

TarraWarra Museum of Art announces its 2026–27 program

From a focus on water in the Collection to the weight of light in our summer show; from a new TarraWarra International exhibition in collaboration with Mumbai, to the tenth TarraWarra Biennial: a rich program of exhibitions, performances and encounters in the Yarra Valley



TarraWarra Museum of Art. Photo © Rory Gardiner.

Healesville, Wurundjeri Country, Monday 7 September 2026 | TarraWarra Museum of Art today announces its program spanning the second half of 2026 and the first half of 2027.

Opening in September, *Waterways*, a new Collection rehang in the Eva and Marc Besen Centre, is accompanied by exclusive *Behind the Glass* tours, while the Museum's first composer-in-residence begins work in partnership with the Australian Art Orchestra. *Light Weight*, a Collection-led summer exhibition, arrives in November, followed by the return of the *TarraWarra Festival* with the Australian Chamber Orchestra in February 2027. Autumn brings a new TarraWarra International exhibition, *Under the Same Sky*, a joint project with the Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation, CSMVS, Mumbai, presented in two iterations across both countries. The tenth edition of the TarraWarra Biennial, *This Hand of Mine*, curated by Dr Mikala Tai, opens in July 2027. Providing wider community access, the Museum has launched a new *TarraWarra Day Trip*, a return bus from Federation Square on the first Saturday of every month during exhibitions.

TarraWarra Museum of Art Director, Dr Victoria Lynn, says: “*The year ahead brings art, music, and conversation together in a series of original exhibitions, a renewed Collection display, and extraordinary performances in and around the Museum and its grounds.*”

AT A GLANCE:

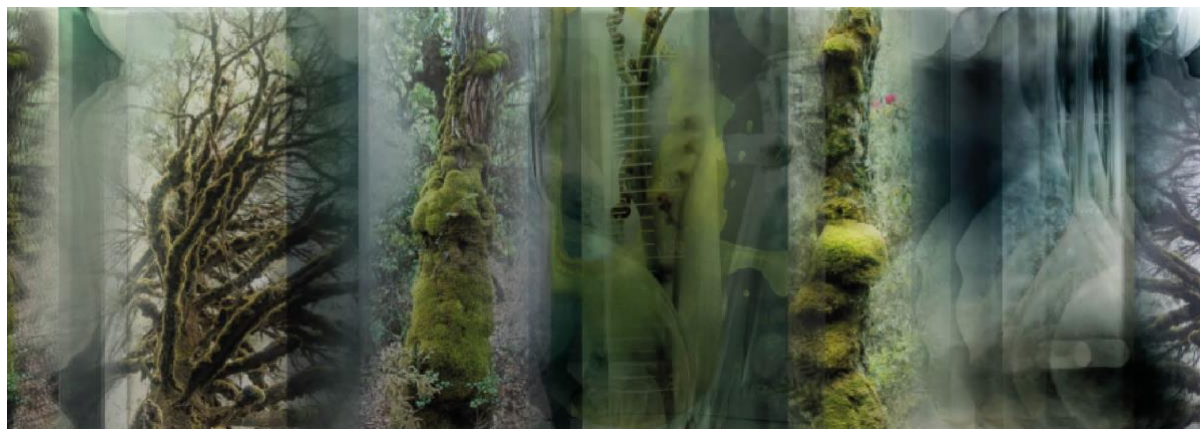
- ***Behind the Glass: Waterways*** | From 5 September 2026 | Curated by Emma Nixon
- **TarraWarra Live featuring the Australian Art Orchestra** | 29 November 2026
- ***Light Weight*** | 28 November 2026 – 28 February 2027 | Curated by Dr Emily Cormack
- **TarraWarra Festival featuring the Australian Chamber Orchestra** | 27–28 February 2027
- **TarraWarra International 2027: *Under the Same Sky*** | 20 March – 11 July 2027
Curated by Dr Victoria Lynn & Puja Vaish
- **TarraWarra Biennial 2027: *This Hand of Mine*** | 31 July – 21 November 2027 | Curated by Dr Mikala Tai

COLLECTION

Behind the Glass: Waterways

From 5 September 2026 | Visible Art Storage, Eva and Marc Besen Centre

Curated by Emma Nixon



Janet Laurence, *Sacred Green* (from the series *Chlorophyll Collapse*), 2018. TarraWarra Museum of Art Collection, Purchased 2018.

