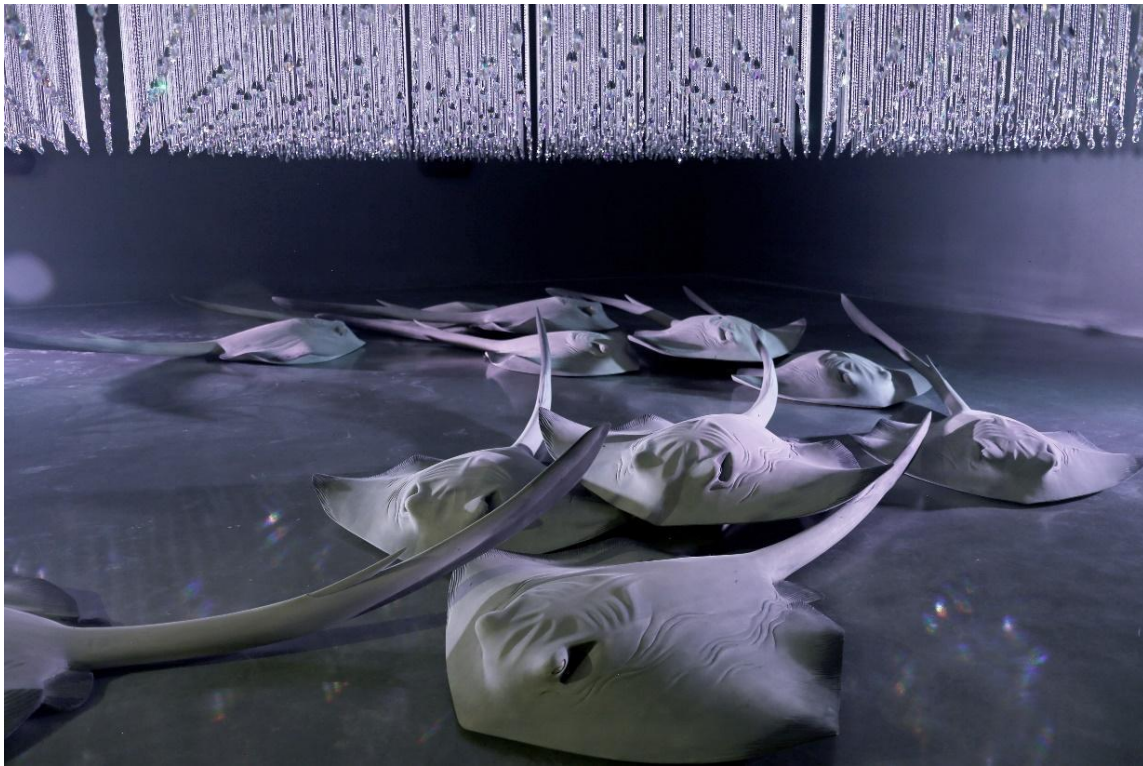


TarraWarra Biennial 2023: ua usiusi fa'ava'asavili

Curated by Dr Léuli Eshrāghi

1 April – 16 July 2023
TarraWarra Museum of Art, Wurundjeri Country



Abdul-Rahman Abdullah, *Pretty Beach* 2019, 500 x 500 x 500 cm, image courtesy of the artist and Moore Contemporary

TarraWarra Biennial 2023: ua usiusi fa'ava'asavili, presented from **1 April – 16 July 2023**, will feature newly commissioned works by 15 artists/artist groups focused on the interconnectedness of the peoples of Australia, Asia and the Great Ocean.

Curated by **Dr Léuli Eshrāghi**, the exhibition is titled **ua usiusi fa'ava'asavili**, a Samoan proverb which means 'the canoe obeys the wind'. The proverb is demonstrative of Great Ocean celestial navigation practices, following centuries of European and Asian colonial occupations.

The TarraWarra Biennial is one of the most anticipated contemporary art exhibitions on the Australian art calendar. It was inaugurated in 2006 in order to identify new trends in contemporary Australian art through an experimental curatorial platform. Each Biennial has developed a distinctive curatorial approach, focusing on a particular set of ideas or themes prevalent in contemporary art.

TarraWarra Biennial 2023: *ua usiusi fa'ava'asavili*, focuses attention on contemporary artists tied by ancestry or by materiality to the many lands and waters constituting Australia and its immediate neighbourhood of the soil and watery expanses termed Asia and the Great Ocean.

Revived by Satawalese Master Navigator Mau Piailug among Kānaka 'Ōiwi communities in 1970s Hawai'i, celestial navigation practices teach the interconnectedness of humans and islands, reefs, stars, suns, moons, currents, winds and all other beings. Bringing this lens to an exhibition context, TarraWarra Biennial 2023 imparts to audiences the wish that humility towards living beings and storied places might generate more neighbourly exchanges and resolutely joyful futures.

