare and contrast the exhibition concepts, venues and programs of the 2006 and 2016 Biennales.

How did Merewether and Rosenthal integrate their curatorial ideas into their choices of venues and artworks?

What impact do you think these curatorial decisions had on the visitors' experience of the exhibition?



Exhibition Concept

The title of the 20th Biennale, The future is already here — it's just not evenly distributed, comes from a quote by science fiction author William Gibson in the early 1990s. More than twenty years ago, he felt that the future was already a part of our everyday lives.

What do you think Gibson meant by this statement? How could the future not be evenly distributed? Discuss the title and its meaning, giving examples of technological inventions that seem futuristic today.

Using examples, discuss the difference between a physical and a virtual experience. Choose artists in the 20th Biennale whose works relate to physical reality and the experience of the body, or to digital technology and virtual reality.

The internet is also a venue for the 20th Biennale. Come up with an idea for an artwork that can only be seen or experienced online. The concept for the artwork should be 'site-specific', that is, it should take into consideration the context of where it is exhibited or shown.

Curatorial Process

Traditionally, a single Artistic Director is invited to curate each edition of the Biennale. For the 20th Biennale, Rosenthal invited 13 curators, writers and theorists to work with her to develop the exhibition.

Select a past Biennale exhibition that had two or more curators. Research the previous exhibitions of each curator. What concepts were explored? What artworks were featured?

How did each curator's expertise come together to form the exhibition concept of that particular Biennale?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of collaboration for a curator?







Embassies

Rosenthal has used the 'embassy' as a metaphor for Biennale venues. Select an Embassy that interests you the most and describe the concepts that are explored at that venue.

Venues

Considering the diverse range of venues for the 20th Biennale, research a natural, urban or historic site of interest in your local area and argue a case for its inclusion as a venue for presenting contemporary art.

Ideas

Each Embassy is organised around a cluster or 'constellation' of thoughts and ideas.

Select one keyword from an Embassy of your choice and define this term. Key words can be found in each venue section of the Kit.

How does the Embassy reflect or sit within the overarching framework of the 20th Biennale?

How does the Embassy reference the history, architecture or function of its venue?

Compare and contrast the work of two or three artists presented at this Embassy, considering how the concept, installation and experience of their work reflects the overall ideas of the Embassy.

Describe the function of an embassy or consulate. Why do you think Rosenthal chose this metaphor for the venues of the 20th Biennale?

Describe the site's history, purpose, original and current use, and relationship with the local community.

How would an artwork be installed, maintained and displayed at this venue?

To what extent would the site need to be redeveloped in order to exhibit contemporary art safely and appropriately for audiences?

What type of permissions would you need to obtain in order to use it as an exhibition venue?

How might the presentation of art at this site affect the meaning of the work?

To what extent does the term relate to one or more Embassies and the exhibition concept overall?

Compare and contrast the ways in which three exhibiting artists explore this idea in their work. Reference one of the featured quotes to support your response.



In-Between

In-Between spaces are the unique, non-traditional and unexpected venues in the city of Sydney selected for the 20th Biennale.

artwork, genre and exhibition space can be.

To what extent are artists in the 20th Biennale investigating notions of the 'in-between' in their practice? Consider writing about a diverse range of artists who blur the boundaries between our notions of what an artist, audience,

Visual Identity

Look through the Biennale of Sydney's visual identity and branding from 1973 to the present day, and select one exhibition's design that you think is the most interesting.

How have the visual identities of past Biennales reflected their exhibition concept?

Do you think the design was particularly successful in evoking the exhibition's ideas, artworks and venues? How?

Redesign the visual identity for one Biennale by recreating the imagery, style, format and ideas in a manner you think would have been most appropriate.

Audience

Contemporary art often requires audience engagement or participation in order to be developed, activated or understood. Select artists from the 20th Biennale whose work relies on other people.

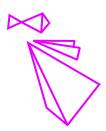
What is the role of the audience in the presentation of these works?

How do audiences experience the work physically, emotionally and conceptually?

In what ways do the boundaries or relationships between audience, artwork and artist shift and manifest themselves as they come together?

What do you think audiences might gain from participating or engaging with these artworks?

What new knowledge or understanding do you think audiences come away with?



Science Fiction

Science fiction is a genre of fiction that often involves speculation and imaginative concepts about the future. The stories and concepts are often based on current or future ideas of science and technology, and explore different ways of living as a society.

Performance

RoseLee Goldberg, an art historian specialising in performance, says that it 'has been the starting point for some of the most radical ideas that have changed the way we artists and audiences - think about art'.1

Research artists in the 20th Biennale and well-known books, TV shows or films that relate to the genre of science fiction.

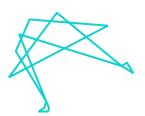
Using your research to give examples, discuss the differences and similarities between the work of a science fiction author and that of an artist.

Write a short science fiction story inspired by this research and the overarching 20th Biennale exhibition concept.

Define performance art by describing what performance involves in terms of materials, concepts, audiences and space; identifying key figures in the development of the art form; and providing examples that reflect diverse performance practices.

Compare and contrast artworks in the 20th Biennale that explore performance in some way.

How do these artworks relate to your definition and understanding of performance? To what extent do these artworks reflect, challenge or reinterpret these conventions?



¹ Quoted in an interview by Nick Stillman, 'The Business of Art: A Conversation with RoseLee Goldberg', available online: http://current.nyfa. org/post/73251798506/conversations-roselee-goldberg (2 November 2005)

For each exhibition, the Biennale produces and prints a free Student Newspaper for secondary-school students. The Student Newspaper contains information about the Biennale and the current exhibition's theme, ideas, artists and artworks.

For the first time, the Biennale invites secondaryschool students to develop and write content for the 20th Biennale Student Newspaper!

This is an excellent opportunity for students to not only present their ideas about the exhibition – sharing their thoughts, research and experiences with fellow students and the wider Biennale audience – but also to have their work published by one of Australia's most significant international contemporary art events.

How to submit your work for the 20th Biennale Student Newspaper

A Start-Off document will provide a list of questions to respond to, with images and examples of art historical and critical writing to help you develop your submission. Quotes from 20th Biennale participating artists and interviews provide inspiration for your submission.

Your response will answer ONE of the questions listed in this document or in this Education Kit. It should be thoughtful and appropriate, and may be in written or visual form or a combination of the two. Questions may relate to the Embassies, individual artist projects or an overarching idea that links multiple artworks across different venues.

What happens with my submission?

Students will complete an online form to submit their response for the Student Newspaper. During the Biennale, some submissions will be featured on the Biennale's website. At the end of the exhibition, an editorial panel will be assembled to review all received submissions and select diverse and outstanding work for inclusion in the printed Student Newspaper publication.

Key dates

Visit 20bos.com for updates, including details on submitting your work and how to get in touch if you have any enquiries.

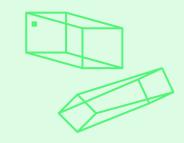
- The Start-Off document and Student Newspaper Submission Form will go live from March
- Submissions close at 5 pm on Sunday, 5
 June 2016
- The final Student Newspaper can be downloaded from the Biennale's website from July 2016

EMBASSY OF THE REAL

Cockatoo Island

'I'm really trying to bring together a virtual or digital experience of the world as well as reminding us of the importance and power of the body."4

- Stephanie Rosenthal





Cockatoo Island Image courtesy Airview Online [www.airviewonline.com.au]

Situated along the Parramatta River west of Sydney Harbour is Cockatoo Island. Its sandstone convict ruins and industrial warehouses serve as a reminder of the site's significance in the development of Sydney. Initially used as a base for fishing by the Eora people of Sydney's coastal region, the overcrowding of prisons on Norfolk Island saw Cockatoo Island repurposed. Convicts were put to work, building their own prison barracks, a military guardhouse and official residences in 1839. As the years went by, the Island moved from hosting prisons and reform schools for disobedient girls and orphaned boys to a site of great industry and shipbuilding, manufacturing some of the world's largest turbine engines and warships.

In 2001, the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust became responsible for Cockatoo Island and embarked upon a project to restore its natural landscape and industrial architecture. Shortly after it opened to the public in 2007, it was registered as a **UNESCO** world heritage site. Cockatoo Island has since been enjoyed by visitors taking historical tours and camping overnight, and is used for film and television

shoots, cultural events, and of course the Biennale of Sydney. The Island has been a major venue of the exhibition since 2008.

The choice to use a public, heritage-listed site such as Cockatoo Island as an exhibition venue presents interesting opportunities for artists and curators to explore the possibilities for situating contemporary art in a unique environment dominated by industrial architecture. The island invites artists to think big and dream up largescale, immersive and interactive installations that are not restricted by the dimensions of a traditional gallery space. Ambitious artworks require good planning - materials and equipment need to travel by special barges to the Island, and care must be taken to ensure that the heritage buildings are not damaged. Weather conditions, which constantly change on the Island, are an additional consideration for artists with delicate artworks.

⁴ Stephanie Rosenthal (speech delivered at the 20th Biennale of Sydney Media Launch, Customs House, 28 October 2015)



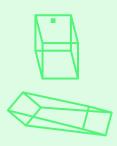
Cockatoo Island

Image courtesy of Sydney Harbour Federation Trust

Stage sets and props from films like X-Men Origins: Wolverine and Unbroken still remain among the historic and industrial architecture of Cockatoo Island. This coming together of fact and fiction is the perfect backdrop for the Embassy of the Real, which engages with this multilayered history by presenting artists who are interested in science fiction, our understanding of reality, and the space between the physical and the virtual. Artworks on Cockatoo Island will challenge or shift how we perceive reality. By exploring how that reality is influenced by new technologies, the artworks also interrogate the importance of our physical body and physical place in the world.

Glossary

UNESCO: The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, an organisation that seeks to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity.



VIRTUAL REALITY / BODY / PHYSICAL SPACE / CHOREOGRAPHY / FICTIONAL REALITY / SCI-FI / FOLDED SPACE / OUTER SPACE / COMMUNICATION / LANGUAGE / WORLD WIDE WEB / CAPITALISM



William Forsythe Nowhere and everywhere at the same time, 2015

Plumb bobs, string, compressed air cylinders, aluminium frames. Courtesy the artist. Photograph: Dominik Mentzos



Chiharu Shiota Flowing Water, 2009

30 beds, bedding, telephones, photos, water. Installation view (2009) at Nizayama Forest Art Museum, Toyama. Courtesy the artist. Photograph: Sunhi Mang. © Chiharu Shiota/Bild-Kunst. Licensed by Viscopy, 2015



Ming Wong Windows On The World (Part 1), 2014

Mixed-media installation with video. Courtesy of Para Site and Spring Workshop, Hong Kong. Photograph: Glenn Eugen Ellingsen



Cécile B. Evans Hyperlinks or It Didn't Happen,

HD video. Courtesy the artist



Justene Williams Your Boat My Scenic Personality of Space, 2012 (video still)

2-channel video, colour, sound. Courtesy the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney



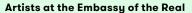
Korakrit Arunanondchai Painting with history in room filled with people with funny names 3, 2015 (video still)

HD video, 25 mins. Courtesy the artist, CLEARING New York/Brussels and Carlos/Ishikawa London

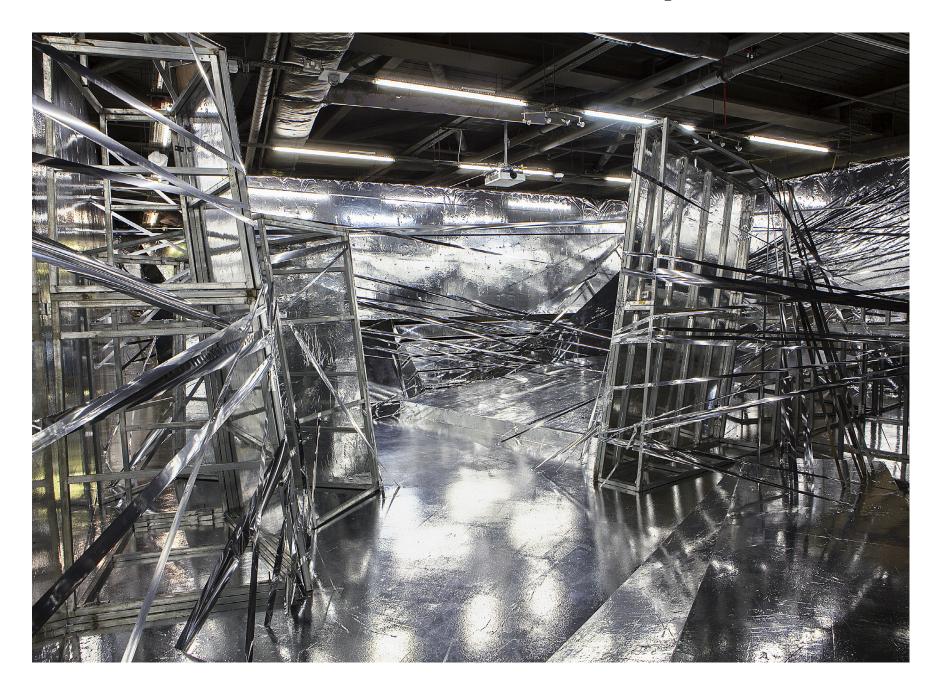


Lee Bul Aubade III, 2014 (detail)

Installation view (2014) at "MMCA Hyundai Motor Series 2014: Lee Bul", National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea. Commissioned by National Museum of Moden and Contemporary Art, Korea. Sponsored by Hyundai Motor Company. Courtesy: National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea. Photograph: Jeon Byung-cheol



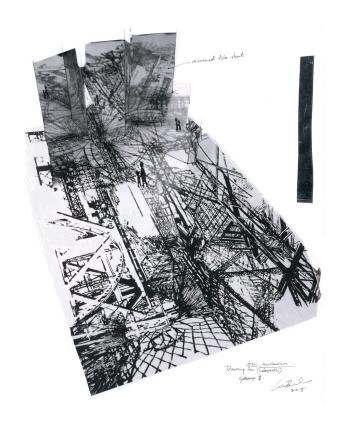
Korakrit Arunanondchai / Samuel Beckett / boychild / Lee Bul / Cevdet Erek / Cécile B. Evans / William Forsythe / Agatha Gothe-Snape / Nilbar Güreş / Camille Henrot / Bharti Kher / Emma McNally / Maaike Schoorel / Chiharu Shiota / Justene Williams / Ming Wong / Xu Zhen (Produced by Madeln Company)



Diluvium, 2014, installation view (2014) at the Korean Cultural Centre UK, London.

Courtesy Korean Cultural Centre UK, London. Photograph: Junyong Cho

'Our plans about **utopia** are undoubtedly going to fail. But as human beings, just because it's destined to fail doesn't mean we should stop dreaming about it. We need to keep trying, don't we?'



Drawing for the labyrinth (Turbine Hall, Biennale of Sydney), 2015

Acrylic paint, pigment ink, metalized polyester tape and pigment print on paper, 30 x 24 cm. Courtesy of Studio Lee Bul

Glossary

Commission: To authorise the production of a new building, piece of equipment or work of art.

Utopia: An imagined place or state of things in which everything is perfect.

Working initially in drawing and performance to explore issues relating to personal identity, Korean artist Lee Bul has slowly shifted the focus of her 20-year career and is now known for large-scale, immersive installations that draw on society's collective experiences. A new, site-specific **commission** for the 20th Biennale of Sydney, Willing To Be Vulnerable, 2016, investigates a contemporary collective experience – how we are coming to grips with a reality in which technology plays an increasingly important role in our lives.

Lee Bul's futuristic installation in the Turbine Hall on Cockatoo Island is a focal point of the Embassy of the Real. Monumental in scale, the artist has filled the 1640 square metre industrial space with an incredible, enveloping cityscape. Her visionary world references science fiction, constant technological innovation and the artist's own imagining of the future. As people move throughout the space, they are met by suspended banners and balloons, metallic, orb-like forms and industrial cranes drawn in black tape on the ground.

Exploring how organic and mechanical forms may co-exist in the future, Willing To Be Vulnerable is a vision of **utopia** that is both familiar and surreal. Getting lost in the installation, visitors are offered a glimpse into an alternate reality or perhaps a possible future. The work is a reflection on humanity's continual push for change and innovation, and aspirations towards perfection, and yet the space also conveys a sense of fragmentation and destruction.

Born 1964 in Yeongju, Korea Lives and works in Seoul, Korea

¹Lee Bul interviewed by Emerson Rosenthal, 'Lee Bul's Labyrinth of Infinity Mirrors: Via Negativa II', The Creators Project, 22 May 2014, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ce/bul-via-negativa-ii

Korakrit Arunanondchai



Painting with history in a room filled with people with funny names 3, 2015 (video still) HD video, 25 mins, Courtesty the artist; C L E A R I N G, New York and Brussels; and Carlos/Ishikawa, London

Korakrit Arunanondchai

'I like the idea of hybrids a lot, like hybrid media, and hybrid experiences ... it's not about mixing everything together for the sake of mixing everything together. It's posed in a framework of: All of that has already happened, and now I'm trying to explore the possibilities of what you can make from that result.'



Painting with history in a room filled with people with funny names 3, 2015 (video still)

HD video, 25 mins, Courtesty the artist; C L E A R I N G, New York and Brussels; and Carlos/ Ishikawa, London

Artists like Yves Klein and Jackson Pollock explored the gestural and performative actions of the body when applying paint to paper and canvas. This direct and expressive process challenged traditional painting practices, allowing artists to experiment with different techniques and break away from representational imagery.

Distancing himself from the blank white canvas, Korakrit Arunanondchai uses acid wash denim as an alternative painting surface in his works to explore and question the persona and identity of the artist. Arunanondchai recalls watching a televised interview with renowned Thai artist Chalermchai Kositpipat as a formative moment. In the interview, Kositpipat was asked to give his opinion on whether a nude body-painting performance was considered art. In his installations, videos and performances, Arunanondchai also questions what art can be.

Painting with history in a room filled with people with funny names 3, 2015, is a video work that continues the artist's ongoing investigation into the making of a Thai denim painter. The video is exhibited within an immersive installation that features a catwalk made from denim, designed as the setting for a one-time performance by his frequent collaborator, performance artist boychild. Drawing on diverse references such as popular culture, technology and Buddhism in his work, he has invited boychild to embody, in real time, the mythical Nāga serpent that features in his video.

Arunanondchai's practice is a **pastiche** of styles and mediums that celebrate art and life, explore how identity and reality are constructed, and invite us to think about how individuals and communities develop personas for themselves.

Glossary

Pastiche: An artistic work in a style that imitates that of another work, artist or period.

Born 1986 Bangkok, Thailand Lives and works in New York, USA and Bangkok

^{1*}Korakrit Arunanondchai interviewed by Honora Shea, 'Korakrit Arunanondchai's Body Work', Interview, 16 July 2014, <interviewmagazine.com/art/korakritarunanondchai-letters-to-chantri/#_>



'The project takes advantage of a recently acquired human instinct – the desire to walk and watch a video on [the] mobile phone at the same time – and creates a safe, immersive path where this can be actualised.'



Hyperlinks or It Didn't Happen, 2014 (video still)

HD video. Courtesy the artist

Glossary

Berman House: Built in 1999, the Berman House was designed by renowned Australian architect Harry Seidler. The concrete and suspended steel structure is built into the natural rock formation overlooking the Wingecarribee River, Joadja, Mittagong and Bowral in the Southern Highlands.

Phenomenon: A fact, situation or event that can be observed, generally of an impressive or extraordinary nature that activates a sense of heighted awareness.

CGI (computer-generated imagery): The application of computer graphics to create or contribute to images in art, printed media, video games, films, television programs, commercials, videos and simulators.

Human condition: The characteristics, key events and situations which compose the essentials of human existence, such as birth, growth, emotions, aspirations, conflict and death.

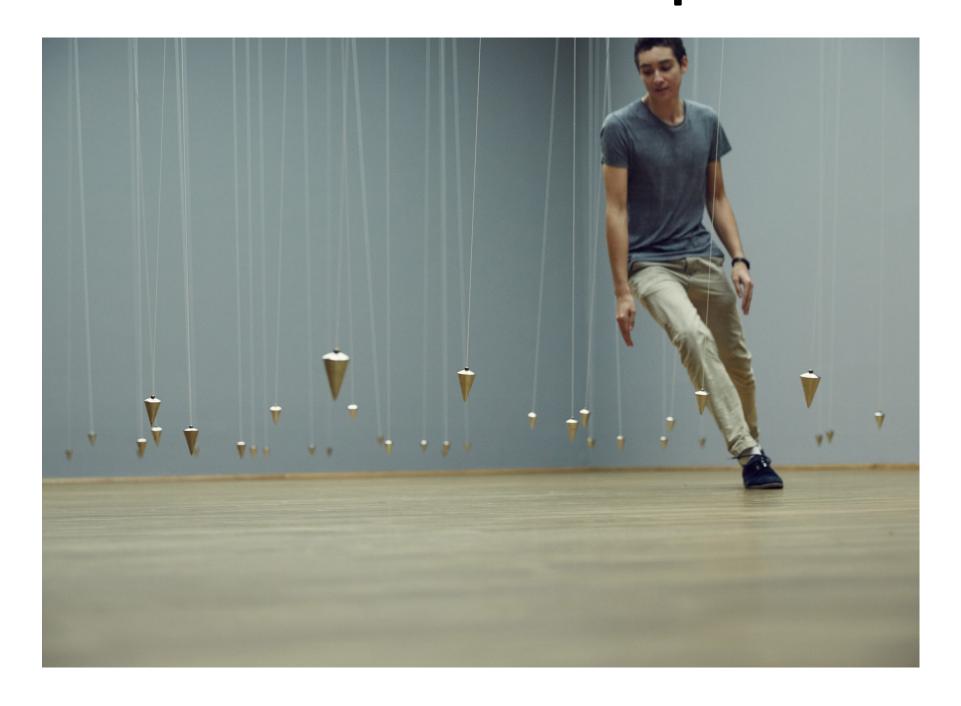
The future is already here - it's just not evenly distributed draws attention to our current state of being - that we exist in a world which is at once physical and digital, real and virtual. Through technology, we are able to not only access information and communicate with others but develop online identities for ourselves, sharing our thoughts, emotions and life events. New technologies influence how people feel and act, and artist Cécile B. Evans is interested in exploring our emotional relationship with technology. Evans' installations overlap virtual and physical objects, images, ideas and spaces to address the various exchanges between people and machines and how humans and technology are evolving alongside each other.

Commissioned for the 20th Biennale of Sydney at the Embassy of the Real, Evans presents a new work *Preamble*, 2016, alongside a video installation entitled *Hyperlinks or It Didn't Happen*, 2014. Using footage filmed at locations in Australia such as the **Berman House** in the

Southern Highlands, *Preamble* takes viewers into an unknown place – a sort of 'unreality'. The work describes a residence that exists in a possible future world where time and place are undefined.

Audiences are to view this work as a prequel to Evans' existing video, Hyperlinks or It Didn't Happen, which explores internet **phenomena** and how immaterial objects, ideas and characters exist online and in the physical hardware used to create and store them. Narrated by a **CGI** of an actor who recently passed away, the video introduces viewers to a set of characters who inhabit alternate realities. Both works draw attention to the impact of digital technology on the **human condition**. Evans uses ideas and objects we experience in real and digital spaces to highlight the fluidity of our physical and virtual realities.

Born 1983 in Cleveland, USA Lives and works in London, England and Berlin, Germany



Nowhere and everywhere at the same time, 2015. Courtesy the artist. Photograph: Dominik Mentzos

'One could easily assume that the substance of choreographic thought resided exclusively in the body. But is it possible for choreography to generate autonomous expressions of its principles – a choreographic object – without the body?'



