

MELBOURNE ART FAIR 20—23 FEB '25

Press Release
Under Embargo until 16 July

Melbourne Art Fair Appoints Melissa Loughnan as Fair Director for the Annual Summer Show

Building on the soaring success of the 2024 Fair and its move to a new annual summer model, the Melbourne Art Foundation has today announced the appointment of prominent artworld figure Melissa Loughnan as Fair Director for Melbourne Art Fair 2025 and beyond.

Australasia's premier fair and progressive forum for contemporary art and ideas, Melbourne Art Fair presents over 60 of the region's most significant galleries and Indigenous art centres each February at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre. Under the leadership of CEO Maree Di Pasquale and the Melbourne Art Foundation board, the Fair has seen unprecedented growth in recent years, which has driven Loughnan's appointment.

Renowned as a visionary of the Melbourne arts industry and around Australia for the best part of two decades, Loughnan brings with her a wealth of credentials and experience to the Fair Director role. In 2007 she founded the legendary not-for-profit Collingwood gallery Utopian Slumps before transitioning to a commercial model in the CBD in 2010. Loughnan has provided public and private art advisory and freelance curatorial work since 2015, including the development of large-scale public art installations and major art projects for various government, corporate and private clients.

Melbourne Art Foundation Chair Peter Jopling AM KC commented on the appointment: "Melissa's extensive knowledge of the Australian and international art scene will make her vital, driving further growth for the revitalised Melbourne Art Fair now staged annually in February. She brings a wealth of experience to the role which will see her leading the direction and development of the Melbourne Art Foundation's flagship cultural event."

Melbourne Art Foundation CEO Maree Di Pasquale says: "This appointment demonstrates our commitment to delivering the highest standard of commercial art fair that the region has known. Melissa's curatorial expertise and extensive relationships within the Australian and international collecting community will be instrumental in further delivering on Melbourne Art Fair's ambitious plans as the dominant Australasian art fair."

Melbourne Art Fair Director Melissa Loughnan says: "I am honoured to be taking up the role of Fair Director for the prestigious Melbourne Art Fair. It is an event of great cultural legacy, and I look forward to leading its direction in this new and ambitious chapter, with the support of the Melbourne Art Foundation board and our vibrant arts community."

Melissa Loughnan will be Fair Director of the now annual Melbourne Art Fair, returning 20 – 23 February 2025 at the Denton Corker Marshall designed Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Tickets on sale and exhibiting galleries announced 1 October 2024. More information available via melbourneartfair.com.au.

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NOTES TO EDITOR

About Melissa Loughnan, Fair Director, Melbourne Art Fair

Melissa Loughnan founded Utopian Slumps in 2007, shifting it from a non-profit to a commercial model in 2010 and operating until the end of 2014. During this time Utopian Slumps participated in numerous local and international art fairs, including Melbourne Art Fair, Sydney Contemporary, Auckland (Aotearoa) Art Fair, Art Stage Singapore, Art Forum Berlin, Art Fair Tokyo and Art Basel Hong Kong. Melissa shifted the business to a consulting agency in 2015, with a focus on public art advisory projects.

Melissa self-published Utopian Slumps: The Collingwood Years in 2011 and authored Australiana to Zeitgeist: An A to Z of New Australian Contemporary Art, Thames and Hudson, 2017. She has presented at various curatorial symposia and participated in panel discussions across Australia and internationally. She recently served a six year term on the Board of West Space.

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 36 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.

Melbourne Art Fair will return in 2025 for its 18th edition from 20 – 23 February 2025 at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.