Curator Dr Léuli Eshrāghi says that, to date, most exhibitions framing the relationships between Australian society and its surrounding archipelagos in south/southeast Asia and the south/southwest Great Ocean have focused on continuing to sample and dabble in intercultural understanding, always remaining a '101' of said region or culture.

"In Gregorian years 2022 and 2023, or by any calendar measure, it is time for complex conversations to take place, so that the sublime aesthetic and intellectual practices born of these contexts can be deeply felt and understood.

"The Biennial artists demonstrate critical care for communities, knowledges, and futures that are being made possible today, by sensitively delving into important concerns. These include animal-human kin constellations, enduring matriarchy, cultural renaissance, intergenerational trauma, territory-based healing, unspoken loss, affirmation of intersectional existence, redress of racial hierarchy, responsibility to territory through ecopoetics, and shining a light on contributions to art histories of the Majority World."

Taking place on Wurundjeri Country, the TarraWarra Biennial 2023 will take audiences across and beyond the archipelagos and regions from West Asia and Iutruwita to Borneo and Viti Levu.

Director of TarraWarra Museum of Art, Dr Victoria Lynn, says the forthcoming TarraWarra Biennial 2023 will be a significant exhibition highlighting important issues in recent art practice in the region.

"It explores the deeply intuitive engagement that each of the artists/artist groups has with a broad constellation of inspirational touchpoints: including being part of an archipelago of regions and the long cultural histories that resonate across the Great Ocean," Dr Lynn said.

The artists participating in TarraWarra Biennial 2023 are: Regina Pilawuk Wilson (Ngan'gikurunggurr, Marrithyel); Vicki West (Trawlwoolway); Sonja Carmichael (Quandamooka) and Elisa Jane Carmichael (Quandamooka); The Unbound Collective: Ali Gumillya Baker (Mirning), Faye Rosas Blanch (Mbararam, Yidinyji), Natalie Harkin (Narungga), Simone Ulalka Tur (Yankunytjatjara); Jenna Lee (Gulumerridjin, Wardaman, KarraJarri); Abdul-Rahman Abdullah; Hoda Afshar; Elyas Alavi; Torika Bolatagici (iTaukei Viti); Dr Kirsten Lyttle (Tainui Waikato); Phuong Ngo; Bhenji Ra; David Sequeira; Sancintya Mohini Simpson; and Dr Leyla Stevens.

Ends

MEDIA CONTACT: For further information or interview requests, please contact Isabel Wright, isabel@articulatepr.com.au, 0400 359 485, or Claire Martin, claire@articulatepr.com.au, 0414 437 588

IMAGES available to download [HERE](#)

ABOUT DR LÉULI ESHRĀGHI:

Dr Léuli Eshrāghi is recognised globally for their expertise in Indigenous critical theory, curatorial practice and museology in service of Indigenous and other racialised communities.

Their academic achievements include the inaugural Horizon/Indigenous Futures Postdoctoral Fellowship, Concordia University (2021); Doctor of Philosophy in Curatorial Practice, Monash University (2019); Summer Indigenous Art Intensive, University of British Columbia Okanagan (2021, 2017); Indigenous Art Journal Residency, Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity (2017); Graduate Certificate in Indigenous Arts Management, University of Melbourne (2012); Bachelor of Arts (Honours), University of Melbourne (2009) and Bachelor of Arts, University of Queensland and Université Lyon II (2008).

Dr Léuli Eshrāghi has realised new commissions for the 22nd Biennale of Sydney, Sharjah Biennial 14, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art and Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center among other group and solo presentations in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States.

Eshrāghi has lectured at gatherings Creative Time, Hawai'i Contemporary Art Summit, Experimenter Curators' Hub, March Meeting, Dhaka Art Summit, Pacific Arts Association, 24 May 2021 and Asia Pacific Triennial, as well as at universities in Antwerp, San Juan, Melbourne, Yogyakarta, Montreal, Honolulu, Auckland and Victoria. They contribute to growing international critical practice across the Great Ocean and North America through residencies, exhibitions, publications, teaching and rights advocacy.

ABOUT TARRAWARRA MUSEUM OF ART:

TarraWarra Museum of Art actively engages with art, place and ideas within global, national and First Nations contexts. Established in 2003, the Museum presents a changing exhibition program of twentieth and twenty-first century art, creating dynamic and memorable experiences for all audiences encouraging curiosity and creativity within the wider community. The Museum, located in Healesville, has a collection of over 600 works of Australian twenty and twenty-first century art.

TarraWarra Museum of Art, Wurundjeri Country, 313 Healesville-Yarra Glen Road, Healesville VIC 3777
T +61 (0)3 5957 3100 W twma.com.au

Opening Hours: Tuesday – Sunday, 11am to 5pm. Open all public holidays except Christmas Day.

TarraWarra Biennial 2023: *ua ususi fa'ava'asavili*, curated by Dr Léuli Eshrāghi, has been generously supported by

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