Towards the Diagnostic Gaze, 2013
Handheald feather duster, sandstone,
dimensions variable. Courtesy of the
artist. Photograph: Dominik Mentzos

Glossary

Ephemeral: Lasting for a short period of time, temporary.

Choreography: An arrangement of steps and movements in sequence, which is used as an instruction for people to follow or perform, such as a dance.

Pendulum: A weight hung from a fixed point so that it can swing freely.

Magnetic: Something or someone that attracts people or things.

Gravity: The force that attracts something with mass and weight towards the centre of the earth or another object.

Just as performance translates a script or idea, or results from a set of instructions, objects can be a fundamental element of works involving the physical body, introduced as another means of shaping or directing the way performance is thought about and **choreographed**. When an object is placed in an exhibition, it directs the movement of visitors, choreographing their behaviour, path and pace, thereby making it a vital element of the work.

Born 1949 in New York, USA Lives and works in Frankfurt am Main, Germany Acclaimed dancer and choreographer William Forsythe has worked throughout his career to critique and reinvent the boundaries and language of dance, particularly that of ballet. Combining experimental music, spoken word and video projection, Forsythe creates large-scale performance installations that highlight both the exhibition's architecture and the behaviour and experiences of visitors in the space.

Nowhere and Everywhere at the Same Time, no. 2, 2013, at the Embassy of the Real is a low-hanging constellation of small **pendulums** that sway slowly by the action of a **magnetic** system. The audience is invited to move in and around this space, taking their cue from these 'choreographic objects' set up to prompt people to embark on an improvised path and set of movements. Interacting with this work, the viewer/participant becomes aware of the **gravity** and behaviour of their body in space; moving to their own rhythm and instinct, they unwittingly dance as a performer in the work.

An artwork is, traditionally, a physical object, whereas performance is typically all about bodies or something happening over time. **Ephemeral** mediums such as performance, dance and theatre place importance on the experience or the memory of a work, and any resulting 'art objects' may be the photographs, video or props left over from, or which document, that performance.

¹ William Forsythe, 'Choreographic Objects', http://www.williamforsythe.de/essay.html



Flowing Water, 2009, thirty beds, bedding, telephones, photos, water. Installation view (2009) at
Nizayama Forest Art Museum, Toyama. Courtesy the artist. Photograph: Sunhi Man

'I began to weave and use yarn at some point after having finished university at the time I was starting to feel that painting on a twodimensional surface wasn't sufficient. The reason I use yarn has nothing to do with handicrafts - yarn allows me to explore breadth and space like a line in a painting. An accumulation of black lines forms a surface, and I can create unlimited spaces that seem to me to gradually expand into a universe.¹¹

Glossary

Consciousness: The state of being aware and responsive to your surroundings.

Intervene: To interfere or come between people, events, place or objects.

Memories are stored in the simple everyday objects we choose to keep, collect and hold close to our hearts and minds. Shoes, keys, clothing, musical instruments and handwritten letters may represent important moments and events in our lives. These objects can suggest a shared experience, playing a part in the lives of most individuals, no matter how diverse their backgrounds may be.

Japanese artist Chiharu Shiota includes personal objects like these in her intricate, immersive and atmospheric installations, cocooned in webs of black or red thread. With this gesture, the stories of the objects are symbolically collected and suspended in time and space. The relationship between the mind and body is explored through evocative installations that inspire sensation and emotion, and represent memory, **consciousness** and dreams.

For her site-specific installation Conscious Sleep, 2016, in the convict precinct on Cockatoo Island, Shiota has constructed an elaborate array of twenty metal framed beds interwoven with hundreds of metres of black thread. Situated

inside heritage-listed sandstone buildings, Shiota's spatial **intervention** invites audiences to enter a surreal, dreamlike space. The installation in part reflects the history of the Island, once housing prisoners as a penal settlement, and later as a reformatory and industrial school for girls.

For the artist, beds symbolise interstitial spaces: places that exist between one thing and another – sleep and wakefulness, life and death, sickness and health. They create connections between reality and imagination, consciousness and dreams. The black thread weaves a three-dimensional drawing that physically connects these ideas, almost recalling the complex nerve systems within the brain. Viewed through the lens and imagination of the artist, Conscious Sleep connects with the deeply personal experiences and memories of the audience.

Born 1972 in Osaka, Japan Lives and works in Berlin, Germany

¹ Chiharu Shiota interviewed by Michele Chan, 'Stitching the sublime: Chiharu Shiota's threads of time – interview', Art Radar, 24 July 2015, http://artradarjournal.com/2015/07/24/chiharu-shiota-artist-profile/

Justene Williams with Sydney Chamber Opera



Cosmic Armature, 2012, video still. Courtesy the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney

Justene Williams

'My art continually changes, it's always in flux, it will never stay the same.'

CRMEDIQUES

Fary



Costume designs for the opera Victory Over the Sun (after Kazimir Malevich), 2015 Courtesy the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney

Have you ever heard the phrase 'one man's trash is another man's treasure'? For Sydney-based artist Justene Williams, this saying holds true. Through her artmaking practice, Williams creates **fantastical** works of art from humble materials and everyday objects, transforming items normally considered trashy and dull into spectacular videos, performances and installations. Not only things, but ideas, culture and history are transformed by Williams. From attending dance classes to her time spent in her father's wrecking yard and working in the retail clothing industry, from her interest in pop culture to that other vast resource surrounding us all – history, everything can be drawn into Williams' artistic world.

At the Embassy of the Real, Justene Williams has collaborated with the Sydney Chamber Opera to stage a new version of a legendary opera that was first performed in St Petersburg, Russia in 1913. Victory Over the Sun shocked audiences when it was first performed, due to its nonsensical, made-up language and experimental music, as well as the innovative sets and costumes designed by artist Kazimir Malevich (images of which can be seen at the Embassy of Translation during the Biennale). The opera was also the place where Malevich's now famous **Black Square** first appeared.

Malevich used black to symbolise a different reality or **dimension** – a place he could only imagine, beyond what our ordinary senses can comprehend. Williams is interested in the symbolism of a different kind of black square – the screens of our smart phones and the endless space of the internet. With the introduction of machines, Malevich felt he was living at a time when everything was on the verge of radically changing. Today, the internet has given us access to different places, information and experiences.

Williams' version of Victory Over the Sun has been inspired by the rich world of images and information that we are connected to today. When the performances are over, stage sets, props and costumes are left behind, with a video that re-creates the experience of being dazzled by movement, colour, sound and light – much like the chaotic energy associated with **dada**. As her contemporary response to the opera, Williams' personal interpretation on Cockatoo Island creates a dialogue between past and present.

Born 1970 in Sydney, Australia Lives and works in Sydney

Glossary

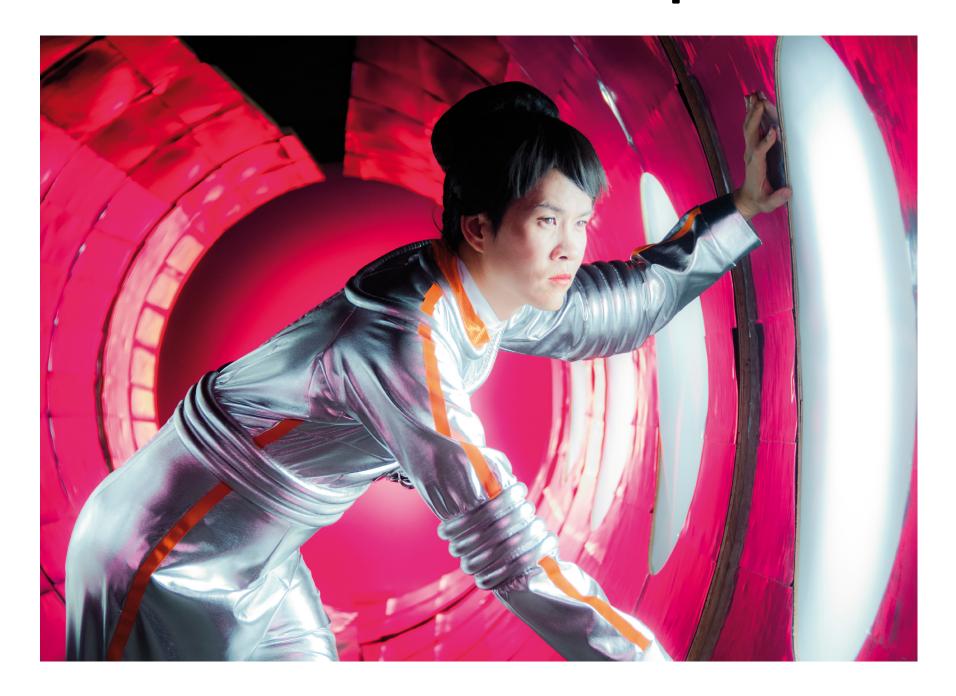
Fantastical: Something extraordinary, unusual and marvellously unrealistic or imaginary.

Black Square: A painting by Kazimir Malevich from 1915. (For more information, see Kazimir Malevich in the Embassy of Translation section.)

Dimension: A measurable aspect, such as length, width or height.

Dada: An early twentieth-century art movement whose representatives made satirical and nonsensical artworks, poetry and performances, challenging notions of what art is, while responding to the destruction and madness of the First World War.

¹ Brianna Munting, 'Justene Williams', National Association for the Visual Arts, 20 March 2015, https://visualarts.net.au/artist-files/2015/justene-williams/



Windows On The World (Part 1), 2014 (video still), mixed-media installation with video Courtesy of Para Site and Spring Workshop, Hong Kong. Photograph: Glenn Eugen Ellingse

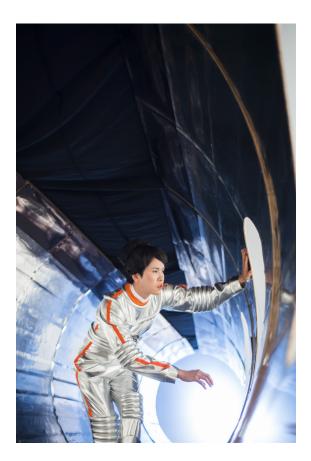
'Science fiction is a space where one can reimagine societies and identities, and extend an idea or the repercussions of that idea, on a society.'

Ming Wong researches, plans, directs, produces and even stars in the films that he makes. With a background in theatre, he uses the world of film and cinema like a library, 'borrowing' classic film scenes and re-creating them by playing all the characters himself. It doesn't matter what gender, ethnicity or language the character should speak – Ming Wong puts himself in the picture, questioning how we understand and create our identities. Through these strange and often humorous translations and reinterpretations of films, the artist creates jarring versions of our cultural history, manipulating the meaning of things that existed in other times and places.

Windows on the World (Part 2), 2014, is a video work presented on 24 different video monitors, set up to remind audiences of a deck in a space station in old science fiction movies. Interested in how both traditional and modern aspects of our culture express ideas about the future, the work incorporates a range of references: Chinese sci-fi films and space-themed cartoons, twentieth-century Cantonese opera, clips inspired by Russian director Andrei Tarkovsky's iconic 1972 film, Solaris, and documentary material about the Chinese space program. While some clips are included without any further editing or manipulation by the artist, Wong himself appears in a silver spacesuit, an astronaut tumbling through a makeshift tunnel. In between this footage, scrolling texts outline the story of the science fiction genre in China.

In his work, Ming Wong is interested not only in how science fiction imagines the future, but how societies think about the future. In doing so, he proposes that this genre reveals something about the social and political reality of the place where it is made. Shown at the Embassy of the Real, Windows on the World (Part 2), 2014, makes us think about what is real and what is not.

Born 1971 in Singapore Lives and works in Berlin, Germany



Windows On The World (Part 1), 2014 (video stills) Mixed-media installation with video. Courtesy of Para Site and Spring Workshop, Hong Kong. Photograph: Glenn Eugen Ellingsen



¹ Ming Wong in Ysabelle Cheung, 'Islands Off the Shores of Asia', TimeOut Hong Kong, 27 September 2014, https://www.timeout.com.hk/art/events/69589/islands-off-the-shores-of-asia.html

- Embassy of the Real

Korakrit Arunanondchai

Research the origins, history and influences of hip hop. From artists, music, dance, clothing and design, identify and describe these and other key elements of the genre. Discuss the impact hip hop has had in shaping popular and urban culture locally and around the world.

Analyse the ways in which Arunanondchai's work and installation for the 20th Biennale appropriate both pop culture and art historical practices.

Compare and contrast three artists who explore ideas of identity in their practice. Comment on the relationship between identity as represented in the work itself and how an artist might construct their 'persona'. What connections can you make between Arunanondchai and the artists you have selected?

Lee Bul

Make a list of the different elements in Lee Bul's installation.

- What materials have been used?
- How do you think the work was constructed?
- What ideas is Lee Bul investigating through her installation?

Research the history of the Industrial Precinct on Cockatoo Island. To what extent does Lee Bul reference this history while representing the themes of the 20th Biennale and the Embassy of the Real?

Select a previous artwork exhibited in the Turbine Hall for the Biennale by one of the following artists: Jannis Kounnelis (2008), Cai Guo-Qiang (2010), Craigie Horsfield and Reinier Rietveld (2012), and Eva Koch and Tori Wranes (2014). Argue a case for why one of these artworks was the most successful in its installation, materiality and concept, considering also the ways in which it might have referenced the Island's history or themes of the Biennale in which it appeared.

Cécile B. Evans

Brainstorm a list of online and digital platforms such as YouTube, Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. What is their purpose? How do people use these apps and sites?

Research artists who reference the internet and technology in their practice. What materials do they use to construct their work? What ideas do they explore? What comments do they make about contemporary society? Look at artists like Cécile B. Evans, Evan Roth and Hito Steyerl.

Write the meanings and memories that are associated with these objects on the backs of small pieces of paper. Using a hole punch and thread, hang these pieces of paper next to the objects.

Discuss the impact of the internet on society and our day-to-day lives.

- What possibilities has it opened up?
- What role does it play in the construction of artistic and personal identity?
- To what extent are our real and digital lives intertwined?

Links to further resources

korakrit.com

carlosishikawa.com/artists/korakritarunanondchai/ artinamericamagazine.com/news-features/interviews/ burning-denim-at-ps1-korakrit-arunanondchai/

Links to further resources

lehmannmaupin.com/artists/lee-bul ngv.vic.gov.au/essay/lee-buls-untitled-2/ theguardian.com/artanddesign/2010/jul/21/artistweek-lee-bul

Links to further resources

cecilebevans.com youtube.com/watch?v=hTg664PcJDY serpentinegalleries.org/exhibitions-events/agnes

William Forsythe

Find an interesting object in the classroom or in your home. Consider the materials, colours, size, shape and weight of that object. Draw and choreograph a sequence of movements based on how you think this object might behave. Work with a peer to make a new series of movements based on two objects.

Research the dance practices of choreographers Boris Charmatz, David Rosetzky, Merce Cunningham and Pina Bausch. Select one of these practitioners and compare their work to Forsythe's practice and his works in the 20th Biennale.

- How do these artists challenge traditional dance and choreographic practices?
- How are these ideas translated and presented as contemporary art in museums and exhibitions?

Chiharu Shiota

Research historic and contemporary artworks that incorporate a bed motif.

- What is the symbolism of the bed?
- What associations can be made with the bed and ideas of sleeping, thought, the subconscious and life experiences?

Describe the process that Shiota goes through to create her works. To what extent are her installations site specific?

How does Shiota connect everyday objects with human experience and memory? Compare and contrast her Biennale work with a previous one by the artist. Consider the context of the works, the audience, objects and materials used, and the installation in the space.

Justene Williams

Research Russian Futurism. What concepts did the movement explore? Which artists were associated with the movement? What ideas and impulses were behind the creation and staging of the controversial 1913 opera Victory Over The Sun?

Describe Williams' work for the 20th Biennale. Compare this with some of her previous works. How has her practice changed? What influences can you identify that remain consistent across her work?

How has Williams re-staged Victory Over The Sun for a contemporary context? Consider the audience, location, collaborators, concept, set design and costumes in your response.

Discuss the role and significance of restaging and reinterpreting historic works for a contemporary context.

- What purpose does restaging serve?
- How might it impact our understandings of the original work?

Links to further resources

williamforsythe.de

theguardian.com/stage/2015/mar/07/in-the-middlesomewhat-elevated-william-forsythe-dance bombmagazine.org/article/2839/william-forsythe

Links to further resources

chiharu-shiota.com/en/ arndtfineart.com/website/artist_9799 2015.veneziabiennale-japanpavilion.jp/en/

Links to further resources

smh.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/justenewilliams-new-exhibition-explores-suburbia-gone-wild-20150202-1343k1.html

artgallery.nsw.gov.au/channel/clip/455/ frieze.com/issue/review/justene-williams/

EMBASSY OF TRANSLATION

Museum of Contemporary Art Australia

'The whole venue is dedicated to thinking about and showing works of artists who are translating historic material into a twenty-first-century language and, through that, making what's important obvious.'5

Stephanie Rosenthal



Museum of Contemporary Art Australia Photograph courtesy of Brett Boardman

A museum preserves and collects objects of artistic, cultural and historic value, exhibiting them to a public audience. These artefacts hold knowledge about diverse ideas, cultures and histories, and museums seek to share this information for the curiosity and further education of their visitors. Established through a **bequest** by Australian expatriate artist John Power (1881-1943) to the University of Sydney, the MCA opened in 1991 and set out to educate and inform the Australian public about contemporary art, through exhibiting groundbreaking contemporary art from Australia, the Asia-Pacific region and around the world, and collecting the work of contemporary Australian artists.

Located alongside Sydney Harbour at Circular Quay, and surrounded by architectural icons, such as the Sydney Opera House and Sydney Harbour Bridge, the original six-storey sandstone building underwent redevelopment in 2012. Changes were made to improve and enlarge its exhibition spaces and to accommodate increased visitation by way of new creative learning facilities, integrated technologies, a café and sculpture terrace. The MCA works in a collaborative manner with a diverse range of curators, artists and communities to ensure its exhibitions and public programs are innovative, exciting and relevant in an Australian contemporary art context.

Stephanie Rosenthal (speech delivered at the 20th Biennale of Sydney Media Launch, Customs House, 28 October 2015)

The juxtaposition of the historic stone architecture of the original MCA building with the modern black, grey and white panelling of the new façade draws a visible link between its history and its current incarnation. As host of the Embassy of Translation, the MCA is a fitting venue for an exhibition that brings past and present together by showing a selection of artists interested in re-contextualising historic positions, concepts and works of art for the twenty-first century. With some artists focusing on dance and choreography, and others attempting to translate ideas, words or history itself into different artistic forms, artists use an array of methods to bring about new perspectives on history, treating it as one material among others and showing how it can be deconstructed, transformed and understood by audiences.



Glossary

Artefact: An object of cultural or historical interest that serves as a record of a particular time and place.

Bequest: The act of giving personal collections, property or funds through an estate or will of a deceased person.

Façade: The front of a building that faces onto the street or open space.

Re-contextualise: To place or consider something in a new way, for example a different audience, place or time.

Deconstructed: Literally meaning take something apart, deconstruction can also refer to a way of analysing or studying by looking at the subject's elements in order to better understand it. The process often involves questioning our assumptions about things.

REINVENTION / RE-EXACTMENT/ RE-COXTEXTUALISATION / REWRITING / LIVING ARCHIVE / INSCRIPTION / MEMORY/HISTORY/ RESTAGING / ACTUALISATION / REREADING/ TRANSCRIPTION

Adam Linder Some Proximity, 2014

Choreographic service, duration variable. Courtesy the artist and Silberkuppe, Berlin



Daniel Boyd Untitled, 2013

Oil and archival glue on linen, 223.5 x 447 cm. Courtesy the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney. Photograph: Jessica Maurer



Helen Marten Parrot Problems, 2014

welded steel, aluminium, fabric, wood, string, cast plaster, rubber, stitched suede, prosthetic eyeballs, rivets, hammer, galvanised painted cardboard, 135 x 150 x 130 cm. Courtesy the artist and K11 Kollection, Hong Kong, Photograph: Annik Wetter



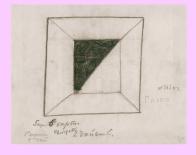
Noa Eshkol The Four Seasons, undated (1980s)

Cotton, sisal, wool, lurex, rayon, lame, sateen, polyester, jersey, cotton crepe, silk taffeta, 490 x 465 cm. Courtesy Noa Eshkol Foundation for Movement Notation, Holon and neugerriemschneider, Berlin. Photograph: Jens Ziehe



Dayanita Singh Museum of Chance, 2015

Mixed media, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist



Kazimir Malevich Set design for the opera Victory over the Sun by M. Matyushin and A. Kruchenykh, Act 2, scene 5, 1913

Pencil on paper, 21.5 x 27.5 cm (sheet). Received in 1937 from the State Musical Research Institute. Courtesy St Petersburg State Museum of Theatre and Music

Artists at the Embassy of Translation

Nina Beier / Daniel Boyd / Céline Condorelli / Noa Eshkol / Germaine Kruip / Adam Linder / Kazimir Malevich / Helen Marten / Shahryar Nashat / Dayanita Singh



Untitled, 2014, oil and archival glue on linen, 167 x 137 cm. Courtesy the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney. Photograph: Jessica Maurer

In many of her exhibitions, Stephanie Rosenthal has explored the relationship between historic and contemporary works of art as well as archival material, and how they may be exhibited alongside each other. She is also interested in the way that artists' works develop and change over time, and thinks of exhibitions as a way of getting inside an artist's head. Several artists in the 20th Biennale of Sydney directly reference or reinterpret historic material; some are represented with a series of works that give a sense of their practice holistically and over time; and some have created works that may fit conceptually across more than one Embassy or venue.

In his signature monochromatic style, Daniel Boyd continues his examination of Indigenous and Australian–European histories with a series of new works at the 20th Biennale. Boyd translates and re-contextualises historic images to question **romanticised** ideas of history, exploring the impact of colonisation and challenging official perspectives of the birth of Australia as a nation.

At the Embassy of Translation, Boyd presents a series of six new works in oil, pastel and archival glue on canvas inspired by the figure of Pemulwuy. These paintings explore the strength and resistance of this Bidjigal (Bidgigal) man from the Botany Bay area of Sydney – a powerful warrior and activist against British colonisation. After leading raids against European settlers, Pemulwuy was eventually shot and decapitated, and his remains are believed to have been transported for display in a museum overseas. Boyd reminds us of the disrespect and abuse of the rights of Indigenous people throughout history, treated as museum objects and scientific specimens.

Presented outdoors at one of the Biennale's 'In-Between Spaces', What Remains, 2016, is a wall installation covered in thousands of small circular mirrors that reflect scenes from daily life. The work changes with every passerby, their presence bringing this two-dimensional surface to life through the mirroring of the contemporary landscape of Redfern. The mirrors also act as a lens to concentrate viewers' reflections on the suburb's complex history, in its current phase of rapid **gentrification** and change. Boyd's work ultimately offers a space for dialogue – his paintings and installations provoke contemplation of conflicted histories and contemporary realities.

Kudjila/Gangalu peoples Born 1982 in Cairns, Australia Lives and works in Sydney, Australia

Glossary

Romanticise: To deal with or describe something in an idealised or unrealistic fashion, making something better or more appealing than it really is.

