



UK/AU

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Australian Government

## MEDIA RELEASE

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# AUSTRALIA AND THE UK ANNOUNCE LARGEST EVER CULTURAL EXCHANGE BETWEEN THE TWO NATIONS

A major new cultural exchange between **Australia** and the **United Kingdom (UK)** has been announced today, celebrating the diverse and innovative artist communities and cultural sectors of each nation. A collaboration between the **British Council** and the **Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**, under the patronage of **Her Majesty the Queen**, the **UK/Australia Season** is a unique artistic programme of more than **200 live and digital** events, marking the largest ever cultural exchange between the two nations. Launching in both countries in **September 2021**, The Season will strengthen and build cultural connections and will include a diverse programme spanning theatre, film, visual arts, dance, design, architecture, music, literature, higher education and a public engagement programme.

Artists, thought leaders and academics from the UK and Australia will collaborate together to create work, centred on the theme *Who Are We Now?*. The Season will reflect on our history, explore our current relationship, and imagine our future together.

For the "**UK in Australia**" programme UK institutions and artists will both present new work in Australia, many for the first time, and collaborate with Australian artists to exchange knowledge. The collaborating UK partners include **British Film Institute, Chineke Orchestra!, Hackney Showroom, Aakash Odedra Company, Blast Theory, Upswing, National Dance Company Wales, Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru, Oily Cart, AC Projects, Trigger, Javaad Alipoor Company, Crossover Labs, London Artists Projects, Science Gallery London, Watershed, Royal Shakespeare Company, Autograph, Wider Earth** and **Natural History Museum**.

Australian companies and institutions presenting UK work and Season events in Australia include the **Biennale of Sydney, Photo 2022, Ballarat International Photo Festival, Arts Centre Melbourne, Sydney Opera House, National Gallery Australia, British Film Festival, Museums Victoria, National Museum Australia, National Portrait Gallery, Remix, the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Diversity Arts Australia, Ten Days on the Island, Australia Council for the Arts, Art Gallery of NSW, Australian Centre of Moving Image, Home of the Arts, National Gallery Victoria, National Institute of Dramatic Art, Melbourne's UNESCO City of Literature, and festivals in Brisbane, Sydney and Adelaide**.

The programme includes extensive collaborations between UK and Australian universities across the country, following an open call for partnership with **Universities UK, Association of Commonwealth Universities and Universities Australia**. This includes grants for trilateral climate research projects, UK Australia student collaboration on global challenges, panels, keynotes, forums, webinars and publications exploring aspects of the theme *Who Are We Now?*

The Season will take place in Australia from **September 2021 to March 2022** and in the UK from **September 2021 to**

**December 2022.** The first programming has been announced today; the full programme will be announced ahead of *The Season's* commencement in September.

**High Commissioner of the United Kingdom to Australia, Victoria Treadell** said: *"It is wonderful to celebrate the launch of the UK/Australia Season, and we look forward to the most incredible year ahead as we highlight our modern and relevant people-to-people links. The Season is a celebration of not only our culture, and how our artists, performers and our educational institutions connect, but also how we recognise each other for who we are today. This is about a celebration of the UK and Australia, and I am really looking forward to the months and year to come."*

**Co-Chair UK/Australia Season, David Gonski AC** said: *"The creative and higher education sectors have always thrived when artists and academics from around the world can share knowledge and practice. The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly challenged both sectors and The Season provides important opportunities to collaborate in these two key markets, delivering not just a deeper understanding of each other but long-term opportunities and economic impact."*

**Season Director of UK in Australia and Director of the British Council in Australia, Helen Salmon,** said: *"The fact that the UK/Australia Season even exists at this moment is extraordinary. Over the past 18 months, our arts and education colleagues have shown steely tenacity, but also flowed like water, re-forming time and again to adapt to and reflect these times. If the past year has taught us anything, it is our deep yearning for connection, something which sits at the heart of everything the British Council does. I am so inspired to see our two nations emerging from opposite sides of the globe to share experiences, collaborate, and re-imagine. We are in a liminal period, a time of great change, and it will be our artists and thinkers who help us make sense of things. They will show us who we really are, and who we might become."*

