

MELBOURNE  
*ketherba* ART FAIR *together*  
22—25 FEB '24

PRESS RELEASE  
23 JANUARY 2024

**Melbourne Art Fair unveils its most ambitious artistic program yet, with live performance, talks, immersive environments, and large-scale installations**

**Melbourne Art Fair**, Australasia's progressive forum for contemporary art and ideas today unveils the full artistic program for its mammoth 17th edition, set to take over the Denton Corker Marshall designed **Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC)** from **22 – 25 February**.

Following its move to an annual summer model, the 2024 program promises to be the most ambitious in the Fair's rich 35-year history, with over 100 artists showcasing a dynamic array of interdisciplinary practices, performances, moving-image art, conversations, immersive installations, and works of scale and significance presented by over 60 leading galleries and Indigenous art centres across 7,500sqm at the MCEC.

Spanning more than **50 events**, and including **6 performances, 4 large-scale installations** and **2 major new commissions**, this year's curated program, themed "ketherba/together," reflects a commitment to showcasing significant work from both emerging and iconic artists.

Sectors have been programmed by an outstanding group of female curators, including **Tamsin Hong, Shelley McSpedden**, and **Anador Walsh**, complemented by research-driven projects from **Gertrude** (Naarm/Melbourne) and **Firstdraft** (Gadigal Country/Sydney), and new commissions including a re-envisioned work from award-winning contemporary dance company, **Lucy Guerin Inc.**, which will mark the first time a work of contemporary dance has been included in the Fair's commissioning program.

This thrilling new adaptation of the site-responsive **NEWRETRO** to a one-hour performance installation from Lucy Guerin Inc. explores the physicality of dance and its relationship to architecture. Performances occur during the Fair's Piper-Heidsieck Preview on Thursday 22 February and as a free public event at Alpha60's Chapter House on Friday 23 February, as part of the **LATE NIGHTS** program presented by **Broadsheet**. Additional highlights in LATE NIGHTS includes the **Lux Australis Ensemble** performance by Elena Kats-Chernin AO on Wednesday 21 February, the Vernissage after party at the Kelvin Club on Thursday 22 February, and the return of an evening of artist talks, open studios, food and music at **Collingwood Yards** on Saturday 24 February.

Melbourne Art Fair's major new commission from trailblazing contemporary feminist artist **Julie Rrap**, represented by **Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery** (Gadigal Country/Sydney) will also be unveiled at this year's Fair. **SOMOS (Standing On My Own Shoulders)**, is a bronze life-size sculptural work in which casts of the artist's body are caught in a moment of action as one figure appears to support the other on its shoulders. Realised in partnership with the **Art Gallery of Western Australia** where the work will make its permanent home following Melbourne Art Fair 2024.

MELBOURNE  
*ketherba* ART FAIR *αλληλεγγύη*  
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## VIDEO

**Presented by VICE**, the VIDEO program offers a dynamic presentation of thought-provoking and highly collectible contemporary works in moving-image art. Curated by **Tamsin Hong, Exhibitions Curator at Serpentine** (London, UK), the sector features emerging and established artists from around the world.

International newcomer to Melbourne Art Fair, **Galeria Madragoa** (Lisbon, Portugal) will present work by South-African multimedia artist, **Buhlebezwe Siwani**, joined by local first-time presenters **Vermilion Art** (Gadigal Country/Sydney) with work by Chinese artist **Geng Xue**.

**N.Smith Gallery** (Gadigal Country/Sydney) returns to the Fair with a video work by **Joan Ross**, alongside **Blackartprojects** (Naarm/Melbourne) presenting work by **Amala Groom** and **Jacob Hoerner Galleries** (Naarm/Melbourne) presenting work by **Rebecca Agnew**.

## BEYOND

Curated by **Shelley McSpedden, Senior Curator at ACCA** (Naarm/Melbourne), BEYOND harnesses monumental spaces within the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre to present four large-scale installations and spatial interventions.

Presentations include **Sullivan+Strumpf** (Naarm/Melbourne, Gadigal Country/Sydney, Singapore) with **Sanné Mestrom's** sculpture challenging female representation, **The Renshaws'** (Meanjin/Brisbane) featuring **Dane Mitchell's** experimental audio-visual installation in collaboration with Japanese musician and singer-songwriter composer **Keiji Haino**, **Void\_Melbourne** (Naarm/Melbourne) showcasing an assembly of large, honey-comb paper structures by **Louise Paramor**, and **The Commercial** (Gadigal Country/Sydney) presenting celebrated poet and artist **Jazz Money's** reflective work acknowledging Indigenous history.

