

TarraWarra Museum of Art | Marketing and Communications

Timothée Nicot | Manager | timothee@twma.com.au

Sunni Hart | Coordinator | sunni@twma.com.au

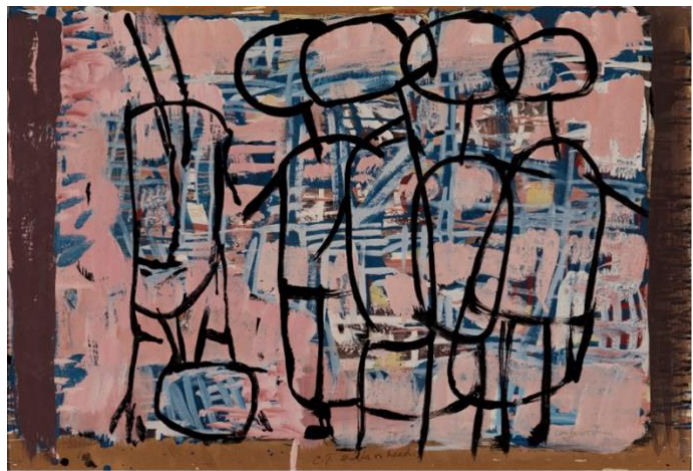
Inside the Mirage

A group exhibition shaped by the enigmatic works of Ian Fairweather and John Young, exploring connections across diasporas, time and place.

Curated by James Lynch

25 July – 1 November 2026

TarraWarra Museum of Art, Wurundjeri Country



Left: John Young, *Fairweather Transformation XXIV* 2026, oil on Belgian linen, 75 x 93 cm.
© John Young, courtesy of the artist, Arc One Gallery, Melbourne and Olsen Gallery, Sydney

Right: Ian Fairweather, *Chi-tien stands on head* 1964, synthetic polymer paint and gouache on cardboard, 64.8 x 99.1 cm.

TarraWarra Museum of Art Collection. Gift of Eva Besen AO and Marc Besen AO.

Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program 2014 © Ian Fairweather. DACS/Copyright Agency, 2026.

Healesville, Wurundjeri Country, Monday 1 June 2026

TarraWarra Museum of Art announced today its upcoming group exhibition, *Inside the Mirage*, shaped by the imaginative and philosophical worlds of artists Ian Fairweather (1891–1974) and John Young (b. 1956), curated by TarraWarra Museum of Art Curator James Lynch. Drawing these two practices into dialogue, the exhibition, on view at the Museum from 25 July until 1 November 2026, highlights new perspectives and connections between Australian art history and the present.

Alongside Young and Fairweather, the exhibition features nine contemporary artists from across Australia whose works foreground shared and inherited stories as their basis, revealing the intertwined histories and complex cultural narratives that shape our contemporary identities and worldviews.

A nostalgia for the past can be hallucinatory, a warping of time and space. *Inside the Mirage* explores the ways artists navigate the complex contradictions of cross-cultural existence and the weight of lives lived between multiple worlds.

Since 2015, Naarm/Melbourne-based artist John Young has engaged in an ongoing artistic conversation with the works of modernist Scottish-Australian artist Ian Fairweather. His interpretations act as cultural translations, reimagining Fairweather's engagement with the Chinese language, philosophy and poetry through contemporary painting and digital imaging. *Inside the Mirage* presents this exchange as a living, cross-generational discussion, exploring the intersection of European modernism and Daoist philosophy, a synthesis that Fairweather pioneered decades earlier.

The exhibition prominently features pairings of works by the two artists, creating a visual bridge that contextualises Young's recent *Transformation* series with historical works by Fairweather from the TarraWarra Museum of Art Collection.

Inside the Mirage further expands these discussions by including nine contemporary Australian artists. Their works and practices explore the ways relationships between artists, timelines, geographic and cultural contexts, and the stories we tell become entangled.

The exhibition presents significant works by some of Australia's leading practitioners of the past three decades, including Gordon Bennett, Mikala Dwyer, Narelle Jubelin, Michael Stevenson, My Le Thi, Zhou Xiaoping and Johnny Bulunbulun, Meng Yu Yan and William Yang.

