

Artistic Director Brief

26th Biennale of Sydney (2028)



'Lights On' Opening Night, 24th Biennale of Sydney (2024), 'Ten Thousand Suns'. Photograph: Katje Ford



Howard Park Wines Trade & Media Tasting Event (2024). White Bay Power Station. Photograph: Katje Ford

Call for Expressions of Interest

Artistic Director, 26th Biennale of Sydney (2028)

The Biennale of Sydney is calling for Expressions of Interest (EOI) from visionary curators and cultural producers who are interested in being the Artistic Director of the 26th Biennale of Sydney (2028).

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 over 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.

Since 1973, the Biennale of Sydney has commissioned and presented the works of more than 2,400 artists from more than 130 countries and territories around the world.

As we approach the 26th edition in 2028, we are seeking a highly motivated and dynamic Artistic Director — or Artistic Director team — that can lead the vision of the Biennale; someone that embodies our core values of being boldly creative, agile, collaborative and respectful in all that we do, with a commitment to place and keeping people connected through contemporary art and ideas.

If that could be you, please complete the Expression of Interest [form](#), including:

- A short Statement of Intent outlining your vision for the 2028 edition: your motivation for this role at this time, and the areas of artistic focus you are most interested in engaging (500 words, 2 pages max).
- A current CV detailing relevant skills, experience and qualifications (max 2 pages).

Expressions of Interest close at 5pm AEDT on Wednesday, October 29, 2025.



ABOUT THE BIENNALE OF SYDNEY

For over fifty years, the Biennale has amplified artistic excellence on the world stage and profiled the social and cultural diversity of Australia, embedding bold, contemporary art exhibitions and experiences in the everyday life of Sydney.

Situated on the land and waters of the Gadigal people, the Biennale of Sydney is enriched by 60,000 years of this continuous living culture. The Biennale works closely and collaboratively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations, with a commitment to upholding self-determination and best practice cultural protocols while honouring and respecting cultural knowledge and expression.

Effectively, the Biennale of Sydney is a major event with an exhibition of contemporary art at its core. It plays an indispensable role unifying and uplifting the Australian arts sector, adapting and responding to our rapidly changing community and social climate and providing invaluable opportunities and international exposure for local artists, creatives and arts workers. Every edition of the Biennale is an open invitation for everyone – residents, workers and visitors – to enjoy experiences that ignite and surprise, spark dialogue, cultivate connections and inspire action through meaningful shared experiences.

There are now over 300+ biennials worldwide, all designed to create connections and exchange through contemporary art, with the Biennale of Sydney at the front of this global art movement. Ephemeral art experiences – particularly those that entice people to connect and learn from each other – have proven to be effective drivers for improving social inclusion, cultural life and economic return.

Our vision for the 25th Biennale of Sydney (2026) and 26th Biennale of Sydney (2028) is to be the major arts and cultural event in the Asia Pacific, and one of the top arts and cultural events in the world.

Art changes everything.

The way we think.

The way we feel.

The way we see the world.

*Experience the
Biennale of Sydney.
For free. For everyone.*



'Lights On' Opening Night, 24th Biennale of Sydney (2024), 'Ten Thousand Suns'. Photograph: Katje Ford.

OUR VALUES

Boldly Creative

We commission and uplift bold endeavours, providing opportunities for artists and creatives to take risks and expand their practice. We invite visitors and participants to challenge deeply held assumptions. Our bold, courageous exhibitions and programs push boundaries and penetrate traditional silos of behaviour and understanding.

Agile

We are nimble, creative, and resilient. Built to be agile, our programming is intentionally responsive to the pulse of communities, while we are committed to thoughtful stewardship, operational excellence, responsible management of our resources, and building long term sustainability. We are transparent in the use of these resources and accountable to the public in all that we do.

Collaborative

We are committed to a diversity of voices and sharing of knowledge, including the visitors and communities we serve. We embrace the contributions of others and share the successes of our collective work. We empower people to share their perspectives and stories that inform issues that matter and address matters of collective conscience of national and international significance. We are committed to the principle of free access. We celebrate the richness of the highly diverse, local, regional, national, and international communities we connect. We are committed to intergenerational engagement and encourage people of all walks of life, especially young people to engage and be inspired by each other, participating in and imagining different worlds and ideas through arts and culture.

