

## Biennale of Sydney announces first details for the 25th edition in 2026



**Sydney, Australia: The Biennale of Sydney** today announced the first details for the 25th edition, taking place from **14 March – 14 June 2026**, including the appointment of the next **Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain First Nations Curatorial Fellow** and the first venue as **White Bay Power Station**.

As part of the Biennale of Sydney's creative partnership with Visionary Partner, **Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain**, the two organisations have today announced the new **Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain First Nations Curatorial Fellow** as **Bruce Johnson McLean**. Johnson McLean is a member of the Wierdi people of Wribpid and is one of Australia's leading voices on First Nations art and culture. A curator, writer, advisor and consultant with over 25 years' professional experience in the sector, he has held previous positions including Assistant Director of First Nations at the National Gallery of Australia and Curator of Indigenous Australian Art at the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art.

Through the partnership, the two organisations work to further commission, present and promote First Nations arts and culture as part of the Biennale of Sydney program. The role of the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain First Nations Curatorial Fellow was established in 2023, with artist Tony Albert the inaugural appointment. For the 2024 edition, Albert worked with the Biennale, the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain and 14 commissioned First Nations artists from around the world, collaborating closely with the artists to bring their creative visions to life. Johnson McLean will continue this important work with First Nations artists commissioned for the 2026 edition of the Biennale of Sydney to be announced in the coming months.

The major international contemporary art festival will activate White Bay Power Station, Sydney's newest arts and cultural venue, after successfully transforming the heritage space in 2024 as the first event at the restored power station. The 2024 edition welcomed over 777,000 visitors across six venues, with White Bay Power Station alone welcoming approximately 174,000 visitors, making it the most attended non-museum site in the history of the Biennale.

**Biennale of Sydney Chief Executive Officer Barbara Moore said:** "The Biennale of Sydney was the first cultural organisation to bring White Bay Power Station to life, transforming this iconic and historic landmark into a dynamic hub for community events and exhibitions of international calibre. The overwhelming success of the Biennale's 24th edition showed the incredible potential of this space to inspire, engage, and connect people through a festival of contemporary art, music, and ideas. We are proud to return to White Bay Power Station in 2026 for the 25th edition in one of the city's most exciting new creative precincts. Entry to the Biennale of Sydney is free.

"The Biennale of Sydney has always been a platform for bold artistic expression and meaningful cultural exchange. Our partnership with the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain continues to strengthen the Biennale's commitment to amplifying First Nations voices, both locally and globally. We are delighted to welcome Bruce Johnson McLean as the next Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain First Nations Curatorial Fellow and look forward to the contributions he will bring to the 25th edition. His experience, knowledge, and deep connection to First Nations art and culture will be invaluable in shaping a compelling and thought-provoking edition in 2026."

**Artistic Director of the 25th Biennale of Sydney Hoor Al Qasimi said:** "The Biennale of Sydney has long been a platform for artists to share their stories, challenge perceptions, and spark dialogue across cultures. As we shape the 25th edition, we are committed to creating a dynamic and inclusive festival of art and ideas that reflects the diversity of contemporary artistic voices. Bruce Johnson McLean's appointment as the next Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain First Nations Curatorial Fellow is a vital step in this journey, and I look forward to working alongside him and the entire Biennale team to create an edition that is deeply rooted in connection, history, and the transformative power of art."

"It is brilliant that the Biennale will return to White Bay Power Station in 2026, a space that has proven to be an extraordinary setting for creative expression and community engagement. With the Biennale, we create engagement by, with, and for community, providing a platform for local artists and performers in this creative endeavour."

**Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain First Nations Curatorial Fellow Bruce Johnson McLean said:** "I am honoured to be working with the Biennale of Sydney and the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, two organisations with a long and proud history of supporting the voices and visions of First Nations artists internationally. Under the artistic direction of one of the world's leading curators, Hoor Al Qasimi, the 25th edition of the Biennale of Sydney will be an important moment for First Nations art and artists globally. It is with great pride that I look forward to carrying on the work of my colleague and friend Tony Albert in supporting ambitious projects by, and building connections between, many of the leading First Nations artists from Australia and around the world."

**Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain said:** "At the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, we believe in the power of art to foster cross-cultural dialogue and create lasting impact. Our partnership with the Biennale of Sydney is built on a shared commitment to championing First Nations artists and perspectives. We are thrilled to welcome Bruce Johnson McLean in this role and to continue working together to bring artists from around the globe and their stories to an international stage. The 25th Biennale of Sydney will be another significant chapter in this ongoing collaboration, and we look forward to the inspiring projects ahead."

**NSW Minister for the Arts John Graham said:** "The White Bay Power Station is a bold canvas for the colour and creativity of the Biennale of Sydney so it's great to see it coming back next year."

"It's so exciting to have this former power station firing for big cultural events. It has the scale to stage big works, stunning backdrops, all centrally located for art lovers around Sydney and beyond."

"We encourage everyone around the city, the state and the country to make plans to come to the 25th Biennale of Sydney at the White Bay Power Station in 2026."

The Biennale of Sydney and Inner West Council have renewed their partnership for the 2026 edition, with a dedicated focus on activating White Bay Power Station as a dynamic cultural venue. Through this partnership, the Biennale aims to deepen connections between international and local voices, fostering new artistic exchanges and engagement with Sydney's creative communities.