Gentrification: The process by which an older or less affluent urban neighbourhood changes as an effect of middle-class or wealthier residents buying and renovating properties in that area. This often results in rent prices going up, causing smaller businesses and poorer residents to move out of the area.



Installation view (2014) at Macquarie Bank, Sydney. Courtesy the artist and

Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney. Photograph: Jessica Maurer



The Four Seasons, 1995, cotton, sisal, wool, lurex, rayon, lame, sateen, polyester, jersey, cotton crepe, silk taffeta, 490 x 465 cm. Courtesy Noa Eshkol Foundation for Movement Notation, Holon and neugerriemschneider, Berlin. Photograph: Jens Ziehe

The Creation, 1995
Cotton, sisal, polyacrylic,
polyester, flannel jersey,
corduroy, poplin, cotton
lawn, 480 x 480 cm. Courtesy
Noa Eshkol Foundation for
Movement Notation, Holon and
neugerriemschneider, Berlin.
Photograph: Jens Ziehe

Noa Eshkol is most known for her work as a choreographer and dancer. However, when she died in 2007, she left behind thousands of textile artworks, which she called her 'wall carpets'. While her dance pieces were structured and **minimalistic**, her textile works became an outlet for expressiveness and poetic narratives – things she avoided in her choreography, which treated the body as a tool for exploring movement. She was interested in ways of recording and studying movement, and developed a system to do this in the 1950s, together with her collaborator Avraham Wachman.

As a choregrapher, dancer, teacher, researcher and textile artist, Eshkol is a good example of how many artists work in different areas and include research as part of their process. Similar to how composers use symbols to transmit the melody, accompaniment, speed and loudness of a piece of music, Eshkol and her collaborator developed the Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation system. This system could be read by dancers and others as a set of instructions, in order for specific movements to be translated from the page into physical action. This system was so effective that it has been used in other fields, such as physical therapy and animal behaviour.

At the Embassy of Translation, photographs, illustrations, texts, books, **scores** and videos are displayed to give audiences an insight into Eshkol's innovative ways of working. Alongside these, seven large and captivating wall carpets are exhibited. Eshkol first started making these textile artworks in 1973 as a form of peaceful and silent protest against the **Yom Kippur War** in Israel, when the only male member of her Chamber Dance Group was conscripted into the army. Feeling that it was not the right time for dancing, she found another kind of activity for herself and her dancers. Starting with her own clothes and scraps gathered from around the house, she began to assemble, pin and sew pieces of fabric together. When she ran out of found materials, she started collecting leftovers from places across Israel that were then layered, folded, collaged and stitched together by her dancers. While eventually continuing to work in dance, she made these richly expressive textile artworks for the rest of her life.

Born 1924 in Kvutza Degania Bet, Israel Died 2007 in Holon, Israel



Glossary

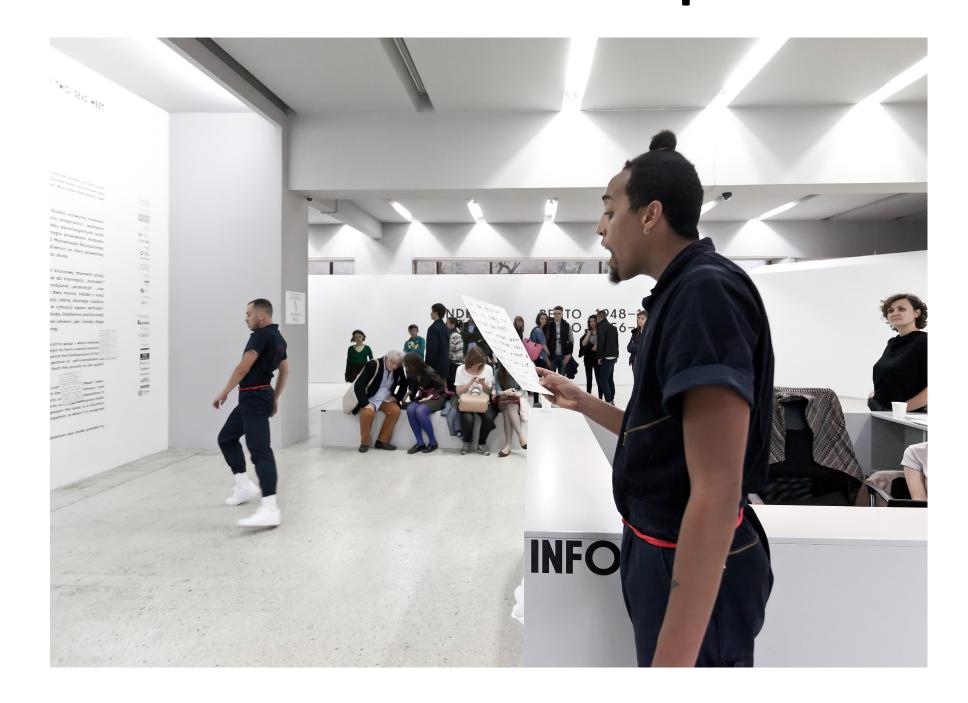
Minimalistic: Relating to minimalism, an artistic style characterised by simple elements and little embellishment.

Physical therapy: A type of therapy or treatment that uses specially designed exercises and equipment to preserve, restore and enhance the ability for physical movement in people who may have experienced an injury, disease or form of disability.

Animal behaviour: A branch of science that studies how animals interact with each other, with other living beings and with the environment.

Score: A system of notation designed to indicate how a piece of music is played or a choreography is performed.

Yom Kippur War: A war between Israel and the Arab states of Egypt and Syria that took place during October 1973, starting with an initial attack on the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur.



Some Proximity, 2014, choreographic service, duration variable. Courtesy the artist and Silberkuppe, Berlin

'What's interesting for me is that it's not just about moving out of the theatre and into the exhibition space. It's about choreography asserting its temporality.'

At a concert you expect music; at the theatre, a play; but at a contemporary art performance, visitors can expect anything. The more 'traditional' performing art forms have set an understanding and expectation of how audiences should look at, engage with and behave around these types of performances, such as ballet or opera. Contemporary performance may be accused of being too conceptual, unusual or random, and what's more, it can't be sold like other artworks. Sometimes this makes it difficult for artists to support themselves financially, or even find audiences for their works.

To address the need for, and value of, performance, and highlight the real work that artists carry out in their acts of creation, dancer and choreographer Adam Linder has devised 'Choreographic Services', which can be hired by an organisation or company by the hour. At the Embassy of Translation, Adam Linder presents Some Proximity, 2014, as part of this body of work, a performance in which an art writer and two dancers are hired on an hourly wage to perform and **enact** criticism and commentary in the context of the museum, taking into consideration its architecture, audiences, collections and ideas.

Making critical notes live in the museum, the writer creates short texts that each of the dancers respond to, translating words and ideas into choreographic movement. The texts simultaneously inspire the performance and record the situation. Audiences are invited to watch the experimentation, **improvisation** and problem-solving components of choreography unfold in real time. By putting these services 'to work' and by being 'on display', audiences and cultural institutions are made aware of the time invested by, and efforts of, the performers. We are compelled to appreciate and understand the personal, artistic, cultural and economic value of dance, theatre and other performance works in society.

Glossary

Enact: To perform, put into practice or act out an idea or suggestion.

Improvise: To create and perform something spontaneously or without preparation.



(above)

Some Riding, 2015
Choreographic service,
duration variable.
Courtesy the artist and
Silberkuppe, Berlin.
Photograph: Mark Blower

(right)
Some Cleaning, 2013
Choreographic service,
duration variable.
Courtesy the artist and
Silberkuppe, Berlin



¹ Adam Linder interviewed by Roslyn Sulcas, 'New Live Performances Redefine Frieze London's Limits', The New York Times, 16 October 2014

Born 1983 in Sydney, Australia Lives and works in Los Angeles, USA and Berlin, Germany





Costume design for Enemy (Nepriyatel), for the opera *Victory* Over the Sun by M. Matyushin and A. Kruchenykh, 1913

Pencil, watercolour and ink on paper, 27.1 x 21.3 cm (sheet). Purchased from 0. Orlova 1934. Courtesy St Petersburg State Museum of Theatre and Music

Costume design for New One for the opera *Victory Over the*Sun by M. Matyushin and A. Kruchenykh, 1913

Pencil, watercolour and ink on paper, 27 x 21.0 cm (sheet). Received in 1937 from the State Musical Research Institute. Courtesy St Petersburg State Museum of Theatre and Music

'I transformed myself in the zero of form and emerged from nothing to creation, that is, to **Suprematism**, to the new realism in painting – to **non-objective** creation.'

The Russian painter Kazimir Malevich is one of the most influential figures in modern art. His life and work were both marked by periods of dramatic change: he witnessed the revolutions in 1917 that overthrew first the **tsars** in Russia and then the temporary government that was set up in their place, and experienced the rise of **socialism**. It was in the lead-up to these turbulent events that Malevich made a break of his own – moving from paintings of landscapes, religious scenes and agricultural workers into **non-objective** art. His experimentations led him to found **Suprematism**, a new art movement characterised by stark colours and geometric shapes.

The work that best sums up Malevich's radical break with the traditional subject matter in painting is Black Square, 1915. Two years before creating this painting, Malevich designed sets and costumes for Aleksei Kruchenykh's **futurist** (anti-)opera, Victory Over the Sun, which was first performed in St Petersburg in December 1913, and which is re-imagined for the 20th Biennale of Sydney by Australian artist Justene Williams with the Sydney Chamber Opera. According to Kruchenykh, the basic theme of the opera is 'the victory of technology over cosmic forces and biologism'. Believing that a new era of technological invention

and human advancement was beginning, the artists wished to translate this spirit of excitement into an innovative new form of theatre. The opera featured strange characters dressed in brightly coloured, oversized costumes, a nonsensical libretto with a made-up language, and backdrops with geometric shapes and bold forms (early versions of Malevich's Black Square). A wallpaper deign featuring Malevich's costume and stage designs is displayed in the Embassy of Translation.

For Malevich, darkness didn't represent nothingness. It symbolised potential, or an entry into a **multidimensional** reality - one which our ordinary senses and measuring devices couldn't yet grasp. In the 20th Biennale, Stephanie Rosenthal is exploring the idea that the twenty-first century is also experiencing a shift in how we perceive reality. She was inspired to include Malevich in the exhibition due to a different kind of black square - the ever-present screens we have in our hands and in our homes: smart phones and computers. Rosenthal is ultimately asking us to consider whether the internet changed the way we think about and experience reality, just like technology and advancements in science did in Malevich's time?

Glossary

Suprematism: Refers to an abstract art based upon 'the supremacy of pure artistic feeling' rather than on visual depiction of objects.

Non-objective: Representing or intended to represent no natural or actual object, figure, or scene.

Tsars: Rulers or emperors of Russia from the sixteenth century until the Russian Revolution.

Socialism: A social system or theory with the principle of common ownership, meaning that the way we produce, distribute and exchange goods should be owned and managed by the community as a whole.

Futurism: An art and social movement originating in Italy in the early twentieth century, which emphasised speed and technology, as well as youth and violence, believing that humanity had triumphed over nature.

Libretto: A text used in, or created for, an extended musical work such as an opera or musical.

Multidimensional: Related to, or involving, several dimensions. A dimension may be something measurable, such as length and depth, or an aspect or feature of a situation.

¹ Kazimir Malevich, 'From Cubism and Futurism to Suprematism: The New Realism in Painting' (1916), English translation in Troels Andersen (ed.), K. S. Malevich: Essays on art 1915–1928, Borgen, Copenhagen, 1968, p. 37



Parrot Problems, 2014, welded steel, aluminium, fabric, wood, string, cast plaster, rubber, stitched suede, prosthetic eyeballs, rivets, hammer, galvanised painted cardboard, 135 x 150 x 130 cm. Courtesy the artist and K11 Kollection, Hong Kong. Photograph: Annik Wetter

'Marten's compositions come together like a form of materialised modernist poetry: opaque, sometimes hard to follow and occasionally absurd, yet with a distinct, if whispered, sense of **authorial** voice.'

Sculpture is about objects; the medium has evolved to include and use diverse materials, processes and techniques of which some are handcrafted, repurposed or mechanised to some degree. Throughout history we have seen artists like Marcel Duchamp, Hélio Oiticica, Louise Bourgeois and Yayoi Kusama play with, and challenge, this materiality and way of making and exhibiting objects in a gallery space.

At the Embassy of Translation, Helen Marten asserts herself among these sculptural heavyweights with her distinctive and detailed **assemblages**. Marten's ambiguous hybrid sculptures are both familiar and foreign – an array of objects and fragments **juxtapose** textures, materials and surfaces. A writer as well, Marten translates ideas and words into three-dimensional forms.

Smoke Description, 2015, at the Embassy of Translation has similarities to the work of American painter Robert Rauschenberg. The flat, two-dimensional surface becomes like a relief sculpture – screenprinted fabric panels are arranged in a grid format on the wall with an array of objects and fibres jutting out into the room. The work also displays images referencing geometric and topographical lines, and evokes the puff and form of smoke, turning it into an object itself.

Reminding us of artists like Marcel Duchamp, who created art from found objects, Marten **subverts** the **readymade** by seeming to combine random materials and objects in her second work at the 20th Biennale of Sydney, entitled *Parrot Problems*, 2014. Appearing as an assortment of rubbish, found and real objects, we discover, upon closer inspection, that each element has been handcrafted and manufactured by the artist. Carefully chosen and constructed, this grouping of objects pushes and plays with Marten's interest in taking objects outside their normal context and challenging how audiences might interpret or interact with them.

Born 1985 in Macclesfield, England Lives and works in London, England

Glossary

Authorial: A recognisable quality that tells us something has been made by one person, such as the writer of a book, article or other text.

Assemblage: An artwork made by grouping together or attaching found or unrelated objects.

Juxtapose: To place different things together for the purpose of comparison or contrast.

Subvert: To challenge, overturn or change something that is widely known or understood.

Readymade: Already made, prepared or available. Marcel Duchamp coined the term 'readymade' to refer to ordinary manufactured objects that he selected and modified, and it was during this process that the objects became a work of art. The process involved the least amount of interaction or production between artist and art, challenging ideas about what constituted an artwork.



Smoke Description, 2015

Screenprinted suede, leather and PVC, hand thrown glazed ceramic, lacquered hardwood, Formica, steel, oyster shells, stitched fabric, tree, $233.5 \times 458.5 \times 47$ cm. Courtesy the artist and Sadie Coles HQ, London

¹ Oliver Basciano, 'Helen Marten: Plank Salad', ArtReview, March 2013, http://artreview.com/reviews/66_uk_review_helen_marten/



'I started as a photojournalist ... So just putting a picture on a gallery wall feels too passive. I want people to relate to my images in a more physical way.'



Suitcase Museum, 2015. Courtesy the artist

Born 1961 in New Delhi, India Lives and works in New Delhi The parameters in which artworks are exhibited, and how we as audiences interact and behave when viewing them, is dictated by the architectural settings and display methods employed by museums and galleries. Whether traditional and fixed, or dynamic and interactive, exhibition design is carefully considered and calculated to enhance, manipulate and foster specific meanings or experiences.

Dayanita Singh challenges what a museum is and what it could be through her photography that explores how we relate to images. For Singh, photography is a metaphor for life: photography can capture a single moment in a lifetime, and life is a collection of moments over time. Singh describes her most recent works as 'mobile museums' – collections of up to 140 images that are continually transported, rearranged and adapted to suit a new location and audience. Images are displayed on books or as books, placed in custom-made display cases and frames, or are stored in boxes and suitcases; the structure and sequence of the images is fluid and adaptable.



Suitcase Museum, 2015. Courtesy the artist

Kitchen Museum, 2015, at the Embassy of Translation consists of a series of handmade accordion-fold books populated with enigmatic and images. The absence of indicators, such as names and places, draws us to contemplate the subjects for themselves, to bring our own interpretations and meaning to the work. The viewer is taken on a journey through the images, but they are able to dictate the pace of the story that is literally unfolding before them.

With each iteration of her 'mobile museums', Singh makes adaptations for the context in which they are shown. The objects and images themselves transform and in the process take on a life of their own. Through constant accumulation, travel and display, the work builds its own archive of memories and stories. In this ongoing process of retranslation and editing, Singh creates new narratives and poetic possibilities for her objects and images.

¹ Dayanita Singh interviewed by Mark Hudson, 'Dayanita Singh interview', The Telegraph, 5 October 2013, <telegraph.co.uk/culture/photography/10356315/Dayanita-Singh-interview.html>

- Embassy of Translation

Daniel Boyd

Find an old photograph of your family or home. Using Photoshop, collage or painting, manipulate the image to incorporate elements of how your family or home looks today. Consider what has changed and the elements that have remained the same.

Compare and contrast Daniel Boyd's 2014 MCA Foyer Wall Commission (Untitled, 2014) and his mural on Vine Street for the 20th Biennale. To what extent does the physical location of these works affect the meaning of the work? Consider the context of museums and suburbs, as well as the audiences who might see Boyd's work.

How does Boyd investigate Indigenous and Australian-European histories through his works for the 20th Biennale?

Noa Eshkol

Research the Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation System. What is the purpose of this system? What are some examples of how it has been used?

Take photographs of or collect different fabrics and textures in your home to create an interesting digital or physical collage. Consider the composition and juxtaposition of colour, shape and pattern.

Explore textile traditions from different countries around the world. Select one that interests you the most and investigate its origins, methods of production and cultural symbolism. How does this tradition compare to Noa Eshkol's wall carpets at the Embassy of Translation?

What connections can you see between Eshkol's wall carpets and her practice as a dancer and choreographer?

Adam Linder

Brainstorm a list of different types of artistic performance. Consider different genres, periods in history, examples from around the world and any figures crucial to the development of performance.

In pairs, assign one person the role of a performer and the other that of a writer. Create a performance that responds to a typical object or event taking place at your school. How will your movements physically represent that object or event? How will you use writing to record, direct or change the performance? Present aspects of your performance to the class, describing the process you each took to choreograph or physically record an aspect of your school.

Performance as an artform may be documented, or exist as a live event to be experienced in the moment. What is the importance or necessity of documentation? Present a case for or against documentation, referring to different artists to support your argument.

Links to further resources

mca.com.au/collection/artist/boyd-daniel/

theguardian.com/artanddesign/australia-cultureblog/2014/apr/16/daniel-boyds-untitled-is-a-worthyaward-winner

splash.abc.net.au/home#!/media/1647723/reframingthe-art-of-daniel-boyd

Links to further resources

frieze.com/issue/review/sharon-lockhart-noa-eshkol/ ewmncenter.com

artinamericamagazine.com/news-features/news/ sharon-lockhart-jewish-museum-1/

Links to further resources

adam-linder.net

youtube.com/watch?v=56jRMVQt-wo&feature=youtu.

Kazimir Malevich

Research the characters in the 1913 opera Victory Over the Sun. What is their personality or role in the opera? How are these characteristics reflected in the costume designs created by Kazimir Malevich?

Update the original costumes from Victory Over the Sun for a contemporary period by altering the original designs using collage or Photoshop. Find inspiration from current fashion trends or the aesthetic of a recent art exhibition.

Research Malevich's Black Square paintings. Why did he produce these? What was the reaction to them? How have different artists and art writers responded to or referenced these paintings throughout time?

Helen Marten

Research the work of sculptors and artists like Robert Rauschenberg, Joseph Cornell, Rosalie Gascoigne and Marcel Duchamp. List the materials, techniques and ideas explored in their practice.

Discuss: How does Helen Marten challenge sculptural conventions and traditions?

Create: Consider the themes in the 20th Biennale, and how passages from texts written about the exhibition might look translated into three-dimensional objects. Sketch designs for sculptural forms and assemblages that reflect the ideas of the exhibition, thinking about material, size, colour and shape.

Dayanita Singh

Curate your own museum display based on objects or items related to your hobbies and interests. What objects would you include? How would these be displayed and stored?

Compare the exhibition architecture and presentation of Dayanita Singh's work with another exhibition of your choice. How do the modes of display compare or differ to one another across these artworks and

In an increasingly digitised society, what is the significance and role of a physical museum collection? Refer to Dayanita Singh and other artists who work with collections or intervene in existing museum spaces, as well as different forms of exhibition architecture.

Links to further resources

theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/jul/04/kazimirmalevich-liberated-painting-tate moma.org/collection/artists/3710?locale=en malevichsociety.org

Links to further resources

helenmarten.com wmagazine.com/culture/art-and-design/2014/08/ helen-marten-artist/photos/ sadiecoles.com/artists/marten#hl-art-unlimited-2015

Links to further resources

dayanitasingh.com/ youtube.com/watch?v=_HZtfgfJ8vs telegraph.co.uk/culture/photography/10356315/ Dayanita-Singh-interview.html



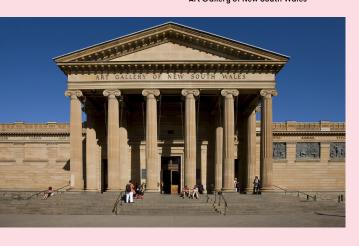
Art Gallery of New South Wales

'The venue presents artists who are interested in the belief structures that we are confronted with nowadays – how we build them up, personalise them and how these might also be global experiences.'6

Stephanie Rosenthal

⁶ Stephanie Rosenthal (speech delivered at the 20th Biennale of Sydney Media Launch, Customs House, 28 October 2015)

Art Gallery of New South Wales



Established in Sydney in 1871, the Art Gallery of NSW is a state institution responsible for the acquisition and exhibition of a national public collection of art. The people of Sydney 'own' the artworks and the Gallery is entrusted to care for and preserve these objects for the purpose of increasing the visitors' knowledge and appreciation of art. The Art Gallery of NSW expands its collection through purchases, grants, bequests and gifts, and it currently comprises some 30,000 works, of which only five per cent are on display at the Gallery at any one time, either in the permanent galleries or temporary exhibitions.

The architecture of a gallery often dictates how audiences behave and experience art. With its classic stonecolumned façade and temple-like staircase entrance, the Art Gallery of NSW stands as a representation of traditional museum architecture and the cultural role of a gallery; that is, a building constructed to physically reflect and promote the standards, expectations and values of a society at the time it is built. Architectural redevelopments over time have provided expanded display spaces for the collection and temporary exhibitions, a new gallery for Asian art and an outdoor sculpture garden. Further expansion as part of the Gallery's Sydney Modern Project is intended to transform the existing site into an art museum for a global audience. More space will be created for the display of art, and the design will take the physical landscape of the site, near the Royal Botanic Gardens, into consideration.

Just as the formal, grand architecture of the Art Gallery of NSW can influence the way we behave in its spaces, or how we reflect on and interpret art, the Embassy of Spirits explores the ways in which we are influenced by different belief structures. Religion, spirituality and philosophy are broad frameworks for artists exhibiting at the Art Gallery of NSW to consider the purpose of belief systems in our everyday lives, and how we place personal or collective meaning and value in them. Situating these works alongside the Gallery's existing collection is a way of reflecting on how objects, ideas and historical events are still meaningful today, and whether contemporary rituals and practices change the way we think about them.



Glossary

Acquisition: The act of acquiring or gaining something by purchase of other means.

Sudney Modern Project: A building project involving the redevelopment of the existing and surrounding spaces of the Art Gallery of NSW, due to be completed in 2021, which coincides with the 150th anniversary of the Gallery. Designed by the Gallery in collaboration with Japanese architectural group SANAA, the new building aims to increase the Gallery's capacity to share art with the many audiences it serves by day and by night.

