



***Free/State* unlocks new realms and delivers messages of resilience in a Biennial for our times**

'Free/State uses ideas of improvisation as a driving force. Improvisation is responsive, present, and immediate. This is the rhythm of Free/State.'

- Sebastian Goldspink, Curator, 2022 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art

Adelaide, Australia: Opening on 4 March, the 2022 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art: *Free/State* assembles twenty-five leading Australian artists with works that reveal alternative ways of viewing the world, making visible unspoken histories and exploring the challenges of an era of global upheaval.

Taking over multiple spaces at the Art Gallery of South Australia as well as a major intervention on the building's North Terrace façade, *Free/State* will open with a weekend of artist talks, performances, DJ sets and more, in celebration of the 31st iteration of the nation's longest-standing survey of contemporary Australian art.

Free/State curator Sebastian Goldspink says, '*Free/State* has been developed through extraordinary times; the past two years have been wild and unpredictable, and artists have shown exceptional resilience in the face of challenges. Throughout, they have continued to make meaning through works that embrace the duality and unpredictability of our collective contemporary existence. *Free/State* uses ideas of improvisation in forms such as jazz as a driving force. Improvisation is responsive, present, and immediate. This is the rhythm of *Free/State*.'

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AGSA Director Rhana Devenport ONZM says, 'At the current moment, the agency of art as a portal to other times, places and ideas is unexpectedly heightened, making the Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art more vital than ever. These artists offer other ways of thinking, new modes of being, and a navigation through the complexities of the world.'

Free/State will explore inter-generational conversations between artists, exhibiting work by trailblazers such as **Tracey Moffatt**, **Angela and Hossein Valamanesh** and **Julie Rrap**. Moffatt's iconic short film *Heaven*, 1997, a voyeuristic montage of male surfers at Sydney's Bondi Beach, acts as a marker for the wave of influence these artists have had on the generations that followed.

With the sudden passing of Hossein Valamanesh in mid-January, the work of **Angela and Hossein Valamanesh** takes on a poignant significance. For the Biennial, Angela and Hossein have considered their shared and individual histories in a major installation that reflects on their own notions of home, presented in their institutional home at AGSA. 'We are humbled to have the opportunity to honour Hossein and Angela's lifetime of collaboration through this significant presentation in *Free/State*. This space reflects their love and their art – two concepts that have been interchangeable for them,' says Sebastian Goldspink.

Further artists who explore the idea of 'home' include Kamilaroi/Gamilaraay artist **Dennis Golding**, through the presentation of a major new sculptural installation which decolonises the Victorian architecture of his childhood neighbourhood 'the Block' in Sydney's Redfern. Golding is also the feature artist for AGSA's The Studio activity space where, inspired by a prized Batman cape he was given as a child, Golding will invite participants to become their own caped crusader by imagining their own superpower and creating a design for their own superhero cape.

Notions of personal resilience, adaptability and survival are evident in many Biennial works including that of **Loren Kronemyer**, whose work signals a desire to fight back against a world seemingly unravelling through a display of hand-crafted knives. **Shaun Gladwell** experiments with the parameters of the body through performance in a new video work, set against an inner-city Melbourne in upheaval. Elsewhere, **Laith McGregor's** new work *Strange Days*, 2022, will feature more than a thousand bottles fixed to the walls of the gallery, spelling out S.O.S and filled with messages of hope gathered from the public over recent months.

Other works explore free speech and accountability within our global culture of mass information and manipulation of opinion. Developed during an era of endless online conversations, Julie Rrap's interactive installation *Write Me*, 2022, comprises a keyboard which allows visitors to write to a virtual Rrap, the words appearing on a large screen while distorted images of the artist's face warp and flicker with each keystroke. **Stanislava Pinchuk** comments on the narratives we choose to accept and celebrate, and those we choose to ignore, through her marble sculptural installation *The Wine Dark Sea*, 2021, that merges classical text from Homer's *Odyssey* with extracts from whistle-blown incident reports from the detention centres in Nauru and Manus Island.

Interventions throughout AGSA include **Kate Scardifield's** ten-metre-long sails that will be suspended from AGSA's front façade, bringing together art and climate science to chart the shifting material states of sail cloth as a metaphor for the climate crisis. In AGSA's Elder Wing, **Tom Polo's**

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large-scale oil paintings will punctuate the space, while Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY Lands) artist **Rhoda Tjitayi** will paint her traditional stories through a contemporary lens directly onto the walls of the Gallery's colonial architecture.

