22nd Biennale of Sydney reveals program highlights for NIRIN 2020

Sydney, Australia: The Biennale of Sydney has today revealed details of the program for its 22nd edition, titled NIRIN. Under the artistic direction of acclaimed Indigenous Australian artist, Brook Andrew, NIRIN, is an artist- and First Nations-led endeavour, presenting an expansive exhibition of contemporary art and events that connect local communities and global networks.

Meaning edge, NIRIN is a word of Brook’s mother’s Nation, the Wiradjuri people of western New South Wales.

NIRIN is a world of endless interconnected centres; a space to gather and to share, to rejoice, disrupt, and re-imagine. Through their own interpretations and experiences, more than 100 artists from around the world will be inspired by, and reflect on, the world today, challenging dominant narratives and proposing exciting new futurisms and paths to healing.

The exhibition is open free to the public from 14 March until 8 June 2020 at six sites in Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, Artspace, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Cockatoo Island, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia and the National Art School.
For all of the 87 days of the exhibition, these projects and ideas will be activated and explored through an interconnected program of free and ticketed events called NIRIN WIR spanning from the Blue Mountains to La Perouse. NIRIN, meaning *edge*, and WIR, meaning *sky*, is a series of activations and creative partnerships with communities, arts organisations and tertiary institutions such as the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney Observatory, Parramatta Female Factory and Sydney University.

**Brook Andrew, Artistic Director for the 22nd Biennale of Sydney** said: "NIRIN is an opportunity to see first-hand how Sydney and Australia is a world stage for arts and culture. It demonstrates how artists have the power to inspire and lead through difficult global times such as environmental catastrophe, urgent states of conflict and reframing histories. There are many turning points in the world right now: come and be a part of this story and immerse yourself, your family and friends in inspiration, change and imagined futures."

**Barbara Moore, Chief Executive Officer, Biennale of Sydney** said: "The Biennale of Sydney embraces art and ideas of today, welcoming artists and audiences to collaborate, learn, heal and bond together. Through NIRIN and NIRIN WIR, the Biennale invites diverse and often marginalised voices of the world to converge, creating a safe place where people can think and talk about issues that resonate on a local and international level. Under the artistic direction of Brook Andrew, the 22nd Biennale of Sydney highlights the importance of uniting people, stimulating dialogue, cultivating connections, listening and amplifying the voices of artists, from a First Nations-led and artist-led perspective."

**NIRIN HIGHLIGHTS**

At the Art Gallery of NSW, **Arthur Jafa**, recently awarded the Golden Lion at the 58th Venice Biennale, will present the Southern Hemisphere premiere of his seminal work *The White Album*. Wiradjuri artist **Karla Dickens** will present an immersive installation in the vestibule of the Gallery that is an observation on the disproportional number of Indigenous women in refuges and correctional centres all around Australia.

Multi-disciplinary artist **Joël Andrianomearisoa** will present a suite of large-scale, sheer textile works that will transform spaces in both the Art Gallery of New South Wales and Museum of Contemporary Art Australia.

Pitjantjatjara artist **Kunmanara Mumu Mike Williams** (1952–2019), a political activist, cultural leader and *ngangkari* (traditional healer), was invited to participate in the Biennale of Sydney before his passing in March 2019. His vision for the exhibition was a large-scale political protest piece, working with the young men in his community to show to the world that *tjukurpa* (law) is still strong. Guided by his widow **Tuppy Ngintja Goodwin** and his lifelong friend and collaborator **Sammy Dodd, Mimili Maku Arts** has facilitated the execution of the project at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, celebrating the significance of Kunmanara’s words: *Kulilaya munuya nintiriwa* (Listen and learn from us).

Gamilaroi/Gomeroi Murri Yinah artist **Barbara McGrady** delves into her extensive photographic archive to curate her life’s work and re-present it as a kaleidoscopic compendium of Aboriginal contemporary history. Collectively titled *Ngayaniny Maran Yaliwaunga Ngaara-li* (*Our Ancestors Are Always Watching*), a selection of photographs will be presented at Art Gallery of New South Wales and as a major immersive installation at Campbelltown Arts Centre.

