

A major new visual arts initiative for First Nations artists and curators

Yalingwa is a major new program designed to support the development of outstanding contemporary Indigenous art and curatorial practice, with a primary focus on South East Australian First Nations artists within a national context.

Announced today by the **Victorian Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Hon Natalie Hutchins**, Yalingwa has been developed in partnership between the **Victorian Government**, the **Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA)** and **TarraWarra Museum of Art**, and will be overseen by an Indigenous Advisory Group that includes elders, curators and key members of the national Indigenous arts community (details below).

Designed to deliver significant outcomes for First Nations artists, Yalingwa includes:

- Three new curatorial positions for Indigenous curators to work with ACCA and TarraWarra Museum of Art to develop major exhibitions and within leading contemporary art institutions.
- Three major exhibitions held in 2018, 2020, and 2022 alternating between ACCA and TarraWarra Museum of Art, focused on new commissions by contemporary Indigenous artists.
- Three one-year Artist Fellowships of \$60,000 for senior South East Australian First Nations artists who have made an important contribution to the development of Indigenous cultural expression.

“Yalingwa will shine a light on some of the nation’s best Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art while opening up major new career-making opportunities for Indigenous artists and curators in this state,” **Minister Hutchins** said. “This is a ground-breaking, collaborative model that will take our Indigenous visual arts sector to a new level.”

Max Delany, ACCA Artistic Director and CEO commended the Victorian Government on the initiative. “Dedicated curatorial positions for First Nations curators, along with the development of major exhibitions of new works by contemporary Indigenous artists, will bring new knowledge and vision into ACCA’s and TarraWarra Museum of Art’s programming.

“Yalingwa will also deliver inspiring opportunities for Australian and international audiences to engage with the dynamism and complexity of First Nations visual arts practice nationally, and promote the vibrancy of Indigenous cultural communities from South East Australia,” he said.

Victoria Lynn, Director of TarraWarra Museum of Art, also commended the initiative. “The depth and breadth of this initiative is visionary, supporting the creation, curating and exhibition of Indigenous arts in Victoria. It will make an enduring contribution to the appreciation and knowledge of Indigenous arts in Victoria. TarraWarra Museum of Art is delighted to collaborate with ACCA and Creative Victoria on this initiative.”

The Yalingwa Initiative

The Yalingwa Visual Arts Initiative 2017–2022 is a significant new partnership between Creative Victoria, ACCA and TarraWarra Museum of Art that aims to support the development of outstanding contemporary Indigenous art and curatorial practice, with a primary focus on South East Australian First Nations artists within a national context.

The Yalingwa Advisory Group

The Advisory Group will act as advisors, ambassadors and mentors for the initiative, and to encourage First Nations community engagement with the program. Members of the committee include:

N’Arweet Carolyn Briggs, Boon Wurrung elder and Director, Boon Wurrung Foundation;

Elizabeth Liddle, Manager, Victorian Aboriginal Business Strategy Implementation, Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources and former Manager, Indigenous Partnerships, Creative Victoria;

Hetti Perkins, curator, writer and broadcaster;

Jacob Boehme, Creative Director, Yirramboi First Nations Arts Festival;

Genevieve Grieves, curator, filmmaker, artist, oral historian and educator.

Yalingwa encompasses three discrete but related program elements

Curatorial positions

Three two-year curatorial positions for Indigenous curators to work with the respective host organisations in the research and development of a major exhibition of new commissions by First Nations artists. The curator will join ACCA’s and/or TarraWarra Museum of Art’s professional staff for four days a week, based at the organisation presenting the next exhibition in the series.

The inaugural curator is **Hannah Presley**. Hannah will be based at ACCA for a period of two years, with her first assignment being the development of the first Yalingwa exhibition for July 2018. She will also work on exhibitions across ACCA’s annual program – offering both Hannah and the ACCA team opportunities for mutually beneficial sharing and exchange.

Hannah most recently curated the current West Space exhibition, *Every Second Feels like a Century*, and was also Curatorial Assistant (First Nations) for Tracey Moffatt’s exhibition *My Horizon* at the Venice Biennale. For Hannah it’s a most exciting role:

“My appointment as curator for the first installment of the Yalingwa program at ACCA is incredibly exciting. I look forward to working closely with our Victorian Indigenous arts communities, and First Nations artists more widely, along with the team at ACCA, as we work together towards significant creative outcomes for Aboriginal artists,” she says.

