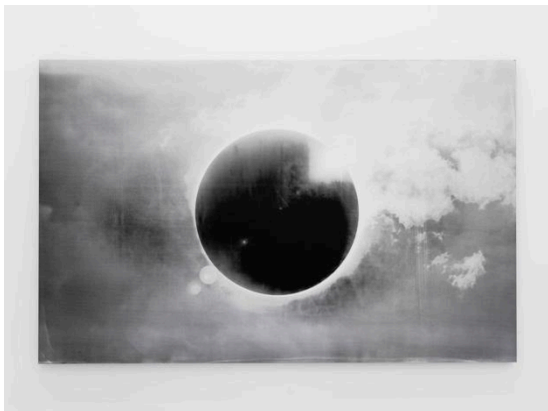


TarraWarra International 2026: *System Release*

A bold new exhibition exploring creative approaches to precarious times

Curated by Dr Emily Cormack

21 March – 5 July 2026



Healesville, Wurundjeri Country, Tuesday 9 December 2025: TarraWarra Museum of Art today announced the return of its TarraWarra International series – paused during and after the pandemic – with **TarraWarra International 2026: *System Release***, curated by **Dr Emily Cormack** (Aotearoa/New Zealand and Naarm/Melbourne), who was appointed Head of Exhibitions and Programs at TarraWarra in April 2025.

TarraWarra International 2026: *System Release* brings together ten artists from Aotearoa/New Zealand, Australia and Mexico who reach into the chaos of global precarity to create new systems of order across a wide range of media. The exhibition proposes a different understanding of order as a kind of friendship with chaos, presenting personal and collective strategies for making sense of a rapidly changing world.

Responding to recent global events that have exposed the vulnerability of civic order, the exhibition challenges the assumption that a so-called “rules-based order” is what holds society together. It frames collapse as a release, inviting audiences to consider alternative systems of knowledge and ways of being grounded in First Nations thinking, posthumanism, collective intelligence, and more-than-human worldviews.

Curator and Head of Exhibitions and Programs, Dr Emily Cormack, says: “We look to artists to expose, explore and interpret precarious global conditions, offering us new perspectives and new ways of being in the world. As international systems of law and governance become increasingly contested, this exhibition forecasts creative approaches that move beyond the tenuous, imperfect pacts that have held the last century in place. As these systems collapse, they also release, creating space for new organising principles, where humans might develop with technology, where Indigenous knowledge is more central, and where the interconnectedness between humans and nature is reaffirmed.”

Director of TarraWarra Museum of Art, Dr Victoria Lynn, says: “The TarraWarra International series was inaugurated in 2013 with *Animate/Inanimate*, followed by *Pierre Huyghe* (2015), *All that is solid...* (2017) and *The Tangible Trace* (2019). Each exhibition has brought compelling and relevant international artists to TarraWarra Museum of Art, often in dialogue with Australian artists.

We are delighted to welcome Dr Emily Cormack back to the Museum – she curated the TarraWarra Biennial 2018: *From Will to Form* – and we look forward to this imaginative and thoughtful new iteration of the TarraWarra International.”

The exhibition features artists **Daniel Boyd** (Kudjala, Ghungalu, Wangerriburra, Wakka Wakka, Gubbi Gubbi, Kuku Yalanji, Yuggera and Bundjalung man from North Queensland, Australia, and North Pentecost Island in Vanuatu), **Francis Carmody** (Naarm/Melbourne, Australia), **Megan Cope** (Quandamooka, south-east Queensland, Australia), **José Dávila** (Mexico), **Alicia Frankovich** (Aotearoa/New Zealand and Naarm/Melbourne, Australia), **Marco Fusinato** (Naarm/Melbourne, Australia), **Nikau Hindin** (Te Rarawa/Ngāpuhi, Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland, Aotearoa/New Zealand), **Nicholas Mangan** (Naarm/Melbourne, Australia), **Dane Mitchell** (Aotearoa/New Zealand and Naarm/Melbourne, Australia), and **Shannon Te Ao** (Ngāti Tūwhareta, Aotearoa/New Zealand).

Working across sculpture, installation, moving image and assemblage, each artist brings forward ideas and objects that illuminate the shifting interplay between order and chaos underpinning civic society.

Alicia Frankovich (Aotearoa/New Zealand and Naarm/Melbourne, Australia) and **Francis Carmody** (Naarm/Melbourne, Australia) present major new commissions informed by post-humanist philosophies. Frankovich’s new sculptural work draws on creatures found in the deep sea and technologies of outer space, connecting biological and cosmic systems. Carmody’s work explores appetite as the force that drives progress, collapsing the cycles of natural food chains with industrial supply chains.

Māori artists **Nikau Hindin** (Te Rarawa/Ngāpuhi) and **Shannon Te Ao** (Ngāti Tūwharetoa) draw on Indigenous knowledge systems as central to proposing new futures. Globally renowned artist Hindin will present a series of manu aute (bark cloth kites). These kite-like forms reference an Indigenous technology used by Māori for centuries for divination, communication and oceanic navigation. Walter’s Prize-winning artist Te Ao presents a three-screen video work that embodies the tiwakawaka (a small fantail-like bird) and its role within Māori mythology. The tiwakawaka can transcend the divisions between worlds and species, and even the divide between film and life.