Also at Campbelltown Arts Centre, multi-disciplinary artist and member of the Siksika (Blackfoot) Nation **Adrian Stimson** will present video and photographs challenging the colonial project through his performance personas Buffalo Boy, Shaman Exterminator and Naked Napi.
At Artspace, Peruvian artist Fátima Rodrigo Gonzales will present a recreation of an iconic TV set from the 1960s Latin TV show ‘Sabado Gigante’ (Gigantic Saturday). In a defiant and expressive process of healing, eight-artist collective Tennant Creek Brio will show a dynamic series of paintings on discarded western objects that draw inspiration from their experiences of small-town Tennant Creek.

Ghanaian-born artist Ibrahim Mahama will present ‘A Grain of Wheat’ at Artspace, a display of rolled-up medical stretchers that are a result of Mahama’s interest in labour and collective enterprise, and at Cockatoo Island, Mahama will present a large-scale installation of sewn coal sacks, that speak to his investigation of the conditions of supply and demand in African markets.

Following his announcement as one of the four winners for the 2019 Turner Prize, on Cockatoo Island artist and audio investigator Lawrence Abu Hamdan will present Once Removed, an audio-visual work that chronicles the testimony of a young historian, Bassel Abi Chahine.

Egyptian-born artist Anna Boghiguian will present a bold, new immersive sculptural installation exploring the marginalisation of people and their communities. Gina Athena Ulysse, a feminist interdisciplinary artist from Haiti, presents An Equitable Human Assertion: a site-specific rasanblaj (a gathering of ideas, things, people and spirits).

Australian artist Tony Albert will also create a space for gathering, sharing and healing in the form of a greenhouse where visitors and families will be invited to write memories and messages on paper imbedded with seeds of native plants; and multi-disciplinary artist from Aotearoa/New Zealand, Lisa Reihana will examine the culture and history of Māori and South Pacific Islander peoples in the immersive installation and film Nomads of the Sea.

Also on Cockatoo Island, Tlingit/Unangax̂ artist Nicholas Galanin will present an excavation of the shadow cast by the Captain Cook statue in Sydney’s Hyde Park to reveal what the land holds beneath the surface. At the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Galanin will also present the video work ‘Tsu Héidei Shugaxtutaan (We Will Again Open This Container of Wisdom That Has Been Left in Our Care), Part I and II, 2006.

At the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, interdisciplinary Afghan artist Aziz Hazara will premiere a new video installation Bow Echo investigating the relationship between people and sites of trauma. Turkish artist Erkan Özgen’s video works will deal with the complex questions of war and violence.

Sudanese artist Ahmed Umar’s deeply personal work What Lasts! (Sarcophagus) – a ceramic sarcophagus sculpted from Umar’s body – was born in the aftermath of opening up about his sexuality and being considered dead by some of his close family members, while USA-based, Pakistani artist Huma Bhabha uses found materials and the detritus of everyday life to create haunting human figures.

Visual activist and photographer Zanele Muholi will present three bodies of work that look at the politics of race, gender and sexuality, and Ainu artist and musician Mayunkiki will present an ongoing project researching traditional Ainu tattooing practices, sinuye, which are banned by Japanese law.

At the National Art School in Darlinghurst, multi-instrumentalist artist and DJ Hannah Catherine Jones will present a large-scale, immersive audio-visual work using pop-cultural and archival material, poetic motifs and provocative imagery to tell a story of the African diaspora.

Transdisciplinary artist Andrew Rewald will present Alchemy Garden at the art school, an outdoor interactive community garden he has built from repurposed materials. It will evolve throughout the exhibition period, growing native and non-native edible plants to examine how ethnobotanicals connect
people and their actions to place. In collaboration with Canadian academic and artist Randy Lee Cutler, the pair will present *Mineral Garden*, an installation exploring the secret life of plants and minerals.

**NIRIN WIR HIGHLIGHTS**

The 22nd Biennale of Sydney’s program of events includes *aabaakwad 2020 NIRIN*. Presented with the Art Gallery of Ontario, aabaakwad (it clears after a storm) is centred on informal, in-depth conversations between international First Nations artists, and other artists, curators and scholars from Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Canada. The featured artists, curators and thinkers taking part include Wanda Nanibush, Adrian Stimson, Vernon Ah Kee, Lisa Reihana, Biung Isumahasan and more. The event will run at the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Cockatoo Island and Sydney Opera House (14–17 March).

