The TarraWarra Biennial 2014: *Whisper in My Mask* presents

**The Telepathy Project**

**Reading Solaris to The Great Moorool**

Image: The Telepathy Project (Veronica Kent and Sean People) *Reading Solaris to the Great Moorool* 2014 mixed media installation and performance, dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artists

An intriguing three part project commissioned for the 2014 Tarrawarri Biennial

The TarraWarra Biennial 2014: *Whisper in My Mask*, curated by Natalie King and Djon Mundine, presents a wide-ranging exploration of the secrets and hidden narratives found within physical, political and psychological forms of masking.

It features recent and specially commissioned video works, sculptures, photography, paintings, participatory installations and unexpected events from more than 20 of Australia’s most vital contemporary Aboriginal and non-Indigenous artists, including The Telepathy Project, who are Melbourne based artists Veronica Kent and Sean Peoples.

When researching their project for the Biennial, Kent and Peoples were fascinated to learn that in the language of the Wurundjeri, the traditional owners of the lands of the Yarra Valley, the name TarraWarra means “slow water”. They were also fascinated to discover that the museum is sited on the shores of what would once have been The Great Moorool, an ancient and enormous body of water that once covered the Yarra Valley, as told in the creation stories of the Kulin nation.

The artists have also been long captivated by the seminal science fiction novel *Solaris*, written in 1961 by Polish author Stanislaw Lem, which tells the story of a water planet whose single, vast ocean is sentient. Their project for the 2014 TarraWarra Biennial, *Reading Solaris to The Great Moorool*, bring both concepts together in an innovative new public art project.

Working extensively with the local Healesville community, *The Telepathy Project*, as part of their ongoing practice of collaborating and ‘knowing’ place, have created a three part philosophical exploration of the anthropomorphic limitations manifested by an attempt to communicate with The Great Moorool.
PART ONE:

Reading Solaris to the Great Moorool installation
16 AUGUST TO 16 NOVEMBER 2014
FREE WITH MUSEUM ENTRY - NO BOOKINGS REQUIRED

The Telepathy Project have created a new installation at TarraWarra Museum of Art’s Vista Walk Gallery, within the 2014 TarraWarra Biennial exhibition. A specially constructed room resembling a 19th century gentleman’s library, incorporating video works, recordings, artworks and notebooks, overlooks the TarraWarra Estate lake, providing exhibition visitors with the opportunity to reflect on unusual ways of communication and the location’s alternate histories.

The installation also invites visitors to participate in the Postcard Dream Project, to co-explore The Telepathy Project’s fascination with the belief that information and visual memories can be transmitted to others while we dream. People can take home postcards of the creation story of The Great Moorool, to sleep with them under their pillows then return them to the Museum after writing their dreams on the back.

PART TWO:

Town Meeting - Have you heard of the Great Moorool?

TUESDAY 2 SEPTEMBER, 5.00PM TO 7.30 PM
FREE EVENT - NO BOOKINGS REQUIRED
HEALESVILLE HOTEL, 256 MAROONDAH HWY, HEALESVILLE 3777
Light Refreshments Provided including Spiced Wine; Pay Bar also available

An inspirational evening event at the iconic Healesville Hotel will explore and celebrate the histories, knowledge and stories of water in the Yarra Valley and beyond.

After a special welcome to country ceremony by distinguished Wurundjeri senior elder Aunty Joy Murphy Wandin AO, guest speakers will discuss their insights into the theme, ranging from philosophy and indigenous history to geology and water management.

They include: local historian Mick Woiwood, author of the recent new book Paradise Lost: On and Around the Great Moorool; Dr Leon Marvell, Associate Professor In Film & Video, Deakin University and an acknowledged expert on science fiction; The Telepathy Project, (Artists Sean Peoples & Veronica Kent); Aunty Joy Wandin Murphy AO, Senior Wurundjeri Elder; the moderator will be TarraWarra Biennial 2014 curator Natalie King.

Renowned Melbourne vocalist, improviser and songwriter, Julie O'Hara, who has been active in the jazz scene for almost twenty years, will perform songs focusing on the subject of water, including one specially written for the Town Meeting, accompanied by Sam Leman on guitar.

Guests will also have the unique opportunity to ‘commune’ with the local waters, by ‘playing’ on glasses of water collected from the nearby creeks and the Maroondah Dam. They also be invited to participate in the official launch of the Postcard Dream Project, taking postcards away with them to tuck under their pillows and dream upon that night.
PART THREE:

**Whisper in My Mask: A Day in the Valley**

*Reading Solaris to the Great Moorool Libretto*

**SUNDAY 19 OCTOBER 2014**

**FREE PUBLIC EVENT- NO BOOKINGS REQUIRED**

On October 19 TarraWarra Museum of Art will hold a special day of events curated for Melbourne Festival 2014 as part of the 2014 TarraWarra Biennial.

