

MEDIA RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BIENNALE OF SYDNEY ANNOUNCES BEN STROUT AS NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Sydney, Australia: Phillip Keir, Chair of the Biennale of Sydney today announced the appointment of **Ben Strout** as the Biennale's new Chief Executive Officer.

'Following an extensive international search, undertaken with assistance from recruitment company Korn Ferry, we are delighted to confirm Ben Strout's appointment as the new Chief Executive Officer' said **Phillip Keir**. 'The selection committee unanimously agreed that Ben's significant arts management experience and strong leadership skills will be a tremendous asset to the Biennale of Sydney.'

Ben Strout was Executive Director of Sydney Writers' Festival (2009–2014), where he produced six festivals and led the organisation through a period of significant expansion. During his tenure, the Festival increased annual turnover by more than 60% and achieved record-breaking attendances.

Prior to joining Sydney Writers' Festival, Ben was Executive Director of Arts Development at the Australia Council for the Arts (2000–2009). At the Council he headed the team responsible for the first three national Books Alive campaigns and led negotiations for specific funding allocations of the Contemporary Visual Arts and Craft Inquiry, of which he was a senior member of the steering committee. Ben also co-authored the Cultural Ministers Council Small to Medium Performing Arts Examination, served for a number of years on the Playing Australia National Touring Committee and was a member of the Asialink Performance/Arts Management Committee (2000–2005).

Ben Strout said, 'The Biennale of Sydney is a deeply engaging and important international event. It is a privilege to be joining the passionate staff of the Biennale, and to be working with such an experienced and dedicated Board of Directors. I am truly looking forward to the years ahead.'

Ben Strout will take up the position in February 2015, taking over from Danielle Earp, who has been Acting Chief Executive Officer since June 2014.



– ENDS –

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, it has provided an international platform for innovative and challenging contemporary art, showcasing the work of nearly 1700 artists from more than 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.

The 20th Biennale of Sydney (2016) will be curated by Stephanie Rosenthal.

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