

YOU
IMAGINE
WHAT
YOU
DESIRE
19TH
BIENNALE
OF SYDNEY
21 MARCH
- 9 JUNE 2014
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Friday, 13 June 2014

THE 19TH BIENNALE OF SYDNEY CLOSES AFTER 81 DAYS

Sydney, Australia: The **19th Biennale of Sydney: You Imagine What You Desire** closed on Monday, 9 June, after presenting the work of 92 artists from 31 countries free to the public over a three-month period.

Curated by Juliana Engberg, the exhibition was presented at various partner venues including the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Artspace, Carriageworks, Cockatoo Island and the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia. Other works and events were experienced at various locations throughout the city, including Henrik Håkansson's epic, episodic film and orchestral performance work, *THE END* (2011 and 2014), which was presented at Pier 2/3 in Walsh Bay over the past weekend.

This year, more than 623,000 visited the Biennale partner venues, including nearly 125,000 from overseas, the highest international visitation numbers recorded in the Biennale's 41-year history. In addition, audiences also experienced outdoor works by Nathan Coley on the Eastern Apron of Cockatoo Island, and the building exteriors of the Art Gallery of New South Wales and Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, as well as numerous performance works in public spaces.

Interim Chair, Mr Andrew Cameron said: 'We are delighted to have staged yet another ambitious and successful Biennale of Sydney – the first edition in our new autumn dates. The many stimulating works made for a wonderful show, with **You Imagine What You Desire** drawing thousands of visitors to Sydney.'

'More than 40 per cent of visits to the 19th Biennale were made by people living outside of Sydney, including 20 per cent of visitors who live internationally. Such results demonstrate the event's international appeal and augment the already significant economic impact of the Biennale of Sydney. We thank all of our venue and funding partners, artists, supporters and visitors and look forward to preparing another fantastic exhibition for the 20th Biennale in 2016.'

Mr Cameron said it was particularly exciting to see such strong engagement with the Biennale's public programs and education offerings; be it the free forums and talks that made up the Middle and End Programs, or new initiatives such as the Art and Dementia tours and the popular Storytime at *The Village* series. 'School groups embraced the free education resources and ferry travel, with more than 12,000 students travelling on the Biennale Ferry to Cockatoo Island.'

Of the 185 works included in the exhibition, 33 were commissioned especially for the 19th Biennale, including the world premiere of Tacita Dean's *Event for a Stage* (2014), which was co-commissioned with Carriageworks. The first live performance work of Dean's career, *Event for a Stage* was performed across four consecutive nights and featured actor Stephen Dillane. Dean will create a new film work using 35mm film recordings from the performances, while ABC RN's Creative Audio Unit has adapted *Event for A Stage* for radio, which will be broadcast to thousands of listeners on Soundproof at 8 pm, Sunday, 15 June and repeated at 9 pm, Friday, 20 June.

Artistic Director, Juliana Engberg said: 'The Biennale has brought into reality those incubating ideas that lived in the imaginations of the artists, for the delight, intrigue and experience of the audience. On the island, in the streets, galleries and spaces around Sydney, creativity has been activated in the minds and hearts of those who wandered amidst our songs, sculptures and surreal offerings. It's been a fabulous 12 weeks of magical art and audience curiosity.'

As part of the 19th Biennale Middle Program, Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller unveiled a new work titled *The City of Forking Paths* (2014), a specially commissioned twilight video walk through The Rocks.

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As the inaugural City of Sydney legacy artwork, this enthralling 19th Biennale work is now a permanent part of the City of Sydney's public art collection, ensuring future audiences will continue to enjoy the work for years to come.

Lord Mayor Clover Moore said the success of this year's event demonstrated the popularity of creativity in Sydney.

'People want to be inspired, challenged and delighted by art and the Biennale has done just that.'

'The City of Sydney has been a major supporter of the Biennale since 1988. We are committed to supporting creative events to help ensure Sydney retains its status as a globally competitive and innovative city with a thriving culture.'

'These festivals inject tens of millions of dollars into the local economy each year, support small businesses and promote Sydney as an events capital on the world stage.'

The 20th Biennale of Sydney will take place in 2016.

- ENDS -

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ABOUT THE BIENNALE OF SYDNEY

The Biennale of Sydney is a non-profit organisation that presents Australia's largest and most exciting contemporary visual arts event.

Held every two years, the Biennale is a three-month exhibition, with an accompanying program of artist talks, performances, forums, guided tours, family days and other special events – all FREE to the public.

The Biennale of Sydney was the first biennale to be established in the Asia-Pacific region and, alongside the Venice and São Paulo biennales and documenta, is one of the longest running exhibitions of its kind. Since its inception in 1973, the Biennale of Sydney has provided an international platform for innovative and challenging contemporary art, showcasing the work of nearly 1700 artists from over 100 countries.

Today it ranks as one of the leading international festivals of contemporary art and continues to be recognised for presenting the freshest and most provocative art from Australia and around the world.

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