In Wurundjeri Woiwurrung language, *TarraWarra* translates approximately as ‘slow moving waters’. The new rehang of the Visible Art Storage in the Eva and Marc Besen Centre, *Waterways*, invites us to explore how Australian artists have depicted and evoked water since 1945 in the TarraWarra Museum of Art Collection.

Artists have always sought to capture the beauty of the natural world. Beaches, rivers, forests, waterfalls, gardens and harbours have long been subjects of the Australian identity and subconscious. The display screens of the Visible Art Storage feature iconic moments from the canon of Australian art history: Brett Whiteley’s ultramarine Sydney Harbour from Lavender Bay; Leonard French’s multi-coloured turtles and fish; Janet Laurence’s mossy forest canopies at risk of deforestation; Brent Harris’ surreal monochromatic ‘swamp’ tendrils; the strength of Judy Watson’s fish spine melding into her stained canvas; Imants Tillers’ metaphysical appropriation of a colonial Eugene von Guérard waterfall; and the glistening brushstrokes waving through Janet Dawson’s *Ripple*. These works capture the life-giving force of water, and the powerful ways it sustains and nourishes our everyday ecologies.

“Water teaches us that nothing stands alone. To follow a river, a bog, a glacier, or an estuary is to move through worlds that precede us and worlds that will outlast us. In its motion, water gathers stories, sediments histories, sutures continents, and reveals the frictions that shape our present planetary condition...It is migrant, cyclical, vulnerable, and yet infinitely resilient.”

– *The Word for World Is Water: World-Building and Creative Resistance Through Liquid Alliances*, ed. Katya Garcia-Anton/Margarida Mendes, Spector Books, Leipzig, 2026

Behind the Glass Tours: Step into the heart of TarraWarra Museum of Art’s permanent Collection. Tours run every Thursday and Saturday at 11.30 am, 1 pm and 3 pm. Duration: 45–60 minutes.

COMPOSER IN RESIDENCE PROGRAM AND CONCERTS

***TarraWarra Live*
featuring the Australian Art Orchestra**

29 November 2026 | Eva and Marc Besen Centre

Presented with the Australian Art Orchestra (AAO) | Artistic Director: Aaron Choulai

A World Premiere of TarraWarra's Inaugural Composer in Residence, Biddy Connor; *Structures We Inherit*, a new work by AAO Artistic Director Aaron Choulai; and AAO First Nations Artist in Residence, Adam Manning.



Left: The Australian Art Orchestra performing at TarraWarra Museum of Art in October 2025. Photo © Paoli Smith Creative for TarraWarra Museum of Art.
Right: Biddy Connor playing viola. Photo © Bryony Jackson.

An afternoon of live music featuring the World Premiere of a new composition created specifically for TarraWarra Museum of Art by Biddy Connor, our inaugural Composer in Residence, along with a full program of new work performed and composed by the Australian Art Orchestra.

Australian Art Orchestra (AAO) and TarraWarra Museum of Art are proud to present *TarraWarra Live* featuring the World Premiere of our inaugural Composer in Residence Commission, along with new works by AAO Artistic Director Aaron Choulai and AAO First Nations Artist in Residence Adam Manning. Each work in the TarraWarra Live series expresses the Museum's values of Art, Place and Ideas across different disciplines, connecting audiences with newly commissioned creative works in live formats.