The exhibition includes the presentation of twelve rarely seen paintings by one of Australia's most enigmatic artists, Ian Fairweather. TarraWarra Museum of Art's Fairweather works are seen in combination with artworks on loan from the Art Gallery of South Australia and the Queensland Art Gallery.

James Lynch, Curator at TarraWarra Museum of Art, explains: *'It has been an enormous privilege to research Ian Fairweather in developing this exhibition. Despite the various hardships he faced, his life, practice and creative research interests were so forward-looking for his time, and his paintings have struck a chord far beyond his lifetime. His works are a cherished part of the canon. Artists from John Olsen to Aida Tomescu have found inspiration in Fairweather's work from his time living in Darwin, Cairns, Melbourne and Bribie Island; his unique artistic legacy continues. John Young is exemplary in this regard, keeping Fairweather's story alive and current through his own painting process. This exhibition is a once-in-a-lifetime kind of project: putting into context Fairweather's rarely seen works alongside a whole new generation of contemporary Australian artists, traversing many different worlds and life experiences, to expand and reflect on Fairweather's appreciation for cultural dialogue and exchange.'*

Lynch continues: *'Across diasporas, time and place, Inside the Mirage weaves loose threads together to humanise the mythical and to generate new narratives of social belonging, inviting us to reimagine our relationships with one another and the worlds we share.'*

A significant accompanying publication will bring together essays offering new scholarship and critical insight into the exhibition's themes. Contributors include the exhibition curator James Lynch and Dr Jacqueline Lo, Director of the Indo-Pacific Research Centre (IPRC) at Murdoch University, Western Australia, and Genevieve Trail, art historian and Senior Tutor at the University of Melbourne.

TarraWarra Museum of Art Director, Dr Victoria Lynn, observes: *'The works by Ian Fairweather in this exhibition are as fresh and dynamic as they were when they were first made. The Museum owns twelve works by this significant Australian modernist. They are brought to life through a scintillating juxtaposition with John Young and nine Australian artists (some also represented by works from our Collection), demonstrating the importance of cross-cultural entanglements in the worlds that artists create.'*

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Inside the Mirage will be accompanied by a series of curated public programs to enliven the exhibition: an in-conversation artist talk with John Young and art historian Claire Roberts; an interactive keynote lecture by William Yang; and a walking tour of the exhibition with live translation into Mandarin with artist Meng Yu Yan and curator James Lynch.

- **Saturday 15 August, 2–4 pm:**
Keynote lecture by artist William Yang
- **Saturday 5 September, 3–4.30 pm:**
An in-conversation with John Young and Claire Roberts
- **Saturday 3 October, 2–3.30 pm:**
Exhibition tour with Meng Yu Yan with Mandarin translation

Inside the Mirage is exclusively on show at TarraWarra Museum of Art from 25 July to 1 November 2026. For more information and to book tickets, visit twma.com.au.

ENDS

BIOGRAPHIES

Ian Fairweather (1891–1974) was the last of nine children and grew up in a village in Stirlingshire, Scotland, where he was raised by his aunts until the age of ten. After completing his schooling in London and Switzerland, he joined the army and served as a lieutenant on the French front lines during the First World War. Soon captured, he spent three years in a prisoner-of-war camp. After the war, he returned to London and studied art at the Slade School under Henry Tonks, as well as studying Japanese and Chinese languages and philosophy at the University of London. Fairweather travelled extensively in the 1920s and 1930s, living in Beijing, China, and travelling throughout Southeast Asia. After living in Melbourne, Cairns and Darwin for extended periods, Fairweather settled on remote Bribie Island, Queensland, in 1954, where he remained until his death. Fairweather’s work was first exhibited in Melbourne at Cynthia Reed’s studio and gallery in 1934, and he held regular solo exhibitions at Macquarie Galleries, Sydney, throughout the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Fairweather was included in major exhibitions such as the Carnegie Institute International exhibition, Pittsburgh (1937), and *Australian Painting: Colonial, Impressionist, Contemporary* at the Tate Gallery, London (1963). He represented Australia at the *VII Bienal de São Paulo*, Brazil (1963).

