



## Richard Bell's *Embassy* to take up residence at AGSA, as the Aboriginal Tent Embassy marks 50 years of First Nations activism

*The Aboriginal Tent Embassy is many things. To most Aboriginal people it is a symbol of resistance to the colonial power structure that still oppresses us, while to some, it is an abhorrent aberration that upsets their master/servant paradigm...Blackfellas' discontent with the policies of assimilation around the country demanded a line in the sand to be drawn. That line in the sand is a work of art.*

- Richard Bell, 2014

**Adelaide, Australia:** Inspired by the Aboriginal Tent Embassy – the protest camp set up 50 years ago on the lawns of Parliament House in Canberra – Richard Bell's *Embassy* will take over the Art Gallery of South Australia's forecourt for three days of film screenings, talks and discussions from 21-23 October as part of the 2022 Adelaide Film Festival.

Programmed in collaboration by Bell and Ngarrindjeri/Kaurna artist Dominic Guerrero, *Embassy* will provide a platform to challenge preconceived ideas and stereotypes about Aboriginal people, art and culture. Consisting of a large canvas tent surrounded by painted protest signs, Bell's installation stands in solidarity with the original Aboriginal Tent Embassy, established at Parliament House in 1972 by four young men demanding Aboriginal land rights, which continues to serve as a powerful symbol of the enduring fight for Aboriginal sovereignty.

Art Gallery of South Australia Director, Rhana Devenport ONZM says, 'Richard Bell is one of Australia's most significant contemporary artists who creates work that is unapologetically provocative and political. His internationally-acclaimed project *Embassy* has engaged thousands of people from across the world in discussions of Aboriginal justice and self-determination, and we look forward to bringing these important conversations to Adelaide through a dynamic program of panel talks and film screenings.'

**MEDIA RELEASE**

11 October 2022

*Embassy* has travelled around the world since first being staged in Melbourne in 2013, including to *Performa 15* (2015) in New York, the *Venice Biennale* (2019), *Documenta 15* (2022), and, in 2023, the Tate Modern, London. In each iteration, *Embassy* addresses local contexts to offer a discourse on sovereignty and resistance; in New York, Bell worked with activists from Black Lives Matter while at the 2016 Cairns Indigenous Art Fair, local Elders, activists and artists discussed Aboriginal rights.

*Embassy* at AGSA coincides with the premiere of the highly anticipated film *You Can Go Now: Richard Bell*, directed by award-winning filmmaker Larissa Behrendt AO, as part of the 2022 Adelaide Film Festival. For screening details, visit [adelaidefilmfestival.org](http://adelaidefilmfestival.org).

Richard Bell's *Embassy* will be open from 10am-5pm on AGSA's North Terrace forecourt from Friday 21 to Sunday 23 October 2022. Free entry, no bookings required. For further details, visit [agsa.sa.gov.au](http://agsa.sa.gov.au).

**EMBASSY PUBLIC PROGRAMS****Friday 21 October****11am: Richard Bell in Conversation with Nici Cumpston and Dominic Guerrero**

From activist to artist, Richard Bell has remained a staunch Aboriginal leader and fighter for Aboriginal rights. Join us for an in-depth conversation exploring Richard's history and his thoughts on current issues facing Aboriginal people.

**2pm: The Power of Filmmaking: PJ Clague with Alexis West**

Join PJ Clague and Alexis West as they discuss the power of film and why it's important for us to use this medium to tell Aboriginal stories and what that means for blak people.

**Saturday 22 October****11am: Banning Spit Hoods: Latoya Rule with Jacinta Koolmatrie**

Join Latoya Rule in conversation with Jacinta Koolmatrie as Latoya reflects on the process of successfully advocating for the ban on spit hoods in South Australia in the aftermath of the death in custody of their brother Wayne Fella Morrison and how the fight is far from over.

**2pm: Unmonumental: James Tylor and Matt Chun with Dominic Guerrero**

*Unmonumental* is a truth-telling project by James Tylor and Matt Chun. Using social media and art, the two artists seek to challenge colonial history.

**6-8:30pm: Neo Teen Takeover: Pika warpuwiltarninthi\***

*Embassy* will also be activated as part of AGSA's popular teen program Neo on Saturday 22 October. Celebrate the power of young people through otherworldly costumes, aerosol art, live music, and one-of-a-kind dance experiences in this free creative program especially for teens aged 13-17, led by Arabana and Kokatha Guest Curator Mali Isabel. \*Ticketed event

**Sunday 23 October****11am: Honouring: Aunty Jo Willmot and Aunty Sandra Saunders with Ashum Owens**

Hear from two incredible Aboriginal women who have challenged racial hierarchies through art, protest and education. Aunty Sandra Saunders and Aunty Joanne Willmot will be interviewed by Kaurna, Narungga, Ngarrindjeri lawyer Ashum Owens.

**2pm: Queer Mob: Violet Buckskin and Keenan Smith with Dominic Guerrero**

Keenan Smith and Violet Buckskin are both staunch activists and community organisers who have been fighting for the rights of local Queer Mob. They are joined by Dominic Guerrero in a conversation about the duality of being Aboriginal and Queer and the struggle for our rights and equality.

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*Broken English* and *No Tin Shack* by Richard Bell and Alessandro Cavadini's Tent Embassy documentary *Ningla A-Na* (1972) will play on a loop in between the programmed talks.

**ABOUT RICHARD BELL**

Richard Bell (b. 1953, Charleville, Queensland) is a member of the Kamilaroi, Kooma, Jiman and Gurang Gurang communities. Bell grew out of a generation of Aboriginal activists and has remained committed to the politics of Aboriginal emancipation and self-determination.

Bell is represented in most major national and state collections, and has exhibited in solo exhibitions at important institutions in Australia and internationally. In 2003 he was the recipient of the Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award. In 2013 he was included in the National Gallery of Canada's largest show of International Indigenous art, *Sakàhan*, and at the Fifth Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art. In 2014, Bell's solo exhibition *Embassy* opened at the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, Perth. In 2015, Bell was a finalist in the Archibald Prize, presented a collaborative exhibition of new work with Emory Douglas at Milani Gallery, and exhibited his major work *Embassy*, 2013-ongoing, as part of *Performa 15*, New York City and the 16<sup>th</sup> Jakarta Biennale, curated by Charles Esche. Bell also premiered a body of new work as part of the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art's 8<sup>th</sup> *Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art*, Brisbane.

In 2016, *BELL invites...* an exhibition of Bell and work by friends and collaborators opened at the Stedelijk Museum SMBA, Amsterdam. Bell also presented *Embassy* as part of the 20th Biennale of Sydney, curated by Stephanie Rosenthal, and premiered a new sculptural commission in Sonsbeek 2016 at the Dutch Art Institute in Arnhem, Netherlands. In 2017, *Embassy* travelled to e-Flux, New York City and the Indigenous New York, Artists' Perspectives program curated by Alan Michelson at the New School. In 2018, Bell won in the fourth iteration of the biennial painting award, *The Gold Award*.

Bell lives and works in Brisbane, Australia.

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**KEY DATES** Interview and filming opportunity with Richard Bell | Friday 21 October, 10am  
*Embassy* | Friday 21 – Sunday 23 October 2022

**IMAGES** [Richard Bell Embassy Images.zip](#)

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*Presented by the Art Gallery of South Australia as part of Tarnanthi with Principal Partner BHP and support from the Government of South Australia.*

*Presented as part of the Adelaide Film Festival.*



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**Image caption:** Richard Bell's *Embassy*, photo courtesy of Milani Gallery.