Respectful

We listen to and value the views of others and treat all people with respect. We honour Country and respect cultural knowledge and memory. We respect the traditional knowledge of First Nations people and communities, cultural expressions, and intellectual property. We are true to our values. We are reliable, honest, and ethical. We take responsibility for our actions and learn from our mistakes.



Legs On The Wall. EDGE Festival, Inner West Council (2024) 24th Biennale of Sydney (2024), 'Ten Thousand Suns'. White Bay Power Station. Photograph: Fancy Boy Photography



Meaghan Pelham, 'Love Poem Sorceress' Family Day: Make Dreams Come True by Studio A, 24th Biennale of Sydney (2024), 'Ten Thousand Suns'. White Bay Power Station. Photograph: Jacquie Manning

OUR STRATEGIC PILLARS



Water Lesson Two | Bryony and Harry Lancaster (Egg Of The Universe) for the 23rd Biennale of Sydney (2022), 'rivus', at South Eveleigh Community Rooftop. Water Lessons is presented by the Biennale of Sydney with assistance from Mirvac and Parliament on King. Photograph: Four Minutes to Midnight.

Celebrate and respect place

The Biennale of Sydney honours Country and respects cultural knowledge and memory. Working with utmost care, respecting where we are and acknowledging history and the living culture specific to this place is at the heart of our values. The Biennale empowers individuals and communities to speak for themselves and to lead with self-determination to bring visibility to First Nations arts and culture on a truly international platform. Biennale activations will acknowledge place specificity and respect cultural knowledge and memory. That includes effective and early collaboration and consultation, as well as representation across all levels of the organisation, influencing planning and programming. The Biennale is internationally recognised and locally loved. We are proud to be distinctly in and of Sydney, including Western Sydney and the regions, reimagining and optimising spaces and locations that speak to the city's history, community, and promise as a destination for creative innovation and experience.



Dylan Mooney, Malcolm Cole – larger than life (detail), 2024. Commissioned by the Biennale of Sydney and the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain. Courtesy the artist and N. Smith Gallery © Dylan Mooney. Installation view, 24th Biennale of Sydney Ten Thousand Suns, 2024, White Bay Power Station. Photograph: Document Photography.

Nurture, commission and present artistic excellence

The Biennale of Sydney provides artists and creatives with the opportunity to play, connect and push themselves in new ways on a global platform. Being an ephemeral proposition at this scale creates a testing ground for ideas, presenting opportunities for participants to experiment and innovate. We will continue to provide new pathways for artists, curators and arts workers to catapult onto a global stage through programming that is responsive to the pulse of communities and a commitment to developing artists' careers. We identify and support sustainable career pathways and opportunities for early career and emerging artists and art workers, empowering them to learn from and contribute to the success of this major arts and cultural event for NSW.

OUR STRATEGIC PILLARS



Family Day: Make Dreams Come True by Studio A, 24th Biennale of Sydney (2024), 'Ten Thousand Suns'. White Bay Power Station. Photograph: Jacquie Manning



EDGE Festival, Inner West Council (2024) 24th Biennale of Sydney (2024), 'Ten Thousand Suns'. White Bay Power Station. Photograph: Fancy Boy Photography

Welcome diverse audiences

Admission to the Biennale of Sydney exhibition is free – and will remain free – for all to enjoy. The Biennale is representative of the rich and diverse cultures of modern Australia in the stories we share, the artists and creatives we work with, and the audiences we serve. The Biennale is an intergenerational experience, where a range of stories are shared, reflected and respected. We have a deep commitment to cultural and social equity, reducing physical and other barriers to access - providing a celebratory, wholesome, feel-good festival experience that is truly accessible – by walking, biking, and all public transport.

Since 1973, the Biennale has a proven ability to attract diverse audiences – young people, families of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, art and culture lovers and experience seekers – because it reinforces the idea that art is for everyone, with a holistic and expansive visitor experience, both digital and physical. Public programs, learning experiences, live performances and social spaces for eating and drinking are an integral part of the festival offering, with an exhibition of ephemeral contemporary art and ideas at its core. In 2024 the Biennale's digital reach was 4.1 million people, nationally and internationally, affirming our focus on digital innovation and exclusive, original content that empowers audiences to better understand the 'why' and 'how' of contemporary art – critical to engaging new audiences and connecting communities.

