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Melbourne Art Fair 2026 Welcomes Record Crowds for Opening Day

The 19th edition of the Fair saw an over 50% increase in attendance for the Champagne Bollinger VIP Preview and Vernissage events

Melbourne, 20th February 2026 - Melbourne Art Fair has opened the doors for its 19th edition, welcoming record attendance on opening day with thousands of collectors descending on the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) for the Champagne Bollinger VIP Preview and Vernissage events.

Fair Director, Melissa Loughnan said *“The opening day of the 2026 edition of Melbourne Art Fair has underscored the energy in the Australian market right now. The calibre of presentations from our exhibitors across the Fair is exceptionally strong and it’s rewarding for us to see this being appreciated and embraced by our visitors. We’re looking forward to seeing the momentum continue to build - there’s an exciting few days ahead”.*

Alongside over 60 of Australia’s most formidable galleries and Indigenous-owned art centres, and the debut of the new collectible design salon, **FUTUREOBJEKT**, VIP guests were offered a first look at a range of exceptional works across the Fair’s ambitious program including large-scale installations and interventions, VIDEO, and COMMISSIONS.

“If the vernissage was anything to go by, this year’s Melbourne art fair will be one of the best ever. The afternoon and evening were vibrant and well attended, with a great energy throughout the opening day” said **Danielle Renshaw, Gallery Director, The Renshaws’**



The Renshaws' presented a solo booth of new work by Archibald Prize winner, Julie Fragar. All works were sold by the end of opening night along with sales of several of the gallery's other artists.

Sydney, London, and Singapore-based gallery Ames Yavuz is presenting a curated presentation of works by Australian artists Rosemary Laing and Caoline Rothwell at this year's Fair.

Dominic Kavanagh, Director, Ames Yavuz said *“we're excited to be back at Melbourne Art Fair in 2026. As one of the most important moments on our cultural calendar we will always come and connect with Melbourne artists and audiences. This edition has a distinctly different look and feel and that was made tangible with the incredible energy and atmosphere of the opening day”*.

William Nuttall, Director, Niagara Galleries said *“Opening day has been a huge success. There has been a real buzz about the fair and we've found the reception to both Arthur (Jalyirri) Dixon's work and Brenda L. Croft's (both in our booth and in Beyond) has been overwhelmingly positive.*

Congratulations to Peter Jopling and his capable team - we're really looking forward to the next few days of the fair, attending the panel discussions and floor talks and continuing to meet with passionate collectors and our gallery peers”.

20th Anniversary of Melbourne Art Fair Commission

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Melbourne Art Fair Commission, the opening day of the Fair saw the return of the 2006 Commission, **Cosmo McMurtry** by Aotearoa / New Zealand contemporary artist **Michael Parekōwhai**, the first commission by Melbourne Art Foundation and realised in partnership with the National Gallery of Victoria. Bringing this landmark work back into the Fair is both an act of reflection and renewal, a nod to where the Commission program began, and a reminder of the ambition that has always underpinned Melbourne Art Foundation's commissioning program. The return of Cosmo McMurtry also highlights the enduring strength of Melbourne Art Fair's relationship with NGV, and the shared belief in commissioning as a way of shaping cultural memory, not just marking moments.

Richard Parker Award 2026

Melbourne Art Fair is thrilled to announce **Hany Armanious** and **Fine Arts, Sydney**, as this year's recipient of the **Richard Parker Award**.

Founder of RATIONALE, an Official Partner of Melbourne Art Fair, Richard Parker brings a deep commitment to the support of contemporary art to all endeavours. This



year, he was at the Fair virtually, selecting the winner in close collaboration with Sharmini Rajarethnam, CEO of RATIONALE.

Viewing art as inseparable from the function of daily life and culture, RATIONALE believes in the intrinsic value of artmaking and the paths of connection it forms across our lives.

Hany Armanious is a sculptor whose work is predominantly concerned with the magical properties of the casting process. Many of his works deal with the alchemical transformation of one object into another via what the artist has described as the 'cult of casting'.

