

Biennale of Sydney to Tackle Race and Colonialism

Sam Gaskin | Sydney | 4 February 2020

Newly announced highlights of the event include Arthur Jafa's *The White Album*, which won the Golden Lion at last year's Venice Biennale.



Lisa Reihana, *In Pursuit of Venus [infected]* (2015-17). Ultra HD video, colour, 7.1 sound, 64 mins, Courtesy the artist and New Zealand at Venice.

The 22nd Biennale of Sydney has announced highlights of its programme, which runs 14 March to 8 June. Occurring 250 years after British explorer Captain Cook landed in Australia, many of the artists selected for the biennale deal with themes of race and colonialism.

Curated by Indigenous Australian artist Brook Andrew, the biennale is entitled NIRIN, which means 'edge' in the language of the Wiradjuri, the Indigenous people of western New South Wales. Andrew said the biennale programme 'demonstrates how artists have the power to inspire and lead through difficult global times such as environmental catastrophe, urgent states of conflict and reframing histories.'

One of the most celebrated works being shown is Arthur Jafa's *The White Album* (2018), which won the Golden Lion at last year's Venice Biennale. The video cuts together close-up portraits of white people with found footage of race-based violence, fumbling efforts to excuse racism, and attempts to acknowledge and address it. The work will be shown in the Southern Hemisphere for the first time at the biennale.

PETER BLUM GALLERY

Many of the other participating artists are either people in majority white countries or people who live in countries underserved by the contemporary art world.

Barbara Moore, Chief Executive Officer, Biennale of Sydney said, 'the biennale invites diverse and often marginalised voices of the world to converge, creating a safe place where people can think and talk about issues that resonate on a local and international level.'

Among other highlights are: Peruvian artist Fátima Rodrigo Gonzales' recreation of an TV set from 1960s Latin TV show Sabado Gigante (Gigantic Saturday); Tlingit/Unangax̂ artist Nicholas Galanin's excavation of the shadow cast by the Captain Cook statue in Sydney's Hyde Park; and New Zealand artist Lisa Reihana's Nomads of the Sea, an immersive film installation exploring Māori and Pacific peoples' culture.

The biennale will take place at six sites where entry is free: Art Gallery of New South Wales, Artspace, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Cockatoo Island, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, and the National Art School.

An interconnected programme called NIRIN WIR (meaning 'edge of the sky'), includes ticketed events and extends to the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney Observatory, Parramatta Female Factory and Sydney University.

—[O]