Headlining the afternoon's program is the World Premiere of a new composition by the inaugural Composer in Residence, Biddy Connor. The AAO will perform Connor's new composition for string quartet, which sits at the intersection of music and visual art and draws inspiration from artworks in the Museum's Collection and the surrounding landscape. Connor's new work explores the resonant possibilities of tuning forks and strings, along with spatial improvisations across TarraWarra Museum's garden and museum spaces.

Papua New Guinean-Australian composer and Artistic Director of the Australian Art Orchestra, Aaron Choulai, will also be presenting his new work entitled *Structures We Inherit*. This new 20 min work for improvising chamber ensemble unfolds as a live, site-responsive composition shaped through sonokinetic conducting, a conducting language Choulai developed that allows the AAO to collectively form

music in real time. Without the use of a fixed score, the music emerges through attentive listening, shared agency and moment-to-moment decision-making in a dialogue between the conductor and ensemble.

The afternoon highlights Kamilaroi percussionist and composer Adam Manning on clapsticks and auxiliary percussion, bringing rhythmic elements rooted in First Nations approaches and concepts into the composition. Adam Manning was the Australian Art Orchestra's First Nations Artist in Residence in 2025. Manning is a musician, artist and researcher at the University of Newcastle, NSW.

As an original Custodial Descendant of Kamilaroi Barray (Land), and a composer/percussionist and artist/designer, his rhythmic expression connects him to Land, People, Culture and Story and articulates the natural frequency (heartbeat) of Ngaya Barray (Mother Earth). His musical expertise has led him to share the stage with distinguished ensembles such as the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra & the Australian Art Orchestra. His compositions have featured on ABC Classic, Ensemble Offspring, and the Melbourne International Jazz Festival.

TarraWarra Live and our Composer in Residence program reflect the Australian Art Orchestra and TarraWarra Museum of Art's shared commitment to commissioning new Australian work, enabling cross-pollination between visual arts and music.

Tickets will be available in October.



AUSTRALIAN ART ORCHESTRA/

aao.com.au

The Robert Salzer Foundation and an anonymous donor support the commission.



SUMMER EXHIBITION

Light Weight

28 November 2026 – 28 February 2027 | Museum

Over thirty celebrated artists revealing the transformative power of light

Curated by Dr Emily Cormack



Left: Russell Drysdale, *Evening*, 1945. TarraWarra Museum of Art Collection. Gift of Eva Besen AO and Marc Besen AC, donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2013. Right: Len Lye, still from *Rainbow Dance*, 1935. Courtesy of the Len Lye Foundation and British Postal Museum and Archive.

This playful exhibition explores the materiality and poetry of light, experimenting with light's metaphorical and symbolic qualities, as well as its material and physical properties. Exploring light's ability to elucidate and enlighten, make visible and splinter into a colour spectrum, the exhibition conjures poetic, generative and structural aspects of light, bridging the worlds of poetry and physics and informing how we perceive and exist in the world.

Light Weight features a rich selection of paintings and photography from the TarraWarra Museum of Art Collection, alongside a major site-responsive installation commission by Naarm-based artist Natasha Johns-Messenger and works on loan from leading Australian contemporary artists. Clarice Beckett's atmospheric tonalism appears alongside the intense chiaroscuro of Rick Amor and Louise Hearman; Godfrey Miller, Len Lye and John Passmore explode light into fractal arrays; the abstraction of the 1970s and 1980s finds meaning in the material forms of Robert Hunter. Jeremy Eaton's photosensitive dyes capture light directly onto canvas, while Len Lye's hand-dyed scratch films are shown with Danica Chappell's camera-less photography. The exhibition questions the apparent weightlessness of light. Rather, it is immaterial yet omnipresent, heavy with the load it carries.

Featured artists: Rick Amor, Clarice Beckett, Lynne Boyd, Arthur Boyd, Andrew Browne, Jon Cattapan, Danica Chappell, Ray Croke, Russell Drysdale, Jeremy Eaton, Dale Frank, Mark Galea, Rosalie Gascoigne, Louise Hearman, Robert Hunter, Natasha Johns-Messenger, Len Lye, Taree Mackenzie, Tim Maguire, Hilarie Mais, Ross Manning, Godfrey Miller, Callum Morton, John Olsen, John Passmore, Lloyd Rees, Tim Storrier, Albert Tucker, Brett Whiteley, Fred Williams, Philip Wolfhagen.