Ramin Haerizadeh, Rokni Haerizadeh and Hesam Rahmanian present *I Prefer Talking to Doctors About Something Else* at the Powerhouse Museum (14 March – 8 June). This collaborative work is created using objects from the museum’s collection. Incorporating and disorganising unexpected artefacts such as space satellites, anatomical models and furniture design, the artists make a sweeping arc across themes of grief, the human body and healing. Visitors are invited to view the collaborative installation process from 2–6 and 9–13 March.

From 27–29 March, the *4ESydney HipHop Festival* will light up Cockatoo Island with the power of words. The program amplifies important voices like Rhyan Clapham aka DOBBY, who journeys back to Brewarrina in north west New South Wales to connect to his family’s history in *River Story*.

The following week (2–5 April), Bankstown’s iconic poetry slam takes residence on Cockatoo Island for three electrifying nights of spoken word from Western Sydney’s best writer-poets.

On 29 April, First Nations artists will take centre stage in one of Sydney’s most historic buildings – Sydney Town Hall – to flip the flawed history and debate the question: ‘*To cook Cook or not?*’ On the 250th anniversary of Cook’s landing in Australia, the all-Indigenous cast will challenge the dominant narrative that the arrival of a British sailor who pillaged his way across the Pacific is a more impressive story than the 60,000 years of continuous history of Australia’s Indigenous people. The event features Wesley Enoch, Brook Andrew, Joel Bray, Melanie Mununggurr-Williams, DOBBY and Ripple Effect, and is supported by The Balnaves Foundation.

*Sovereign Ideas*, a special event for 300 Indigenous students from schools across Australia, will also take place at Sydney Town Hall on 29 April. Highlighting the careers of iconoclastic young cultural thinkers and leaders from First Nations around the world, *Sovereign Ideas* – supported by The Balnaves Foundation and Sydney University – presents an encouraging narrative of possibilities that counter stereotypes and stigmas.

*Stories We Never Tell* – presented by Parramatta Female Factory Precinct and PYT Fairfield – is a performative walking tour (7–9 May) of the former Parramatta Girls Home; a place where the walls are inscribed with the marks and memories of women. Storytellers will activate the buildings to redefine the space with resilience and celebration. Tours of the Parramatta Female Factory Precinct will also be held every second Tuesday during the exhibition.

Every Friday throughout the exhibition, *Information + Cultural Exchange* invites visitors to exercise, dance and make art with elderly and dementia-affected residents of Abel Tasman Village in Chester Hill. Led by artists Naomi Oliver, Liam Benson and Victoria Harbut, DJ Black President and Care Manager Sophia Markwell, the program contemplates and honours existence and oblivion (our own).
From Monday to Friday each week, Rosman Cruises will transport students from Circular Quay to Cockatoo Island for free on NIRIN HAIVETA. Launched in 1947, NIRIN HAIVETA (previously known as Radar) is the “mother” of the Rosman fleet. She remained in continuous service for more than 60 years and has undergone a complete refurbishment for the Biennale of Sydney with Melbourne arts and cultural collective BE, resulting in a vessel that celebrates women’s mark-making through visual representation and interpretation. Every Saturday, NIRIN HAIVETA will also transport Western Sydney residents from Sydney Olympic Park Wharf to Cockatoo Island free of charge (bookings essential).

Sundays are a family day on Cockatoo Island with OUR PATH, a learning program that highlights the excellent educational practices of artists and community leaders in regional NSW. From March to May, visitors can join Linda Kennedy, a Yuin woman, in the learning space in Biloela House for a series of creative workshops, STEM education, cultural practice and yarning. In June, Kempsey-based artist and Dunghutti Elder, Uncle John Kelly, and artist Rena Shein will collaborate with young people and families on a participatory work based on Uncle John’s Dreaming.

Physical theatre performer and access advocate Sarah Houbolt responds to the streets of Sydney through a personal lens as part of the Biennale’s podcast series available on Spotify from March. Funny and experiential, Sarah layers sound and narrative in a poetic account of what life is like, and what it could be, as she traverses the path between Art Gallery of New South Wales, Artspace and the National Art School.

Visitors to the Biennale can also join Aunty Deidre Martin on a guided bushwalk through beautiful Dharawal National Park near Campbelltown, Dharug artist Chris Tobin opens his Blue Mountains Artist Camp on 23–24 May, and Aboriginal guides and storytellers will take guests on a spiritual journey at La Perouse (Guriwal) to learn about the local Indigenous community’s unbroken connection to Country.