## LIVE

Subtitled *Performing Care*, LIVE is an onsite performance program presenting a series of new commissions by an emergent generation of Naarm-based performance artists. This program curated by **Anador Walsh, Director of Performance Review**, ponders how performance can best be cared for and represented in an art fair context. **Presented by Glenfiddich**, LIVE proudly celebrates the practices of boundary-pushing artists and will feature performances by **Diego Ramírez, Georgia Banks** and **Arini Byng**.

## PROJECT ROOMS

**Presented by Alpha60**, PROJECT ROOMS provides a non-commercial platform for artistic experimentation through research-driven presentations. **Gertrude** (Naarm/Melbourne) returns with

MELBOURNE  
*ketherba* ART FAIR *αλληλεγγύη*  
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"Proximity", connecting the production environment to the Fair, featuring works by **Elyas Alavi, Arini Byng, Francis Carmody, Ruth Höflich, Georgia Morgan, and Lisa Waup**. **Firstdraft** (Gadigal Country/Sydney) debuts with "Soft Cell", navigating nebulous borders with works by **Shannon Toth, Dustin Voggenreiter, Amy Prcevich, Danica Knežević, and Easton Dunne**.

## CONVERSATIONS

A platform for critical discourse and the sharing of ideas, CONVERSATIONS brings together cultural communities and thinkers from across the creative spectrum. The program aims to address the future of art and its relationship to interdisciplinary practices and the contemporary world through a series of talks and panels featuring artists, gallerists, curators, collectors, critics and cultural luminaries.

In "Reframing the Museum: Rethinking Collections Through a Non-Western Lens", **Kimberley Moulton**, an esteemed Yorta Yorta writer and curator and **Adjunct Curator, TATE**, leads a thought-provoking discussion challenging traditional narratives within museum collections in a panel presented in partnership with the **Victorian First Peoples Art and Design Fair**. Joined by international curators **Erin Vink, Curator, First Nations art (local and global), AGNSW** and **Tamsin Hong Curator Exhibitions at Serpentine**, the conversation aims to reshape cultural heritage understanding by emphasising diverse voices and histories often overlooked.

The **Premier Artist Talks** include a captivating dialogue between contemporary feminist artist **Julie Rrap** and **Victoria Lynn, the Director of TarraWarra Museum of Art**. Additionally, multimedia artist **Buhlebezwe Siwani** engages in a compelling dialogue with **Tamsin Hong, Curator Exhibitions at Serpentine and Curator for Melbourne Art Fair's VIDEO sector**. The conversation provides a deeper understanding of Siwani's artistic journey and the themes embedded in her work featured in this year's VIDEO program courtesy **Galeria Madragoa**.

**Alison Kubler, Editor of VAULT Magazine** is joined by the inimitable **Akira Isogawa** and multidisciplinary artist and Powerhouse Museum creative resident **Jordan Gogos** as they discuss the ever-evolving intersection of art and fashion. While ABC Journalist **Patricia Karvelas** is joined by internationally acclaimed art journalist and author, **Jennifer Higgie**, to discuss Jennifer's personal experience and research in her authorship of "The Other Side", a publication that has challenged traditional art historical narratives to shed light on mysticism, feminism and the supernatural in art history.

"Connecting Regions: Platforms for Independence, Freedom, and Activism" sees moderator **Alexie Glass-Kantor**, Director of Artspace and curator for Australia's 41st representation at the 59th Venice Biennale, joined by **Megan Tamati-Quennell, Curator of modern and contemporary Māori and Indigenous art, Te Papa, New Zealand, Co-Curator Sharjah Biennial 16, Cosmin Costinas, Artistic Director, 24th Biennale of Sydney** and **Elias Redstone, Artistic Director and CEO Photo Festival, Australian Editor Wallpaper**. The discussion explores the significance of platforms supporting artistic independence, freedom, and activism.

MELBOURNE  
*ketherba* ART FAIR *αλληλεγγυη*  
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Exploring the evolving role of patronage in the 21st century, "**Building Cultural Cities: The Practice of Patronage**" features insights from **Charlotte Day, Director, Art Museums, The University of Melbourne, Carol Yinghua Lu, Director and Curator, Inside-Out Art Museum Beijing, Dr. Terry Wu, Arts Advocate and Plastic Surgeon, and Matthais Arndt, Founder of Arndt Art Agency and Owner of The ARNDT Collection.** The conversation will delve into how patronage shapes cultural landscapes and influences contemporary artistic practices.

"**The Design Edit: From the Studio to the Gallery**", moderated by **Simone LeAmon, NGV's Hugh Williamson Curator of Contemporary Design and Architecture,** will explore the journey of creative concepts from the studio to the gallery. **Oigáll Projects** director **Andy Kelly, Pascale Gomes-McNabb, Sally Dan-Cuthbert,** and designer **Anna Varendorff** contribute to a discussion on the intersection of design and contemporary art.