CONCERTS AND WORKSHOP

TarraWarra Festival 2027
featuring the Australian Chamber Orchestra

Saturday 27 and Sunday 28 February 2027 | Eva and Marc Besen Centre

Presented with the Australian Chamber Orchestra | Artistic Director Richard Tognetti



TarraWarra Festival 2026: The Australian Chamber Orchestra, led by Richard Tognetti, at the Eva and Marc Besen Centre. Photo © Thomas McCammon.

A landmark event on TarraWarra Museum of Art's summer calendar, the TarraWarra Festival returns in 2027 for two days of music, art and conversation in the heart of the Yarra Valley. Led by Artistic Director Richard Tognetti, the Australian Chamber Orchestra (ACO) takes to the Eva and Marc Besen Centre for a weekend of three concerts and a workshop, bringing audiences together across music, architecture, art and place.

Across the weekend, audiences will move between the two buildings, with chamber music programs performed in the Kerstin Thompson Architects–designed performance space, workshops and conversations with the musicians, and time to experience the Museum's exhibitions during the closing days of *Light Weight*.

Set among the vineyards and indigenous garden on Wurundjeri Country, the Festival offers a unique opportunity to experience Richard Tognetti and the ACO in an intimate setting, where listening and looking inform one another.

Festival tickets will also include food and wine from the cellar door, making for an unforgettable summer weekend at TarraWarra. Full program details, repertoire, participating musicians and ticketing information will be announced soon.

Tickets will launch on 9 October 2026

ACO

aco.com.au

TARRAWARRA INTERNATIONAL 2027 | WITH THE JNAF FOUNDATION, CSMVS, MUMBAI

Under the Same Sky

20 March – 11 July 2027, TarraWarra Museum of Art

3 September 2027 – 16 January 2028, Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation, CSMVS, Mumbai

A shared attentiveness to complexity, diversity and contradiction in the contemporary world.

Curated by Dr Victoria Lynn and Puja Vaish



Left: Sohrab Hura, still from *The Coast*, 2020. Courtesy of the artist and Experimenter. Right: Lavanya Mani, *Rahu*, 2024 (detail). Courtesy of the artist and Chemould Prescott Road, Mumbai.

In a world always in motion, lived realities exceed narrow associations with geography. *Under the Same Sky* is a joint exhibition by TarraWarra Museum of Art, Australia, as part of the TarraWarra International 2027 series, and the Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS Museum), Mumbai. The artists live and work on Boonwurrung, Wurundjeri and Kamilaroi Country, Odisha, Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Athurugiriya, Dhaka, Sydney, Melbourne and Berlin, and together their works consider how we might understand the contemporary world – not through fixed ideas of origin, nationality or region, but through the connections, histories and conditions that shape how we live and share it.

Through myth, metaphor, humour, fact and fiction, the artists reveal personal histories, ancestral lineages and diasporic experiences, alongside systemic forces and colonial pasts whose echoes inform the present. Their chosen media – painting, film, photography, textile, sculpture, assemblage, installation and performance – carry histories and inherently loaded legacies of their own, which inform the work. The works gather around acts of witnessing, contested borders, resilience and resistance, the creation and interrogation of archives, and the tracing and retelling of cultural traditions. Together, these works trace unexpected transcultural connections and tensions that make visible what is often left out of mainstream imaginings of the world.

Artists include: Khadim Ali, Sarnath Banerjee, Anju Dodiya, Gauri Gill, Simryn Gill, Shilpa Gupta, Sohrab Hura, Kirtika Kain, Yardena Kurulkar, Lavanya Mani, Brian Martin with Srinivas Gomango and Deeptimayee Patro, Amol Patil, Sangeeta Sandrasegar, Varunika Saraf, Mithu Sen, Hema Shironi and Munem Wasif.