The 22nd Biennale of Sydney (2020) exhibition NIRIN will be open – free to the public – from 14 March until 8 June 2020. Artist projects will be revealed on Instagram @biennalesydney throughout February.

The full events program for NIRIN WIR is available at [www.biennaleofsydney.art/events](http://www.biennaleofsydney.art/events) with tickets on sale from now. Facebook / Instagram / @biennalesydney #NIRIN2020

The Biennale of Sydney is supported by

![Major Government Partners](image1.png)

ENDS

**IMAGES** For high resolution images, go [HERE](https://www.biennaleofsydney.org.au/) or contact our media team.

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FULL LIST OF CREATIVES BY VENUE

NIRIN
ART GALLERY OF NEW SOUTH WALES
Maria Thereza Alves (Brazil/Germany/Italy)
Lhola Amira (South Africa)
Joël Andrianomearisoa (Madagascar/France)
Karim Bleus (Haiti)
Karla Dickens (Australia)
Préfète Duffaut (Haiti)
Andre Eugene (Haiti)
LaFortune Felix (Haiti)
Nicholas Galanin (Alaska)
Josep Grau-Garriga (Spain/France)
Arthur Jafa (USA)
Emily Karaka (New Zealand)
Bronwyn Katz (South Africa)
Barbara McGrady (Australia)
Mostaff Muchawaya (Zimbabwe)
The Mulka Project (Australia)
Elicura Chihuailaf Nahuelpán (Chile) (until 7 May)
Iltja Nijarra / Namatjira School of Art (Australia)
Musa N. Nxumalo (South Africa)
Rosana Paulino (Brazil)
Kunmanara Mumu Mike Williams (Australia)

ARTSPACE
Colectivo Ayllu (Argentina/Chile/Ecuador/Spain/Venezuela)
Fátima Rodrigo Gonzales (Peru)
Ibrahim Mahama (Ghana)
Taqralik Partridge (Norway/Canada)
Tennant Creek Brio (Australia)

CAMPBELLTOWN ARTS CENTRE
Charlotte Allingham (Australia)
Denilson Baniwa (Brazil)
Demian DinéYazhi´ & R.I.S.E. Radical Indigenous Survivance & Empowerment (USA)
First Dog on the Moon (Australia)
Ramin Haerizadeh, Rokni Haerizadeh, and Hesam Rahmanian (Iran/United Arab Emirates)
Aziz Hazara (Afghanistan)
Napoleon Jones-Henderson (USA)
Nongirrnga Marawili (Darrpirra/Yirrkala (Australia)
Misheck Masamvu (Zimbabwe)
Barbara McGrady (Australia)
John Miller and Elisapeta Heta (New Zealand)
Iltja Nijarra/Namatjira School of Art (Australia)
Musa N. Nxumalo (South Africa)
Shaheed/Witness/Kashmir (India/Kashmir)
Adrian Stimson (Canada/Siksika Nation)
Anders Sunna (Sweden/Sápmi)
Suohpanterror (Sápmi/Finland/Sweden/Norway)
Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers (Kainai First Nation (Canada)/Sápmi (Norway))
COCKATOO ISLAND
4ESydney HipHop Festival (Australia)
Adrift Lab (Canada/Australia/United Kingdom)
Tony Albert (Australia)
Lhola Amira (South Africa)
ArTree Nepal (Nepal)
Sammy Baloji (Democratic Republic of Congo/Belgium)
Sissel M. Bergh (Norway)
Anna Boghiguian (Egypt/Canada)
Mohamed Bourouissa (Algeria/France)
Eric Bridgeman & Haus Yuriyal (Papua New Guinea/Australia)
Tania Bruguera (Cuba)
Vajiko Chachkhiani (Georgia/Germany)
Jose Dávila (Mexico)
Léuli Eshraghi (Australia)
Nicholas Galanin (Alaska)
Lawrence Abu Hamdan (Jordan/Lebanon)
Lucas Ihlein & Kim Williams (Australia)
Ibrahim Mahama (Ghana)
Katarina Matiasek (Austria)
Jota Mombaça (Brazil)
Melanie Mununggurr-Williams (Australia)
Paulo Nazareth (Brazil)
S.J. Norman (Australia)
Iltja Ntjarra / Namatjira School of Art (Australia)
Manuel Ocampo (Philippines)
Laure Prouvost (Belgium/France/UK)
Lisa Reihana (New Zealand)
Shaheed/Witness/Kashmir (India/Kashmir)
Latai Taumoepeau (Australia)
Tennant Creek Brio (Australia)
Warwick Thornton (Australia)
Gina Athena Ulysse (Haiti)

