

Sydney, 10 October 2016

# The National: New Australian Art 2017 2019 2021

## Sydney's Premier Cultural Institutions Announce First Artists for *The National: New Australian Art 2017*



**Sydney, Australia: The first artists presenting work in the inaugural edition of *The National: New Australian Art*, opening on 30 March 2017 at the Art Gallery of New South Wales (AGNSW), Carriageworks and the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia (MCA), were revealed today.**

A major exhibition partnership between three of Sydney's premier cultural institutions, *The National: New Australian Art* is a six-year initiative presenting the latest ideas and forms in contemporary Australian art over three editions in 2017, 2019 and 2021.

The initial nine artists announced today are from six Australian states and territories:

- Art Gallery of NSW: Taloi Havini (Melbourne, Victoria; Sydney, New South Wales; Buka and Bougainville), Tiger Yaltangki (Indulkana, South Australia) and Alex Martinis Roe (Berlin, Germany)
- Carriageworks: Archie Moore (Brisbane, Queensland), Justene Williams (Western Sydney, New South Wales), Richard Lewer (Melbourne, Victoria)
- Museum of Contemporary Art Australia: Erin Coates (Perth, Western Australia), Karen Mills (Darwin, Northern Territory), Ronnie van Hout (Melbourne, Victoria)

These artists highlight the curatorial vision for the exhibition, representing a mix of emerging, mid-career and established artists drawn from around the country and practicing overseas. New and recently commissioned works encompass a diverse range of mediums including painting, video, sculpture, installation, drawing and performance.

Curators for the 2017 edition of *The National: New Australian Art* are Anneke Jaspers, Curator Contemporary Art and Wayne Tunnicliffe, Head Curator Australian Art, Art Gallery of NSW; Lisa Havilah, Director and Nina Miall, Curator, Carriageworks; and Blair French, Director, Curatorial & Digital, MCA.

Connecting three of Sydney's key cultural precincts - The Domain, Redfern and Circular Quay - *The National: New Australian Art* will be the only large-scale recurring exhibition in the city focused solely on contemporary Australian art.

The full artist list will be announced on 1 December 2016.

Images: Tiger Yaltangki, *Doctor Who*, 2016, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 112 x 167 cm © the artist, courtesy and Iwantja Arts; Archie Moore, *Inchalachee Nation*, 2014, sewn linen flag. Courtesy the artist and The Commercial, Sydney; Ronnie van Hout, *To Love and be Loved in Return*, installation view, Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney, 7 June - 12 July 2014. Image courtesy the artist, Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney and Station Gallery, Melbourne. Photo Simon Hewson.

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## The National: New Australian Art 2017

### Exhibition Dates

Art Gallery of New South Wales 30 March – 30 July 2017

Carriageworks 30 March – 18 June 2017

Museum of Contemporary Art Australia 30 March – 18 June 2017

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## ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

### Presented at the Art Gallery of New South Wales

#### Taloi Havini

Taloi Havini was born in Arawa, Bougainville in 1981 and descends from the Nakas clan of the Hakö (Haku) people of north-eastern Buka in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, PNG. She immigrated to Australia with her family in 1990 and currently lives and works between Melbourne, Sydney, Bougainville and Buka. Havini graduated in 2004 with a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) from Australian National University in Canberra where she majored in ceramics, photomedia and art and politics. She utilises a wide variety of media to explore issues about keeping inherited knowledge systems and cultural distinctiveness alive across time and place.

Taloi Havini's video installation *Habitat* is filmed in her homeland of Bougainville. It begins in Konawiru and moves through the labyrinthine Jaba River delta, a region belonging to local Nagovis people, before ascending to the Moroni Valley and the Crown Prince Range, areas customarily associated with the local Moroni people. This land was compulsorily acquired in 1969 by the PNG Government, who formed a joint venture with Australian mining company Conzinc Rio Tinto to develop the Panguna copper mine. Operating until 1989, the mine was forced to close when a local resistance movement sabotaged its operations. Proceeding through lush and seemingly pristine locales, Havini takes us on a journey on which the ecological impact of mining becomes increasingly apparent and the negative effects this has had on the lives of people who live within this landscape and depend upon it.