BELIEF STRUCTURES / ANCESTORS / SPIRITYALITY / BODY / NATYRE / INUISIBILITY / RITES OF PASSAGE / RITYAL / RE-SPIRITING / GHOST



Taro Shinoda Ginga, 2010

Installation view (2010) at the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo. Courtesy the artist and Mori Art Museum, Tokyo. Photograph: Kozo Takayama



Jumana Manna A magical substance flows into me, 2015 (video still)

HD video, 70 mins. Co-commissioned by Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah; Chisenhale Gallery, London; Malmö Konsthall, Malmö and the 20th Biennale of Sydney. Courtesy the artist and CRG Gallery, New York



Rodel Tapaya The Chocolate Ruins, 2013

Acrylic on canvas, 304 x 731 cm. Private collection. Courtesy the artist and ARNDT Art Agency, Berlin and Singapore



Mella Jaarsma Dogwalk, 2015-16 (production still)

leather, stuffed cow and goat feet, multi-channel video. Courtesy of the artist and Arndt Fine Art. Photograph: Mie Cornoedus



Sheila Hicks Biennale of Sydney Sketches, 2015

Watercolour on paper. Courtesy the artist; Alison Jacques Gallery, London; and Espace Louis Vuitton, Munich. Photograph: Christian Kain



Dane Mitchell All Whatness Is Wetness I, Meander Homeopathic Vaporous Object, 2015

Ultrasonic humidifier, homeopathic remedy, pump, 28 x 33 x 22 cm (humidifier). Installation view (2015) at RaebervonStenglin, Zürich. Courtesy the artist and RaebervonStenglin, Zürich. Photograph: Stefan Jaeggi



Johanna Calle / Joyce Campbell / Yin-Ju Chen / Erub Arts / Sheila Hicks / Mella Jaarsma / Jumana Manna / Dane Mitchell / Christoph Schlingensief / Sudarshan Shetty / Taro Shinoda / Rodel Tapaya / Ken Thaiday Snr / Nyapanyapa Yunupingu / ghost telephone (project curated by Adrian Heathfield, 20th Biennale Attaché)



The Embassy of Chromatic Delegates, 2015-16, linen, cotton, nylon, polyester, bamboo, wood ensemble of sculptural elements installed dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist; Alison Jacques Gallery, London; and Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York. Photograph: Cristobal Zañartu

'The large assemblage or environment I have created for the Biennale of Sydney is meant to convey the multifaceted and complex communication systems that we are obliged to use these days to express our deep cultural concerns. We each have individual agendas – sometimes articulated and other times not expressed and covert.'

Sheila Hicks' installations celebrate the vitality, colour and texture of thousands of metres of fabric and fibre woven throughout her five-decade-plus career. At 81 years old, Hicks is one of the oldest artists exhibiting in the 20th Biennale of Sydney. Her immersive, riotous and voluptuous sculptures and installations envelop the viewer and enliven spaces with colour, life and energy. Threads weave in and out of each other, clustering as masses on the floor or wrapping around the architecture of a space.

After studying painting at a number of arts institutions and meeting mentors like **Josef and Anni Albers**, Hicks received a scholarship to study art in Chile. Travelling throughout South America exposed her to the tradition and culture of Andean textiles, through which she was able to transfer her passion for colour to this new threaded language. Through weaving, knotting, braiding and stitching, Hicks was able to create conversations between texture, colour and shape, taking these forms off the loom and into the gallery space.

For the 20th Biennale, Hicks presents two works at the Embassy of Spirits. The Embassy of Chromatic Delegates, 2015-16, is a series of richly textured, fibre-clad objects that populate the exhibition. Hand-wrapped 'batons' represent the meeting of delegates from diverse backgrounds; large 'boules' or 'soft stones' contain secret treasures, and a group of round discs act as interplanetary messengers and satellites. The Questioning Column, 2016, is a site-specific installation of long, winding cords that drape around one of the columns at the gallery's entrance. The combination of natural and synthetic textiles softens the architectural forms of the gallery, where lines of fibre now cascade down in rainbow colours. Both works combine feeling with purpose, play and metaphorical meaning, poetically and deliberately finding their place in the **idiosyncrasies** of the space, and indeed in our world.



Biennale of Sydney Sketches, 2015
Watercolour on paper. Courtesy the artist;
Alison Jacques Gallery, London; and Espace Louis
Vuitton, Munich. Photograph: Christian Kain

Glossary

Josef and Anni Albers: Josef Albers (1888–1976) was an influential teacher, writer, painter and colour theorist. Anni Albers (1899–1994) was a textile designer, weaver, writer and printmaker who inspired a reconsideration of fabrics as an art form.

Idiosyncrasy: Unique qualities in the way something or someone behaves, thinks or looks.

Born 1934 in Hastings, USA Lives and works in Paris, France and New York, USA

¹ Sheila Hicks



Dogwalk, 2015-16 (production still), leather, stuffed cow and goat feet, multi-channel video.

Courtesy the artist and Arndt Fine Art. Photograph: Mie Cornoedus

'I think of my art practice as a reflection on human existence and a visual representation of the reality of life.'

Disrupting our ideas of the function of clothing, Mella Jaarsma works with performance, textiles and costumes, and is perhaps best known for her elaborate costumes made from an array of unusual materials including emblems, animal skins, horns and bark. For the 20th Biennale of Sydney, Jaarsma combines all of these forms in a new work that **parodies** fashion parades and catwalks, commenting that the human species is not the only one to admire and consider, while raising questions about the beliefs and philosophies that determine how we dress and act.

Dogwalk, 2015–16, is an **installation** of 12 costumes that plays with the more familiar term of the 'catwalk'. Created to be worn by humans, these costumes have been made from the skins of cows, sheep and goats – animals which may be sacrificed for Islamic rituals or celebrations in predominantly Muslim Indonesia, where the artist lives. With leather straps that resemble leashes, Jaarsma's costumes turn their wearers into animal-human hybrids and are designed to raise questions about the contradictory views held of animals in different cultural contexts. For example, dogs are viewed as unclean and haram (forbidden in Islamic law) in Indonesia, but are beloved pets in other countries.

Animistic belief systems in different cultures and religions have long been an interest for the artist, and Dogwalk has been inspired by the mythological figure of the trickster. As mischievous pranksters, tricksters are a common motif in folklore, stories, myths and legends. They can act as messengers between gods and humans, and many are able to 'shape-shift' and assume animal form. Whether through magic, power or cleverness, the animal trickster's special trait is to bring about transformation through a rejection of conventional values and beliefs. For Jaarsma, the bond between humans and animals – dogs in particular – is emblematic of some of the behavioural characteristics associated with the trickster. Dogwalk invites audiences to consider what beliefs and ideas we 'put on' in our daily lives.

Born 1960 Emmeloord, The Netherlands Lives and works in Yogyakarta, Indonesia



Dogwalk, 2015-16 (production still)

Leather, stuffed cow and goat feet, multi-channel video. Courtesy the artist and Arndt Fine Art. Photograph: Mie Cornoedus

Glossary

Parody: An imitation of a particular style of writing, genre, artist or art form that uses exaggeration and ridicule for comic effect.

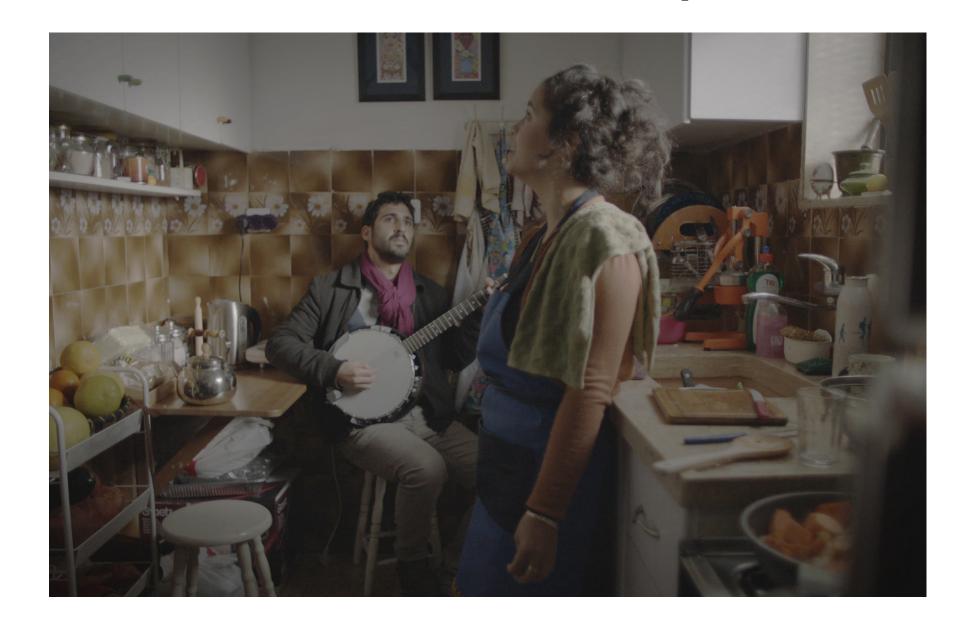
Installation: A combination of objects, ideas and three-dimensional works that often are site-specific and designed to transform the function, movement throughout and perception of an exhibition space.

Animism: A worldview that or belief that inanimate objects, plants and natural phenomena have a soul, spirit or living consciousness.

Motif: A reoccurring subject or theme.

Emblematic: Serving as a symbol of something or representing a particular quality or concept.

Naima Morelli, 'Mella Jaarsma: Give Me Shelter', Trouble Magazine, 2015,



A magical substance flows into me, 2015 (video still), HD video, 70 mins. Co-commissioned by Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah; Chisenhale Gallery, London; Malmö Konsthall, Malmö and the 20th Biennale of Sydney. Courtesy of the artist and CRG Gallery, New York

'I am haunted by the past, but allergic to nostalgia. Sometimes I need to rid myself of a fear. Other times, broadly, I'm trying to understand what brought us here. I'm never satisfied by one position, so I layer things and trust that connections will be drawn, since they grow out of my experiences.'1



A magical substance flows into me, 2015.

Installation view (2015) at Chisenhale Gallery, London,
Co-commissioned by Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah;

Co-commissioned by Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah; Chisenhale Gallery, London; Malmö Konsthall, Malmö; and the 20th Biennale of Sydney. Courtesy the artist and CRG Gallery, New York. Photograph: Andy Keate Jumana Manna's film and sculptural installation, A magical substance flows into me, 2015, presented at the Embassy of Spirits for the 20th Biennale of Sydney, investigates ideas of nationalism, history and the construction of community through the exploration of music rituals in Palestine and Israel. Similar to the way an **anthropologist** or historian might work, Manna researched the German ethnomusicologist Robert Lachmann to inform her work. Lachmann was a music librarian at the Berlin National Library who went on to produce a series of broadcasts called Oriental Music for the Palestine Broadcasting Service. These broadcasts featured field recordings of 'oriental' music from across Palestine, including a diverse range of musical scores from Kurdish, Moroccan, Samaritan, Yemenite Jew, Bedouin and Coptic Christian sources.

In the film, Manna herself retraces Lachmann's steps by visiting musicians in their homes, asking them to respond to and re-perform these recordings. As each piece of music is appropriated it becomes impossible to determine the original, paralleling the blurring of geographic borders and territories of these diverse cultural groups. The domestic spaces where these scenes are filmed are physically translated in the gallery space as a seating area for viewers. These sculptural forms are constructed from handcrafted, hollow, painted plaster pieces and everyday items including trash cans and plastic chairs. The familiar objects create an immersive environment for audiences to reflect on musical performances across cultures.

Using music as a common thread, Manna challenges the notion and logic of separation in Israel and Palestine. Travelling across these contested borders allows her to explore the fragmented histories and segregated peoples of the country in order translate her understanding and experiences of contemporary Palestine.

Glossary

Anthropologist: A person who studies humans, past and present. Anthropology draws and builds upon knowledge from the social and biological sciences as well as the humanities and physical sciences.

Ethnomusicology: An area of study encompassing various approaches to the study of music around the world that emphasise its cultural, social, material, cognitive, biological and other dimensions or contexts instead of, or in addition to, its isolated sound component.

Born 1987 in Princeton, USA Lives and works in Berlin, Germany and Jerusalem

¹ Jumana Manna interviewed by Omar Kholeif, 'Focus Interview: Jumana Manna', Frieze Magazine, Issue 164, June–August 2014, <frieze.com/issue/article/focus-interview-jumana-manna>



All Whatness is Wetness, 2015. Installation view (2015) at RaebervonStenglin, Zürich. Courtesy the artist

'For more than a decade,
Mitchell has been
investigating thresholds,
occupying and analysing
often-invisible processes
of transmission between
states, realms or
dimensions, in an attempt
to understand – as he
puts it – the place 'where
both scientist and shaman
illuminate the unseen'

Born 1976 in Auckland, New Zealand Lives and works in Auckland



All Whatness is Wetness, 2015 Installation view (2015) at RaebervonStenglin, Zürich. Courtesy the artist

Not content with looking to science and its systems for measuring and understanding the world around us, Dane Mitchell borrows rituals, practices and beliefs from a variety of fields, consulting with practitioners of **shamanism**, alchemy, witchcraft and perfumery in his investigations of different forms of knowledge. His interest lies in how we construct and apply belief systems to our lives, which he explores through **assemblages**, installation and spatial experiences.

At the Embassy of Spirits, Mitchell has used principles from **homeopathy** to inform his work Remembering (AI) and Forgetting (NaCI), 2016. One of two 'molecular sculptures' that the artist has made for the Biennale, the work consists of vapours of the elements aluminium and sodium chloride that are released into the gallery space. These specific formulas are prescribed for opposing needs: one is to aide memory while the other helps to forget. Stored in industrial containers, these substances change form from solid to liquid to gas. When airborne, they linger in the air as **ephemeral**

Glossary

Shaman: A member of certain tribal societies who acts as a medium between the visible world and a supernatural spirit world. A shaman practises magic or sorcery for the purposes of healing, divination and control over natural events.

Assemblage: A sculptural technique of organising or composing into a unified whole a group of unrelated and often fragmentary or discarded objects.

Homeopathy: A system of medical practice that treats a disease by the administration of small doses of a remedy that would in larger amounts produce in healthy persons symptoms similar to that of the disease.

Ephemeral: Lasting for a short period of time; temporary.

sculptures, raising questions not only about where they start and finish, but where our memories begin and end. As a companion to this work, Remedy for Agoraphobia (AgN), 2016, situated in the Fernery at Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens, investigates whether plants respond to homeopathic remedies. In this case, a silver compound periodically released into the air is designed to combat agoraphobia (an irrational fear of open spaces).

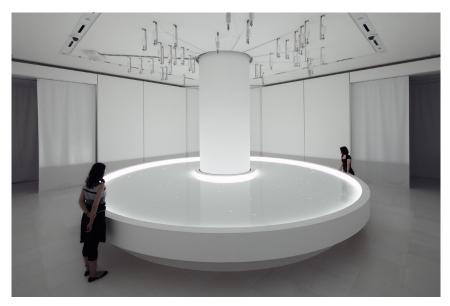
These subtle sculptures allow us to reflect on belief and knowledge, highlighting different methods for understanding the world and how it functions. Mitchell tests how human convictions find spaces between logic and perception by challenging our expectations that the world is ordered by visible cause and effect. Rather than experiencing the world solely through facts and figures, it can be experienced through a multiplicity of perceptions and through the senses – not all of them can be easily understood as one thing or another.

¹ Emily Cormack, 'Dane Mitchell', Frieze Magazine, Issue 142, October 2011, <frieze.com/issue/review/danemitchell>



Karesansui, 2015 Installation view (2015) at Sharjah Biennial 12. Courtesy the artist and Sharjah Art Foundation. Photograph: Alfredo Rubio

'Our civilisation is too loud and the voice of *Ki* is too small. And the voice of *Ki* is guiding us towards harmony. Under this civilisation, how can we hear the voice of *Ki*?'



Ginga, 2010. Installation view (2010) at the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo.
Courtesy the artist and Mori Art Museum, Tokyo. Photograph: Kozo Takayama

The 20th Biennale of Sydney uses the metaphor of the embassy to convey the idea that the exhibition venues are safe spaces for thinking. Taro Shinoda's Abstraction of Confusion, 2016, is the manifestation of this idea as a physical space that encourages reflection. White clay covers the walls of a quiet room in the heart of the Embassy of Spirits. As people enter this minimal space there is at once a sense of stillness and calm, meditation and contemplation. During the course of the exhibition, the clay will crack and fall away to reveal a rich, earthy, ochre paint.

During a visit to **Yirrkala**, Arnhem Land in 2015, Shinoda was both struck by the red earth of the Western Desert and the diversity of the population in the area. Encountering Aboriginal, Western and Eastern belief systems in one place, he was motivated to create a space that had the potential to resonate with diverse cultural groups – to create a space that could inspire contemplation about forms of contemporary spirituality.

Drawing on his background in Japanese garden design, Taro Shinoda creates simple and beautiful hand-built installations informed by philosophical concepts and **Zen** ideology. Guided by the spiritual principle *Ki*, describing the vital energy that exists in all living things, Abstraction of Confusion explores the cultural importance of spaces for meditation in our increasingly fast-paced world. His work represents a connection between nature and humanity that is at once evolving, inclusive and coexisting. Audiences are invited into the work to observe both their current and physical environment as well as the **introspective** spaces that exist within themselves.

Born 1964 in Tokyo, Japan Lives and works in Tokyo

Glossary

Yirrkala: An Australian Indigenous community in Arnhem Land, in the Northern
Territory of Australia. The community is well known for didgeridoo making, traditional bark painting and the large number of artists who live there.

Zen: A Japanese school of Mahayana Buddhism, which emphasises the value of meditation, self-consciousness and intuition rather than ritual worship or study of scriptures. It is a state of being, and describes a total state of focus that incorporates a total togetherness of body and mind.

Introspection: The act or process of looking into oneself, to contemplate one's thoughts, feelings and sensations.

¹ Taro Shinoda, 'Embassy of Spirits Roundtable Discussion', 20th Biennale of Sydney Exhibition Catalogue, Sydney, 2016, p. 205



Adda Manok Mo, Pedro? (Do You Have a Rooster, Pedro?), 2015-16, acrylic on canvas, 300 x 700 cm x 5cm.

Courtesy the artist and ARNDT Art Agency, Berlin. Photograph: At Maculangan

'In the end war, like games and battles, is a harsh reality where no one ends up being the winner.'1

The Chocolate Ruins, 2013
Acrylic on canvas, 304 x 731 cm.
Private collection. Courtesy
of the Artist and ARNDT Fine
Art, Berlin and Singapore



Filipino artist Rodel Tapaya creates contemporary hybrid paintings based on the classic folktales and stories that sparked our imaginations as children. Maintaining their appeal across time, culture and generation, these stories follow playful and carefree, or spiteful and tormented characters, through otherworldly lands, and often carry a message, value or moral code that reveals existing standards for how to behave and live in society. The older we get, the more we come to realise the hidden and often sinister symbolism and meaning behind our favourite stories.

Taking inspiration from these traditional narratives and infusing them with historical research, Tapaya reinterprets the conventional **archetypes**, characters and structures of fairytales and legends. His chaotic paintings are loaded with metaphors relating to mythological creatures and other **allegorical** figures.

Tapaya combines his references to folktales with contemporary and historical events to comment on contemporary beliefs and society.

At the Embassy of Spirits, Tapaya examines the civil war in the Philippines in his new work

Adda Manok Mo, Pedro? (Do You Have a Rooster, Pedro?), 2016. The rooster acts as a metaphor to connect current events, religion and everyday life. While the title refers to a game of control played by children of the llocano Region in the northern part of the Philippines, it also invites us to make other connections to the rooster: in the biblical story of Saint Peter, who betrayed Jesus three times as the cock crowed; and in the myth of the Origin of Birds, where the god Bathala punished those waging war by transforming roosters into flightless chickens. The work also makes reference to the events of Mamasapano clash in 2015 between militant and **secessionist** groups.

In his work, Tapaya makes reference to actual and mythological events of punishment and conflict to speak about the history of invasion and control in the Philippines. Now predominantly Catholic due to Spanish colonisation in the sixteenth century, the country's inhabitants have a long history of different cultures and ideologies living together, and a continuing struggle for peace, autonomy and freedom from political and religious power structures.

Glossary

Archetype: A very typical example of a person or thing.

Allegory: A story, play, picture or other work in which characters or events stand for ideas about human existence, or symbolise a particular political or historical situation.

Secession: The withdrawal of a group from a larger entity, especially a political entity (such as a country), but also any organisation, union or military alliance.

Born 1980 in Montalban, Philippines Lives and works in Bulacan, Philippines

¹ Rodel Tapaya, 20th Biennale of Sydney Guide, Sydney, 2016, p. 145

Sheila Hicks

Research the work of Josef and Anni Albers, and the textile traditions of South America and the Andes. What elements of these traditions, materials and techniques can be identified in Sheila Hicks' practice and work for the 20th Biennale?

Artists such as Ernesto Neto, Sheila Hicks, Tomas Saraceno, Olafur Eliasson and Yayoi Kusama are known for their immersive and sensory installations and environments.

- What materials does each artist use?
- What concepts are they exploring in their work?
- How do these artists alter the exhibition space?
- To what extent has the exhibition or museum architecture impacted or influenced the work?
- How do audiences participate, interact with or encounter these installations?

Mella Jaarsma

Make a list of different fashion trends, ceremonial or religious garments and rituals involving costumes in contemporary or historical times. What connections can you make between the different styles of clothing? Do they serve a particular purpose?

Identify the materials used by Mella Jaarsma to create her costumes. How does the artist source her materials? What are the uses and origins of the materials? Do they reference specific ideas, cultures, objects or traditions?

Research the representation of animals in art history. Select one or two animals and refer to specific examples in your responses.

- Which animals are frequently represented across different mediums and cultures?
- What do these animals symbolise?
- What social, cultural or spiritual associations do the animals hold? Note, they might have significance in rituals, represent values or appear in mythological tales.
- What connections can be made between the artworks you have researched and Mella Jaarsma's work for the 20th Biennale?

How do artists use sculpture and performance to explore themes of identity and the body? In your response, consider the definition of a 'body' as well as relationships between object, performer, artist and audience.

Jumana Manna

As a class, make a list of different types of music, musicians and instruments. What connections can be found between the songs, genres and styles? How do we experience or encounter music and sound in our everyday lives?

Compare and contrast artists who explore music and sound in their practice, such as Jumana Manna, Stephen Vitiello, Nam June Paik and Charlotte Moorman, Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller, Cevdet Erek and John Cage.

- How are the sound elements made, found and recorded?
- How do the sounds reference people and places?
- What ideas are the artists trying to explore in their practice through sound?
- Describe the sensorial experience these sound works create for the viewer.

Discuss: How does Manna explore identity and place in her practice?

Links to further resources

sheilahicks.com

nytimes.com/2015/11/27/arts/design/sheila-hicks-aweaver-flirting-with-installation-art.html?_r=0 aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-historyinterview-sheila-hicks-11947

Links to further resources

mellajaarsma.com arndtfineart.com/website/artist_25847?idx=i vimeo.com/36814501

Links to further resources

jumanamanna.com

frieze.com/issue/article/focus-interview-jumanamanna/

konsthall.malmo.se/o.o.i.s/5549

Art Gallery of New South Wales — Embassy of Spirits

Dane Mitchell

Analyse Dane Mitchell's installations at the 20th Biennale. How has the artist taken into consideration the audience, site and overall exhibition concept in the making of his works? Compare this with some of his previous works.

