



**Biennale of Sydney 2018**

**13 – 16 April**

**With**

**Sue Gardiner**

**Friday, 13 April 2018**

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Welcome to our 7<sup>th</sup> Biennale of Sydney program. Please make your way to the airport and check in for flight;

NZ 103 Departing at 9.00am – your flight includes “The Works”

On arrival in Sydney please clear customs, collect your luggage and assemble outside the exit to await our transfer into Sydney.

We will head straight to the **Art Gallery of New South Wales**, and Glen will continue on to the hotel and unload the bags for check in later in the afternoon. On arrival at the AGNSW please take a break for lunch until 1.30pm.

We are pleased to introduce the 21<sup>st</sup> **Biennale of Sydney** this afternoon, as well as other key works at the AGNSW. You will gain an insight into the theme of the Biennale, and meet Curator Nicholas Chalmers.

We will wander down to Artspace to view the **Ai Weiwei** work here before concluding our afternoon with a welcome drink at the Tilbury Hotel before taking a taxi back to the hotel for check in.

Your hotel for the next three nights is the

**Sofitel Sydney Wentworth**

61-101 Phillip Street  
Sydney  
+ 61 (0) 2 9228 9142

Breakfast is included (Coffee may be extra)

**Saturday, 14 April 2018**

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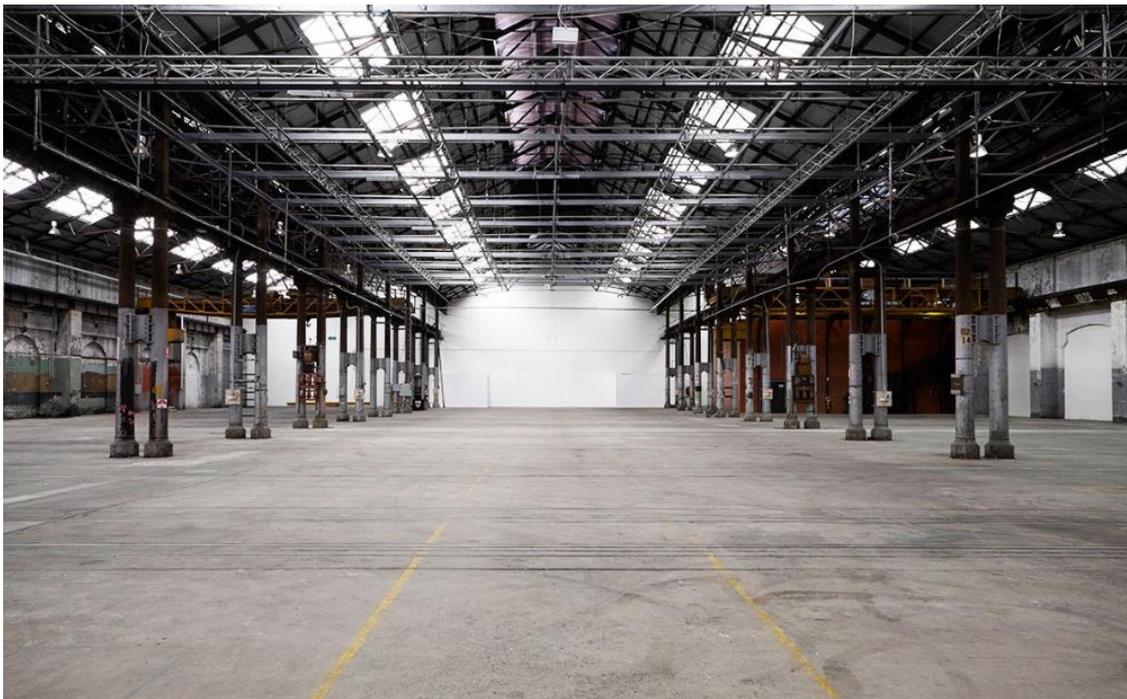
This morning please be ready to depart at 9.00am.

Today we will visit **Carriageworks**, our second Biennale venue. Here we will visit the Farmers Market prior to entering the venue. We will also find time to visit the studio of artist **Nell**.

*“Born in 1975 in Maitland, NSW, Nell has a signature style that is instantly recognisable: a fusion of religious iconography with a rock ‘n’ roll aesthetic. Recent major works and collaborations include The National: New Australian Art 2017, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (2017); WORDS + CROSSES, Ramp Gallery, Wikato Institute of Technology, New Zealand (2017); Namatjira Project Auction, Tarnanthi, Art Gallery of South Australia (2017), Adelaide; NE/LL, Shepparton Art Museum, Victoria (2016); commissioned performances and installations at MONA FOMA (2012), Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) and La Maison Rouge, Paris (2013); and The Oracle, Spring/Summer collaboration with Romance Was Born for Australian Fashion Week (2012).*

Our current plan is to visit **The Commercial** then take lunch at a café nearby. After lunch head to **Sullivan & Strumpf** before finishing at **4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art**.