Debut of FUTUREOBJEKT

FUTUREOBJEKT is the new collectable design salon conceived by Melbourne Art Fair as a platform for the most compelling ideas in contemporary design, architecture, and the crafted objects. The program brings together 20 of Australia's leading designers and studios whose works challenge convention, celebrate material intelligence, and propose new ways of living with design.

Andy Kelly, Director, Collectible Design at Melbourne Art Fair said *"The opening day of Melbourne Art Fair heralded the bold start of a new design experience in Australia. It's quite humbling to have seen FUTUREOBJEKT be so enthusiastically embraced by the community."*

If I'm honest, it's actually a bit emotional. I'm just a kid who started a gallery with my boyfriend and it's a real point of pride to be part of creating FUTUREOBJEKT - a new platform that will help support and grow our industry"

Designer and FUTUREOBJEKT exhibitor Ella Saddington of Cordon Salon said: *"It's so wonderful being a part of FUTUREOBJEKT at the Melbourne art fair. There's so much on offer - phenomenal Australian and international, art, design, craft, jewellery - something for everyone. There's also a beautiful energy at the fair for the opening day. I've loved seeing so many people out supporting some great art and design"*.

Designer and FUTUREOBJEKT exhibitor Tom Fereday said *"FUTUREOBJEKT has helped to soften the traditional format of the Art Fair. The design sensibility across the board creates a sense of intimacy and cohesion, and the elegant transitions between presentations makes the overall experience feel deeply considered."*

For this exhibition, I'm debuting a cast aluminium edition of my Core Lights. Every piece I've created for the show is something I would truly want to own myself".



Envisioned as both stage and showcase, FUTUREOBJEKT is anchored by the central Mobilia Design Lounge. Titled *Living Thing* the immersive installation is a collaboration with artist **Tom Polo** and draws inspiration from romantic architecture and Italian piazzas - public squares traditionally organised around a central landmark, often a sculpture or artwork, offering visitors an intuitive way to navigate and understand their surroundings.

Salvatore Fazzari, Director of MOBILIA + Gallery 20/20 said *“We are thrilled to be participating in Melbourne Art Fair through our new gallery 20/20 project and our Mobilia Design Lounge in collaboration with Tom Polo, as part of the inaugural FUTUREOBJEKT. This prestigious platform represents a landmark moment for collectible design in Australia, bringing together the most innovative voices at the intersection of contemporary art, craft, and object-making.*

“We are deeply grateful to the Melbourne Art Fair team for this exciting opportunity to present our vision alongside such forward-thinking studios and galleries. Our project celebrates material intelligence, challenges conventional boundaries, and invites collectors and audiences to reimagine how design enriches everyday life and cultural dialogue.”

Melbourne Art Fair Partners

Visitors to the Fair yesterday were delighted by interventions from Melbourne Art Fair partners.

The Champagne Bollinger Bar: A collaboration with Brahman Perera

A collaboration with Melbourne Art Fair ambassador Brahman Perera sees the creation of the Champagne Bollinger Bar, conceived as a considered space for conversation, reflection and social encounter.

Through thoughtful materiality and handcrafted elements, Brahman’s own vision creates a dialogue between design and Champagne, a space evocative of the Maison’s enduring values of craftsmanship, human connection and generosity. Viewed through his distinctive lens of hospitality, the bar invites guests to experience Bollinger as it is intended: a Champagne to be shared among friends and savoured by a discerning audience of collectors and connoisseurs.

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit
www.melbourneartfair.com.au/tickets.