The exhibition is co-curated by Dr Victoria Lynn, Director of TarraWarra Museum of Art, and Puja Vaish, Director of the Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation (JNAF), Mumbai. Following its presentation at TarraWarra Museum of Art, a second iteration will be presented in Mumbai from 3 September 2027 to 16 January 2028.

The project also benefits from the expertise of Anindita Banerjee, a regional Victorian-based performance artist and curator specialising in community participation. Banerjee will curate a lively program of interdisciplinary and interactive events designed to deepen engagement with local and diasporic audiences, expanding inclusion, equity and representation across the project.

ABOUT THE JEHangIR NICHOLSON ART FOUNDATION (JNAF)

The Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation is a non-profit organisation committed to preserving, exhibiting and updating the seminal collection of Indian art, acquired by Jehangir Nicholson, one of the earliest art collectors in India. In 2008, the JNAF entered into a collaboration with the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai (formerly the Prince of Wales Museum), where it functions as the museum's modern and contemporary art wing. With over 800 artworks, the collection reflects crucial phases of Indian art history from the 1940s onwards. Through its exhibitions, programming and collaborations, the JNAF fosters critical dialogue, enabling new ways of approaching art history. The Foundation has held 39 exhibitions and published 22 books. Past collaborators include Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah; Foam Fotografiemuseum, Amsterdam; Tate, London; Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi; and Sher-Gil Sundaram Arts Foundation, New Delhi, among others.



JEHANGIR
NICHOLSON
ART FOUNDATION

jnaf.org | csmvs.in

The exhibition is supported by a Maitri Grant (maitri meaning “friendship” in Sanskrit) from the Centre for Australia-India Relations, which fosters greater exchange and collaboration between the Australian and Indian cultural, education, research and business communities.

The project has also been assisted by the Australian Government through Creative Australia, its principal arts investment and advisory body.



TARRAWARRA BIENNIAL 2027 | 10TH EDITION

This Hand of Mine

31 July – 21 November 2027 | Curated by Dr Mikala Tai

“Who is moving / This hand of mine?” – Kanjiro Kawai

There is a moment in the artistic process when everything stills. When the mind and body lock together and move with an intuitive rhythm, and the work appears as if manifested. It sometimes happens in the dead of night, or in an intense few hours that collapse into seeming minutes. In these moments, the act of making shifts from conscious thought to instinct, where an imperceptible alchemy seems to take hold. Curated by Dr Mikala Tai, TarraWarra Biennial 2027: *This Hand of Mine* dwells in this moment, asking what spectral forces are at play. The exhibition brings together artists who, collectively, propose the gallery as a site of blessing.

With *This Hand of Mine* marking its tenth edition, the TarraWarra Biennial explores where ideas arise, reflecting on the influence of superstition, ritual, and the power of thought and belief. Tai examines how artists draw on intuition, nature and material transformation to make sense of the world. Through works that engage the thresholds between the visible and the unseen, it invites audiences to consider the personal rituals, talismans and acts of faith that shape how we move through life.

Inaugurated in 2006 by TarraWarra Museum of Art’s founding Director, the late Maudie Palmer AO, the TarraWarra Biennial has presented the work of over 200 artists across nine editions, establishing itself as one of Australia’s most distinctive platforms for contemporary art. Each edition is conceived as an independent, experimental exhibition led by a guest curator: never a repeating format, always a distinct proposition.

Dr Mikala Tai says: *“I spent my early childhood in the hills encircling TarraWarra... To return in 2027 is deeply meaningful. I feel a responsibility to this place, where my imagination awakened, and my first friendships were formed, and I hope to anchor the TarraWarra Biennial with this sense of origin, connection, and return.”*

Dr Mikala Tai has been a defining presence in the Australian contemporary art sector for nearly two decades. Most recently Head of Visual Arts at Creative Australia, she was Project Director for Archie Moore’s *kith and kin*, awarded the Golden Lion at the 2024 Venice Biennale, the first Australian work to receive the prize. Previously Director of 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, she has also held roles at the National Gallery of Victoria and Para Site, Hong Kong.