Indigenous artist **Daniel Boyd** (Kudjala, Ghungalu, Wangerriburra, Wakka Wakka, Gubbi Gubbi, Kuku Yalanji, Yuggera and Bundjalung) revisits his commission for the TarraWarra Biennial 2014: *Whisper in My Mask*, in which vinyl stenopeic lenses are applied to the Museum’s north window. These lenses interrupt the view beyond to symbolically disrupt the power of representation and perception. **Dane Mitchell** (Aotearoa/New Zealand and Naarm/Melbourne), who represented Aotearoa New Zealand at the 58th Venice Biennale in 2019, presents a work involving homeopathic formulas – one to aid memory and one to erase it – sprayed onto the Museum’s windows, offering the potential to remedy the body, the mind and the Museum itself as a comment on the modernist art museum as an institutional force.

Works by **Megan Cope** (Quandamooka, south-east Queensland, Australia) and **Nicholas Mangan** (Naarm/Melbourne, Australia) engage geological time as a record of our past and an indication of what our future might hold. Cope, a Quandamooka artist, employs oyster shells in her sculptural installations to refer to the middens of Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island). Mangan’s work delves into zircon, a 4.4-billion-year-old mineral found in some of the Earth’s earliest crust in Western Australia, using film, photography and sculpture to explore the mineral’s crushed dust.

Marco Fusinato (Naarm/Melbourne) presents large-scale screenprints from his *DESASTRES* project, originally presented at the 59th Venice Biennale, examining mining, neoliberalism and the forces of greed and consumption through images that signal the breakdown of civil, social and celestial systems.

Mexican artist **José Dávila** presents a major new sculptural assemblage configured specifically for TarraWarra Museum of Art, combining a range of materials with gravity and chance to evoke the precarious balance between humans and the natural world. The work invites audiences to reflect on their own agency and responsibility in shaping relationships with each other and with the environment.

System Release is accompanied by a dynamic public program including artist talks, a forum and a day of music exploring the relationship between improvisation and instruction as a way of thinking about order and chaos in sound. **A full-colour 100-page catalogue will include essays and insights by leading thinkers in this field.**

ABOUT TARRAWARRA INTERNATIONAL: Established in 2013, the TarraWarra International series supports Australian artists to present their work within a global context by exhibiting alongside leading contemporary practitioners from abroad. The initiative situates their practices within international conversations and expands opportunities for critical engagement with contemporary art.

Each edition of TarraWarra International has explored key developments in contemporary practice, from relationships between the animate and inanimate to shifting experiences of temporality and speculative responses to the archive, including *Animate/Inanimate* (2013), *Pierre Huyghe* (2015), *All that is solid...* (2017) and *The Tangible Trace* (2019).

Paused during and after the global pandemic, the program returns in 2026 with *System Release*, curated by Dr Emily Cormack; now alternating every two years with the TarraWarra Biennial, the series remains committed to rigorous curatorial research, ambitious new commissions and providing audiences with accessible, thought-provoking encounters with major works by leading Australian and international artists.

ENDS

IMAGE CAPTIONS: (Left) Marco Fusinato, *DESASTRES dlce34aza7o1pjlcet7q*, 2024. Liquitex titanium white heavy-body acrylic with gloss and screen-print medium on Belle Arti 96U Fine 360gsm black double-primed linen. 150 × 240 cm. Courtesy of the artist and PALAS, Sydney. (Right) José Dávila, *Esfuerzo Común*, 2022. Concrete, metal, boulders, volcanic rock, one-way mirror, strap 185 (H) × 660 (L) × 315 (W) cm. Courtesy of the artist and OMR, Mexico City.

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IMAGES available [HERE](#)

ABOUT TARRAWARRA MUSEUM OF ART: TarraWarra Museum of Art is a leading not-for-profit public art museum presenting inventive and thought-provoking exhibitions and programs on twentieth- and twenty-first-century Australian art. The Museum is home to one of the nation's most significant collections, spanning from the 1930s to today. Its permanent collection was established through the generous donation of more than 600 artworks by the late Marc Besen AC and Eva Besen AO, its founding patrons. Located in the heart of the Yarra Valley, the Museum fosters deep engagement with art, place and ideas. Its remarkable natural setting and immersive architectural environment offer visitors a space for curiosity, reflection and imagination.

The Museum's newest addition, the Eva and Marc Besen Centre, expands this vision through its purpose-built Visible Art Storage for more than 300 works, alongside a learning centre and performance space designed by Kerstin Thompson Architects. Since opening, the Centre has received major national recognition, including the Australian Institute of Architects' Victorian Chapter's William Wardell Award for Public Architecture, the Victorian Award for Interior Architecture, and the National Award for Public Architecture at the 2025 National Architecture Awards.