LIVE curator **Anador Walsh** is joined by Curator and Writer **Amelia Wallin** and artists **Brooke Stamp and Lucrecia Quintanilla** in the panel "**Performing Care: Performance in the Art Fair Context**", to discuss what it means to appropriately care for performance practice in the gallery.

These conversations offer attendees a unique and engaging experience, providing profound insights into the minds of artists, curators, and cultural leaders while encouraging reflection on the broader impact of art on society.

## PARTNER ACTIVATIONS

Alongside the curatorial program, an array of partner activations champion artistic practice through bold new commissions and immersive environments. **Alpha60**, the presenting partner of PROJECT ROOMS and an Official Fair Partner, commissions artists **Mikala Dwyer, Kate Rohde, and Lottie Consalvo** to craft unique bags, bridging fashion and art.

**Paola Balla's *Murrup (Ghost) Weaving in Rosie Kuka Lar (Grandmother's Camp)*** provides a preview of the **Victorian First Peoples Art and Design Fair**, aligning with the state's **Creative State 2025** initiative.

**Glenfiddich's** whisky pop-up bar returns to Melbourne Art Fair for a second year, bigger and better for 2024. Designed in collaboration with artist, fashion designer and Fair Ambassador **Jordan Gogos**, the bar will sling cocktails created by award-winning Melbourne bar Caretaker's Cottage and feature a line-up of DJ's spinning vinyl each night.

**Piazza Bistro by Flack Studio**, featuring **Piper-Heidsieck Champagne**, transforms into a whimsically opulent French Riviera bistro designed by Fair ambassador **David Flack.** **Arts Project Australia** presents a curated 'shop' alongside their booth featuring recent works from the APA studio, including painting, drawing, printmaking, ceramics and textiles. **Oigáll Projects'** ambitious design for this year's **VIP Lounge** offers an intimate luxury space to showcase contemporary art and design.

MELBOURNE  
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These activations, from fashion-art crossovers to whisky-infused atmospheres and immersive lounges, collectively enrich Melbourne Art Fair, celebrating the convergence of contemporary art, design, and culture.

The 2024 program titled *ketherba/together* complements a compelling roster of leading galleries and Indigenous art centres, with a focus on solo shows and works of scale and significance from some of Australia's most celebrated artists. Highlights include **Kalli Rolfe Contemporary Art's** (Naarm/Melbourne) blockbuster exhibition of rare works from **Howard Arkley** spanning the 1970s to 1990s, featuring a major installation and Arkley's final painting, a work previously never shown to the public.

Artist **Wanapati Yunupiju** takes over 100 sqm with **Tolarno Galleries** (Naarm/Melbourne) after a sell-out exhibition at the Fair in 2022. Sydney's **COMA** gallery exhibits a new body of photographic work by Australian artist of Burmese descent, **Shan Turner-Carroll**.

Explore the full program and gallery list at [melbournartfair.com.au](https://melbournartfair.com.au)

-- ENDS --

**Media resources and high resolution images are available [here](#).**

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## NOTES TO EDITOR

### About Melbourne Art Fair

Founded by Australia's leading galleries in 1988, Melbourne Art Fair is today owned and operated by the Melbourne Art Foundation, a non-profit arts organisation dedicated to the support of living artists. Since the foundation's establishment in 2003, the Melbourne Art Fair has distributed \$1M in artist and curator fees. With the endorsement of the Art Galleries Association of Australia (AGAA) the Fair continues to be a seminal fixture on the Australasian cultural calendar, stimulating critical and commercial attention for artists for over 35 years. Melbourne Art Fair has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy and the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria.

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Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre

2A Clarendon St, South Wharf VIC 3006

[www.melbournartfair.com.au](https://www.melbournartfair.com.au)

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**Melbourne Art Fair 2024 Participating Galleries**

[melbournartfair.com.au/2024-galleries/](http://melbournartfair.com.au/2024-galleries/)

**Melbourne Art Fair 2024 Event Details**

Thursday 22 February

Piper-Heidsieck Preview 12:00pm-5:00pm  
Vernissage 5:00pm-9:00pm

Friday 23 February

General admission 12:00pm-7:00pm

Saturday 24 February

General admission 10:00am-6:00pm

Sunday 25 February

General admission 10:00am-5:00pm

**About Thematic: *ketherba/together***

A word of the Boon Wurrung, *ketherba* to us expresses a togetherness imbued with promise, one that not only transcends but embraces difference and gives cause for hope.

In a world changed, Melbourne Art Fair remains steadfast in our faith in the capacity for art to stimulate meaningful ideas, ones that hold relevancy across a cultural expanse of immense depth and breadth. In coming together around this belief, artists, collectors, curators and patrons alike affirm our conviction, as one community, that art continues to stir and unite us, propelling us ever forward.

**About the 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.

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