Major exhibitions focusing on artists' commissions

Three major exhibitions will be held in 2018, 2020 and 2022 focusing on new commissions by contemporary Indigenous artists. The exhibitions will alternate between ACCA and TarraWarra Museum of Art, with the first taking place at ACCA in 2018.

Artist Fellowships

Three one-year Artist Fellowships supporting significant career development will be offered, with the first Fellowship to be awarded in 2018. Each of the three Fellowships encompasses a cash award of AUD \$60,000 which will be awarded to an artist based in Victoria to support the development and consolidation of their practice. The recipient will be selected through an open-call expression-of-interest process and assessed by the Advisory Committee in consultation with Creative Victoria and ACCA and TarraWarra Museum of Art's Directors.

Successful recipients will be recognised for the contribution they have made to the development of contemporary art practice locally, nationally or internationally, their contribution to Indigenous cultural expression, and the potential to continue to develop and expand art and cultural practice.

The call for expressions-of-interest for Artist Fellowships will be made in February 2018, with the inaugural Fellowship to be announced at the opening of the first Yalingwa exhibition at ACCA in July 2018.

ACCA

The Australian Centre for Contemporary Art is an Australian flagship contemporary art space, and a leading centre for the artistic and wider communities to participate in a critically engaged contemporary art culture that encourages curiosity and transformation.

Established in Melbourne in 1983 and now situated in an iconic award-winning architecturally designed building in the Southbank arts precinct, ACCA develops exhibitions exploring the ideas and work of significant artists from around the world, commissions ambitious new works by local and international artists, and delivers a range of curatorial, education and public programs including talks, lectures, symposia, performances, screenings, music and events.

In December 2016, Wemba Wemba and Gunditjmara artist and curator Paola Balla and Artistic Director Max Delany curated the exhibition *Sovereignty*, which was widely considered a landmark representation of the vibrant and diverse visual art and culture of First Nations artists of South East Australia. *Sovereignty* was conceived as a platform for Indigenous community expression, and explored a diverse range of themes, including the celebration and assertion of cultural identity and resistance, the significance and interconnectedness of Country, people and place, the renewal of cultural languages and practices, and the importance of matriarchal culture.

TarraWarra Museum of Art

TarraWarra Museum of Art brings together the appreciation of both art and place. Situated in the spectacular Yarra Valley, on the cusp of outer Melbourne and inner regional Victoria, the Museum is uniquely positioned to deliver the important history of Australian modernism and new developments in contemporary art to a large cross section of the Victorian public. At the heart of the Museum is a collection of over 650 modern and contemporary Australian art works donated by patrons Eva Besen AO and Marc Besen AC.

The name TarraWarra comes from the area in which the museum is located. It means slow moving water in Wurundjeri, and is located near a bend in the Yarra River, where the water slows down. As the name TarraWarra suggests, its non-urban environment creates an immersive atmosphere and provides for a different pace and rhythm: a retreat for the imagination.

Following the arrival of Director Victoria Lynn in 2012, Indigenous art has featured every year at the Museum, with significant projects including: *Future Memorials: Jonathan Jones, Tom Nicholson and Aunty Joy Wandin Murphy*, 2013; *Danie Mellor: Exotic Lies Sacred Tales*, curated by Maudie Palmer, 2014; *TarraWarra Biennial: Whisper in My Mask*; curated by Djon Mundine and Natalie King 2014; *John Mawurndjul and Gulumbu Yunupingu: Earth and Sky*, curated by Hetti Perkins, 2015; *Judy Watson: the scarifer*, 2016; and *Yhonnie Scarce*, 2017 both curated by Director, Victoria Lynn.

ENDS

For further media information:

ACCA - Katrina Hall, kathall@ozemail.com.au, 0421153046

TarraWarra Museum of Art

Katrina Raymond, katrina@medialinkproductions.com, (03) 9663 3222, 0417303158

Louis Raymond, louis@medialinkproductions.com (03) 9663 3222, 0448 808 811

