

Showcase exhibition to delight

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The Victorian First Peoples Art and Design Fair (VFPADF) showcase is set to make history with its debut at the Melbourne Art Fair in Naarm next month.

Billed as one of the largest ever collections of contemporary works by Indigenous creatives from the State, the showcase exhibition features 21 independent artists with an additional 17 represented via art centres.

“Working with mediums across the whole breadth of contemporary art and cultural practice — from weaving to carving, photography, video, animation, sculpture, installation, textiles, prints, and weaving — is in particular, a really incredible feature in the showcase,” co-curator and Palawa woman Jessica Clark told Style Up.

Dr Clark said for her, and co-curator and Meriam Mir Torres Strait woman Janina Harding, artists ancestral connection to Country in Victoria, and the breadth of cultural practice and mediums had been a “guiding force” in shaping the showcase as a reflection of the work being done in Victoria.

On the announcement of

their debut for 2025 last year, which begins a bi-annual presence at the Art Fair going forward, Ms Harding told Style Up the span of talent and style in-waiting across all pockets of the State was “the beauty of this brief”.

And 12 months on, it has proved to be a “breadth of diversity of what artists are actually into and making” on show, with promise for the showcase to grow into a larger, full-scale official inaugural presentation for 2027.

“This exhibition will expand to more than double its size. But also, the intention is that multi-art forms are involved — so there’s engagement with fashion, engagement with dance and multiple sectors within arts and culture ecology, as well as a market-type format,” Dr Clark said.

Ms Harding, among First Nations artists on display, will also feature in the Art Fairs “Conversations” program.

Melbourne Art Fair will unveil its full 2025 program, set for Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre from February 20-23, which is said to feature First Nations artists at an “unprecedented scale”.

Artists, community, Treaty

Assembly and Creative Victoria’s First Peoples Directions Circle representatives will also host discussions in “Treaty, Art and Culture”, and No Dots Down Here.

Boon Wurrung and Barkindji artist Mitch Mahoney has been awarded the VFPADF

Commission, to premier in the Art Fair’s Commission program.

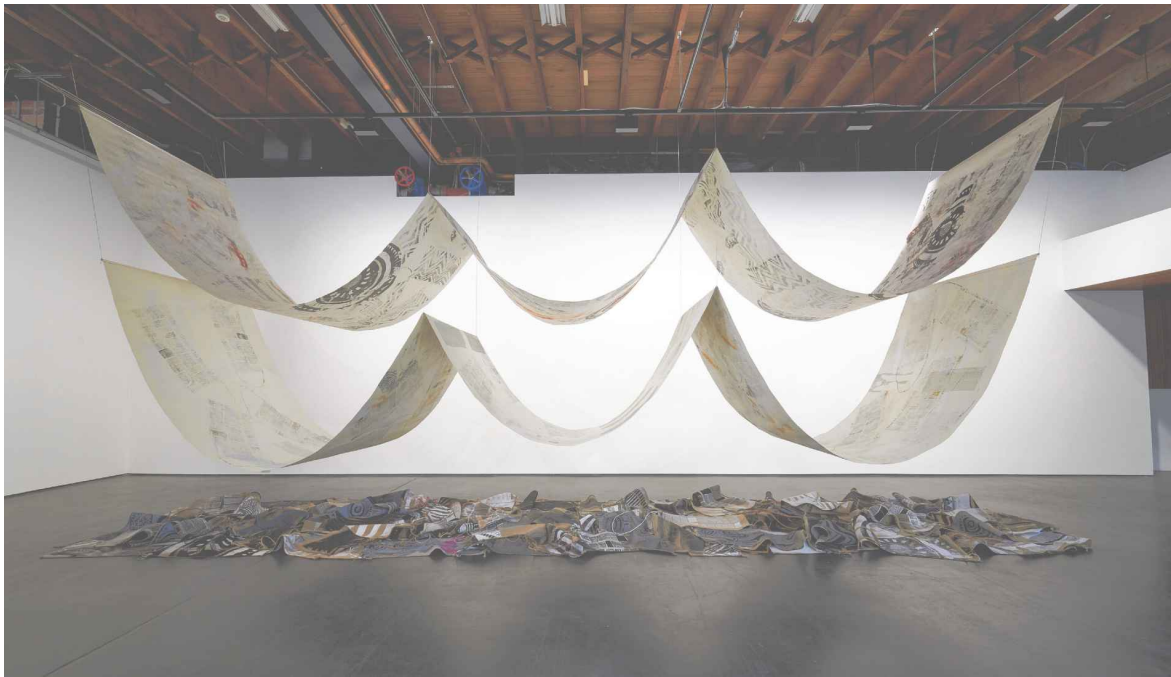
The installation work explores connection to Country, ecological balance, and human responsibility centred around the Goodoo the Murray Cod, Mullet and Longtail Tuna.

MOA Arts, Munupi Arts & Crafts Association, Papunya Tjupi Arts and Wik & Kugu Arts Centre each return after 2024 with the Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support (IVAIS) supported William Mora Indigenous Art Centre Program.

VFPADF is an initiative of Creative Victoria’s First Peoples Directions Circle.



Boon Wurrung and Barkindji artist’s Mitch Mahoney piece.



VFPADF inclusion, Lisa Waup's Mother Country, 2023. Picture: Christian Capurro