

# TarraWarra Biennial 2014: *Whisper in My Mask*

16 August – 16 November 2014



Image: Nasim Nasr, *Unveiling the Veil* 2010 (still), single channel video, silent, 6:21 min

The TarraWarra Biennial 2014: *Whisper in My Mask*, curated by Natalie King and Djon Mundine, is the fourth iteration of a signature event on the national exhibition calendar.

The Biennial curators and TarraWarra Museum of Art are pleased to announce the preview list of TarraWarra Biennial 2014 artists including: **boat-people\*** (NSW), **Daniel Boyd** (NSW), **Søren Dahlgaard** (VIC), **Destiny Deacon & Virginia Fraser** (VIC), **Karla Dickens** (NSW), **Fiona Foley** (QLD), **Tony Garifalakis** (VIC), **Sandra Hill** (WA), **Gabriella Mangano and Silvana Mangano** (VIC), **Romaine Moreton** (VIC), **Nasim Nasr** (SA), **Polixeni Papapetrou** (VIC), **Elizabeth Pedler** (WA), **Sangeeta Sandrasegar** (VIC), **The Telepathy Project** (Veronica Kent and Sean Peoples) (VIC) and **The Tjanpi Desert Weavers Project** with **Fiona Hall** (SA/NT/WA).

Inaugurated in 2006 to identify new developments in contemporary art practice, the Biennial allows artists to present new work at the unique TarraWarra Museum of Art, highlighting pivotal aspects of Australian practice under an experimental curatorial platform.

Significantly, this is the first time that the TarraWarra Biennial has been curated by a collaborative duo comprising an Indigenous and non-Indigenous curator, following on from the successful tour of their 2012/13 Asialink exhibition *Shadowlife* to Taiwan, Singapore, Bangkok and Bendigo, with record attendances.

The TarraWarra Biennial 2014 is also an official partner with the 2014 Melbourne Art Fair, 13 - 17 of August, held at the Royal Exhibition Building.

Taking a line from the evocative song *Art Groupie* (1984) by singer, actress and model Grace Jones, the title of this year's Biennial, *Whisper in my Mask*, signals an exploration of masking, secrets and hidden narratives as psychological states.

*Touch Me in a Picture,*  
*Wrap Me in a Cast,*  
*Kiss Me in a Sculpture,*  
*Whisper in My Mask*  
Art Groupie, Grace Jones, 1984.

The mask in its multifarious forms and functions can both reveal and conceal personas: it can protect, beautify, frighten or pacify, universalise or eternalise, intensifying and amplifying expression. In a selection of works that elicit an emotional and sensory response, the Biennial will return us to human senses and the Aboriginal Djambarrpuyngu people's palate, experienced on a scale from 'monuk' (salt) to rapine (sweet). Moreover, masking suggests altered states of reverie and otherworldliness intertwined with hidden narratives, local mysteries and parapsychology.

Disguise manifests as trace, inscription, erasure, secrets, camouflage, whisperings, dreamings and subterfuge. These ideas will infiltrate the Biennial as a series of trigger points by incorporating a range of artworks including sound, video, performance and participatory installation by cross-generational Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal artists.

The curators have undertaken extensive research and field work to cities and remote communities in order to select Aboriginal and non-indigenous artists working across diverse media. Having worked at Ramingining and Maningrida, Djon Mundine has extensive networks in rural communities as well as affiliations with emerging and established artists in various cities. This significant experience will be deployed alongside Natalie King's expertise in photography and moving image practices to ensure a ground-breaking Biennial. Together, their collaborative curatorial methodology will interrogate the work of lesser known artists alongside more established artists.

On Sunday 19 October, specially timed to take place as a part of the Melbourne Festival, 10 – 26 October, the TarraWarra Biennial will feature a day of live performances, artists' talks, curators' talks and innovative and unexpected actions.

TarraWarra Museum of Art Director, Victoria Lynn, says, "The TarraWarra Biennial, one of only two biennials of Australian art held in this country, is dedicated to showcasing contemporary and innovative works by Australian artists. The fourth TarraWarra Biennial will provide visitors with a must-see opportunity to witness a significant number of Indigenous artists alongside their non-Indigenous contemporaries".