The Visible Art Storage recently underwent its first major rehang, foregrounding trailblazing Australian women artists in the *Behind the Glass* display. Bringing together works by Davida Allen, Yvonne Audette, Kate Beynon, Angela Brennan, Virginia Cuppidge, Janet Dawson, Lesley Dumbrell, Rosalie Gascoigne, Melinda Harper, Emily Kam Ngwarray, Hilarie Mais, Mandy Martin, Erica McGilchrist, Susan Norrie, Margaret Preston, Angelina Pwerle, Vivienne Shark LeWitt, Dawn Sime, Aida Tomescu, Michelle Ussher and Jenny Watson, the rehang reasserts women's contributions within Australia's art history. The Visible Art Storage is accessible to visitors through scheduled guided tours.

CURATORIAL TEAM: In 2025, TarraWarra Museum of Art renewed and expanded its curatorial leadership. Alongside Director Dr Victoria Lynn (appointed in April 2012), the team now includes, since April 2025, Dr Emily Cormack, Head of Exhibitions and Programs; James Lynch, Curator; and Emma Nixon, Assistant Curator:

Dr Victoria Lynn (she/her) – Director | Dr Victoria Lynn has been Director of TarraWarra Museum of Art since 2012 and is a widely published author on contemporary art. At TarraWarra, she has curated and co-curated several major exhibitions, including *Rose Nolan: Breathing Helps* (2025), *The Soils Project* (2023), TarraWarra International 2017: *All That Is Solid...*, TarraWarra International 2015: *Pierre Huyghe*, and TarraWarra Biennial 2012: *Sonic Spheres*. She previously served as Visual Arts Curator for the Adelaide Festival (2010, 2012), establishing and curating the Adelaide International exhibitions. Lynn has also curated internationally for the Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art (Korea), the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, and the Auckland Triennial. She has held senior roles at ACMI and the Art Gallery of New South Wales and was Chair of the Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council.

Dr Emily Cormack (she/her) – Head of Exhibitions and Programs | Dr Emily Cormack is a curator, writer and academic whose practice spans more than two decades across Australia, Aotearoa, the Asia Pacific and Europe. She joined TarraWarra Museum of Art in April 2025, bringing a deeply artist-centred and research-driven approach to the Museum's exhibitions and programs. Cormack has held significant curatorial roles, including Artistic Director and Curator of Melbourne Art Fair; Curator of the TarraWarra Biennial 2018: *From Will to Form*; Curator, Public Art at Monash University; Curator at Gertrude Contemporary, and Curator, Adam Art Gallery, Wellington. She has curated and co-curated over 50 exhibitions in Australia, including *Primavera: Young Australian Artists* (MCA, 2016), as well as exhibitions in Malaysia, Italy, South Korea, Aotearoa/New Zealand and Singapore. She has a PhD from Monash University, Melbourne (2021), and has published numerous texts on art and art theory, most recently a chapter in the Monash University publication *Let's Go Outside: Art in Public Spaces*.

James Lynch (he/him) – Curator | James Lynch is a Naarm/Melbourne-based artist and curator who has worked across the university and museum sectors for more than two decades. Most recently, he served as Curator at Deakin University, where he developed survey exhibitions for leading Australian artists, including Jumaadi, Fayen d'Evie, Sarah Goffman and Charlie Sofo, as well as thematic group exhibitions such as *Conversations in Space* and *Holding in the Hand*. Lynch previously held the role of Curator, Collection, at Monash University Museum of Art. Since joining TarraWarra, he has co-curated the collection exhibition *The City Wakes, The City Sleeps*, which is currently on display until March 2026, as well as *Behind the Glass*, the first rehang of the Eva and Marc Besen Centre's Visible Art Storage, highlighting trailblazing women artists from Australia.

Emma Nixon (she/her) – Assistant Curator | Emma Nixon joined TarraWarra Museum of Art as Assistant Curator in 2025. She has held roles across several contemporary art organisations, including Gallery Manager at Neon Parc, Museum Assistant at Monash University Museum of Art, Gallery Assistant at Haydens, and Research Officer within Monash Art, Design and Architecture. Nixon's 2021 Honours thesis, completed in Art History and Curating at Monash University, was peer-reviewed and published in *Findings* journal. She has co-curated exhibitions such as *John Nixon–Four Decades, Five Hundred Prints* (Geelong Gallery, 2023) and *A Fictional Retrospective: Gertrude's First Decade 1985–1995* (Gertrude Contemporary, 2025). She recently worked in the Netherlands on *The Clock Wife* (Tale of A Tub, Rotterdam), representing the John Nixon Estate. Nixon has written for institutions including the National Gallery of Victoria, Geelong Gallery, Gertrude Contemporary and Liquid Architecture's *Disclaimer* journal. Since joining TarraWarra, she has co-curated *Behind the Glass*, the first rehang of the Eva and Marc Besen Centre's Visible Art Storage, highlighting trailblazing women artists from Australia.

TarraWarra Museum of Art

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