#### Tiger Yaltangki

Tiger Yaltangki was born in 1973 and grew up in Indulkana in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands of South Australia. He has painted through the local art centre Iwantja Arts for many years. Whimsy and fantasy inform his practice as he combines elements from Anangu culture with science fiction and his love of music, which spans from ACDC to Hank Williams. Yaltangki's works offer a unique image of contemporary life in his community and explore the divergent influences that have shaped his world view. His distinctive approach to painting has attracted considerable attention in recent years, with works being included in a number of significant exhibitions in Australia and in exhibitions of APY art internationally.

Tiger Yaltangki's innovative painting practice is influenced by Anangu law, country and the artist's love for science fiction television. Growing up and working in the small community of Indulkana in the Southern Desert region, his works are as likely to include mamu spirits from his Pitjantjatjara culture as they are images inspired by popular culture. In paintings such as *Doctor Who 2016*, which will feature in *The National 2017*, Yaltangki populates his canvas with a cast of ambiguous figures layered with an array of linear shapes and graphic forms. Imbued with a sense of curiosity and humor, Yaltangki's cast of characters exists in a dreamlike state where diverse influences mingle and coalesce, evoking Anangu culture and place as well as the wonders of time travel and parallel universes that feature in the titular television series.

#### Alex Martinis Roe

Alex Martinis Roe was born in Melbourne in 1982 and has lived and worked in Berlin since 2009. Her current projects focus on feminist histories and fostering relations between different generations as a way of imagining and realising feminist futures. Martinis Roe's work for *The National* is part of *To Become Two*, a series of six video and performance works that explores the historical emergence of a series of inter-connected feminist political practices in Europe and Australia, and considers their currency in the present moment. Additionally, Alex is collaborating with theorist Melanie Sehgal and a research group called *FORMATIONS*, which began within the frame-work of the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin.

Alex Martinis Roe's new work draws on intensive research to build a narrative about the remarkable engagement with French feminist and post-structuralist philosophy in Sydney in the 1970s and 1980s. A multi-channel video connects the Sydney Filmmakers Co-operative, the Feminist Film Workers, the General Philosophy department at the University of Sydney, and related self-publishing groups which were active in these developments. This will be presented alongside archival material within an installation that explores the modest domestic spaces in which transformative debates and thinking often occurred locally. During the exhibition a series of workshops and events will take place in the gallery which revisit the history of feminist theory in Sydney, offering fresh perspectives on its origins and legacies.

## Presented at Carriageworks

### Archie Moore

Archie Moore takes a map published by anthropologist RH Matthews in 1900 in which he identified 28 Aboriginal 'nations' as the departure point for an ambitious new installation for *The National*. Devising colourful flags for each of Matthews' 'imagined nations', Moore creates a work which explores the contradictory and flawed nature of the anthropologist's endeavour, while simultaneously raising questions about his own fragmented identity.

Archie Moore was born in Toowoomba in 1970 and lives and works in Brisbane. His conceptual practice is embedded in Aboriginal politics and the wider concerns of racism, language, identity, interpersonal understandings and dwellings. He works across a range of media, including painting, drawing, sculpture, installation, photography, video, sound, and aroma. Through his practice, he seeks to connect his own experience of engaging in his self-described uncertain Aboriginal ancestry, whether he is of Kamilaroi heritage or another group – connotations, misrepresentations, gaps in knowledge and personal identity. Being in one's skin and the question of whether or not it is possible to experience someone else's experiences is an ongoing theme in his practice.

### Justene Williams

For *The National*, Justene Williams will create a new sculptural installation which pairs 2-3 large canvas fabric paintings with 3-4 steel tree-like sculptures and an upright piano customised to act as an assisted readymade. Taking its inspiration from sketches of volumetric costumes by Italian Futurist Fortunato Depero, an accompanying performance involving musicians, dancers, singers, percussionists, a pianist and a gymnast will animate the installation over the course of *The National's* opening weekend, creating a cacophony of movement, colour, sound and spectacle.