**Curators: Natalie King and Djon Mundine OAM**

\*boat-people - (Safdar Ahmed, Zehra Ahmed, Stephanie Carrick, Dave Gravina, Katie Hepworth, Jiann Hughes, Deborah Kelly, Enda Murray, Pip Shea, Sumugan Sivanesan, Jamil Yamani)

**Curator Biographies:**

**Djon Mundine OAM** is a member of Bundjalung people of northern NSW. He has an extensive career as a curator, activist, writer, and occasional artist. Mundine has been involved in the visual arts since the late 1970s, working as Art Advisor at Milingimbi, Maningrida and Ramingining in the Northern Territory from 1979–95, with the majority of this time spent at Ramingining (1983–95), a small community in Central Arnhem Land located around 400 kilometres east of Darwin. While at Ramingining, Mundine initiated *The Aboriginal Memorial* (1987–88), a significant installation of 200 hollow log coffins or poles now held in the permanent collection of the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra. In 1995, his last year at Ramingining, Mundine was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for his services to the visual arts. Since that time he has worked as a curator and academic while he continues to be involved in collaborative art projects.

In 2005–06 he undertook a residency at the National Museum of Ethnology (Minpaku) in Osaka, Japan as a Research Professor in the Department of Social Research, prior to which he was Senior Consultant and Curator of Indigenous Art at the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane. He has taught at the National Art School, Canberra and has held curatorial positions at the National Museum of Australia, Canberra, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney and the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. More recently, he was Indigenous Curator – Contemporary Art at the Campbelltown Art Centre where he mounted the *Sunshine State – Smart State* and *More Than My Skin* exhibitions. He is currently a PhD candidate at College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales.

**Natalie King** is a Melbourne-based curator, writer, editor and Senior Research Fellow, Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne. Formerly, she was the Director of Utopia, a pan-Asian incubator at Asialink. She has curated exhibitions for numerous museums including the Singapore Art Museum, National Museum of Art, Osaka, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Tjibaou Cultural Centre, New Caledonia and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney. King is co-editor of the anthology *Art in the Asia Pacific: Intimate Publics*, Routledge, 2014 with Larissa Hjorth (RMIT) and Mami Kataoka (Mori Art Museum). She has conducted interviews with Ai Wei Wei, Candice Breitz, Joseph Kosuth, Massimiliano Gioni, Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, Tacita Dean, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Bill Henson, Jitish Kallat, Hou Hanru, Kathy Temin and Cai Guo-Qiang amongst others. King is on the editorial board of *Art and Australia* and a correspondent for *Flash Art International* as well as a contributor to *Artlink*, *Eyeline*, *LEAP* (China), *Art Monthly* and *Art Asia Pacific*.

She was the curator and editor of *Up Close: Carol Jerrems with Larry Clark, Nan Goldin and William Young* at Heide Museum of Modern Art, 2010, part of the Melbourne Festival, as a recipient of an Australia Council grant. Formerly, she was the visual arts reporter for ABC radio. She is the co-author of a Thames & Hudson monograph on Chinese/Australian painter, Guan Wei, with Hou Hanru. In April 2013, King co-convened with Victoria Lynn, a Curatorial Lab with renowned biennial curator Hou Hanru, as well as a public “in conversation”. She also conducted a workshop at Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi with Raqs Media Collective. In 2014, she will co-curate the 13th International Photo Festival at the Dong Gang Museum of Photography, Korea.

Nasim Nasr image courtesy of the artist and Greenaway Art Gallery, Adelaide

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For further information or exhibition images contact:  
Eliza Ordinans, Media & Communications  
Email: [eliza@twma.com.au](mailto:eliza@twma.com.au)

311 Healesville – Yarra Glen Road Healesville Victoria  
Postal Address PO Box 310 Healesville Victoria 3777  
T +613 5957 3100 F +613 5957 3120

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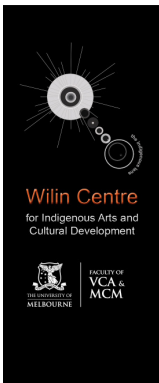
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