**Inner West Mayor Darcy Byrne said:** "The return of the Biennale of Sydney to White Bay Power Station in 2026 marks another significant step in establishing the Inner West as one of Australia's premier arts and culture destinations. Partnering with the Biennale, Inner West Council will help deliver a dynamic public program as part of the festival. With White Bay Power Station becoming a major hub for creative activity, we look forward to welcoming everyone to the Inner West."

With the artistic direction led by **Hoor Al Qasimi**, the 25th Biennale of Sydney will be presented from **14 March – 14 June 2026**, with further details to be announced.

For further information on the Biennale of Sydney, please visit [biennaleofsydney.art](https://biennaleofsydney.art).

Ends

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**IMAGES:** Available to download [here](#).

Image captions: Bruce Johnson McLean, Photograph: Daniel Boud; White Bay Power Station, Photograph: Toby Peet

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## ABOUT THE BIENNALE OF SYDNEY

The Biennale of Sydney is a leading international contemporary art event. It plays an indispensable role in Australia's engagement with the world, and a meaningful role in the life of the nation. For 50 years, the Biennale has been a unifying force in the Australian arts sector, embedding boldly creative art exhibitions and experiences in the everyday life of Sydney and putting the artistic excellence of Australia front and centre on the world stage. The Biennale of Sydney has commissioned and presented exceptional works of art by more than 2400 artists from more than 130 countries and territories. The Biennale of Sydney is committed to free access for all.

## ABOUT FONDATION CARTIER POUR L'ART CONTEMPORAIN

The Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain is a private cultural institution whose mission is to promote all fields of contemporary artistic creation to the international public through a program of temporary exhibitions, live performances, and conversations.

The Fondation Cartier's singular artistic program explores a wide array of creative fields from visual and performing arts to architecture, design, fashion, philosophy, and the sciences. For more than four decades, the Fondation Cartier has been instrumental in revealing the talent of some of the greatest contemporary artists and has established its museum spaces as a platform where artists and scientists can meet and create projects to address major issues of today's world.

The Fondation Cartier travels the world, partnering with major art institutions and engaging new audiences to discover the works of contemporary artists, and be challenged by their perspectives.

At the end of 2025, the Fondation Cartier will open a new exhibition space in France on Place du Palais-Royal in Paris. This new building, conceived by the renowned architect Jean Nouvel, marks a new chapter in the history of the Fondation Cartier, which positions itself as a significant actor in the ongoing urban and cultural development of the city of Paris, as well as on the global contemporary art scene.

Find out more here: [www.fondationcartier.com/](http://www.fondationcartier.com/)

## ABOUT BRUCE JOHNSON MCLEAN

Bruce Johnson McLean is a member of the Wierdi people of Wribpid (Belyando River region in Central Queensland) and is one of Australia's leading voices on First Nations art and culture. A curator, writer, advisor and consultant with over 25 years' professional experience in the sector Bruce has been involved in First Nations art his entire life. Most recently Bruce was Assistant Director, First Nations at the National Gallery of Australia, managing First Nations programs and initiatives. For the 16 years prior, Bruce was Curator, Indigenous Australian Art at the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art.

Bruce has curated many high profile exhibitions and programs, within Australia and internationally, with highlights including co-curating *Mavis Ngallametta: Show Me the Way to go Home* 2020, *Goobalathaldin Dick Roughsey: Stories of this Land* 2019, *Tony Albert: Visible* 2018, *Mirdidingkingathi Juwarnda Sally Gabori: Dulka Warngiid Land of All* 2016, *GOMA Q: Contemporary Queensland Art* 2015 and *My Country, I Still Call Australia Home: Contemporary Art from Black Australia* 2013. He was a part of the curatorial team for *Land, Sea and Sky: Contemporary Art of the Torres Strait Islands* 2011 and the Asia Pacific Triennial and Contemporary Australia series'. In 2023 Bruce was a curator of the international collaborative exhibition *Histórias Indígenas* (Indigenous Histories) at MASP, Sao Paulo,

Brazil and KODE, Bergen, Norway. He has worked on several major projects including large-scale illumination projects with Vincent Namatjira and the Mulka Project for Canberra's Enlighten Festival.

#### **ABOUT WHITE BAY POWER STATION**

White Bay Power Station, a century old heritage building, was conserved by Placemaking NSW and transformed into a unique arts, cultural and creative industries space.

The restoration of the former power station was the first big move in the urban renewal of Bays West. Encompassing Rozelle Bay, White Bay and Glebe Island, the Bays West precinct is set to become an area of innovation and sustainability for living, working and recreation.

The NSW Government is developing a long-term strategy for the building to ensure that it becomes a cultural asset for current and future generations.

It is one of the only power stations in the world, retaining machinery and equipment from before the 1950s, demonstrating the process of electricity production and its use throughout Sydney's extensive rail network.

For more information <https://www.whitebaypowerstation.com>

#### **ABOUT INNER WEST COUNCIL**

Inner West Council was formed in 2016 by the NSW Government which amalgamated Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville Councils.

As a hub of independent arts and strong artistic communities, Inner West is an incubator for new ideas, innovation and emerging technologies.

It is a magnet for artists, writers, musicians, designers, film makers and knowledge workers seeking an inspiring atmosphere and space to live, work, visit and play in.