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NOTES TO EDITOR

Melbourne Art Fair 2026 Galleries

Galleries presenting at Melbourne Art Fair in 2026 include: **1301SW/STARKWHITE** (Naarm/Melbourne, Gadigal Country/Sydney, Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland), **Alcaston Gallery** (Naarm/Melbourne), **Ames Yavuz** (Gadigal Country/Sydney, Singapore), **Art Collective WA** (Boorloo/Perth), **Arts Projects Australia** (Naarm/Melbourne), **Australian Tapestry Workshop** (Naarm/Melbourne), **CAVES** (Naarm/Melbourne), **cbOne** (Naarm/Melbourne), **Charles Nodrum Gallery** (Naarm/Melbourne), **D'Lan GALLERIES** (Naarm/Melbourne, Gadigal Country/Sydney, Lenapehoking/New York), **Daine Singer** (Naarm/Melbourne), **Egg & Dart** (Dharawal Country/Wollongong), **Fine Arts, Sydney** (Gadigal Country/Sydney), **Fox Jensen & Fox Jensen McCrory** (Gadigal Country/Sydney, Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland), **Galerie Christian Lethert** (Cologne), **Gertrude** (Naarm/Melbourne), **Jan Murphy Gallery** (Meanjin/Brisbane), **Justin Miller Art** (Gadigal Country/Sydney), **MARS Gallery** (Naarm/Melbourne), **Martin Browne Contemporary** (Gadigal Country/Sydney), **Michael Reid Sydney + Berlin** (Gadigal Country/Sydney, Berlin), **MOORE CONTEMPORARY** (Boorloo/Perth), **NandaHobbs** (Gadigal Country/Sydney), **Neon Parc** (Naarm/Melbourne), **Niagara Galleries** (Naarm/Melbourne), **Nicholas Thompson Gallery** (Naarm/Melbourne), **PIERMARQ*** (Gadigal Country/Sydney), **Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery** (London), **REDBASE ART** (Naarm/Melbourne, Gadigal Country/Sydney, Yogyakarta, Indonesia), **Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery** (Gadigal Country/Sydney), **Sophie Gannon Gallery** (Naarm/Melbourne), **S_y_d_n_e_y_S_y_d_n_e_y_** (Gadigal Country/Sydney), **STATION** (Naarm/Melbourne, Gadigal Country/Sydney), **Sullivan+Strumpf** (Naarm/Melbourne, Gadigal Country/Sydney, Singapore), **Tido Art** (Naarm/Melbourne), **Tolarno Galleries** (Naarm/Melbourne), **William Mora Galleries** (Naarm/Melbourne).

Committed to creating a platform that supports the next generation of artistic practice, Melbourne Art Foundation provides subsidised spaces for young galleries established after 2018: **Animal House Fine Arts** (Naarm/Melbourne), **APY Art Centre Collective** (Naarm/Melbourne, Gadigal Country /Sydney, Tarntanya/Adelaide), **AVA (Boorloo/Perth)**, **Cassandra Bird** (Gadigal Country/Sydney, Paris), **day01.**(Gadigal Country/Sydney), **Emilia Galatis Projects** (Whadjuk boodjar/Perth), **Five Walls** (Naarm/Melbourne), **Foënaner Galleries** (Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland), **Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert** (Gadigal Country/Sydney), **Grace** (Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland), **Haydens** (Naarm/Melbourne), **LAILA** (Gadigal Country/Sydney), **LON Gallery** (Naarm/Melbourne), **MAGMA Galleries** (Naarm/Melbourne), **Mary Cherry Contemporary** (Naarm/Melbourne), **N.Smith Gallery** (Gadigal Country/Sydney), **Nasha Gallery** (Gadigal Country/Sydney), **PALAS** (Gadigal Country/Sydney), **Sumer** (Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland), **The Little Machine** (Tarntanya/Adelaide), **The Renshaws'** (Meanjin/Brisbane), **Void_Melbourne** (Naarm/Melbourne).



Supported through the William Mora Indigenous Art Centre program the 2026 Fair will host six Indigenous arts centres: **MOA Arts** (Mua, Mualgal Country/Moa Island), **Munupi Arts & Crafts Association** (Pirlangimpi Community, Melville Island), **Papunya Tjupi Arts** (Papunya), **Jilamara Arts** (Milikapiti Community, Melville Island), **Ikuntji Artists** (Haasts Bluff, Ikuntji), and **Walkatjara Art** (Mutitjulu community, Uluru). The Program is funded by the Australian Government through the **Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support (IVAIS)** program and generously supported by **Morgans Financial Limited**.