Compare and contrast: Haines & Hinterding, Archie Moore, David Capra, Wim Delvoye, Ernesto Neto and Anicka Yi use scent as a component of their works. How do these artists create alternative and sensory experiences for audiences?

Research homeopathy, shamanism, alchemy and perfumery.

- How can such alternative medicines and practices be considered belief systems? Consider who would use or adopt these systems and for what purpose.
- To what extent does Mitchell reflect on or adopt systems of knowledge and belief in his practice?

Mella Jaarsma

Research meditation practices in Eastern, Indigenous and Western contexts. List and describe any signs, symbols, objects, colours, behaviours and beliefs associated with these customs.

Compare and contrast Taro Shinoda's installation for the 20th Biennale with previous works by the artist.

- —What materials has the artist used?
- What concepts is he exploring?
- To what extent has the exhibition location influenced his work?
- How does Shinoda create an immersive or spiritual experience for the viewer?

Artists like Shinoda, Ann Veronica Janssens and Mark Rothko have created meditative and immersive spaces or rooms in their practices. To what extent can these installations be considered forms of contemporary spirituality?

Jumana Manna

As a class, make a list of different myths, fairy tales, archetypes and legends.

- What similarities and differences can you find?
- Are there any themes that recur across these stories and characters?
- Do they have any connections to real life events?
- What aspects of the tales can you relate to in your own life?

Research Rodel Tapaya's practice.

- What recurring signs, symbols and stories appear in his works?
- How are these similar or different to his work for the 20th Biennale?
- How does Tapaya merge folktales with historic or contemporary world events?

Considering your research from the previous questions, design signs and symbols for events, people, places and objects in your life. Create a painting or collage that incorporates your designs and represents a narrative about your life and identity.

Links to further resources

danemitchell.co.nz frieze.com/issue/review/dane-mitchell/ danemitchell.co.nz/#!about1/c1u7s

Links to further resources

takaishiigallery.com/en/archives/5993/ gardnermuseum.org/contemporary_art/artists/ taro shinoda

boston.com/ae/theater_arts/articles/2009/12/04/ taro_shinoda_sends_a_message_with_lunar_ reflections/

Links to further resources

arndtfineart.com/website/artist 24872

db-artmag.com/en/81/feature/the-spirit-in-the-forestsrodel-tapayas-magical-art/

FO YZZAMBASY OF NOH-PARTICIPATION

Artspace

'I decided to work together with Karen Mirza and Brad Butler, who have what they call the Museum of Non-Participation, in which they explore – by inviting other artists and in doing their own research – how non-participation can be an action and an active part of resisting.'⁷

— Stephanie Rosenthal

Artspace was founded in 1983 by a group of artists wanting to provide an alternative to public institutions and commercial galleries in Sydney. As of 1992, it has been located in the historic Gunnery in Woolloomooloo, a building that has had several uses since it was first established as a storehouse for the Sydney Morning Herald in the early 1900s. At different times it has served as an instructional centre for trainees in the Royal Australian Navy, a naval film laboratory and cinema, and an

artists' **squat** – in the 1970s, artists lived, set up their studios and organised performances and exhibitions there. During the early 1990s, it was proposed that the building become a centre dedicated to the visual arts. Today, Artspace is a leading **interdisciplinary** space for the creation and presentation of contemporary art through exhibitions, performances, **artist residencies** and public programs.



⁷Stephanie Rosenthal (speech delivered at the 20th Biennale of Sydney Media Launch, Customs House, 28 October 2015)



Artspace



Artspace is the temporary home of the Embassy of Non-Participation for the 20th Biennale. The name of this Embassy has been inspired by the work of artists Karen Mirza and Brad Butler, who will be exhibiting and organising events at this venue over the course of the Biennale. Mirza and Butler use such methods as drawing, filmmaking, performance and even curating to think about what it means to participate, collaborate and have a role in society.

For these artists, organising a discussion or a workshop is just as interesting as creating a film or an installation, because each format provides an equal opportunity to raise ideas and foster debate. Their focus on critical discussion aligns perfectly with Artspace's own dedication to working with artists to test new ideas and shape public conversation, a key consideration in Rosenthal's choice to invite the artists to work at Artspace for the Biennale.

Glossary

Squat: A building or piece of land occupied by people who are living in it without permission to do so.

Interdisciplinary: Involving a combination or blurring of two or more disciplines, which can refer to fields of study like science or history, or areas of specialisation in art, like painting and sculpture.

Artist residency: A program that invites artists to work and live in a different environment for a fixed period of time. Residencies provide time and space for artists to work, do research and reflect on their practice, as well as opportunities to meet other professionals, and to produce and present new artworks, exhibitions, programs and publications.

ALTARNATIVE STRUCTUR35/ OWNING SPACE / CAPITALISM / DISLOCATION



Karen Mirza and Brad Butler Hold Your Ground, 2012

HD video, 7:57 mins. Commissioned by Film and Video Umbrella, London. Courtesy the artists; waterside contemporary, London; and Galeri Non, Istanbul



Karen Mirza and Brad Butler You are the Prime Minister, 2014

Neon, 200 cm. Courtesy the artists; waterside contemporary, London; and Galeri Non, Istanbul



Karen Mirza and Brad Butler The New Deal, 2013

Paper works, pen, ink and Braille. Courtesy of the artists, waterside contemporary, London; and Galeri Non, Istanbul



Karen Mirza and Brad Butler The Exception And The Rule, 2014

Artists at the Embassy of Non-Participation

Karen Mirza and Brad Butler

Karen Mirza and Brad Butler



Karen Mirza and Brad Butler

'Our Museum of Non Participation refers to an institutional critique that is embedded in its very title—and yet it is released from being an actual museum. It can travel as a place, a slogan, a banner, a performance, a newspaper, a film, an intervention, an occupation—anything that enables it to "act."'1

Karen Mirza and Brad Butler have been working together since 1998, producing films, drawings, installations and performances, as well as engaging in many other activities that are less easily connected with the work that artists do, such as **curating**. The Embassy of Non-Participation at the 20th Biennale of Sydney has been inspired by the duo's ongoing body of work entitled 'The Museum of Non Participation'. Rather than referring to an actual museum, the title is like a slogan, used ironically by the artists to suggest that artistic practice can be different to what we normally associate with traditional forms of collecting and displaying art. Furthermore, it suggests that artists can choose not to make the type of art that is accepted into a museum, and questions who and what has the right to be officially included in these places of 'high art'.

Mirza and Butler's exhibition at Artspace is like a mini-**retrospective**, made up of existing and new works. The artists spent two months in residence at Artspace in Woolloomooloo to develop a new work for the Biennale, evocatively entitled *The dust is our enemy*, the fine dry stuff that clogs the throat and lungs; our enemy, our charge, our hope, 2016.

Taking a site-specific approach, the artists have drawn on the rich history of the building and its neighbourhood, including its naval heritage and its use as an artists' squat in the 1970s, looking also at issues facing the Indigenous communities of the area, the environmental activism of the **Green Bans** and the ongoing **gentrification** in Woolloomooloo.

This new work accompanies video works, large-scale collages and a neon artwork consisting of the statement 'You are the Prime Minister'. The sentence comes from an entrance examination given to thirteen-year-old boys by Eton College, an elite school in England. The students were asked to imagine they were the prime minister and make an argument for the use of military force against members of the population. In this and other works, Mirza and Butler critique the way the world works, investigating themes of power, privilege, **capitalism** and 'non-participation' – another way of saying 'resistance' or 'defiance' – and asking whether, by choosing not to participate in something, we might actually be making an active protest.

Glossary

Curation: A process of managing, organising, displaying and developing a collection of objects or artworks as a means of presenting different narratives, ideas or beliefs. Curation is traditionally the result of one individual's authoritative decisions – mainly that of a curator.

Retrospective: An exhibition or collection of works showcasing the development of an artist, or artists, over a period of time.

Green Bans: A unique period of environmental activism in 1970s Sydney, when builders labourers refused to work on buildings that the construction of which was seen to have negative consequences on the environment or social life of an area.

Gentrification: The process by which an older or less affluent urban neighbourhood changes as an effect of middle-class or wealthier residents buying and renovating properties in that area. This often results in rent prices going up, causing smaller businesses and poorer residents to move out of the area.

Capitalism: An economic system in which individuals and companies, rather than the government, are responsible for the means of production. Goods are usually made by companies and sold for profit, and prices go up and down according to the demand for products.

Karen Mirza born 1967 in Evesham, England Brad Butler born 1973 in London, England

Live and work in London and Istanbul, Turkey

¹ http://www.walkerart.org/magazine/2013/mirza-butler-museum-of-non-participation

Karen Mirza and Brad Butler

Create a glossary of terms that relate to community action and social behaviours, which might include such words as participation, engagement, protest, resistance, activism, social critique and debate.

Artists like Karen Mirza and Brad Butler, Keg de Souza, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Tania Bruguera, Joseph Beuys, Félix González-Torres and Tino Sehgal each challenge the role of the audience, artist and artwork in different ways. Select two artists from this list (or from a list of your own), find examples of their work and describe the main features of these works, considering the ideas, role of the audience, and the context or location of each work.

Compare and contrast three artworks or projects presented at the Embassy of Non-Participation. Consider the materials used, what research informed the work, and whether the artists have involved people in the making or realisation of the project. How do Karen Mirza and Brad Butler communicate ideas about protest, power and privilege?

To what extent does art and activism share similar goals? Does art have the potential to shape, influence and change behaviours? How effective is it in dealing with issues in society?

Links to further resources

mirza-butler.net artreview.com/reviews/karen_mirza_and_brad_ butler_deep_state/ waterside-contemporary.com/artists/mirza-butler/



The Exception And The Rule, 2014

embassy of stanislaw Lem

Mobile Book Stall

Mobile Book Stall

'A lot of artists have been inspired by Stanislaw Lem and science fiction, so I thought it was appropriate to open the Embassy of Stanislaw Lem and to sell second-hand books by Stanislaw Lem. The idea is also to talk about the aspect of misreading and translation, but mainly to bring that interest in science fiction forward.'8

- Stephanie Rosenthal



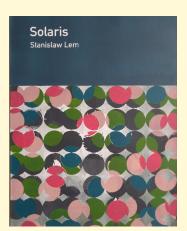
Stanislaw Lem was a prolific Polish science fiction author whose writing investigated ideas about, but not limited to, alternate realities, philosophy, new technologies, communication and its limitations, and the nature of intelligence. Over 45 million copies of Lem's books have been sold in over 41 different languages and some have been the inspiration for cinematic adaptations. His narrative tales about a society of the future and the future of our world continue to inspire people. Science fiction challenges us to consider our capacity for adapting to change, as well as how humanity might manifest and shape the future.

Aspects of the futuristic worlds proposed in science fiction movies and TV shows like The Jetsons, Back to the Future and The Matrix manifest in our everyday lives. With the invention and application of smartphones, computers, drones, the internet and segways, The future is already here — it's just not evenly distributed, like Stanislaw Lem, is interested in thinking about how we experience our reality - a reality in which our physical bodies interact with digital technologies and new inventions.

⁸ Stephanie Rosenthal (speech delivered at the 20th Biennale of Sydney Media Launch, Customs House, 28 October 2015)

Paying homage to the work and influence of Stanislaw Lem, Rosenthal invited the artist Heman Chong to create the Embassy of Stanislaw Lem. The Embassy is a bookshop filled with second-hand copies of Stanislaw Lem's books (both in English and Polish) for viewers to read and purchase, and serves as a platform for discussion about science fiction and its potential for imagining the future. By turning a bookshop into art, Rosenthal and Chong inspire us to think about whether the work of visual artists and science fiction writers have something in common.

A community bookshop is also a reminder of publishing before the digital age, when our ability to access stories and information didn't involve a screen.



Heman Chong Solaris / Stanislaw Lem, 2010

Acrylic on canvas, 46 x 61 x 3.5 cm. Courtesy the artist and Vitamin Creative Space, Guangzhou. Photograph: Heman Chong

Glossary

Science Fiction: A genre of fiction based on imagined future scientific or technological advances and major social or environmental changes, frequently portraying space or time travel and life on other planets.

Manifest: To demonstrate, make clear or obvious; or to make evident by showing or displaying.

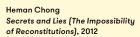
Drone: An aircraft that is remotely controlled or can fly autonomously through software-controlled flight plans that work in conjunction with GPS. Associated with their use in military situations (where manned flight is considered too risky or difficult), drones can also be used to deliver parcels, carry an internet signal to remote areas or to film and photograph objects from differing perspectives.

Segway: A self-balancing personal transportation device with two wheels, designed to operate on a level surface in a pedestrian environment.

Homage: Honouring or showing respect in a particular way

TROUSLATION / Re-textualisation / WRITING / SCIENCE FICTION / MISREADING





326 novels within the espionage genre deconstructed via a paper shredder, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist; Elaine Ng and Fabio Rossi. Photograph: Heman Chong



Heman Chong !emocleW, 2015

Digital print on cloth, 150 x 750 cm. Courtesy the artist and Wilkinson Gallery, London. Photograph: Sang-tae Kim

Artists at the Embassy of Stanislaw Lem

Heman Chong



Everyday Life in the Modern World, What is the artist's role today?, Protest, Intimacy, 2005 4 books and 4 perfume bottles, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist and Vitamin Creative Space, Guangzhou. Photograph: Heman Chong 'I investigate how individuals and communities imagine the future, and see if there are certain applications to this research where I can show different methods in which we can redefine our lives beyond what is told to us that will make us 'happy''¹

Born 1977 in Muar, Malaysia Lives and works in Singapore Solaris Stanislaw Lem

Solaris / Stanislaw Lem, 2010

Acrylic on canvas, 46

x 61 x 3.5 cm. Courtesy
the artist and Vitamin
Creative Space, Guangzhou.
Photograph: Heman Chong

Glossary

Speculate: To form a theory about something without firm evidence.

Conceptualism: When an idea or concept presented by the artist is considered more important than the finished product, if any such product exists.

Accumulation: A mass of something that is gradually collected and gathered over time.

Satire: Using irony, sarcasm and ridicule to expose or shame individuals, companies or other aspects of society. It is often used in the hope that improvements to situations will occur.

From advancements in technology to the nature of intelligence and the way humans and other living things communicate, science fiction proposes alternate realities and new modes of thinking. The genre deals with time and space, and presents narratives that may not be so far away from our everyday lives. Contemporary art shares similar themes to science fiction, such as imagining our world differently, expanding our understanding of what is possible, and reinterpreting or proposing other ways to think about our histories.

Heman Chong is an artist, curator and writer interested in how people think about time and **speculate** about the future. Chong often sets up situations that involve variations on a **conceptual** theme, represented as the repetition or **accumulation** of text, objects and images. Inspired by the work of Polish science fiction author Stanislaw Lem, Chong has designated a mobile bookstall as the Embassy of Stanislaw Lem at the 20th Biennale.

Lem's texts range from **satire** to philosophy and are marked by an eccentric use of grammar, poetry and turn of phrase. Some of his best-known works have been translated into over 40 languages, and it is this aspect of translation – rereading and also misreading over time and place – that interests Chong. Entitled *LEM2*, 2016, the bookstall gathers together second-hand copies of the author's publications (in both English and Polish) to be browsed and purchased by visitors. Here, the artist sets up a system of exchange where the audience is an active participant. The work also invites us to consider how information is transferred from one language or person to another and how people might misread or fail to understand these ideas.

¹ Heman Chong interviewed by Terry Ong, 'Interview: Heman Chong', SG Now, 8 August 2013, http://sg.asia-city.com/events/article/interview-heman-chong-0

Heman Chong

Heman Chong's mobile book stall celebrates the physicality of the 'bookstore' in a time when new technologies allow us to easily access books and publications online.

- What purpose do libraries and bookstores serve today?
- Research libraries, bookstores and pop-up book stalls in your local community, or internationally. What is it about these spaces that entice people to read?

Discuss how information is transferred from one language or person to another. What is the likelihood of texts being misread or messages being transformed on the way from original to translated or conveyed version? Consider the case of Stanislaw Lem's books and the significance that Heman Chong gives them by presenting them as art in the 20th Biennale.

As a class, develop a booklist or reading group based on books that have inspired you. Select an author of your choice and create a zine that features their work and ideas. Set up a pop-up bookstore in your school hall or classroom for others to enjoy.

What is the difference between art writing and writing as art? Compare and contrast different types of written texts in art (reviews, essays, exhibition wall texts) as well as the work of artists who use text in their work, such as Agatha Gothe-Snape, Joseph Kosuth, Jenny Holzer, Vernon Ah Kee and On Kawara.

Links to further resources

rossirossi.com/contemporary/artists/heman-chong/ artworks

au.blouinartinfo.com/news/story/835451/24questions-with-heman-chong

art-agenda.com/reviews/heman-chong%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%9Cof-indeterminate-time-oroccurrence%E2%80%9D/

> admire you, and yet you tend to be critical of yourself. While you have some personality weaknesses you are generally able to compensate for them. You have considerable unused capacity that you have not turned to your advantage: Disciplined and self-controlled on the outside, you tend to be worrisome and insecure on the inside. At times you have serious doubts as to whether you have made the right decision or done the right thing. You preter a certain amount of charge and variety and become dissatisfied when hemmed in by restrictions and limitations. You also pride yourself as an independent thinker; and do not accept others statements without satisfactory proof. But you have found it unwise to be too frank in revealing yourself to others. At times you are extroverted, affable, and sociable, while at other times you are introverted, wary, and reserved. Some of your aspirations tend to be rather unrealistic.

You have a need for other people to like and

The Forer Effect, 2008 Site specific wall installation, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist and Wilkinson Gallery, London. Photograph: Heman Chong

EMBASSY OF TRANSITION

Mortuary Station



Mortuary Station



For almost 70 years, between 1869 and 1938, Mortuary Station in the inner-Sydney suburb of Chippendale was a stop along the Rookwood Cemetery rail line. The station was used to transport coffins and mourners from the city to burial grounds in Rookwood, as well as to cemeteries in Sutherland and Newcastle. It was built in an ornate, **gothic** style by the colonial architect James Barnet, who is known for designing many notable Sydney buildings, including the Australian Museum and Darlinghurst Court House. With its arches, angels and other decorative features, the station has the appearance of a church, though it was never used for religious purposes. It is one of the most unique railway buildings in Australia and a rare, existing reminder of funeral customs in nineteenth-century Sydney. With the invention of hearses, the station lost its purpose. In the years following, it has housed horses, functions and even a pancake restaurant. Today, it receives only occasional use and can be hired for weddings, photoshoots or other events.

Like Cockatoo Island and Carriageworks, Mortuary Station is valued and protected due to its historic and architectural significance. Stripped of its original purpose but retaining its atmospheric character, it is like a theatre set, waiting to be used or activated. Such spaces not only provide a unique opportunity for art audiences to engage with contemporary art in non-museum venues, they also provide a platform for artists to create site-specific work inspired by the spaces themselves. The decision to use Mortuary Station as an exhibition venue for the Biennale was also made for geographic reasons. Due to its location along the imaginary 'corridor' linking the different Embassies and exhibits, it becomes one 'stop' along the journey from Carriageworks into the city and on to Cockatoo Island.

The Embassy of Transition at Mortuary Station has been inspired by the history of the location and exhibits artists whose works engage with the cycles of life and death, as well as with rites of passage. These artists are interested in the process of change – going from one state or condition into another. With these themes, it is closely linked to the Embassy of Spirits at the Art Gallery of NSW, which explores belief and ritual today.

Glossary

Gothic: A style of architecture originating in France in the twelfth century that lasted until the sixteenth century, with distinctive pointed arches and grand, ornamental features. It is most associated with great churches and cathedrals in Europe.

Hearse: A vehicle for transporting coffins.

CROSSING BOUNDARIES I BODY / MOVEMENT / IMMIGRATION / WORLD WIDE WEB / INNER SPACE / OUTER SPACE LOWNING SPACE I OCCUPYING SPACE



Charwei Tsai Spiral Incense Mantra, 2014 Installation of hand-inscribed spiral incenses, 150cm each. Courtesy

the artist



Spiral Incense Mantra, 2014 (detail)
Installation of hand-inscribed spiral incenses, 150cm each. Courtesy the artist

Charwei Tsai



Spiral Incense Mantra, 2014 (detail)
Installation of hand-inscribed spiral
incenses, 150cm each. Courtesy the artist

Charwei Tsai



Marco Chiandetti Sculpture for a Bird (Male Electus Parrot), 2015

Ceramic, male electus parrot, 19 x 10 x 10 cm. Courtesy the artist. Photograph: Willem-Dirk du Toit



Marco Chiandetti Sculpture for a Bird (African Grey Parrot), 2015

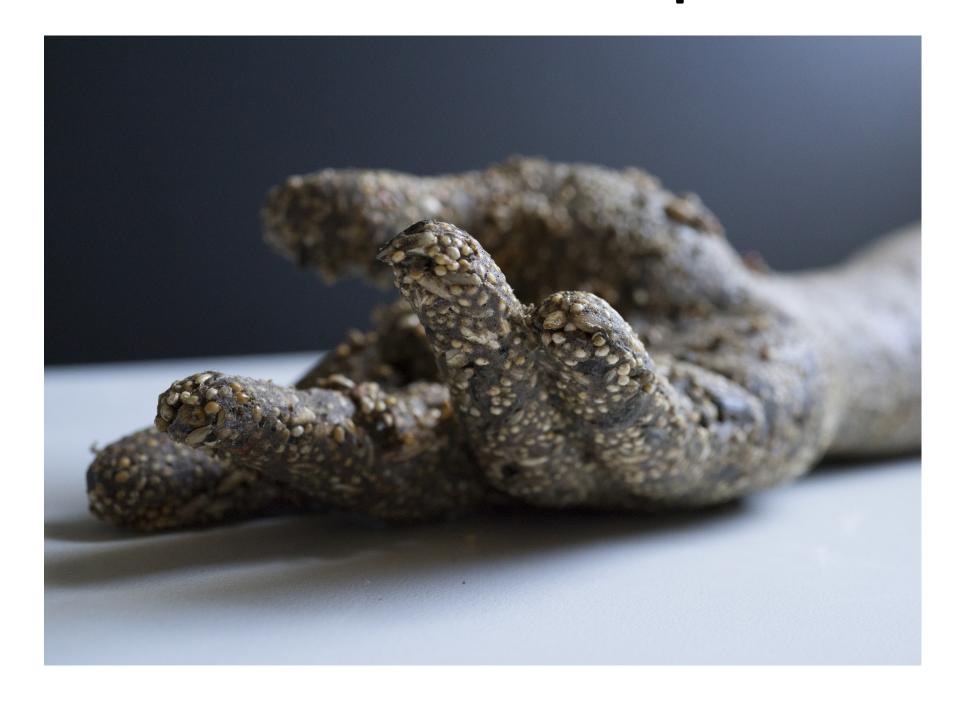
Ceramic, African grey parrot, 19 x 10 x 10 cm. Courtesy the artist. Photograph: Willem-Dirk du Toit



Marco Chiandetti Sculpture for a Bird (Masked Owl), 2015

Ceramic, masked owl, 19 x 10 x 10 cm. Courtesy the artist.
Photograph: Willem-Dirk du Toit

Marco Chiandetti / Charwei Tsai



The hand of the artist in bird seed, 2015, bird seed, 40 x 10 x 9 cm. Courtesy the artist. Photograph: Marco Chiandetti

'The term sculptor means something different these days I think. It's so much broader. Sculpture in the expanded field perhaps. It doesn't necessarily mean we have to be sculpting an object.'