**Whisper in My Mask: A day in the valley** will feature TarraWarra Biennial 2014 artists Søren Dahlgaard; The Telepathy Project libretto *Reading Solaris to the Great Moorool*; artists of the TarraWarra Biennial 2014 in conversation with curator Natalie King; poetry readings by Romaine Moreton and *A Special Conversation*: Henry Reynolds, Djon Mundine & Fiona Foley.

In their performance of the libretto, The Telepathy Project’s participation in the 2014 TarraWarra Biennial will once again engage the local community and beyond, when singers, community and school choirs and visitors to the museum come together around the TarraWarra Lake situated just below the museum, to sing the libretto *Reading Solaris to the Great Moorool* to the water of the lake, written especially for the Biennial by singer and musician Julie O'Hara.

The event will conclude with The Telepathy Project reading aloud to the TarraWarra Lake the dreams collected in *Postcard Dream Project*.

*Image: Reading Solaris to the Great Moorool, The Telepathy Project Dream Project, Courtesy of the artists and TarraWarra Museum of Art*

The TarraWarra Biennial 2014: **Whisper in My Mask** features at the Museum from August 16 to November 16

For further information on the 2014 TarraWarra Biennial please see over the page...
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.

Inaugurated in 2006 to identify new developments in contemporary art practice, the TarraWarra Biennial invites artists to present their work at the unique TarraWarra Museum of Art, located in the spectacular Yarra Valley one hour from Melbourne. The Biennial highlights pivotal aspects of Australian practice under an experimental curatorial platform.

Featuring recent and specially commissioned works by more than 20 of Australia’s most vital contemporary Aboriginal and non-Indigenous artists, and taking a line from the evocative song ‘Art Groupie’ (1981) by singer Grace Jones, the title of this year’s Biennial, *Whisper in my Mask*, signals a wide-ranging exploration of masking.

*Touch Me in a Picture, Wrap Me in a Cast, Kiss Me in a Sculpture, Whisper in My Mask* 

In a selection of works that elicit an emotional and sensory response, the Biennial explores the mask’s multifarious forms and functions and the ways in which it both reveals and conceals personas: to protect, beautify, frighten or pacify, universalise or eternalise, and intensify and amplify expression.

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 has been deployed alongside Natalie King’s expertise in photography and moving image practices to ensure a ground-breaking Biennial. Together, their collaborative curatorial methodology interrogates the work of lesser-known artists alongside those who are more established.

The participating artists include: boat-people*(NSW), Daniel Boyd (NSW), Søren Dahlgaaard (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).

TarraWarra Museum of Art Director, Victoria Lynn, says, “This year’s Biennial features both timely political gestures about the masking of history as well as a more mysterious interest in hidden personas, ghosts and telepathy. Featuring performances, talks and events, the exhibition also embraces a broad sense of community that encompasses not only the local Yarra Valley but also the significant Indigenous communities across Australia.”

Highlights include the specially commissioned work of the Tjanpi Desert Weavers with the Australian Venice Biennale 2015 representative Fiona Hall; The Telepathy Project which involves a town meeting at the Healesville Hotel, a libretto for TarraWarra’s lake, a project about dreams, and a library; and 3,500 litres of beanbag beans for the participatory installation by emerging Western Australian artist Elizabeth Pedler.

On August 16, timed to coincide with the Biennial’s official partner, Melbourne Art Fair, (13 - 17 of August, at the Royal Exhibition Building), the Museum will present the premiere of the play 'Weavings and Whispers: Miwi wisdom', written especially for the Biennial by Prof. Diane Bell, and performed by members of the Ngarrindjeri Weavers, followed by an audience discussion, along with a range of talks given by the exhibition artists throughout the day.

On October 19 the Museum will hold a special day of events curated for Melbourne Festival, Whisper in My Mask: A day in the valley, featuring Søren Dahlgaaard; The Telepathy Project libretto Reading Solaris to the Great Moorool; artists of the TarraWarra Biennial 2014 in conversation with curator Natalie King; poetry readings by Romaine Moreton and A Special Conversation: Henry Reynolds, Djon Mundine & Fiona Foley.

*Tboat-people - (Safdar Ahmed, Zehra Ahmed, Stephanie Carrick, Dave Gravina, Katie Hepworth, Jiann Hughes, Deborah Kelly, Enda Murray, Pip Shea, Sumugan Sivanesan, Jamil Yamani)
This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.

In partnership with the Wilin Centre for Indigenous Arts and Cultural Development

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