Details of participating artists, the public program and the catalogue will be announced in 2027.

This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through Creative Australia, its principal arts investment and advisory body.



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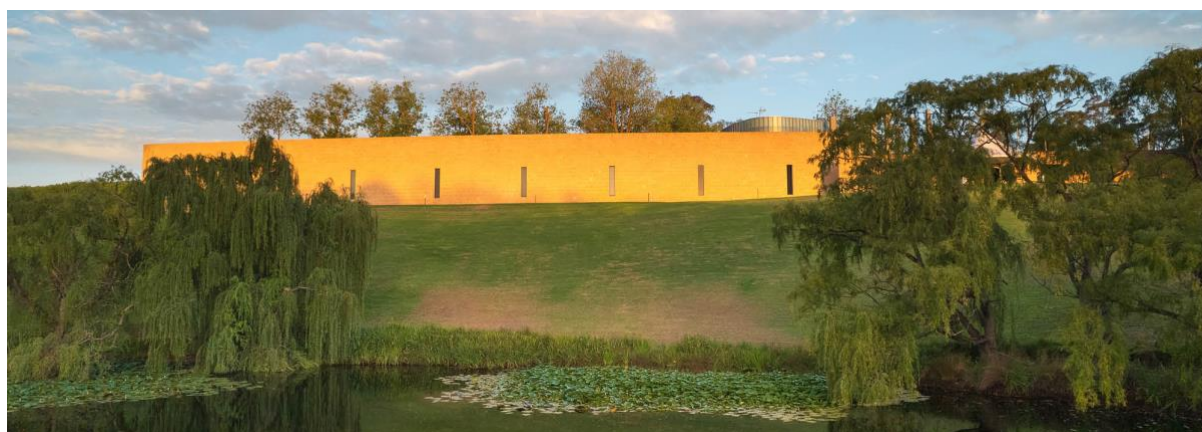
NEW OFFERING | FIRST SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH DURING EXHIBITIONS

TarraWarra Day Trip

Return bus from Federation Square

First Saturday of every month, during exhibitions only

A day in the Yarra Valley, all sorted!



View of TarraWarra Museum of Art. Photo © All Rights Reserved.

To provide wider community access, TarraWarra Museum of Art has launched a new *TarraWarra Day Trip*, offering return transport from Federation Square on the first Saturday of every month during exhibitions.

Departing Federation Square at 11.30 am, the bus takes visitors directly to the Museum in the heart of the Yarra Valley, with time to explore the current exhibition before departing TarraWarra at 4 pm and returning to Naarm-Melbourne's CBD at approximately 5.30 pm.

Limited to 24 passengers per departure, each ticket includes return transport and Museum entry. Visitors can also add a discounted *Behind the Glass* tour of the Eva and Marc Besen Centre's Visible Art Storage, subject to availability. Food and wine are available at the neighbouring TarraWarra Estate cellar door.

Tickets: \$40 general | \$32 senior | \$22 concession | \$10 members.

Departing Federation Square 11.30 am, returning from TarraWarra 4 pm.

[More information and booking on twma.com.au](https://twma.com.au)

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ABOUT TARRAWARRA MUSEUM OF ART



An event at dusk at the Eva and Marc Besen Centre, with the sculpture walk connecting the Allan Powell-designed Museum building and the Kerstin Thompson Architects-designed Centre. Photo © Paoli Smith Creative for 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 Wurundjeri 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, opened in March 2025 and expands this vision with purpose-built Visible Art Storage for more than 300 works, plus 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. Visitors can access Visible Art Storage through scheduled *Behind the Glass* guided tours.

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TarraWarra Museum of Art acknowledges the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation as the original custodians of the lands and waters on which the Museum stands.

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