Born 1973 in London, England Lives and works in London



Sculpture for a Bird (Masked Owl), 2015 Ceramic, masked owl, 18 x 11 x 11 cm, Courtesy the artist. Photograph: Willem-Dirk du Toit

Mortuary Station was built to transport coffins and mourners to Rookwood Cemetery, established to counter the overcrowding of other grave sites in Sydney. Aptly named the Embassy of Transition for the 20th Biennale, Mortuary Station is about the journeys we take throughout life, from migration to the transition to death and the afterlife.

Often represented in art, folklore and classical mythology, birds are both subject matter and material for Marco Chiandetti, who sees in them a symbol of phases of life. His lively and changing site-specific installation, The boundaries which divide Life from Death are at best shadowy and vague. Who shall say where the one ends, and where the other begins?, 2016, is an exhibition of living mynah birds. Known as the Indian or common mynah, the particular species that stars in Chiandetti's installation is sometimes referred to as a messenger of God, for its ability to mimic voices - in Australia, however, the bird is considered a pest. The Indian mynah was introduced to Australia from Southeast Asia to control locusts and cane beetles. Today these scavengers have made a home in populated urban areas, aggressively competing with native birds for food sources and nesting sites.

Glossary

Folklore: The traditional beliefs, customs and stories of a community, passed through the generations by word of mouth.

Mythology: A collection of myths, especially one belonging to a particular religious or cultural tradition, often relating to gods and heroes.

Ominous: Giving the worrying impression that something bad is going to happen.

Interested in the different ways various cultures perceive this bird, Chiandetti turns our attention towards the mythology of birds and their symbolic representation in art. Birds have often been positioned between humans and the supernatural world, guiding the soul into the spiritual realm of the afterlife. Other cultures view them as **ominous**, superstitious beings that are capable of bringing about imminent tragedy and death.

Chiandetti has created aviaries to house the birds throughout the exhibition period, as well as a series of sculptures that have been cast from human bodies, some made of bird seed. Acting both as a sculpture and food source, these objects will be eaten over time, breaking down in the garden beds below as this new habitat grows into itself. This physical display of germination, regeneration and other biological processes is a visual reminder of the cycles of life and of the body returning to nature. The birds atop their seeded sculptures are performers helping us to reflect on different types of transitions we undergo in a lifetime.



'Transition is a topic that I have always explored in my work, but when Stephanie invited me to create a work for the Mortuary Station, I started reading more specifically on death. Then, a couple of months later, my grandmother passed away, and it was my first experience of someone I am very close to dying. I felt that learning about this topic of death prepared me for the incident. It's an important transition in my life to learn about impermanence experientially. So, I guess I relate transition to death, given the site of the Mortuary Station.'1

Glossary

Found object: Art created from objects or products that are not normally considered art, often because they already have a non-art function.

Site-specific: Art that is created in response to the space it occupies. Site-specific artworks may be about the spatiality, landscape, politics or history of the site, or about the identity of the people who use the site.

Bardo: The state between death and rebirth in Buddhist thought.

Inscribe: To write or carve words or symbols onto something.

The Buddhist scriptures that artist Charwei Tsai learnt and memorised as a young child growing up in Taiwan have been a strong influence in her work. Whether working with film, photography, drawing, calligraphy or installation, she is interested in ideas of impermanence, the fragility of life and respect for the natural world – concepts that are important in Buddhist teachings. Combining **found objects** with materials that relate to spirituality and belief, she expands the usual tools for art – instead of a canvas, why not use things that are part of our living and non-living environments, like mushrooms, trees, sea creatures and incense?

Tsai is one of the artists exhibiting at the Embassy of Transition for the 20th Biennale of Sydney, and has created a series of **site-specific** works that relate to the history of Mortuary Station. Between 1869 and 1938, this inner-Sydney train station was used to transport coffins and mourners from the city to burial grounds in Rookwood.

Inspired by this location, works such as *Spiral* Incense **Bardo**, 2016, reflect on the transition from life to death in different ways. Large incense spirals hanging over the platform will be lit each morning and left to burn until the end of the day. The incense has been **inscribed** with passages taken from a widely studied Tibetan text that is considered to be a guide for the dying and which is also beneficial for the living. The text is meant to be read aloud, helping the spirit of a recently deceased person to release their hold on life.

Scattered over the train tracks is A Dedication to Those Who Have Passed Through Mortuary Station, Sydney, 2016. Objects from nature bear a word from the text in memory of the spirits who passed through Mortuary Station. Visitors to the exhibition are invited to participate, entering the ticket office and writing a note to a deceased loved one on a leaf or seed before leaving it on the tracks in a symbolic gesture of letting go.

Born 1980 in Taipei, Taiwan Lives and works in Saigon, Vietnam and Taipei



Spiral Incense Mantra, 2014 Hand-inscribed spiral incense made of natural herbs, 150 cm each. Courtesy the artist

¹ Charwei Tsai, 'A conversation between Geraldine Barlow, Marco Chiandetti and Charwei Tsai', 20th Biennale of Sydney Exhibition Catalogue, Sydney, 2016, p. 254

Marco Chiandetti

Research birds in mythology and religion. What do these animals symbolise in different cultures and contexts? How have they been represented in historic and contemporary artworks?

How does Marco Chiandetti explore the relationship between humans and the natural world?

Analyse: Chiandetti's work for the Biennale is unconventional in both its materials and location. Reflect on the possible challenges and deliberations that the artist might have faced in the conception and development of his artwork at Mortuary Station. Consider:

- the physical location and surroundings,
- the need for special permissions from local councils and authorities,
- audience reaction.
- any moral or ethical issues and concerns.

Charwei Tsai

Describe how Charwei Tsai's work is installed at Mortuary Station.

- How does her work make connections with the site it is exhibited in?
- How do audiences respond to or interact with her
- What practices and beliefs is the artist referencing with her spiral incense?

Research artists who use natural materials in their work. What connections do these artists make between the human and natural world? Consider the materials used, the location or site of the work and audience interaction.

How do artists explore ideas of death, impermanence and cycles of life in their practice?



Links to further resources

marcochiandetti.com

fiskfrisk.com/2012/01/31/conversation-with-marcochiandetti/

Links to further resources

charwei.com

youtube.com/watch?v=C1N9GE6x1to smh.com.au/news/entertainment/arts/ the-fleeting-beauty-of-art-that-is-made-toperish/2009/10/15/1255195877597.html

Carriageworks

'The Embassy of Disappearance explores how we memorise history, how we deal with history and how languages, cultures and landscapes are disappearing.'9

Stephanie Rosenthal

Carriageworks



9 Stephanie Rosenthal (speech delivered at the 20th) Biennale of Sydney Media Launch, Customs House, 28 October 2015)

Carriageworks, housed in the old Eveleigh Rail Yards, is a heritage-listed site and arts centre that produces and presents a diverse, multidisciplinary program exploring contemporary ideas and issues by working with local and international artists from a range of cultures and communities. The centre itself is made up of vast industrial halls and theatrical spaces that retain many features from its past. Iron and brick elements have been left behind as reminders of the railway carriage and blacksmith workshops that were in use in the nineteenth century. It was in Eveleigh that the first Australian steam locomotives were produced, and at their peak the workshops employed more than 3,000 workers. From farmland to rail yard, Carriageworks occupies a territory that is embedded in layers of history and important periods of change. In fact, much of what we know today as the Sydney suburb of Redfern was once considered Eveleigh, which is now a relatively small area bordered by Redfern, Newtown and Alexandria. Nearby Redfern is also an area marked by transformation. It has a significant history of Aboriginal protest, and is today undergoing rapid **gentrification**.

Carriageworks is located in a residential area on a street lined with terrace houses. For Rosenthal, it is important that the Biennale is located in places where people actually live - not only where they work and spend their leisure time. The decision to use Carriageworks as a venue for the Biennale is not only due to their generously-sized and atmospheric spaces, which offer exciting possibilities for artists, but it is also a way of bringing the Biennale out of the city and into our neighbourhoods.

Carriageworks

The Embassy of Disappearance at Carriageworks reflects this atmosphere of change and shifting circumstances by bringing together artists who explore themes of absence and memory, and who reflect on disappearing languages, histories, natural resources, currencies and landscapes. Things can disappear forever or leave traces. These traces may be visible and considered worthy of protection, such as archaeological ruins and collections of historical objects, or they can exist in the intangible form of memories and stories.



Glossary

Gentrification: The process by which an older or less affluent urban neighbourhood changes as an effect of middle-class or wealthier residents buying and renovating properties in that area. This often results on rent prices going up, causing smaller businesses and poorer residents to move out.

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  POLITICS OF SPACE
 NATURAL RESOURCES /
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Lee Mingwei Guernica in Sand, 2006 / 2015

Mixed media interactive installation; sand, wooden island, lighting, 1300 x 643 cm. Courtesy of JUT Museum Pre-Opening Office, Taipei. Photograph: Taipei Fine Arts Museum



Neha Choksi The Weather Inside Me (Bombay Sunset), 2010 (detail)

9 CRT television sets, 9 DVDs, 1 photograph, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist and Project 88, Mumbai



Jamie North Slag Bowl II and Slag Bowl I, 2013

Cement, sand, coal ash, steel slag and moss, 15 x 37 cm each. Courtesy the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney. Photograph: Jamie North



Gerald Machona People from Far Away, 2012 (video still)

DVD, 12:57 mins. Courtesy the artist and Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg and Cape Town



Apichatpong Weerasethakul Vapour, 2015 (video still)

Single-channel video, 15 mins. Courtesy the artist and Kick the Machine Films, Bangkok. Photograph: Chai Siris



Charles Lim Sea State 7: Sandwich, 2015 (video still)

Single-channel HD digital video, c. 5 mins. Courtesy the artist



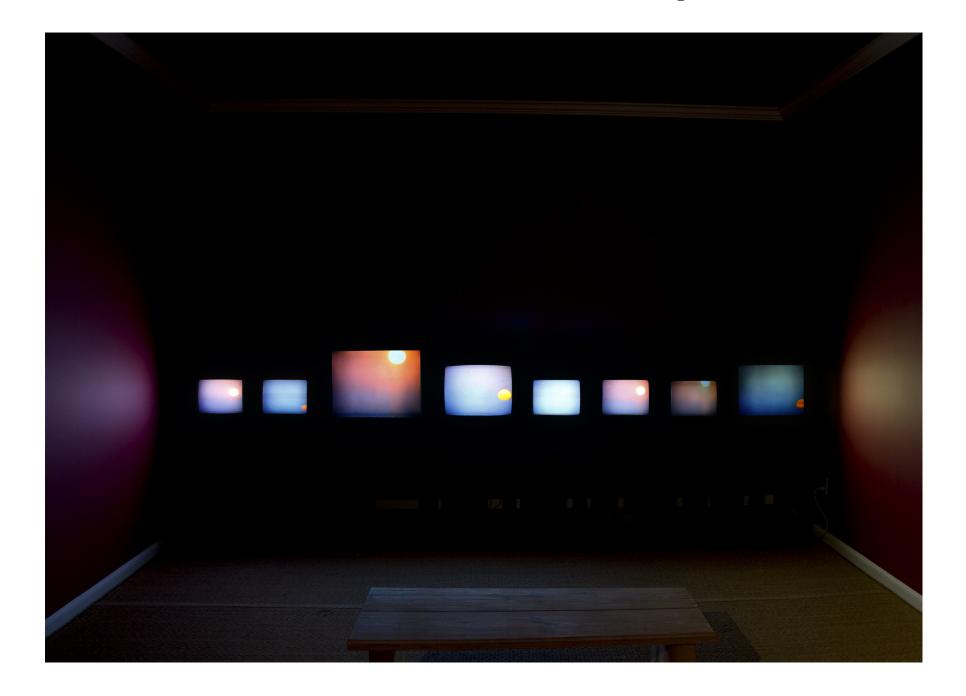
Yao Jui-Chung + Lost Society Document

Waipu Waste Composting Demonstration Factory, Taichung City, 2014

Digital image, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist and Lost Society Document, Taipei. Photograph: Yao Jui-Chung

Artists at the Embassy of Disappearance

Lauren Brincat / Chen Chieh-jen / Neha Choksi / Yannick Dauby and Wan-Shuen Tsai / FX Harsono / Lee Mingwei / Charles Lim / Minouk Lim / Gerald Machona / Yuta Nakamura / Otobong Nkanga / Jamie North / Melik Ohanian / Bernardo Ortiz / Mike Parr / Miguel Ángel Rojas / María Isabel Rueda / Aura Satz / Apichatpong Weerasethakul / Yao Jui-chung / Robert Renhui Zhao



The Weather Inside Me (Bombay Sunset), 2010 (detail), 9 CRT television sets, 9 dvds, 1 photograph, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist and Project 88, Mumbai

'I was interested in the idea of the inability to witness humanity's last sunset. To imagine the unimaginable death of all, we have to consider what is in our experience right now – hence the layers of the sunsets. Even destruction requires a witness, **Sartre** said, and this has fascinated me because the ultimate destruction must remain unwitnessed and only imagined prior. The future absence haunts the present and creates the haunting as a real event in the present'

Echo of the Inside (Column Cube I), 2011 Mixed media, 287 x 50 x 50 cm. Courtesy the artist and Project 88, Mumbai. Photograph: Shane Stankard



Glossary

Sartre: Jean-Paul Charles Aymard Sartre was a French philosopher, playwright, novelist, political activist, biographer and literary critic.

Melancholic: A feeling of deep sadness, typically with no obvious cause.

Metaphor: A figure of speech in which a word or phrase that ordinarily describes one thing is used to describe another, making a comparison.

Can you imagine the death of our life-giving sun? What can be harder to imagine than death itself, which we cannot experience even when it happens? These questions have inspired Neha Choksi to think about ageing and absence – both the ageing of the sun and the ageing of our bodies. In her work at the Embassy of Disappearance, Choksi has created a large, mixed-media installation to reflect on the last sunset that we might ever see, and the future of life on our planet.

A sunset is a powerful symbol of the cycles of life; signalling the end of the day, we experience it as a beautiful yet **melancholic** moment. It is no surprise, then, that sunsets, much like sunrises, have inspired artists for centuries. What may come as a surprise is that the sun, like other stars, has its own life cycle. It is able

¹ Neha Choksi, 'A conversation between Stephanie Rosenthal, Neha Choksi, Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Lee Mingwei and Aura Satz', 20th Biennale of Sydney Exhibition Catalogue, Sydney, 2016, p. 307

Born 1973 in New Jersey, USA Lives and works in Mumbai, India and Los Angeles, USA to produce energy through its own supply of hydrogen fuel, although scientists predict this fuel will be used up in about 5 billion years.

Scientific, poetic and philosophical ideas come together in The Sun's Rehearsal, 2016. It invites visitors to imagine all the sunsets they have seen in a lifetime. On a large billboard-sized wall, several photographs of sunsets have been pasted on top of each other. A hole has been cut out where the sun should be, and the cut-out has been left in the room as a freestanding sculpture. Resembling an old billboard, with parts of the paper torn away to reveal glimpses of hidden sunsets, the work acts as a metaphor for a loss that we can only imagine. In addition, the artist has invited dancer Alice Cummins to perform within this installation at different times during the exhibition. Entitled Memory of the Last Sunset, 2016, the performance reminds us that we, too, will also disappear one day, leaving only memories and traces behind - just like a performance itself.



The heart of Huilan Sunshine Electric City, Hualien City, 2010, digital image, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist and Lost Society Document, Taipei. Photograph: Huang Tzu-Jui

'Individually, we are a bunch of nobodies, but when we combine our energy together, we can become a very powerful force to push the government to affect change'

Yao Jui-Chung is an artist, curator and teacher who works like a historian, **anthropologist** and documentary photographer. His photographs, videos, installations and paintings often draw from Chinese and Taiwanese history to bring attention to aspects of society and human experience.

While teaching courses on contemporary photography and performance art in 2010, Yao set his students a challenging task: to undertake a photographic survey of the **satirically** named Mosquito Pavilions of Taiwan – public spaces and construction projects erected in the 1990s by the government for the purposes of **social welfare** and recreation. Massive amounts of money went into the construction of these buildings and facilities that were never properly used, and which have since been abandoned.

Yao and his students formed a temporary organisation called the Lost Document Society and travelled throughout Taiwan, documenting the derelict ruins of swimming pools, shopping malls and community centres. They produced a series of black-and-white photographs of these failed government building projects in a series that has become known as *The Mosquito Project*, some of which can be seen at the Embassy of Disappearance for the 20th Biennale.

One hundred and forty-four photographs, four books, documentary films and interviews with students are shown in the Biennale, as the result of this investigation that took place over several years. Mirage – Disused Public Property in Taiwan, 2010–16, is both the name of the artwork and the 684-page book of photographs that documents the process. The name 'mirage' was chosen by the artist to refer to the idea of an empty illusion, referring to the lack of foresight of the Taiwanese government, which resulted in these empty spaces. Nevertheless, showing that art might in fact be able to cause change, Yao's project prompted a promise from the government to conduct an investigation and potential **revitalisation** of the abandoned properties.

Born 1969 in Taipei, Taiwan Lives and works in Taipei



North District Comprehensive Exhibition Hall, Taoyuan County
Digital image, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist and
Lost Society Document, Taipei. Photograph: Yao Jui-Chung

Glossary

Anthropologist: A person who studies humans, past and present, to try to understand the complexity of cultures across all of human history. Anthropology is the study of humanity and it shares similarities with other types of science, such as social science and biology.

Satire: Using irony, sarcasm and ridicule to expose or shame individuals, companies or other aspects of society. It is often used in the hope that improvements to situations will occur.

Social welfare: The wellbeing of a society, referring also to programs that provide assistance or services to needy individuals and families.

Revitalise: To give a new life or energy to something.

¹ Yao Jui-Chung in Dana Ter, 'Investigative Art', *Taipei Times*, 21 September 2014, p. 12



'Charles' 'Sea State' project is one among many other ideas that are trying to engage with this idea of data, regarding who has access to it and who doesn't ... The question of 'big data', or metadata, is an ongoing debate right now globally – in terms of who gets to leak it, who gets to hold it and who gets to manipulate it.'



silent clap of the status quo, 2016 (video still) Digital video, 120 mins. Courtesy the artist

Singaporean artist and former Olympic sailor Charles Lim is interested in the complex relationships between land and sea. From maritime history and artefacts, to romanticised views and stories of water, aquatic life and seafaring voyages, Lim uses performance, drawing, photography and video to interpret and understand the ways in which humans and technology are transforming maritime environments.

Based on extensive research that the artist has been conducting since 2005, Lim's project Sea State explores the condition of the ocean and the global debates around climate change, **transnational** borders and the use of natural resources. Lim continues these investigations in his video silent clap of the status quo, 2016, presented at the Embassy for Disappearance for the 20th Biennale. The work depicts the installation and maintenance of a vast network of undersea telecommunications cables, edited together from hundreds of hours of footage.

Living in a world full of data, we are constantly seeking ways to manage and store our information, software and other applications. Data exists in the seemingly intangible space of the internet, yet we still require physical technology and hardware to access its information. Lim's new three-channel video traces and **traverses** the massive distances covered by these cables that connect continents and ultimately allow us to communicate with other people while enabling access to vast amounts of information.

Lim's silent clap of the status quo examines the complex infrastructure physically required to connect and **expedite** data and information across our physical and virtual worlds. By doing so, Lim draws our attention to the ways in which access to information and other technological services is regulated and managed by different countries, as well as the very real effect our need for global connectivity has on the natural world.

Glossary

Transnational: Extending or operating across national boundaries.

Traverse: To travel across, over or through.

Expedite: To speed up an action or process so that it is accomplished more quickly.

Born 1969 in Taipei, Taiwan Lives and works in Taipei

¹ Shabbir Hussain Mustafa, in 'Navigating the Unseen: An Interview with Charles Lim and Shabbir Hussain Mustafa, ArtAsiaPacific, Issue 93, May/June 2015, http://artasiapacific.com/Magazine/93/NavigatingTheUnseen



'We are all foreign to someone, somewhere at some point in our lifetime and my work tries to connect with that idea.'

People move from one place to another to settle temporarily or permanently in a new place for a number of reasons; this is sometimes involuntary in areas afflicted by war and conflict. Throughout history the impact of migration and colonisation on different continents has been felt socially, culturally and politically. Linking events and issues past and present, Gerald Machona examines the significance of historical migration on the African continent to comment on the **diaspora**, **xenophobia** and violence in South Africa.

Machona explores ideas of alienation, foreignness and nationalism to investigate cultural identity and challenge intolerance. His performances involve characters referencing 'Nyau', forms of ritual dance incorporating masks originating from the Chewa villages of central Malawi. Alongside this influence, Machona also draws from his experiences as part of the Zimbabwean diaspora in South Africa. In 2008, the artist witnessed violent xenophobic attacks in South Africa that were in reaction to mass African (and particularly Zimbabwean) migration, caused in part by the **hyperinflationary** Zimbabwean economy.

Fabricated from **decommissioned currencies**, Machona's spacesuits in *Ndiri* Afronaut (*I* am an Afronaut), 2012, and *Uri* Afronaut, 2012 have been meticulously sewn from Zimbabwean dollar notes and the old South African rand. The artist then performs and animates these characters in his video work *Vabvakure* (*People from Far Away*), 2012, as an explorer traversing the landscape, comparing the experience of migration to space exploration. A fourth work, *Flagging the Nation*, 2012, is a currency-stitched flag planted unsteadily in a pile of sand. The symbolism of currency devoid of value reflects the figure of an alien migrant and the arbitrary 'price' of a human life. In this manner, Machona investigates the value of individual and collective identities within the condition of forced exile due to political, economic and racial persecution.

Born 1986 in Zvishavane, Zimbabwe Lives and works in Cape Town, South Africa

Uri Afronaut, 2012
Decommissioned currencies,
foam, fabric, wood, perspex,
rubber, nylon. Courtesy
of Iziko South African
National Gallery, Cape Town.
Photograph: Carina Beyer



Glossary

Diaspora: The dispersion or spread of any people from their original homeland.

Xenophobia: Dislike or prejudice against people from other countries.

Hyperinflationary: A situation where the price increases are so out of control that the concept of inflation is meaningless.

Decommissioned currency: A currency that is removed from circulation.

¹ Gerald Machona interviewed by Jessica Hunkin, 'Gerald Machona and the price of society's issues', Mail & Guardian, 27 August 2014, http://mg.co.za/article/2014-08-27-gerald-machona-and-the-price-of-societys-issues>



Guernica in Sand, 2006/2016, mixed-media interactive installation; sand, wooden island, lighting, 1300 x 643 cm.

Courtesy of JUT Museum Pre-Opening Office, Taipei. Photograph: Taipei Fine Arts Museum

'I am fascinated by the ephemeral in terms of both its fleeting existence and the residue it leaves behind. The way I relate to these residues is that they are simply the by-products of the process and not its documentation.'1

Echo of the Inside (Column Cube I), 2011 Mixed media, 287 x 50 x 50 cm. Courtesy the artist and Project 88, Mumbai. Photograph: Shane Stankard

In recent times artists and curators have chosen to restage historic artworks and performances to allow audiences the opportunity to experience artworks that were intended for a particular place and time. Through this process of appropriation, the context, audience and meaning of the original work unavoidably changes.

Lee Mingwei has reinterpreted the **iconography** of Pablo Picasso's work *Guernica*, 1937, by constructing a new version of the mural in sand, producing a new, one-to-one-scale version on the floor of the Embassy of Disappearance. *Guernica in Sand*, 2006/2016, is made in a method similar to paint-by-numbers: coloured sand is poured into a number of metal frames that build up individual sections of the painting, the frames are then carefully removed to reveal the final image. Teapots are used to draw fine black outlines around these sections, and the

final sand painting is accompanied by lights, sculptures and a platform allowing audiences to view the large-scale, **affective** work.