**Season Director for Australia in the UK Michael Naphthali** said: *"The first-ever bilateral programme of cultural exchange between Australia and the UK could not be more timely. Although there is much that binds us, do we really know each other as well as we think we do? Given our evolving relationship, the UK/Australia Season is an invaluable opportunity for our two nations to reflect on our past, our current relationship and where we can go together through the lens of art and culture. The Season provides a framework for honest and inspiring conversations led by our artists, visionaries, thinkers, civic and policy leaders to respond to the proposition "Who Are We Now?"*

#### **Highlights of the "UK in Australia" programme:**

- Across 2022, **ACMI**, Australia's national museum of screen culture, and the **British Film Institute** (BFI) will present a series of programs across film, performance and moving image art that explore themes of representation and identity and ask *Who Are We Now?* At ACMI, a BFI curated season of contemporary British films exploring identity. A special presentation of Mark Jenkins's award-winning film *Bait* will be the centrepiece of the season.
- **Adelaide Festival** is working on an exciting new project with **Chineke! Orchestra**, the first professional orchestra in Europe, comprising of a majority of Black, Asian and ethnically diverse professional musicians from the UK and mainland Europe (March 2022, Adelaide).
- The **Wired Lab**, with the Wiradjuri community and BAFTA award winning artist, **Chris Watson**, will present 'Country Calling' (working title), a deeply experiential audio project which will be developed from recordings of Wiradjuri Language being spoken on Country, in particular the critically endangered Box Gum Grassy Woodlands habitat. The resulting composition will be premiered at an artist-led architect designed conversion of 'The Church of the Immaculate Conception', a recently deconsecrated catholic church in the tiny rural village of Muttama, which is being transformed into site

for deep listening. Muttama and Muttama creek were important pathways for Wiradjuri people travelling for ceremony and family business and still is today connecting people from Brungle to Cootamundra.

- **National Gallery Victoria** will create a Season-specific program around major work by Welsh artist, **Cerith Wyn Evans** (September - November 2021, Melbourne).
- **POP Icons** presented by the **award-winning Javaad Alipoor Company** will see the performers work with migrant and refugee communities in Sydney to explore the different cultures they have brought to Australia. Celebrating the heritage of international pop culture, this collaborative performance series created with **Riverside's National Theatre of Parramatta** will challenge the preconceptions of mainstream and peripheral cultures (September 21 - February 22, Sydney).
- **Ballarat International Foto Biennale** will present a retrospective of **Linda McCartney** alongside exhibitions by **Mitchell Moreno** and **Alix Marie**, showcasing the changing face of photography as an art form and the intersection of body, representation, and identity (August 21 - September 21, Ballarat).
- **Made in Birmingham/Made in Sydney**, a groundbreaking digital collaboration between the **Museum of Contemporary Art Australia (MCA)** in Sydney and **Ikon** in Birmingham. The project invites Fijian-Australian artist **Salote Tawale** and British-Afghan artist **Osman Yousefzada** to explore questions of identity and belonging in contemporary Australia and Britain through two new video artworks. The project features recorded performance, original moving image works and video developed by the two artists. Both artists, chosen by Rachel Kent, Chief Curator, MCA Australia and Jonathan Watkins, Director, Ikon, have multidisciplinary practices that explore the migrant experience, identity and outsider culture. Two separate works will be created for presentation in a video format, as well as live activations to be announced (March – June 2022)
- **Renaissance One**, a UK-Australian movement of 11 women artists and cultural producers will present a six-month digital micro-festival **This Is Who We Are: Mentoring the Margins**, **Bernardine Evaristo OBE** and a collective of influential UK and Australian women with African and Caribbean, First Nations and West, South and South East Asian origins, will present a series of mentoring sessions, salons and workshops, aimed at connecting and amplifying women of colour between nations (September 21 - March 2022, online).
- **National Gallery of Australia** and **British Council** will present a joint public engagement event exploring the NGA's exhibition of the UK's most influential contemporary artists, **Sarah Lucas** (Canberra, August 2021 – February 2022).
- Australian premiere and national tour of writer, artist and activist **Travis Alabanza's** award-winning show, **Burgerz!**. Following their experience when someone threw a burger at them and shouted a transphobic slur, **Alabanza** became obsessed with the fast food and created this timely and powerful performance which explores how trans bodies survive and how, by reclaiming an act of violence, they can address their own complicity.
- Award-winning Kathak and contemporary dance company **Aakash Odedra Company** will embark on a creative programme with Australian dance organisation **Strut Dance** and award-winning choreographer **Lewis Major** to share cultural knowledge and language, resulting in three dance films

created with renowned film cinematographer **Deborah May** (November 2021 - March 2022, Online).