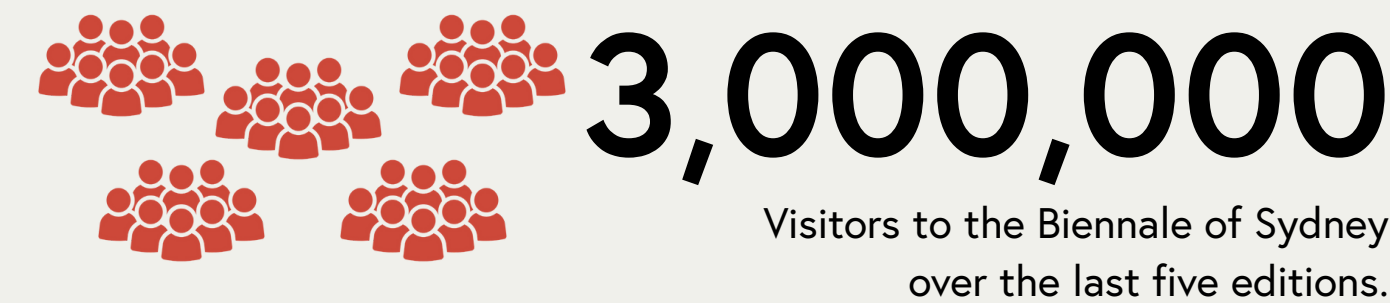
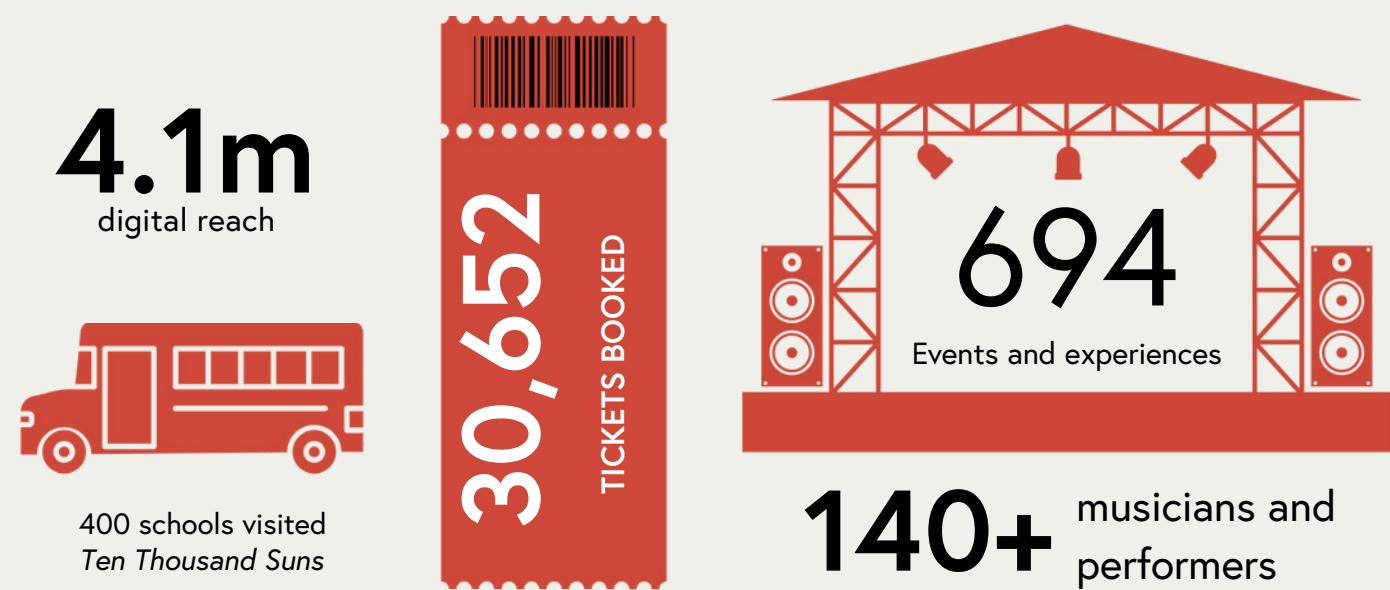
Collaborate

The Biennale of Sydney is a unifying force for the Australian arts sector. By extending our collaborative approach with and for the sector more concertedly, we not only make the arts and cultural sectors ecology more robust, but we also deepen the visitor experience and the economic impact of this major event for the ultimate benefit of the people of NSW. This inclusive way of working will showcase Sydney as the international gateway to our nation and a powerhouse of history, culture and hospitality, deepening the relationship and efforts of complementing industries. While the Biennale has a strong history of private sector investment, expanding our creative and strategic partnerships extends our programming potential, further diversifying revenues streams and creating greater stability for the organisation, as well as the arts and cultural sector more generally. Partnerships with cultural institutions, universities and not-for-profit organisations will continue to increase the benefits of Government investment in the Biennale by bringing incomparable visibility and visitation to those partnering institutions and organisations.