Referring to the practice of **Tibetan Sand Painting**, a performance midway through the exhibition sees the artist and his assistants sweep the sand – not only to symbolically erase the history and meaning of the original *Guernica*, but to produce a new abstract work. An act of creation results from a process of destruction, demonstrating both **impermanence** and the possibility of renewal in everyday life.

Lee's performance highlights the ways in which we construct and memorise history. The idea that there is no one true history is explored in the transformation of this malleable material, reminding us of the temporariness of objects, narratives and our lives to some degree – and perhaps there's something hopeful in that.

Glossary

Appropriation: The artistic practice or technique of reworking and re-presenting images from other or well-known artworks in one's own work or to elicit a new idea or response.

Iconography: The traditional images or symbols associated with a subject or idea, especially something that is religious or well known.

Affective: Something or someone that possesses the power to cause emotion of feeling.

Tibetan Sand Painting: A practice originating from Tibetan Buddhism in which intricate designs or mandalas are made by pouring sand or other powders into precise patterns on a flat surface, for meditative or ritual purposes. The design is destroyed soon after its completion to emphasise impermanence.

Impermanence: Something that is temporary. In Buddhism, it expresses the idea that life is temporary, or in a constant state of change.

Born 1964 in Taichung, Taiwan Lives and works in New York, USA

¹Veeranganakumari Solanki, 'Lee Mingwei & Charwei Tsai: The art of ephemeral', Flash Art Online, November–December 2012, http://www.flashartonline.com/article/lee-mingwei-charwei-tsai/



Installation view (2013) of 'Innerouter' at Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney. Portland cement, coal ash, steel slag, iron oxide, plastic fibre, and native Australian plant species, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney. Photograph: Ashley Barber

'I never want to be too prescriptive, though I would like viewers to see complexity behind the apparent simplicity of the work. That means considering the distinctions between such things as the man-made and the natural, resilience and fragility, and the exotic and the indigenous.'

We exist in a world of diverse landscapes – constructed and artificial, natural and organic. Manufacturing and architectural industries have evolved over time, developing our cities into the places we see today, settling into and alongside the natural world in one way or another. Jamie North juxtaposes the waste products of industry with native Australian plant species to create living sculptural installations that reference and explore this relationship between the structures humans create and the biological world.

Influenced by a family who worked in the steel and building industries as well as by rock formations in the national parks of Thailand, North creates miniature landscapes made from cast concrete and plants. The plants integrate themselves into and around these forms, provoking audiences to contemplate their ability to regenerate and reclaim urban environments. We are reminded of constant cycles of erosion, decomposition and growth.

At the Embassy of Disappearance, North presents Succession, 2016, a new site-specific sculptural installation that continues his interest in native plants and their ability to survive in the most unlikely circumstances. Selected for their resilience, the Kangaroo Grape (Cissus antarctica) and Port Jackson fig (Ficus rubiginosa) plant species are the living elements of the installation. As they thrive in low light, these plants will be maintained at night through an artificial LED lighting system. Over the course of the exhibition, the plants will grow and bond with the concrete ruins they are embedded within. As audiences, we are made aware of how landscapes disappear and transform, and we are invited to consider the impact and tensions that exist between humans and nature.

Born 1971 in Newcastle, Australia Lives and works in Sydney, Australia



(above)

of 'Terraforms' at Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney Cement, marble waste, limestone, steel slag, coal ash, plastic fibre, tree fern slab, various Australian native plant species, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney.

Photograph: Ashley Barber

Installation view (2014)



Slag Bowl I, 2013
Cement, sand, coal ash, steel slag and moss, 15 x 37 cm each. Courtesy the artist and Sarah
Cottier Gallery, Sydney.
Photograph: Jamie North



¹ Jamie North interviewed by Sara Sweet, 'Jamie North: Rock Melt at The National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne', Aesthetica, 29 June 2015, <aestheticamagazine.com/jamie-north-at-the-national-gallery-of-victoria-international-melbourne-australia>



Fever Room, 2015 (film still), video projection performance, 75 mins. Courtesy the artist and Kick the Machine Films, Bangkok. Photograph: Chai Siris

'Film time is fixed time. It's linear.
This has been said often. Whereas in a gallery, it's acknowledged that audiences are the ones who control time, even when they go up close to the screen ... I am interested in how I can take both kinds of time and put them together, how I can combine the times of both films and installations.'



Vapour, 2015 (film still)
Single-channel video,
15 mins. Courtesy the
artist and Kick the
Machine Films, Bangkok.
Photograph: Chai Siris

Born 1970 in Bangkok, Thailand Lives and works in Chiang Mai, Thailand

Glossary

Surrealism: A twentieth-century movement incorporating art, film and literature that created fantastical imagery in an exploration of the subconscious and dreams.

¹ Apichatpong Weerasethakul interviewed by Lawrence Chua, 'Apichatpong Weerasethakul by Lawrence Chua', *BOMB*, Issue 114, Winter 2011, <bombmagazine.org/article/4715/apichatpong-weerasethakul> The Embassy of Disappearance brings together stories, events, places and ideas to examine what is absent from or retained in memory. The origins of art are often traced back to prehistoric cave drawings and rock paintings. But what if, as Thai artist and filmmaker Apichatpong Weerasethakul wonders, art first stirred in a very primitive form of cinema: the dancing lights and shadows thrown by a crackling fire, where people simply gathered to watch? Following these reflections, the filmmaker has attempted to recreate the earliest experience of storytelling and cinema for the 20th Biennale of Sydney.

Home Movie, 2016, is a single-channel video installation presented at the Embassy of Disappearance. Known for his experimental video works that deal with memory and the representation of reality, Weerasethakul's new work explores themes relating to imagination and ideas of the primitive. Projecting onto a large pane of glass suspended in the exhibition space, Weerasethakul has created a light-filled environment in which

an elemental ball of fire blazes, flickers and dances on the 'screen' and surrounding walls, as if we are suddenly found in a cave where people once gathered for warmth and shelter.

This abstract and surrealistic film brings to mind Plato's allegory of the cave - a story through which the philosopher attempts to explain the nature of reality. Dreamlike silhouettes cast against the cave walls by firelight are believed by a group of captive cave-dwellers to be real. Some choose to escape, understanding eventually that these shadows are only poor substitutes for the reality they discover outside. Others choose to remain in the cave, the only world they have ever known. In the continually shifting and changing flames of Home Movie, objects appear for brief moments, only to be consumed by the furnace onscreen. There is no indication of time passing, nor is there a clue as to where the fire began. As we watch, the reality we know is forgotten and we are led to consider the nature of perception as well as our own existence.

Neha Choksi

Compare and contrast Neha Choksi's installation The Sun's Rehearsal at the 20th Biennale with Olafur Eliasson's The Weather Project, created for the Tate Modern in 2003-2004.

- Describe how each artist has recreated the sun.
- What role does the audience play in these works?
- What aspects of the natural world do the works comment on or represent?

Create: Photograph a landscape scene at different times of the day over a period of time

- Using collage techniques or Photoshop, layer the images or photographs on top of each other, peeling away some areas to expose parts of the images below.
- Consider your composition and think about which details should be brought forward or covered up.
- What emotions or memories might be evoked in the resulting, composite image?

How does Choksi explore ideas of time, impermanence, memory and the earth in her practice?

Yao Jui-chung + Lost Society Document

Document through notes, drawings and photographs aspects of your local area, paying attention to interesting or well-known buildings and sites. Consider the following:

- When were these buildings and sites created?
- Has their function and use changed over time?
- Do these buildings or spaces hold memories or tell stories?

Research Yao Jui-chung's practice. How has the artist's work developed over time? What comparisons can be made with his work at the 20th Biennale?

Compare and contrast the practice of Yao Jui-chung and the Lost Society Document with artists like Bernd and Hilla Becher, Andreas Gurksy and Chen Chieh-jen.

- What photographic conventions and techniques do the artists use?
- How do these artists collaborate with other people?
- What is the purpose of their 'documentary' style of photography?
- How do these artists provide social, cultural or political commentary in their works?

Links to further resources

soundcloud.com/southbankcentre/artist-neha-choksiin-conversation-with-jennifer-higgie nutimes.com/2013/10/17/arts/international/indianartist-explores-absence-through-presence.html vimeo.com/122664104

Links to further resources

yaojuichung.com/htdocs/ michaelgoedhuis.com/Yao-Jui-chung-DesktopDefault. aspx?tabid=45&tabindex=44&artistid=106482 cfcca.org.uk/archive/yao-jui-chung



Embassy of Disappearance

Charles Lim

Research different data storage systems such as USB drives, computer hard drives, smart phones, camera memory cards, Google Data Centers, etc.

- What is their purpose? What kind of data and how much can these products hold?
- What materials have been used to make these devices? Are they portable or fixed to a certain
- What is the financial, energy and environmental cost of these devices?
- How are they repaired and looked after?

Since 2005, Charles Lim has worked on the Sea State project. Describe how this project has changed from its early beginnings, to its presentation at the 20th Biennale. Consider the works shown, the exhibition spaces, how each work is installed, and its different audiences.

Discuss how 20th Biennale artists like Nilbar Gures, Cecile B Evans and Charles Lim investigate technology and information in their work. How do these artists explore or interrogate the impact or distribution of these resources on society?

Gerald Machona

Research the currency of a particular country. When did this denomination originate and where is it used? What symbols, figures, colours and images are on the denomination? How has its value changed over time?

Explore the practice of artists who reference or use currency in their work. What personal, economic or cultural commentary might be intended through the use of this material?

Compare and contrast Gerald Machona's work with the artist Simryn Gill. In their respective practices, how are ideas of migration and diaspora explored?



Links to further resources

seastate.sg/

futureperfect.asia/artists/charles-lim vimeo.com/user16151903/videos/page:2/sort:date

Links to further resources

youtube.com/watch?v=GbJ6pZvalu8 goodman-gallery.com/artists/geraldmachona mg.co.za/article/2014-08-27-gerald-machona-and-theprice-of-societys-issues

Lee Mingwei

List the ways in which Lee Mingwei has recontextualised Pablo Picasso's 1937 painting Guernica in creating his work in the 20th Biennale.

Discuss how the historical significance and meaning of Picasso's painting might be given new interpretation through Lee Mingwei's appropriated version.

With reference to other works by the artist such as The Mending Project (exhibited in the 18th Biennale of Sydney in 2012) and The Sleeping Project (2003 Venice Biennale), discuss how Lee Mingwei's practice alters traditional relationships between artist, audience and artwork.

Jamie North

Research natural areas and landscapes around the world that are facing extinction or dramatic transformation as a result of human development and habitation on the earth. Describe the features of the landscape before and after human influence. What suggestions would you make to improve or reverse this

Analyse Jamie North's practice.

- What native plants does he use? What are their properties?
- How do they grow and germinate in their natural environment?
- How do these plants adapt or relate to the sculptural forms or site they are exhibited?

Make a collage (using old magazines, or by editing images in Photoshop) that juxtaposes the natural world with an urban environment. Consider the relationship between the natural and urban features you have combined; their characteristics, impact upon one another, dominance or resilience.

Apichatpong Weerasethakul

Apichatpong Weerasethakul's video installation aims to represent the first cinematic experience. Describe your first experience of film, cinema or television. Compare this experience with those of others in your

- What was memorable about the film itself, as well as your physical or emotional experience of
- How does your experience relate to Weerasethakul's Home Movie at the Embassy of Disappearance?

List and describe the conventions of documentary filmmaking. Would you describe Weerasethakul's films as documentaries or works of fiction? Why or why not?

Should films tell a story and have a narrative structure? What can video works by artists do or achieve that other movies can't? Make a case for or against storytelling and narrative structures in films.

Links to further resources

leemingwei.com/projects.php youtube.com/watch?v=id6U9BFBuFU vimeo.com/38872397

Links to further resources

jamienorth.com/

aestheticamagazine.com/jamie-north-at-the-nationalgallery-of-victoria-international-melbourne-australia/ youtube.com/watch?v=-jdrPgNyp68

Links to further resources

kickthemachine.com

theguardian.com/film/2015/oct/16/apichatpongweerasethakul-cemetery-of-splendour-cannes animateprojects.org/films/by_artist/w/a_ weerasethakul

In-between Spaces

'I like the idea of wandering, exploring Sydney and [having] these spaces or cracks suddenly open up so that one can imagine there's an opening up of your mind and the possibility of thinking about something differently.'

— Stephanie Rosenthal

In most cases, we experience art after first making a decision to step inside a museum or gallery. This usually involves a special trip and making arrangements, perhaps with a friend or organised as part of a school or group excursion. In planning the 20th Biennale, Rosenthal wanted to find a way to bring art closer to the everyday life of the city and its people. Why can't art be something that you stumble across on your way to school or something you discover when you duck out to the shops?

In addition to the seven venues or Embassies, a series of works have been **commissioned** for various 'in-between' spaces around Sydney. While some of these artworks are located inside physical buildings, many can be encountered outdoors in unexpected places, such as in a cemetery, on a wall in the city or in a gap between two buildings. Art will pop up in a library or on a lawn in the Royal Botanic

Gardens. For Agatha Gothe-Snape, art has the potential to change the way we move through the city. Her work is a 'score' for Sydney that encourages visitors to follow a particular trail and break out of their habitual ways of getting from A to B. For Bo Christian Larsson, cemeteries are places for both remembering and forgetting. During the Biennale, he will dress the old gravestones of the Camperdown Memorial Rest Park with custom-made fabric covers. Visitors to the Royal Botanic Gardens may chance upon Archie Moore's re-creation of **Bennelong**'s hut while they are having a picnic. In a project by Mette Edvardsen at the Newtown Library, 'books' are turned into people that can be loaned from the library to tell you a story. Perhaps even more than at the other venues, these works respond to the specific places that they temporarily inhabit.

Glossary

Commission: To request, order or authorise the production of something.

Score: A system of notation designed to indicate how a piece of music is played or a choreography is performed.

Bennelong: An Indigenous Australian who lived from 1764 to 1813 and was known for his friendship with Governor Arthur Phillip. Bennelong Point, the site of the Sydney Opera House, was given its name because of the brick hut that Bennelong lived in there.

¹⁰ Stephanie Rosenthal (speech delivered at the 20th Biennale of Sydney Media Launch, Customs House, 28 October 2015)



Brown Council Group Action, 2014

Single channel HD video with sound, 5:25 mins. Commissioned by the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia for the Jackson Bella Room, 2014. Courtesy the artists. Photograph: Brown Council



Agatha Gothe-Snape A Planet with Two Suns, 2013

Performance documentation, Agatha Gothe-Snape and Susan Gibb, as part of WorkOut: 7 Days of Experimental Performance, curated by Anna Davies, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia. Courtesy Agatha Gothe-Snape and The Commercial Gallery, Sydney



Archie Moore Clover, 2012

Acrylic paint, sticks, 300 x 200 x 150 cm. Courtesy the artist. Photograph: Erika Scott



Keg de Souza If There's Something Strange in Your Neighbourhood, 2014

Embroidered inflatable architecture, blowers, UV torches, single channel video, mirrors, drawing workshops, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist. Photograph: Lucas Abela



Richard Bell Embassy, 2013

Installation view (2013) at the 5th Moscow Biennale, Moscow. Courtesy of Moscow Biennale Art Foundation, Moscow. Photograph: Yackov Petchenin



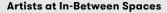
Mette Edvardsen Time has fallen asleep in the afternoon sunshine

Performance. Photograph: Liesbeth Bernaerts



Bo Christian Larsson Shaman Dream, 2015

Tin, wax, wig, oil paint, hawk feather, wild boar fur, cow leather, thistle, rope, wood, glass, 63 x 35 x 35 cm. Courtesy Bo Christian Larsson and Galleri Bo Bjerggaard



Ricardo Basbaum / Richard Bell / Brown Council / Daniel Boyd / Mette Edvardsen / Agatha Gothe-Snape with Brooke Stamp / Bo Christian Larsson / Dane Mitchell / Archie Moore / Oscar Murillo / Keg de Souza



Embassy, 2013, canvas tent with annex, aluminium frame, rope and projection screen; synthetic polymer paint on board, 320 x 500 x 600 cm (installed). Installation view (2013) at the 5th Moscow Biennale,

Moscow. Courtesy Moscow Biennale Art Foundation, Moscow. Photograph: Yackov Petchenin

'There's this collective amnesia in this country about what did happen ... That's basically why I make (art) ... I want a revolution in the thinking of Australians.'

Richard Bell makes paintings, performances, videos and installations that are provocative, satirical and often darkly humorous, poking fun at the art world while raising serious questions about Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians' relationships with one another and with the history of this country. Often describing himself as an activist masquerading as an artist, Bell's work for the 20th Biennale of Sydney restages and highlights an important event in the history of activism in Australia, paying homage to the Aboriginal Embassy that was set up on the lawns of Parliament House in Canberra in 1972.

On 26 January 1972, Redfern-based Aboriginal activists Michael Anderson, Billy Craigie, Tony Coorey and Bert Williams set up a beach umbrella outside Parliament House as a protest against Australian Government policy of the day, with the aim of bringing issues of Indigenous health, housing and land rights to the forefront of Australian politics. Over 40 years later, Bell considers these issues to be just as urgent as they were in 1972, and uses his artwork as a way of encouraging debate, discussion and different ways of thinking, which he hopes can lead to change.

Over three days in March and May 2016, Embassy, 2013–16 will occupy the forecourt of the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia. It will form the setting for talks and discussions led by political leaders and activists invited by Bell, such as Gary Foley and Jenny Munro. Consisting of a tent with videos, seating for visitors and signs created by the artist, it is both an installation and an invitation to take part in important conversations. Located at the site of the first British colony in Australia, it symbolically claims land that was traditionally owned by the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, who were **displaced** soon after the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788.

Kamilaroi, Kooma, Jiman, Gurang Gurang peoples Born 1953 in Charleville, Australia Lives and works in Brisbane, Australia

Glossary

Displace: To move something or someone from their home, place or position.

IF YOU CANT LET ME LIVE ABORIGINAL WHY! PREACH DEMOCRACY

Why! Preach Democracy, 2014

Synthetic polymer paint on board, 90 x 90 cm. Courtesy the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

¹ Richard Bell in Daniel Browning, 'Decolonising Now: The Activism of Richard Bell' in Richard Bell: Lessons on Etiquette and Manners, Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne, 2013, p. 23



Sketch for Fade Away, Fade Away, Fade Away, 2016. Courtesy the artist © Bo Christian Larsson

'White is the ultimate camouflage, both as a visual colour, a conceptual texture and religious and chemical constellation.²¹

Born 1976 in Kristinehamn, Sweden Lives and works in Älvkarhed, Sweden and Berlin, Germany It's a Vision Thing, 2013 Performance and installation, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist and Pinakothek der Moderne. Munich



Glossary

Site-specific: A term used to describe art that has been created in response to the space it occupies. Site-specific artworks may be about the spatiality, landscape, politics or history of the site, or about the identity of the people who are associated with it.

Globalisation: The process of economic, technological, sociocultural and political integration of the world whereby self-governing communities are increasingly unified into an interdependent, international society.

Swedish artist Bo Christian Larsson investigates social rituals, symbols and histories in order to understand how a society operates through its communal practices. Larsson explores how morals and belief systems influence what practices we choose to participate in, and what carries on as tradition. For the 20th Biennale, Larsson presents Fade Away, Fade Away, Fade Away, 2016, an evolving, **site-specific** installation located at the Camperdown Cemetery in Newtown.

Founded in 1848, Camperdown Cemetery was once the main burial site in Sydney. Today, some 2000 gravestones remain and are the setting for Larsson's new work for the Biennale. Over the course of the exhibition, female seamstresses will work daily to create white fabric covers that shroud the gravestones, concealing the remaining record of that person's existence. With this act, the artist erases the gender, identity and history of the deceased in a manner that is dismissive and yet equalising.

In choosing to employ seamstresses to create these unusual monuments, Larsson comments on the impact of **globalisation**, which has played a role in the exploitation and unequal labour conditions of women in certain societies. The stillness of the cemetery is transformed by the active performance of the seamstresses, engaged in a communal ritual of shrouding the gravestones. By working together, they become a community. By covering up the gravestones, they draw our attention to a different kind of community: in death, we join people we have never known, and the traces of our individuality fade away.

Fade Away, Fade Away, Fade Away explores social rituals through a contemplation of living labour and the acts of memorialisation we carry out for the deceased. Like a blank canvas, the covers present an opportunity for viewers to imagine who might be buried in these grounds, and to consider how individuals are honoured, remembered or forgotten throughout history.

¹ Bo Christian Larsson, 20th Biennale of Sydney: The future is already here

⁻ it's just not evenly distributed Guide, Sydney, 2016, p. 192



Mass Action, 2012, live performance, 90 hours. Courtesy the artists. Photograph: Pia van Gelder

'We are interested in examining the way that history is written, because often it is recorded by a singular voice – it is a narrative, a story, a fiction. We are interested in critiquing the role of history in cementing these cultural narratives around who is remembered and who is forgotten.'

Group Action, 2014
Single channel HD video
with sound, 5:25 mins.
Commissioned by the
Museum of Contemporary
Art Australia for the
Jackson Bella Room, 2014.
Courtesy the artists.
Photograph: Brown Council



Brown Council is a **collaboration** between Frances Barret, Kate Blackmore, Kelly Doley and Diana Smith – four Sydney-based artists who explore the conventions and history of performance. What is the role of the artist, performer and audience? How do their roles overlap and interact? Is the performance live and intended to be experienced in the moment? Or does the audience experience that performance as a memory through photographs, videos and text?

All of these questions and more are addressed by Brown Council in their 'collaborative **proposition**', *Making History*, 2016, developed for the former Grantpirrie gallery space in Redfern. For the 20th Biennale, Brown Council will question how and why performance is written into our history books by holding a series of discussions with invited artists, writers, poets, groups and academics. Their conversations will reflect on history and performance-art history, especially from the perspective of Australian and **feminist** contexts.

For example, Making History in part looks at the group's ongoing research project to reconstruct a portrait of feminist artist Barbara Cleveland (1945–1981). Cleveland's fairly unknown yet experimental body art practice is presented by Brown Council through reinterpretations, grainy old photographs and the retelling of witness experiences. We are not sure, however, that Cleveland ever existed.

In an installation that develops over time through the collection of stories and documents, Making History is a **living archive** – a place and platform for performance to be presented and recorded at the same time. Through these discussions, Brown Council provide a space to critique the roles of the artist and the audience, how people collaborate and in turn rewrite or construct histories, memories and stories, whether or not they're true or false.

Established 2007

Frances Barrett born 1983 in Sydney, Australia Kate Blackmore born 1982 in Adelaide, Australia Kelly Doley born 1984 in Melbourne, Australia Diana Smith born 1981 in Sydney

Live and work in Sydney

Glossary

Collaboration: The process of working – one with another – in the act of production. Collaboration can also refer to the outcome of the process or, used as a collective noun, it can refer to the participants involved in a process.

Proposition: A statement that expresses a judgement or opinion, or a suggested plan of action.

Feminist: A person who supports the equality and rights of both men and women, and who may engage in activities intended to achieve the same opportunities for women as for men.

Living archive: A collection of historical documents or records providing information about a place or group of people that is regularly or actively spoken about or used.