- Two worlds gleefully collide when the internationally-acclaimed Australian circus ensemble, **Circa**, and Academy Award® winning studio **Aardman** bring Shaun the Sheep to the stage. **Shaun The Sheep's Circus Show** combines the extreme physicality and awe-inspiring feats of Circa, and the playful charm of the multi-award winning TV series Shaun the Sheep. This is must-see family entertainment, packed full of smart wit, vibrant circus skills and daredevil acrobatics.
- **The Electric Dreams Adelaide: British Immersive Showcase**, a five-day event focused on the art of immersive storytelling presented by **Crossover Labs**. A collective of British artists will invite audiences to step into real and imagined worlds, showcasing the best immersive works that Britain has to offer and reflecting modern Britain (February 2022, Adelaide).
- **Blast Theory**, an internationally renowned artist group creating groundbreaking new forms of performance and interactive art exploring social and political questions, will present **Rider Spoke** opening at **Adelaide Fringe Festival**. Following a sold-out season at the Barbican in London, this interactive performance will invite participants to cycle through the streets of the city guided by a narrator and score, in search of unknown places and strangers (February 2022 - March 2022, Adelaide).
- **Playable City Melbourne** is an **RMIT University** project in collaboration with **Watershed, Bristol** connecting music, games and fashion with public space – shaping an urban play community exploring alternate ways of being, First Peoples connection to place, and more-than-human infrastructure.
- **Dan Daw**, Artistic Associate of Candoco Dance Company (UK) will collaborate with a Qld based artist as part of **Undercover Arts Festival** (Brisbane, September 2021).
- Leading UK circus company **Upswing** will collaborate with **Casus Circus** to present *Big Village Digital*, an online programme of original film, podcasts and curated conversations. This digital programme will celebrate and profile companies and makers of colour who pioneer new modes of expression, bring new stories to our creative spaces, and challenge colonial and class-based notions of Art. (September 2021 – March 2022, Digital).
- National Museum Australia will present **COP-26 Climate Forum**, a 2-3 day event in their new Great Southern Land gallery focused on responses to COP-26 (November 21, Canberra).
- **Arts Centre Melbourne** will bring together **Oily Cart (UK)** and **Polyglot Theatre (Australia)**, two of the world's leading theatre makers for young audiences, to create a new inclusive work called *PARKED* for children with profound and multiple learning disabilities (November 2021, Melbourne).
- UK poet, playwright and author **Joelle Taylor** will tour **Outspoken C+nto**, a spoken word theatre performance presenting an important female-centred perspective that traces the narrative of a 'mis-fitting' butch body through the gay liberation movement to the present day (National, dates to be announced).
- **Photo Australia** will partner with **1854 Media**, publisher of the British Journal of Photography, to present an exclusive Australian exhibition of the Portrait of Humanity award in Melbourne, and **Autograph ABP**, London to present PHOTO LIVE, a ten-part series of artist and curator talks in the

lead up to PHOTO 2022 International Festival of Photography (Melbourne, March 2022).