This year's Biennial artists explore ideas of portals to other worlds and states, including **Kate Mitchell** whose single-channel video takes the form of a Zoom meeting of nine spiritual channelers to interrogate the co-existence of other realms, while **Darren Sylvester** invites audiences to literally step through a neon sci-fi portal stationed near the entrance to AGSA.

Since 1990, conceived as part of the Adelaide Festival, the Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art has created career-defining opportunities for close to 500 artists, and been experienced by more than one million visitors.

The 2022 *Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art: Free/State* will be presented from 4 March to 5 June 2022 as part of the 2022 Adelaide Festival.

2022 ADELAIDE BIENNIAL ARTISTS

Abdul-Rahman Abdullah (WA), Serena Bonson (NT), Mitch Cairns (NSW), Dean Cross (NSW), Shaun Gladwell (VIC), Dennis Golding (NSW), Loren Kronemyer (TAS), Laith McGregor (NSW), Kate Mitchell (QLD), Tracey Moffatt (NSW), Stanislava Pinchuk (VIC), Tom Polo (NSW), JD Reforma (NSW), Reko Rennie (VIC), Julie Rrap (NSW), Kate Scardifield (NSW), Darren Sylvester (VIC), Jelena Telecki (NSW), Rhoda Tjitayi (SA), James Tylor & Rebecca Selleck (ACT), Angela & Hossein Valamanesh (SA), Sera Waters (SA) and Min Wong (NSW).

OPENING WEEKEND

agsa.sa.gov.au/whats-on/adelaide-biennial-of-australian-art/2022-adelaide-biennial-of-australian-art-freestate/freestate-vernissage-weekend/

MEDIA PORTAL <https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/about/media/2022-adelaide-biennial-media-portal/>

IMAGES https://files.artgallery.sa.gov.au/ftp/marketing/MEDIA/2022/2022AdelaideBiennial_Images.zip

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KEY DATES Media Preview | Thursday 3 March 2022, 11am
Vernissage Weekend | Friday 4 March to Sunday 6 March 2022
Exhibition Season | Friday 4 March to Sunday 5 June 2022

SOCIAL MEDIA @agsa.adelaide #freestate #adelaidebiennial #agsaadelaide

ABOUT THE ADELAIDE BIENNIAL OF AUSTRALIAN ART

Known for its risk taking and expansive vision, the Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art has demonstrated a significant and sustained practice for more than three decades. Inaugurated in 1990, it is the country's longest running survey of contemporary Australian art and an important platform for Australian artists to realise new works and projects of a scale that require an institutional context for their conception and presentation. The Adelaide Biennial has had a lasting impact on Australian art,

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on the careers of artists, curators and arts professionals, and on the state of South Australia as a wellspring for contemporary art. The nationwide Biennial Ambassadors Program plays an essential role in supporting the Adelaide Biennial's artistic ambition and championing the practice of Australian artists.

ABOUT SEBASTIAN GOLDSPINK

Sebastian Goldspink is a Sydney-based independent curator. In 2011, he created the artist run space ALASKA projects as a platform for exhibiting contemporary art in unused or disused spaces. Since its inception, ALASKA has showcased over 500 artists across 150 exhibitions. A proud descendant of the Burrattagal people of Western Sydney, Goldspink has curated exhibitions nationally throughout Australia and internationally in London, Christchurch, Los Angeles and New Orleans.

Goldspink has held professional appointments at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Art Month Sydney, National Art School, College of Fine Arts, UNSW and Dlux Media Arts. He has consulted and collaborated with institutions including Museum of Old and New Art, Performance Space, Sydney Symphony, HOTA Gold Coast, Art Bank and Kaldor Public Art Projects. He writes regularly for a wide variety of publications and is a regular speaker on art and culture. Goldspink is currently engaged as Gallery Coordinator for the Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf.

Image caption: still: Tom Polo, born Sydney 1985, *clockwatch (for Roslyn Oxley9)*, 2021, created with Dara Gill, 2021, wall painting and digital video dimensions variable, 8 hours, 15 minutes; Courtesy the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney.

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