We will return to the Sofitel at approximately 4.30pm.



**Sunday, 15 April 2018**

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Please be ready to depart at 9.00am this morning. Our first appointment is at the Sydney Opera House where we have tickets to the performance by Artist **Oliver Beer**.

*“Oliver Beer’s work explores sound and space through sculpture, film and performance, examining cultural and phenomenological relationships between music, the human voice and architecture. Beer translates his research into performative works in which the spectator becomes a participant by the mere fact of their presence.”*

We will then head back to the ferry and out to **Cockatoo Island**, in the middle of Sydney Harbour, for the rest of the day. On our return we will get off at Bangaroo and wander this new area and its link to Wynyard Station. From nearby Wynyard Station there is a new installation by **Tracey Emin** titled “The Distance of your Heart”. This work features 60 small scale sculptures along Grosvenor Street and Bridge Street.

We should be back at the hotel around 4-5pm this afternoon.



**Monday, 16 April 2018**

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Please be checked out, bags stored and ready to depart this morning at 9.30am.

We will spend the morning at the **Museum of Contemporary Art**, lunch together at the MCA, before returning to the hotel for our mid afternoon pick up for our return flight to Auckland.

Our transfer will be at about 2.45pm for our flight at 5.50pm this afternoon.

## READING

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### CURATORIAL STATEMENT

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

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

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

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## ENGAGEMENT

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Most artists make work about a set of ideas that become a considered investigation over time, through both research and practice. A key focus for the 21st Biennale of Sydney is the commitment made by artists to undertake research and investigate ideas, histories and contexts to inform their practice. This level of engagement can mean years, even decades, of investigation and development.

Engagement can also shape the conceptual framework or content of the work. From investigating art history, literature, psychology or philosophy (Luciano Fabro, Riet Wijnen, Eija-Liisa Ahtila), to investigating the life of a significant person (Geng Xue) or even ancient marine life (Martin Walde), artists pursue deep engagement in order to bring new knowledge to light, to redress historical narratives (Brook Andrew, Marlene Gilson, Dimitar Solakov), or raise our awareness. Many artists are concerned with commenting on contemporary world issues such as forced migration (Ai Weiwei, Tiffany Chung), the 'apartheid wall' of Palestine (Jacob Kirkegaard), nuclear power (Yukinori Yanagi), or broader themes such as nature (Sam Falls), technology (Nicole Wong) and ritual (Khaled Sabsabi).

Research can also shape the aesthetic or methodology the artist uses: from reproducing or remaking an artist's work from the past, to exploring the style and media of another artists work, or of another discipline entirely, creating cross-overs with science, technology, archaeology or museum practice.

By studying history in general and art history in particular, contemporary practitioners reframe how we think about art and society, whether through investigating and reclaiming the silences and erasures of history; reworking the modernist avant-garde; critiquing the Western canon; or in direct engagement with politics and communities.

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## ART AND GLOBALISATION

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Art now takes part in the international circulation of tourism, trade, money and culture that is described as 'globalisation'. The emergence of international late capitalism and the Western economic expansion of the 1980s was the backdrop for changing ideas about art, culture and exhibition display that are still being investigated all over the world.

During the 1980s there was a boom in the commercial art market (with big sales of contemporary work) at the same time as a significant shift in international exhibition practice: large museums began mounting blockbuster exhibitions, looking outside art-making practice for content, and moving away from the conventions of exhibitions that relied on a historical narrative or timeline display, and from survey shows of single artists.

This shift in museum practice was led by institutions such as Tate Modern, London and the Pompidou Centre, Paris, both known for developing new displays for their permanent collections devised according to thematic or conceptual investigations, not just the time and location in which the works were made. This approach is fundamental to an ongoing process of critical thinking about local and international artwork; it forms a significant part of the critical unpacking of Western narratives and frameworks for art, culture and history that have traditionally constructed and excluded other places, practices and points of view.

Alongside this shift within large cultural institutions, there was also a rapid expansion in the number of periodic exhibitions such as biennales. These exhibitions have several characteristics in common, including: engaging a different curator or curatorial team each time; a focus on recent or current work, often by living artists and often commissioned for the exhibition; an overarching set of concepts or curatorial ideas that frame large displays of diverse work; and installation across multiple sites or venues, often extending into other spaces in their host cities and regions.

Rapid developments in technology have increased the speed at which information and images circulate, expanding our access to artworks, exhibitions, platforms and cultural dialogues, even though access is still not available in the same ways for everyone in all places. The impact of this communication through digital media, and the accessibility of travel, has allowed artists and curators to collaborate more easily, shifting the focus away from art markets such as New York or London, and onto the many international exhibitions in places such as Sydney, São Paulo and Gwangju. Location has become both more and less important: distance is no longer a restriction or limitation to access and participation, and locality is a central focus for specific themes and discussions.

The Biennale of Sydney has often directly addressed the relationships between places, histories and ideas alongside the nature of display, participation and reception.