### Highlights of the “Australia in the UK” programme:

- **Songlines: Tracking the Seven Sisters**, the **National Museum of Australia’s** extraordinary immersive exhibition featuring over 300 paintings and objects by more than 100 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, will make its European premiere at **The Box, Plymouth** in October 2021. The project was developed over five years in collaboration with First Nations communities, and has been described as ‘a triumph of 21st century museology’ when it was first shown at the National Museum of Australia in Canberra (September 2021 – January 2022, Plymouth)
- The raw, wild energy of Australia’s B-Boys explored through the work of Sydney’ Hip Hop star Nick Power, ***Between Tiny Cities*** is a four-year dance exchange between **Darwin’s D\*City Rockers** and **Cambodia’s Tiny Toones** youth programme, touring across the UK.
- **Keg de Souza**, an artist of Goan ancestry who lives and works in Sydney on Gadigal Land, will transform Inverleith House, in Edinburgh’s Royal Botanic Gardens, into **Climate House**, a home for the 21st century explorers, scientists, artists, thinkers, who investigate the impact of climate change.
- The first visit to the UK of a globally unique institution, **the Australian World Orchestra**, conducted by maestro Zubin Mehta. All the musicians are Australian, brought together from great orchestras and ensembles worldwide. Founded by Australian conductor Alexander Briger AO the reputation for excellence has firmly established them as a global representative of classical music. The orchestra has attracted the world’s leading conductors including Sir Simon Rattle, Maestro Riccardo Muti, Maestro Zubin Mehta and Australians Simone Young AM and Alexander Briger AO. Australian soprano Siobhan Stagg will perform with the AWO as part of the UK/Australia Season. (Dates to be announced 2022).
- **The British Film Institute (BFI)**, the UK’s lead organisation for film and the moving image, is working with the **Australian Centre of the Moving Image (ACMI)**, Australia’ museum of screen culture, and the **National Film and Sound Archive of Australia (NFSA)**, Australia’s national audiovisual archive, on film programmes taking place in Australia and the UK that will explore themes of representation and identity.
- The **Sherman Centre for Culture and Ideas (SCCI, 2018-2022)** is a not-for-profit Foundation principally funded by Sydney philanthropists Dr Gene Sherman AM and Brian Sherman AM. It aims to positively impact **Fashion and Architecture** via the **SCCI Hub** series, extending the typical reach of these topics by linking them with other forms of cultural expression. Panel discussions, keynotes and films feature leading international and Australian voices in Fashion, Architecture and the broader cultural sphere, emphasising ethical living across all interconnected topics. **SCCI Architecture & Fashion Hubs @ Design Museum**, London bring together 40 Australia-based and expat Australian speakers from around the world to participate in two intensive, three-day, salon-style conferences. (October 2022, London)
- **Australian Chamber Orchestra** will return to London to perform three concerts, including **River**, a music and cinematic collaboration with BAFTA-nominated Sherpa Director **Jennifer Peedom**. (Dates and venue to be announced).

## Ends

### **Media contacts: For information on the UK/Australia Season and to request artist interviews or press imagery please contact Articulate PR:**

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Full press kit, including images and trailers, can be accessed [here](#).

Please view the full Season Film [www.ukaustraliaseason.com](http://www.ukaustraliaseason.com)

## Notes to Editors

### **About UK/Australia Season 2021-22**

The UK/Australia Season is a joint initiative by the British Council and the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The Season highlights the breadth of partnership between Australia and the UK, and aims to deepen and extend cultural connections. The Season commences in September 2021, concluding in March 2022 in Australia and in December 2022 in the UK. The theme 'Who Are We Now?' will reflect on our history, explore our current relationship, and imagine our future together. The Season will feature programming for all ages, and will celebrate the diversity of cultures and languages in both countries. It will emphasise Australia's First Nations voices, enable cultural exchange with Wales, Scotland, England and Northern Ireland, and celebrate the diverse societies that have emerged in both Australia and the UK through migration.

The Season has the generous support of a philanthropic Patrons Board, co-chaired by Sir Lloyd Dorfman in the UK and David Gonski AC in Australia, with members in both countries.

[www.ukaustraliaseason.com](http://www.ukaustraliaseason.com)

### **About the British Council**

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We build connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language. Last year we reached over 80 million people directly and 791 million people overall including online, and through broadcasts and publications. Founded in 1934 we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body. We receive a 15 per cent core funding grant from the UK government.

[www.britishcouncil.org.au](http://www.britishcouncil.org.au)

### **About the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

The Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade works closely with a broad range of partners to advance Australia's security and prosperity globally. Relationships are at the heart of our work. Through initiatives like the UK/Australia Season, we work with partners to showcase Australia as an innovative, creative, diverse and tolerant nation, which assists with strengthening Australia's influence, reputation, reach and relationships overseas. [www.dfat.gov.au](http://www.dfat.gov.au)