John Young AM was born in Hong Kong in 1956 and moved to Sydney to study in 1967. Since his first exhibition in 1979, Young has become one of Australia’s foremost senior contemporary artists, noted for his discursive and scholarly approach. Young has held more than eighty solo exhibitions worldwide, as well as four major survey exhibitions. His work has been presented in major exhibitions both in Australia and internationally, including at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Kennedy Centre, Washington; and the Aga Khan Museum, Toronto. In the past decade, Young developed two major bodies of work: *The History Projects*, focusing on histories of violence and benevolence, later developing this into a visual history of the Chinese in Australia since 1840; and *Abstract Paintings*, a reassessment of technology’s devastation of bodily skills and knowledge. John Young is represented by Arc One, Melbourne; Philip Bacon Galleries, Brisbane; and Moore Contemporary, Perth.

James Lynch is a Naarm/Melbourne-based artist and curator who has worked across the university and museum sectors for more than two decades. In 2025, he joined the TarraWarra Museum of Art as Curator, co-curating the collection exhibition *The City Wakes, The City Sleeps*, as well as *Behind the Glass*, the first rehang of the Eva and Marc Besen Centre’s Visible Art Storage, which highlighted trailblazing women artists from Australia. Previously, 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, Holding in the Hand* and many more. Prior to this, Lynch held the role of

TarraWarra Museum of Art | Marketing and Communications

Timothée Nicot | Manager | timothee@twma.com.au

Sunni Hart | Coordinator | sunni@twma.com.au

Curator, Collection, at the Monash University Museum of Art. His curatorial work has elaborated alternative narratives and new perspectives on the relationships between art, artists and the contexts in which they operate.

BACKGROUND

TarraWarra Museum of Art has a significant connection to both John Young and Ian Fairweather. In 2005, the Museum presented John Young's first survey exhibition, *Orient/Occident*, curated by the late Maudie Palmer AO and spanning 27 years of work. In 2012, the Museum presented the three-person exhibition *Passages* with artists Brian Castro, Khai Liew and John Young. In 2015, TarraWarra Museum of Art partnered with the University of Queensland and curator Steven Alderton to re-present Ian Fairweather's 1965 exhibition *The Drunken Buddha* in its entirety and to help republish the second edition of Fairweather's translation of the ancient Chinese folk tale.

PRESS IMAGES

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE PRESS PACK OF IMAGES](#)

This press pack includes a selection of images made available for press use. Images must not be cropped, resized or altered, and must always be accompanied by the corresponding credits and copyright information. Any additional image requests should be directed to the contacts listed on page 7.



Left: John Young, *Transculture, Colourful Beast* 2003, digital print and oil on canvas, 300 x 445.5 cm (overall). TarraWarra Museum of Art Collection. Purchased 2004 © John Young, courtesy of the artist; Arc One Gallery, Melbourne; Philip Bacon Galleries, Brisbane; and Moore Contemporary, Perth.

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 on Wurrundjeri Country, 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, which opened in May 2025, expands this vision through its purpose-built Visible Art Storage for more than 300 works, as well as 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 is accessible to visitors through scheduled guided tours.

COMING UP AT TARRAWARRA MUSEUM OF ART

LIGHT WEIGHT

21 November 2026 – 28 February 2027

Curated by Dr Emily Cormack, TarraWarra Museum of Art Head of Exhibitions and Events

Bringing together major works from the TarraWarra Museum of Art Collection alongside new commissions and loans by leading Australian artists, *Light Weight* explores the material, poetic and symbolic qualities of light across painting, photography, film and installation. Spanning early-twentieth-century tonalism to contemporary experimental practices, the exhibition considers how artists have used light to imprint form, animate the spectrum, shape atmosphere, and imbue meaning within Australian art.

TarraWarra Museum of Art | Marketing and Communications

Timothée Nicot | Manager | timothee@twma.com.au

Sunni Hart | Coordinator | sunni@twma.com.au

MEDIA CONTACTS

Timothée Nicot | 0404 771 833

Sunni Hart | 0406 547 779

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

TarraWarra Museum of Art is supported by

SUPPORTED BY



INAUGURAL FOUNDATION SUPPORTER



SPONSORS



MUSEUM PARTNERS



LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM SUPPORTERS



MEDIA PARTNERS