IMPACT AND REACH 2024



73 artists from 23 countries travelled to Sydney to participate in the event.
The program featured 36 First Nations artists.



IMPACT AND REACH 2024

AUDIENCE

International visitors

27% New Zealand

24% Europe

20% North America

16% UK

9% Asia

27% of visitors were under the age of 35

45% of visitors from culturally and linguistically diverse communities

↑

25%

From the 2022 visitation

Interstate visitors

14% QLD

14% ACT

50% VIC

Audience origin:


10% international

14% interstate

7% regional

69%

Visitors from Sydney



Annual household income: 30.2% make \$200k+

31.9% City and Inner South

23% Inner West

11.2% Eastern Suburbs

11.2% North Sydney and Hornsby

9.2% Regional NSW

COMMUNITY

IMPACT

85% visitors believe the Biennale enhance Sydney's reputation as an arts and cultural hub

84% believe it made Sydney a more enjoyable place to live

75% believe enhanced Sydney as an events capital

51.5% visitors have been to more than one Biennale

18.3% attended the Biennale for the first time

Audiences appreciate:

'Access to art in extraordinary locations' and 'variety of art exhibits'





'Lights On' Opening Night, 24th Biennale of Sydney (2024), 'Ten Thousand Suns'. Photograph: Katje Ford

Highlights

A full report on the 24th Biennale of Sydney (2024) is [here](#). And information about the upcoming edition of the 25th Biennale of Sydney (2026) is [here](#).

The Biennale, with free admission to the exhibition at every location, is the most accessible arts experience in Australia. For many people, the Biennale of Sydney provides their first introduction to contemporary art: people who may never enter a museum in their lifetime, but who get to experience world-class blockbuster contemporary art with their friends and family because of the Biennale's commitment to activating iconic Sydney destinations and attractions and secret precincts and places.



White Bay Power Station. Photograph: Toby Peet

Locations

The Biennale of Sydney has historically activated a variety of sites, including museums, galleries, and other public spaces. The Artistic Director may propose new or alternative locations in close collaboration with the CEO. Final decisions on Biennale locations are made by the Board of Directors, in alignment with the Biennale's strategic plan and available resources.

The Biennale's use of public spaces, such as the White Bay Power Station, has historically served as a catalyst for experimentation and bold creativity. For artists, these non-traditional venues offer the freedom to explore and push their practice in ways that might not otherwise be possible. Museums and galleries, by contrast, provide opportunities to engage with collections, challenge institutional norms, or present works in climate-controlled conditions, offering a different, yet equally important, mode of artistic practice and audience experience.

The total number of artists and locations included in each edition is determined by the nature of the artworks and partners selected.

The footprint for the 2026 edition will be announced in February 2026. For information on locations used in previous editions, please refer to the [Biennale archive](#).

Funding

The Biennale operates on a budget of approximately \$13 million cash plus in-kind contributions over a two-year cycle. Approximately 25% of the Biennale's income is provided as core funding from the three tiers of government (Federal – Creative Australia, State – Create NSW, Destination NSW and Local – City of Sydney), with the remaining funds generated through partnerships, philanthropy and earned income. Approximately 60% of Biennale funds are dedicated to its exhibition and programs, including artist project costs, public programs, artistic director expenses and exhibition overheads. That percentage increases to approximately 65% when considering in-kind contributions.



Timeline for the 26th Biennale of Sydney (2028)

The 26th Biennale of Sydney is anticipated to be open to the public from March – June 2028 (exact dates to be announced in 2026).

The Artistic Director(s) of the 26th Biennale of Sydney (2028) will begin part-time research in May 2026, moving to full-time from July 2027. By July 31, 2027, they will present the final program to the Board of Directors, including artworks, floor plans, and the event schedule, in collaboration with the CEO.