Born in Sydney in 1970 and currently living and working in Sydney, Justine Williams' amalgamation of video, photography, sculpture and performance calls upon Dada techniques of collage and the absurd, utilising historical and popular culture references in order to reexamine forgotten imagery. Using found and recycled materials, Williams creates elaborate costumes and environments in which she executes delirious, shamanistic actions that channel the visual excesses of the early twentieth century avant-garde, as well as alluding to more cryptic personal narratives. Documented performances are collaged and screened within complex, high-energy environments that are experienced as immersive cacophonies of performance, sculpture, video and sound. Williams' practice draws upon her experiences growing up in Western Sydney, dance classes, Eisteddfod performances and visual merchandising. Her father's wrecking yard inspired an admiration for the abandoned object and a desire to reanimate the inanimate.

### Richard Lewer

For *The National*, Richard Lewer will make a new video animation that continues his examination into extreme behavior and human resilience, and is inspired by his research into the death in custody of sixteen-year old Aboriginal boy, John Pat, at Roebourne Police Station in 1983. Furthering his experimental drawing practice, Lewer's animation will be accompanied by a performance during which the artist will explore the troubling situation of Aboriginal deaths in custody with the audience.

Richard Lewer was born in Hamilton, New Zealand in 1970 and lives and works in Melbourne. He is known for his video and animation, paintings, and delicately beautiful drawings, which evocatively rework some of life's less pleasant elements – crime scenes, illness, horror movies and extreme events. The work is accessible and familiar, with a critical edge that probes what is beautiful and sinister about our society without injecting a moralising tone or political message. Lewer's focus is, however, less concerned with telling the concrete facts of a case. Instead, his work explores the way that places can become repositories for the psychic residue of extreme events, painful activities or our deepest fears.

## Presented at the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia

### Erin Coates

Erin Coates was born Albany, Western Australia in 1977.

Erin Coates is a Perth-based artist and creative producer working across video, installation and drawing. Her work focuses on extreme or intimate human physical action in relation to built environments. Her interests include architecture and film, particularly the genres of body horror and b-grade science fiction. The artist's screen based works include protagonists who find ways to physically interact with everyday spaces, by using utopic, absurdist and guerrilla strategies.

Coates' first major solo exhibition, *Kinesphere*, was held in 2014 at Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts and was the result of the Catalyst: Katherine Hannay Visual Arts Commission. Her work has also been included in many national and international exhibitions and film festivals such as the Paris Short Film Festival (2015), *The Jester's Whisper* – John Fries Award, UNSW Galleries, Sydney (2015), *Spaced 2: Future Recall*, Perth International Arts Festival, The Western Australian Museum (2015), Aesthetica Short Film Festival, UK (2014), *Subject to Ruin*, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Sydney (2014), New York Independent Film Festival (2014), *Energetics & Informatics*, Aotearoa Digital Arts Network, Whanganui, New Zealand (2010); and *My Favourite Australian*, National Portrait Gallery of Australia, Canberra (2008).

Erin has a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Curtin University, Perth and a Master of Fine Arts from the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada.

#### **Karen Mills**

Karen Mills was born in Katherine, Northern Territory, in 1960, and grew up in South Australia. After leaving home Mills returned to the Northern Territory to reconnect with family and her Indigenous cultural heritage. She lives and works in Darwin.

Mills' paintings explore concepts about identity, connection and disconnection with culture, geology and Australian history. Mills' uses a range of paint media including natural ochre and dry pigment, to create layered, textured surfaces to depict experiences and memories; of being in different places, journeys across country and observation of the landscape. Mills is a descendant of the Balangarra people of the Oombulgurri and Forrest River Aboriginal Reserves, near Wyndham, Western Australia. The history and landscape of the East Kimberley is a significant influence on her work.

Her work has been featured in exhibitions nationally and internationally, and is held in private collections around the world. More recently, it was included in Tarnanthi - Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art (2015), held at the Art Gallery of South Australia, SA.

#### **Ronnie van Hout**

Ronnie van Hout was born in Christchurch, New Zealand in 1962. He lives and works in Melbourne, Australia. Through sculpture, film, embroidery, photography and music van Hout's work explores ideas about memory, personality, family history, the artistic life and self-portraiture.

In June 2016, van Hout's sculptural commission *Quasi* (2016) was unveiled on the roof of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna O Waiwhetu, New Zealand. The five-metre-tall sculpture combines scans of the artist's face and hand to create a surreal and playful presence overseeing his childhood hometown.

Ronnie van Hout has exhibited in New Zealand and Australia since the early 1980's.