FUTUREOBJEKT Exhibitors

Adam Cornish (Naarm/Melbourne), **Alta Forma** (Naarm/Melbourne), **Agency Projects** (Naarm/Melbourne), **Agglomerati** (London), **Adam Goodrum** (Gadigal Country/Sydney), **Beci Orpin & Dustin Fritsche** (Naarm/Melbourne), **CHRISTOPHER BOOTS** (Naarm/Melbourne), **Cordon Salon**, **Rosanna Ceravolo**, **Jordan Flemming & Marta Figueiredo** (Naarm/Melbourne), **CRAFT Victoria** (Naarm/Melbourne), **Dalton Stewart & Annie Paxton** (Naarm/Melbourne), **Don Cameron** (Gadigal Country/Sydney), **Mobilia as TWENTY TWENTY** (Naarm/Melbourne, Gadigal Country/Sydney, Boorloo/Perth), **OIGÀLL PROJECTS** (Naarm/Melbourne), **OKO OLO & Charlie White** (Gadigal Country/Sydney, Naarm/Melbourne), **Sozou Studio** (Naarm/Melbourne), **Studio GARDNER** (Gadigal Country/Sydney), **TOMFEREDAY** (Gadigal Country/Sydney), **Volker Haug Studio** (Naarm/Melbourne), **Zachary Frankel** (Naarm/Melbourne).

Melbourne Art Fair is owned and produced by the **Melbourne Art Foundation**, a systemically significant non-profit Australian arts organisation that leads the way in building audiences and markets for the work of Australia's living artists. Melbourne Art Fair has been assisted by the Australian Government through Creative Australia, its principal arts investment and advisory body, and Creative Victoria.

Melbourne Art Fair 2026 - Schedule of Events

Press Preview

Thursday, 19 February

11am-12pm

VIP Preview Day

Thursday, 19 February

Champagne Bollinger Preview: 12pm-5pm

Vernissage: 5pm-9pm

Public Days

Friday, 20 February: 12pm-8pm

Saturday, 21 February: 10am-6pm



Sunday, 22 February: 10am-5pm

ABOUT MELBOURNE ART FAIR

For four days each February, Melbourne Art Fair transforms the city into a meeting place for the curious and the devoted. Leading galleries and Indigenous-owned art centres converge with collectors, artists, and those simply drawn to the hum of new ideas. The air is thick with conversation, drinks are poured, stories are traded, and somewhere in the crowd, someone falls in love with an idea that will follow them home.

For more than thirty-eight years, Melbourne Art Fair has been a defining fixture on the Australasian cultural calendar, supporting and promoting living artists through the staging of a world-class contemporary art fair. It is a place to wander, to pause, to talk and to see the world, briefly, through someone else's eyes. Presenting works from the region's most respected artists and galleries, and their newest, most exciting counterparts, the Fair stimulates critical and commercial attention, ensuring that the conversations that begin here continue to resonate long after the lights go out.

This is art.

This is Melbourne.

www.melbourneartfair.com.au

ABOUT MELBOURNE ART FOUNDATION

Melbourne Art Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation established in 2003 to promote and support contemporary art and living artists. Committed to bringing artists, galleries, collectors, and the art loving public together, the Foundation leads the way in building audiences and a market for Australia's living artists. It weaves together commercial, social, cultural, and environmental threads to support the rich cultural tapestry of the Australian visual arts community. The Foundation sponsors a range of programs anchoring Melbourne Art Fair as a cultural benchmark including commissions, special projects, exhibitions, conversations, and performances.

www.melbourneartfoundation.com

Further information on Melbourne Art Fair 2026 can be found in past press announcements:

[New Wave Galleries Make Their Melbourne Art Fair Debut in 2026](#)

[Melbourne Art Fair Announces FUTUREOBJEKT Exhibitors and Inaugural Design](#)

[Commission in Partnership with National Gallery of Victoria](#)

[Melbourne Art Fair unveils exhibition highlights and CONVERSATIONS program for february 2026](#)

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