The Artistic Director(s) is expected to be in Sydney for key stages of development and delivery, residing in the city during the production period (July 2027–March 2028) and throughout the opening weeks in March 2028. A detailed timeline will be shared with preferred candidates prior to appointment.



Media Preview Tour. 24th Biennale of Sydney (2024) 'Ten Thousand Suns', Chau Chak Wing Museum. Photograph: Daniel Boud

Candidate Criteria

The Biennale of Sydney is seeking a visionary and collaborative Artistic Director – or Artistic Director team – to lead the 26th edition in 2028.

We are looking for someone with experience shaping ambitious, public-facing cultural programs or festivals, who can lead the vision of the Biennale at this pivotal moment. You will embody our core values of being boldly creative, agile, collaborative and respectful, with a commitment to place and keeping people connected through contemporary art, ideas and experiences.

The Search Committee and Biennale of Sydney Board of Directors, through the recruitment process for the Artistic Director of the 26th Biennale of Sydney (2028), seek candidates who demonstrate the following:

- An inspiring and timely curatorial vision for the 26th edition of the Biennale of Sydney, anchored in contemporary art practices and audience impact that are canons for what the Biennale of Sydney is now, and what it can be into the future.
- Demonstrated experience in curating or producing large-scale, multi-site exhibitions or cultural programs, including within both traditional and non-traditional spaces. Someone who can activate Sydney in a compelling and serious way.
- Availability, and a collaborative and culturally sensitive approach to working with artists, staff, communities, and peers. Can commit to part-time engagement from May-July 2027, then full-time from July 2027 to March 2028.
- Experience supporting First Nations-led projects, with the ability to navigate this work respectfully with the support of experienced advisors and team members.
- A strong commitment to developing and presenting audience engagement initiatives in partnership with other companies, organisations, festivals and events across Sydney that reflects how people want to experience art and events today.
- A proven ability to commission, develop and source funding for new, site-specific, or experimental works with contemporary artists that are ambitious, innovative, and capable of engaging broad audiences and critical attention.
- Demonstrated ability to liaise and negotiate with artists, staff and presenting partners to ensure limited resources are strategically deployed for optimal outcomes for artists and audiences.
- A practical understanding of space, including how artists and audiences interact with physical and conceptual environments, and how this impacts exhibition design and production.
- Financial acumen, including experience with significant budgets and the ability to prioritise resources and make sound decisions in collaboration with the executive team.
- Outstanding communication skills, both written and spoken, as the position involves developing written proposals, writing curatorial texts, and articulating ideas with clarity to diverse audiences and stakeholders.
- Capacity to maintain confidentiality and support the timely delivery of marketing, communications and media strategies in the lead-up to the Biennale.
- Familiarity with public and private funding landscapes and the ability to support fundraising efforts, including the development of compelling curatorial cases and a compelling program that attracts support
- Ability to effectively employ his/her/their local and international network, and the capacity to build and nurture long-term partnerships.
- Willingness and ability to undertake international and domestic travel for research and relationship-building, and to be based in Sydney during the critical development and delivery period (July 2027 – March 2028).

The Biennale of Sydney fosters a collaborative and respectful workplace culture, with a team as diverse as the program we present and the audiences who experience them. We actively encourage First Nations people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, LGBTQIA+ people, people with disability and those who have diverse experiences of our world to join the Biennale of Sydney team. We are committed to making reasonable adjustments to provide a positive, barrier-free recruitment process and supportive workplace. If you have support or access requirements, please let us know in your application.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the term of the contract?

The AD is contracted from May 2026 to June 2028. The 26th Biennale of Sydney is anticipated to be open to the public from March – June 2028 (exact dates to be announced in 2026).

What are the responsibilities of the Artistic Director?

The Artistic Director conceives the artistic vision for the 26th Biennale of Sydney (2028) and, working with the CEO, the Biennale team and exhibition partners, develops the full artistic and events plan of the edition for approval by the Board of Directors. They also contribute to funding, marketing, and publicity efforts, acting as a key advocate for the Biennale as the edition develops. A more detailed outline is provided in the Candidate Criteria.

Does the Artistic Director have to live in Australia or be an Australian citizen?

No. The Biennale is an international contemporary art event and we welcome submissions from individuals or collectives from anywhere in the world.

What are the expectations around timeline and availability of the Artistic Director?

