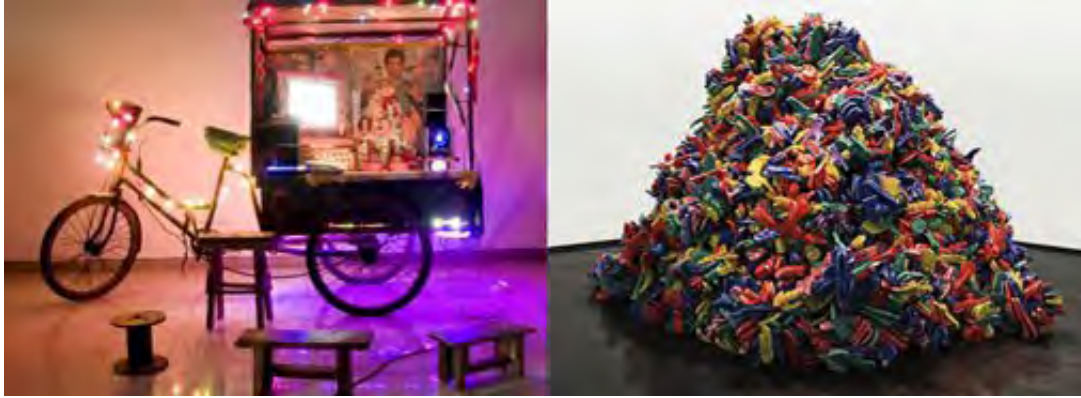


18th Biennale of Sydney: all our relations

27 artists and 100 works at the Art Gallery of NSW



Left: JIN Shi *Small business karaoke* 2009. Courtesy White Rabbit Gallery, Sydney; Right: Hassan Sharif *Slippers and wire* 2009. Courtesy the artist and The Flying House, Dubai

The Art Gallery of NSW returns as a major venue for 2012 and will present many local and international artists with around 100 works. Beginning with aerial views from afar and gradually zooming to a close-up of the everyday, with its cycle of life and death, the exhibition, subtitled *In Finite Blue Planet*, announces a new consciousness of the finite – rather than infinite – nature of our blue planet and its resources. The artworks present alternative perspectives for a globalised world, while facing the challenges of living on a finite planet in an endangered environment, with war, displacement and migration as consequences.

A highlight will be the work of Hassan Sharif, who currently lives and works in Dubai. Sharif has developed a body of work that has strong associations with the materiality of daily life. Using cotton, textiles, metal, plastic and everyday items, Sharif manipulates the materials by twisting, knotting, folding and wrapping to create sculptural forms that explore ideas of consumerism, mass production and the simplicity of daily life. Combining recycled materials and found objects, he creates forms that have no purpose or function other than to be seen – to be experienced as a provocative entity that draws the audience's attention to his perception of the reality of life in the United Arab Emirates and the fast-paced evolution of society. For the 18th Biennale of Sydney, Hassan Sharif will have a large presence with his work *Slippers and wire* (2009) and *Suspended objects* (2011), together with a selection of seventeen works from the series *Objects*.

Thai artist Nipan Oranniwesna explores the fragility of contemporary society with *City of Ghost* (2012), a site-specific installation made from cut-out stencil maps and baby powder. The work presents an assemblage of maps from ten different metropolises, including Sydney. This sprawling cityscape evokes the precarious nature of our world in the 21st century.

Together with women embroiders from her town Batou in Inner Mongolia, Beijing-based artist Gao Rong has created a life-sized replica of her grandparents' house. Using embroidery in a contemporary application, Gao presents reconstructions of everyday domestic items and tableaux.

Interdisciplinary arts collective Postcommodity, comprised of four Indigenous American artists, will cut a

hole into the floor of the Yiribana Gallery to create their work *Do you remember when?* (2009–12). The hole reveals the earth below, symbolising a spiritual, cultural and physical portal, and a point of transformation between worlds. As part of this work, Postcommodity will collaborate with Aboriginal language speakers in New South Wales to create a sound component.

The Biennale's main title, *all our relations*, reflects the curatorial premise of artistic directors Catherine de Zegher and Gerald McMaster. Their curatorial conversation and working method are informed by the notion of relation, and have shaped the exhibition project following the idea of interdependency and interconnectedness in the world at large.

The 18th Biennale of Sydney presents works by more than 100 artists from Australia, New Zealand, the Asia-Pacific, the Americas, Europe, South Africa and the Middle East. Nearly half the artists in the 18th Biennale present works created specifically for this exhibition. Alongside the Venice Biennale, São Paulo Biennial and Documenta in Kassel, the Biennale of Sydney is one of the longest running exhibitions of its kind and was the first biennial to be established in the Asia-Pacific region. Other major venues include the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Pier 2/3 and Cockatoo Island.

About the Biennale of Sydney

The Biennale of Sydney continues to play a central role in developing visual arts culture in Australia and connecting artists from around the world. Every two years it is presented free to the public over a twelve-week period. Since its inception in 1973, the Biennale of Sydney has provided an international platform for innovative contemporary art, showcasing the work of more than 1500 artists from over 83 countries.