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART AUSTRALIA
Tony Albert (Australia)
Joël Andrianomearisoa (Madagascar/France)
Denilson Baniwa (Brazil)
Huma Bhabha (Pakistan/USA)
Eric Bridgeman (Papua New Guinea/Australia)
Jes Fan (Canada/USA/Hong Kong)
Aziz Hazara (Afghanistan)
Tarek Lakhrissi (France)
Stone Kulimoe’anga Maka (Tonga/New Zealand)
Nongirrna Marawili (Darrirra/Yirrkala (Australia))
Misheck Masamvu (Zimbabwe)
Mayuniki (Japan)
Zanele Muholi (South Africa)
Elicura Chihuailaf Nahuelpán (Chile)
Iltja Ntjarra / Namatjira School of Art (Australia)
Erkan Özgen (Turkey)
Victoria Santa Cruz (Peru)
Ahmed Umar (Sudan/Norway)
Pedro Wonaeamirri (Melville Island/Andranangruwu, Paluwiyanga (Australia). Tribe: Milipurrulla, White Cockatoo. Dance: Jilarti, Brolga)

NATIONAL ART SCHOOL
Adrift Lab (Canada/Australia/United Kingdom)
Tony Albert (Australia)
Randy Lee Cutler (Canada)
Hannah Catherine Jones (United Kingdom)
Teresa Margolles (Mexico)
Ilji Ntjarra / Namatjira School of Art (Australia)
Andrew Rewald (Australia/Germany)

NIRIN WIR
MULTI VENUE
BE. (Australia)
Breaking Bread (South Africa)
Club Ate: Justin Shoulder and Bhenji Ra (Australia)
FAFSWAG (New Zealand)
Brian Fuata (Australia)
FUNPARK Coalition (Australia)
Lily Hibberd (Australia/France)
Sarah Houbolt (Australia)
Kylie Kwong (Australia)
MzRizk (Australia)
Parramatta Female Factory (Australia)
Reading Oceania (Australia)
STARTTS (NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors) (Australia)
Suohpanterror Sápmi (Finland/Sweden/Norway)
Unbound Collective (Australia)

POWERHOUSE MUSEUM
Dion Beasley (Australia)
Johanna Bell (Australia)
Club Ate: Justin Shoulder and Bhenji Ra (Australia)
Ramin Haerizadeh, Rokni Haerizadeh and Hesam Rahmanian (Iran/United Arab Emirates)

BLACKTOWN NATIVE INSTITUTION Dharug Nation (Australia)
Julie Bukari Webb (Australia)
Adam King (Australia)
Vanessa Possum (Australia)
Leanne Tobin (Australia)
Leanne Mulgo Watson (Australia)
Corina Wiali Norman (Australia)

NIRIN NGAAY
Charlotte Allingham (Australia)
First Dog on the Moon (Australia)
Stuart Geddes and Trent Walter (Australia)

ABOUT THE BIENNALE OF SYDNEY
The Biennale of Sydney is one of the leading international contemporary art events in the world. It plays an indispensable role in Australia’s engagement with the world, and a meaningful role in the life of the
The Biennale presents the most dynamic contemporary art from around the globe in venues across Sydney with exhibitions that ignite and surprise people, sparking dialogue, cultivating connections and inspiring action through meaningful, shared arts experiences.

The Biennale of Sydney amplifies the voices of artists and tell the stories of our global communities, as they drive momentum for lasting cultural change.

Established in 1973, it is the third oldest biennial in the world after Venice and São Paulo and the largest exhibition of its kind in Australia. The Biennale of Sydney has commissioned and presented exceptional works of art by more than 1,800 national and international artists from more than 100 countries.

The Biennale of Sydney is committed to free access for all and, in 2018, attracted visitation of over 850,000, the highest level in its 45-year history. The Biennale attracts a broad audience: local, interstate, international, culturally diverse and intergenerational. The majority of visitors have a passionate interest in the arts, and rate the exhibition highly whether they are a first-time visitor or a Biennale veteran.