The Artistic Director(s) will begin research on a part-time basis from May 2026, transitioning to full-time engagement from July 2027. By July 31, 2027, the Artistic Director(s), together with the CEO, will present the final Biennale program to the Board of Directors, including the complete list of artworks, floor plans, and event schedule. The Artistic Director(s) is expected to be in Sydney at key stages of the Biennale's development and delivery, including residing primarily in Sydney during the production period (July 2027–March 2028) and the opening weeks in March 2028. A more detailed schedule of timelines will be discussed with preferred candidates prior to appointment.

Is there a preference for an individual or can a collective apply?

Both individuals and collectives are welcome to apply.

How are the EOIs assessed?

An assessment panel of arts industry experts (the Artistic Director Search Committee) will read all submissions and determine who will be invited to the next stage of the selection process. Assessment will be made using a points system against the Selection Criteria, judged using the applicant's submitted Statement of Intent and CV.

When will I know the outcome of my EOI?

Applicants will be advised on the outcome of the EOI by November 30, 2025.

What happens if my EOI is successful?

Successful candidates will proceed to the next round, being invited to submit a more formal proposal. They will also receive a more detailed brief in advance of their submission, including a meeting with the CEO via zoom. Following submission of the proposals, the Artistic Director Search Committee assess the submissions. The shortlisted candidates will be invited to present their concepts to the Committee in February 2026. A final shortlisted candidates will then be invited for a second interview in March 2026.

How is the Artistic Director(s) appointed?

The appointment of the Artistic Director(s) is confirmed by the Biennale's Board of Directors, following a recommendation by the dedicated search committee.

Where can I find out more about the Biennale of Sydney?

Go to www.biennaleofsydney.art or follow us on social media @biennalesydney.

When is the EOI due?

Expressions of Interest are due by 5 pm AEDT on Wednesday, October 29, 2025.





Media Preview Tour, 24th Biennale of Sydney 'Ten Thousand Suns', 2024, MCA. Photograph: Daniel Boud

Applying for the Role

Thank you for your interest in applying for the role of Artistic Director for the 26th Biennale of Sydney. Please read all this brief carefully before submitting your application.

EOI must be submitted via the online application portal [here](#).

Your EOI must include the following information:

Personal Information

- Full name
- Country and city where you are based
- Phone number (including country and area code)
- Email address
- Primary language spoken
- Do you require an interpreter? (Yes/No)
- Pronoun(s)
- Do you have any access requirements? (Please outline)

Supporting Documents

1. Curriculum Vitae (CV)

- Maximum 2 pages
- Highlight relevant professional experience, artistic leadership, and curatorial or programming achievements.

2. Statement of Intent (maximum 500 words, 2 pages)

- Outline your vision or methodology for the 26th Biennale of Sydney.
- Please include:
 - Your vision and how it relates to the contemporary context.
 - The intended impact on audiences.
 - The Biennale canons that are most important to you.
 - Why you are interested in this role, and why now.
 - The types of artists you would be interested in engaging with.

Expression of Interest deadline: 5 pm AEDT on Wednesday, October 29, 2025

We look forward to receiving your submission.





Left to right: Trevor Yeung, *Five Chaotic Suns (Transfing)*, 2023. Commissioned by the Biennale of Sydney with generous assistance from the Hong Kong Arts Development Council. Courtesy the artist © Trevor Yeung. Orquídeas Barrileteras; Strengthening Deaf Culture, 2023. Commissioned by the Biennale of Sydney and the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain. Courtesy the artists © Orquídeas Barrileteras. Barrileteros Almas Del Viento, *El danzante (The Dancing one)*, 2019; *Resurrección del Maíz (Resurrection of the corn)*, 2017. Courtesy the artists © Barrileteros Almas Del Viento. Özgür Kar, *Death's Horn*, and *the Birds*, 2024. Commissioned by the Biennale of Sydney with generous assistance from Mondriaan Fund and SAHA Association. Courtesy the artist © Özgür Kar. Christopher Myers, *Untitled I-XII*, 2024. Commissioned by the Biennale of Sydney with generous support from Terra Foundation for American Art and generous assistance from James Cohan, New York. Courtesy the artist and James Cohan Gallery, New York © Christopher Myers. Installation view, 24th Biennale of Sydney, *Ten Thousand Suns*, 2024. White Bay Power Station. Photograph: Document Photography.