¹ Kate Blackmore in 'A fictional script of a conversation that did not take place between Stephanie Rosenthal and Brown Council: Frances Barrett, Kate Blackmore, Diana Smith and Kelly Doley', 20th Biennale of Sydney Exhibition Catalogue, Sydney, 2016, p. 111



Tropical Thunder, 2013, inflatable architecture constructed from plastic tablecloths, blowers, local soft drink bottles, perspex, plastic flowers, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist and Auckland Triennial. Photograph: Auckland Triennial

'I'm always really clear when I do these socially driven projects that I am an artist. And I'm really clear about what I'm exploring to begin with. [But] there's a lot of risk-taking. You can't go into a community expecting a particular outcome ... [It's only] when you meet people – that's what really shapes the project.'



Impossible Utopia, 2011

Inflatable architecture constructed from discarded umbrellas, blowers, offset printed lightbox cartography, walking tour, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist. Photograph: Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney

Socially engaged and community-driven projects blur the traditional roles of artist and audience the 'artwork' is the result of ongoing and extensive research, collaboration and conversation between people with diverse cultural, social, political and religious interests. When entering any new situation or environment, we are wise to pay attention to, and respect, the individual experiences and conditions that make up what it means to be in a specific place. Artists are often very sensitive to the world around them, seeking an awareness of these parameters when entering into a community to learn, research or to produce an artwork. Rather than having one single author, artworks produced in these ways may be created collectively and 'owned' by the community in which it is made. As such, the artist no longer plays a central role to the conception and creation of that artwork.

Tent settlements or cities have emerged around the world following the mass migration of people affected by instability and conflict in their native country. Displaced persons brought together by diverse and sometimes unexpected circumstances are forced into situations where they must adapt to, and adopt, a totally new way of living and working. The resourceful and resilient manner in

which people respond to dramatic change has seen the emergence of an entirely new type of community – tent cities that may be governed by their own set of **democratic**, self-managed systems of education, income and communication.

Informed by her training as an architect and time spent **squatting** and working in alternative spaces, Keg de Souza is interested in how people inhabit public and private spaces in the built environment. We Built This City, 2016, is a new site-specific work developed to address issues of homelessness, dispossession, land rights and ownership of space. This temporary structure made from sewn-together tents provides a platform for dialogue and public discussions that occur throughout the exhibition. Creating moments for discussion is a key part of the artist's project - she has invited special guests from the local community to contribute to the 'Redfern School of Displacement', and visitors may attend a 'Tour of Beauty' through littleknown areas in the Redfern and Waterloo area.

Born 1978 in Perth, Australia Lives and works in Sydney, Australia

Glossary

Socially engaged: Practices that encourage participation in, and contributions to, a community to encourage the development and exchange of new knowledge and skills.

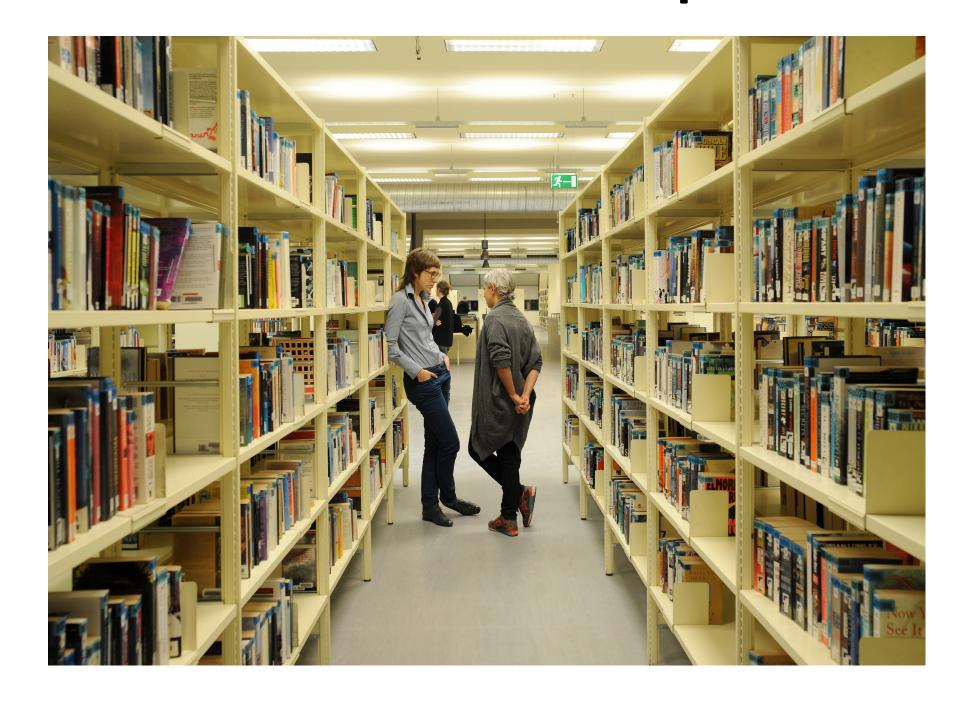
Democratic: Something that promotes social equality.

Squatting: To unlawfully occupy an uninhabited building or to settle on a piece of land.

Dispossession: When a person loses or is removed from their home, losing income, status and potentially relationships.

¹ Keg de Souza

Mette Edvardsen



Time has fallen asleep in the afternoon sunshine, performance. Courtesy the artist. Photograph: Liesbeth Bernaerts

'Here we are developing the practice of learning by heart and entering a process of remembering (and forgetting). For me it was important to bring the focus onto the engagement of the doing, rather than what has been done. Even if you have learned a whole book by heart, you will still need to practice or else you will forget it again. And for me this is also the beauty of it. More than an achievement it is the continuous doing of something, an engagement with the ongoing.'1

Born 1970 in Lørenskog, Norway
Lives and works in Brussels, Belgium

Stories are told and shared as a form of entertainment or education, functioning to instil a particular set of values. Stories can be conveyed in many forms – as books, movies, plays, bedtime stories, comics and as an oral tradition – and they are vital to the passing down of cultural or religious knowledge, histories and rituals.

Published in 1953. Fahrenheit 451 is a **science fiction** novel written by Ray Bradbury that portrays a world where the use and owning of books is considered illegal. As banned items, books are burnt (the title refers to the temperature at which paper burns) with the intention of eliminating unnecessary knowledge and suppressing information and ideas. Mette Edvardsen has used this novel as the inspiration for a performance work for the 20th Biennale at Newtown Library. Time has fallen asleep in the afternoon sunshine, is an experience that exists as an intimate conversation between two people. Audiences are invited to borrow a book from the library, however, this 'book' is a person. Having memorised a selected text, the living book shares its contents on a walk between the stalls and shelves of the library, literally bringing each story to life.

Time has fallen asleep in the afternoon sunshine questions how stories, knowledge and information are memorised, interpreted and retold. Informed by her practice as a dancer, Edvardsen sets up a physical exchange between the 'living book' and viewer to highlight the power of storytelling through physical bodies. Both are performers, though not on stage; both enter a situation of communication in a very immediate, physical and active manner, responding to verbal and non-verbal cues. Today, paper books compete against their digital e-reader counterparts for the love and affection of their readers – let the battle for storytelling supremacy continue!



Time has fallen asleep in the afternoon sunshine Performance. Courtesy

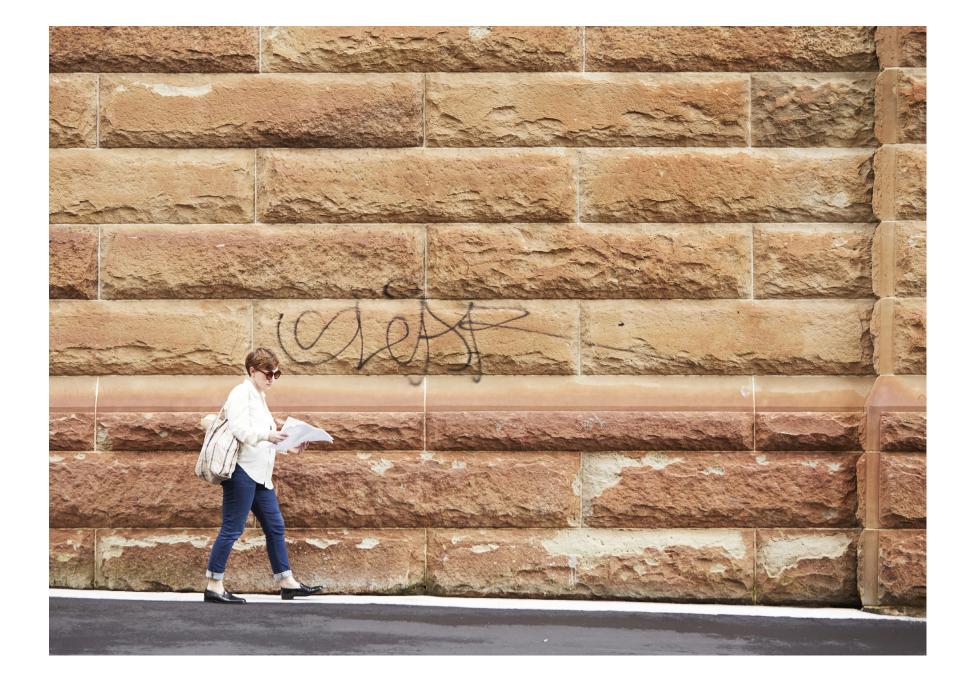
the artist. Photograph: Sveinn Fannar Johannsson

Glossary

Science fiction: A genre of fiction dealing with imaginative content, such as futuristic settings, futuristic science and technology, space travel, time travel, faster-than-light travel, parallel universes and extra-terrestrial life.

¹ http://bellyflopmag.com/interviews/dance-umbrella-mette-edvardsen

Agatha Gothe-Snape — with Brooke Stamp



Agatha Gothe-Snape with Brooke Stamp, documentation of Outsiding, 2015, a scored walk from Dr Chau Chak Wing Building to Hollywood Hotel, 6 November 2015. Photograph: Zan Wimberley

atha Gothe-Snape — with Brooke Stamp

'I use a whole lot of different mediums to produce responses to different circumstances ... Any given moment – and the thickness of that moment, the richness of that moment – is the centre from which my work comes out of ... I'm really interested in interrogating its qualities.'

The 20th Biennale of Sydney explores ideas of the 'in-between' in different ways – the in-between space we inhabit when we use the internet, the in-between spaces inhabited by people who may have been displaced from their homes or lands, and the in-between spaces of the exhibition, where artworks may be stumbled upon in the city, outside of traditional gallery spaces. Not only this, but artists today are increasingly working in between ideas and mediums, and collaborating with other people. When new ideas, relationships and places come into contact with each other, new possibilities, solutions or even uncertainties may emerge that allow us to see things in a new way.

The practice of Agatha Gothe-Snape sits clearly in this in-between space. Her work investigates relationships between ideas, people and objects through language, movement and choreography. Led by chance, Gothe-Snape sets up subtle **interventions** or alterations in physical spaces, where she is able to question and challenge our relationships with each other, with art and with the contexts and histories in which all these things are situated. Her artworks may take the form of **improvised** performances, conversations, signage,

phrases and even PowerPoint presentations. Often, these actions and texts are recorded, capturing these moments and the way they unfold in time.

For the 20th Biennale, Gothe-Snape presents Here, an Echo, 2015-16, with dancer and collaborator Brooke Stamp, describing the project as a choreography for the city. Unfolding over three weekends during the exhibition, the duo will enact 'performative interferences' - sitespecific **happenings** and informal events that enliven urban space. Here, an Echo is a call to movement, a cue for action and a response to a specific location. The work is something between a 'score', an instruction and a performance, which is documented and translated by Gothe-Snape over time as text. Through this process, writing accumulates throughout the exhibition as a series of **koans** or poetic interruptions that describe the fabric, movement and energy of the city.

*Agatha Gothe-Snape is also presenting a work on Cockatoo Island entitled *Physical Doorway*, 2016.

Born 1980 in Sydney, Australia Lives and works in Sydney

Glossary

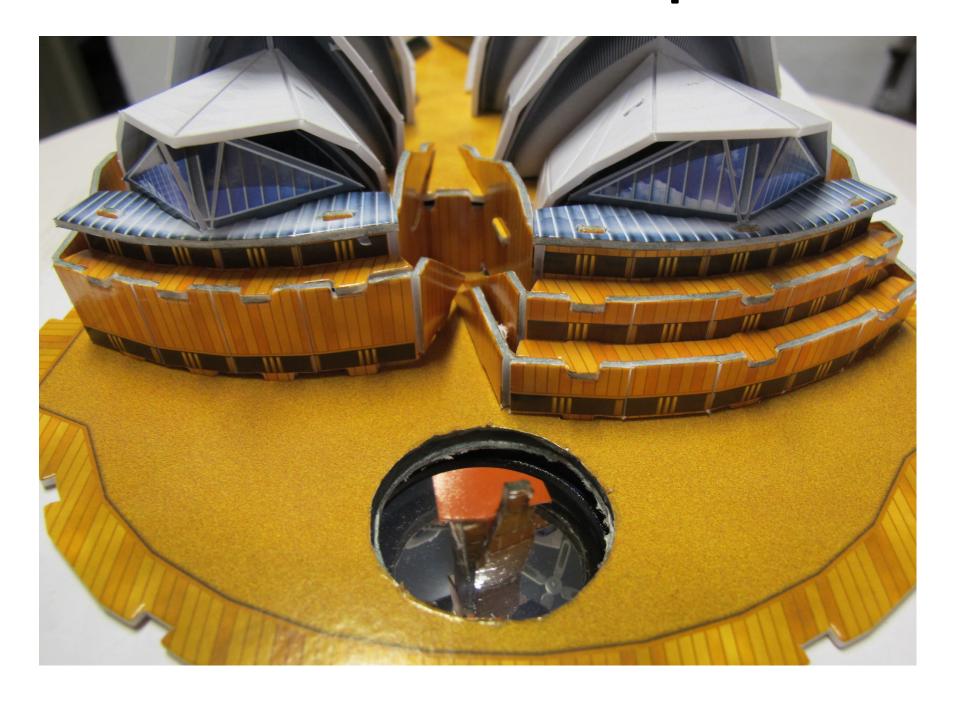
Intervene: To interfere or come between people, events, place or objects.

Improvise: To create and perform something spontaneously or without preparation.

Happenings: A term coined by Allan Kaprow in 1958 for a performance, event or series of events that often relate to everyday actions and gestures. Whether improvised or scripted, happenings are intended to disrupt the traditional roles of the artist, artwork and observer, making each as important as the other. Audiences are simultaneously viewers of, and an active part of, the artwork.

Koan: An inconsistent story or riddle without a solution, used in Zen Buddhism to demonstrate the failure of logical reasoning and to stimulate enlightenment.

¹ Agatha Gothe-Snape interviewed by the Museum Contemporary Art Australia, 'Artist's Voice', Museum Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney, 17 August 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8AvT5NILSMo



Bennelong Way To The Top, 2010, mixed media, dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist. Photograph: Mitch Cairns

'Another thing I'm interested in is this idea of shared experience, or [of] being in one's shoes, or more accurately, the unverifiability of knowing if another person's experience is the same as your own.'

Bennelong Point is where the iconic Sydney Opera House stands. This monumental architectural structure was officially opened in 1973, and coincidentally, the first Biennale of Sydney took place at this venue as part of its opening celebrations. The Sydney Opera House welcomes thousands of visitors each year to its concert halls for an array of cultural events and artistic performances, and was placed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2007.

Like most urban and developed places in Australia, Bennelong Point has a strong Indigenous history. Originally a small island that connected to the mainland at low tide and used as a site of ceremony and feasting, the Aboriginal name for this harbour peninsula is **warrang**. Woollarawarre Bennelong, a member of the Wangal people and a central figure in Sydney's early colonial history, is the person after which this site is now named. Kidnapped by Governor Arthur Phillip in 1789, Bennelong formed an unlikely friendship with the colonial governor and worked hard to establish positive and diplomatic communications between European and Aboriginal communities. As a token of respect, Governor Phillip built a hut for Bennelong where the Opera House now stands, which was the first domestic dwelling built for use by an Indigenous person in the new colony.

Drawing attention to this history, Archie Moore has rebuilt Bennelong's hut for the 20th Biennale in the Royal Botanic Gardens. Interested in the role of built structures in the lives of Indigenous people, whether institutional buildings or personal dwellings, the artist used primary sources and historical drawings to research and identify the original site of the hut as well as the materials it would have been constructed from. While the exterior reflects Bennelong's Hut, the interior recreates his grandmother's home based on the personal account of family members. Moore's contemporary remaking of this structure and narrative examines the social and cultural **assumptions** upon which Australian society is built, while reflecting on the effects of colonialism and the dispossession and survival of Aboriginal people.

Born 1970 in Toowoomba, Australia Lives and works in Brisbane, Australia



Clover, 2012
Acrylic paint, sticks,
300 x 200 x 150 cm,
Courtesy the artist.
Photograph: Erika Scott

Glossary

Warrang: An Aboriginal name meaning 'scars in the back'. It is the original name for Bennelong Point, said to be where young boys were initiated, part of which involved scarring their backs.²

Assumption: Something that is accepted as true or as certain to happen, without proof.

¹ Archie Moore interviewed by Wes Hill, 'Archie Moore in Conversation with Wes Hill', eyeline, no. 82, p. 30

² 'Bennelong Point (Opera House)', www.CreativeSpirits.info, http://www.creativespirits.info/australia/new-south-wales/sydney/bennelong-point-opera-house#axzz3y0ti4yzB

Richard Bell

Research the original Tent Embassy in Canberra and compare it to Richard Bell's *Embassy* at the 20th Biennale. To what extent has the context, key issues and circumstances changed?

How does the Bell interpret or communicate issues central to his practice for audiences? What is the significance of the location of his Biennale work in relation to the ideas he explores?

Make a list of artists whose work blurs the boundaries between art and activism such as Richard Bell, Tania Bruguera, Guerilla Girls, Emory Douglas and Amy Balkin. Present your research to the class. What is the difference between politically engaged art and activism?

Brown Council

Research the 1970s Australian performance artist Barbara Cleveland.

- How does Brown Council incorporate or highlight her practice in their work?
- To what extent has Cleveland influenced their work for the 20th Biennale?

Research the history of performance art in Australia. What comparisons can be made with Brown Council's practice and the work of other artists you have researched? Consider the ideas explored, materials used and modes of working.

Analyse: Brown Council have invited artists, curator and writers like Anne Marsh, Mike Parr, Amy Ireland and Virginia Barratt, Salote Tawale, and Eugene Choi to participate, perform and present as part of their project *Making Histories*.

- What expertise and experiences do each of these people bring to the work?
- Why do you think Brown Council have invited these people to be a part of their work?

Links to further resources

mca.com.au/collection/artist/bell-richard theguardian.com/culture/australia-culture-blog/2014/feb/21/richard-bell-asylum-seeker-policy-is-amanifestation-of-australian-racism artlink.com.au/articles/3359/

Links to further resources

browncouncil.com/about

doubledialogues.com/article/the-feminist-performance-art-of-brown-council-an-interview-with-diana-smith/

abc.net.au/arts/blog/brown-council-at-the-country-womens-association-bake-137-cakes-in-90-hours-120906/default.htm

Keg de Souza

Create a glossary of terms that relate to social life, change and the transformation of neighbourhoods and cities; include words like community, gentrification, displacement, occupy, dispossession, refugee, migration, social housing, ownership and urbanisation.

Research the history of the suburb you live in, creating a timeline with maps, images, landmarks, people and local issues. What does your suburb look like today? How has it changed?

Design a structure as a meeting place for people to come together and discuss issues that are of shared concern for your local community. Consider the purpose of the structure, what materials you would use to build it, and how you might welcome people to spend time in the space.

Describe how artists and collectives like Susan Hefuna, Francesco Clemente, Andrea Zittel, Sean Cordeiro and Claire Healy, Joseph Griffiths and Assemble create installations about shelters and the home. What connections can you make with Keg de Souza's work for the 20th Biennale?

Agatha Gothe-Snape with Brooke Stamp

Research the ways in which artists intervene in urban spaces, looking at examples such as the High Line in New York, a former railway line repurposed as a park and site for artistic projects, the work of artists like Eglė Budvytytė, who choreographed the movements of a group of men running through a city, or Jenny Holzer's billboards and LED works.

- Select some interesting examples from your research and compare this to the way Gothe-Snape enlivens urban spaces.
- Consider the audiences, introduced elements, communicative or performative aspects and nature of the sites.

Consider the challenges in presenting an ephemeral, non-object based artwork at a large-scale exhibition like the Biennale of Sydney. How might this impact the way the project is conceptualised, presented and marketed? How important is it for an artwork to leave a trace or to be documented?

Photograph or document different signs found on your journey to and from school. Based on the ones that you found, design a new series of signs that appropriate, combine and transform the originals.

- What are you trying to convey with these signs?
- Do they relate to the area you found them in?
- What experience do you hope to create for people?

Links to further resources

kegdesouza.com
realtimearts.net/feature/In_Profile/11328
dasplatforms.com/writing/an-interview-with-keg-de-souza/

Links to further resources

agathagothesnape.net/ youtube.com/watch?v=8AvT5NILSMo thecommercialgallery.com/artist/agatha-gothesnape/works In-between Spaces

Mette Edvardsen

Brainstorm different forms of storytelling. Write notes about the similarities and differences between the storytelling methods you have identified, considering purpose, audience and format.

Mette Edvardsen is a dancer and choreographer who explores theatrical expressions. How have her previous experiences and works informed her performances in the 20th Biennale?

Select a short story, poem or chapter from your favourite book. Memorise an excerpt or the entire text and perform this to members of your class.

- How does the process of memorisation and performance change your experience of the text?
- How different is your translation and re-performance from the original?

Bo Christian Larsson

Larsson feels that 'white is the ultimate camouflage'. Research the symbolism of the colour white in different cultural and religious contexts. With these different associations in mind, how might Larsson's artwork be understood by various people? In your response, give examples of other artists or cultural occasions where the colour white is referenced or used.

Research the religious and funerary customs of different cultures. Compare and contrast the symbolism, imagery, rituals and customs associated with these practices. How does the religious association and context of St Stephen's Anglican Church, on the grounds of the Camperdown Cemetery, affect the meaning of Larsson's installation?

Artists like Bo Christian Larsson, Ai Weiwei and Santiago Sierra have collaborated with communities and marginalised groups to highlight the effects of globalisation, production methods and the labour market. How do artists bring attention to these global issues beyond the context of their artwork?

Archie Moore

Research Archie Moore's practice, paying attention to the Indigenous figures and histories he references. What recurring themes or motifs can you find in his work?

Research the history of Bennelong Point. Why do you think Moore chose to recreate Bennelong's hut for the 20th Biennale? Discuss the site-specific nature of the work.

Explore the ways in which artists such as Rachel Whiteread, Do-Ho Suh and Song Dong create dwellings based on historic information, personal memory, traditional techniques and found materials.

Links to further resources

metteedvardsen.be youtube.com/watch?v=PSMDB7FbBI0 exeuntmagazine.com/reviews/time-has-fallen-asleepin-the-afternoon-sunshine/

Links to further resources

bochristianlarsson.com/2013/ bjerggaard.com/artist/show/107 youtube.com/watch?v=Bebhnm1cV4w

Links to further resources

archiemoore.wordpress.com sturgeonmagazine.com.au/the-word-the-book-thechurch-the-mission-archie-moore/ thecommercialgallery.com/uploads/VD36FWJ-Archie%20Moore%20Tarnanthi.pdf