

Press Release
24 June 2021

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

UK presenters include: BFI, BRITISH MUSEUM, DESIGN MUSEUM, EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL, SOUTHBANK CENTRE, ROYAL OPERA HOUSE, ROYAL BOTANIC GARDEN EDINBURGH, IKON, THE BOX, PLYMOUTH, WALES MILLENNIUM CENTRE, BELFAST INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL

Australian presenters include: ADELAIDE FESTIVAL, ARTS CENTRE MELBOURNE, BIENNALE OF SYDNEY, NATIONAL GALLERY OF AUSTRALIA, NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA, SYDNEY FESTIVAL, SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE, AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA



(from left to right) *Seven Sisters Songline*, 1994 by Josephine Mick, Ninuku Arts © the artist/Copyright Agency 2020, image: National Museum of Australia. Acrobats from Circa rehearse on Queensland's famous Gold Coast in preparation for *Shaun the Sheep's Circus Show*, photo by James D. Morgan/Getty Images.

Press images are available to download via: https://bit.ly/UK_AU

A major cultural exchange between the UK and Australia was announced today, Thursday 24 June 2021, with an artistic programme that showcases the diverse and vibrant arts sectors of both nations, opening in both countries in **September 2021, running until March 2022 in Australia and until December 2022 in the UK.**

The UK/Australia Season is a unique exchange programme between artists from each country designed to strengthen and build cultural connections between the UK and Australia. The theme of the Season is 'Who Are We Now?' and will reflect on the shared history, current relationship and imagine the future of the two nations.

The programme with more than 200 live and digital events across the two nations has been directed by Michael Naphthali of the Australian High Commission, London and by Helen Salmon, Director of British Council in Australia and is a joint initiative by the British Council and the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, under the Royal patronage of Her Majesty the Queen.

The artistic programme in both countries for the Season ranges across theatre, film, visual arts, dance, design, creative technology, architecture, music, literature, museums, broadcast and talks, and features numerous exciting cross-arts commissions. There will be several world, UK and Australian premieres.

The programme in the UK is presented with season partners including the BFI, Royal Opera House, British Museum, Southbank Centre, Design Museum, The Box (Plymouth), Ikon (Birmingham), Belfast International Arts Festival, Wales Millennium Centre, and Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

Highlights of the programme of Australian projects in the UK announced today include:

Lonely House

Edinburgh International Festival 2021

20-21 August 2021

Barrie Kosky, Australian Artistic Director of Berlin's Komische Oper, and singer/actor Katharine Mehrling will host a sophisticated evening of cabaret at the Edinburgh International Festival with French chansons and American songs from composer Kurt Weill's time in exile in Paris and New York. Kurt Weill, one of Germany's most distinctive and controversial musical figures, fled his country when he discovered that he was about to be arrested by the Nazis. He first escaped to Paris and then to New York, where he continued his musical style in a clutch of wildly successful musicals, from *Knickerbocker Holiday* to *Lady in the Dark* (written with Ira Gershwin), *One Touch of Venus* to *Street Scene* (winner of the inaugural Tony Award for Best Original Score).

Ancestors, Artefacts, Empire: Indigenous Australia in British and Irish museums

Publisher: The British Museum

Publication date: 2 September 2021

A new book published by British Museum Press, *Ancestors, Artefacts, Empire: Indigenous Australia in British and Irish Museums* brings together an important collection of extraordinary Indigenous Australian art and artefacts preserved in museums across Great Britain and Ireland. This landmark publication presents a global history that entwines ancestral pasts with epochs of empire and colony leading to the contemporary moment. The book uses nearly 160 artefacts, selected from over 30 public museums, both large metropolitan and small regional, to present a multi-stranded narrative that opens up vistas on Britain's Australian history as much as Australia's British history.

Songlines: Tracking the Seven Sisters

21 October 2021 – 27 February 2022

The Box, Plymouth

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.

Made in Birmingham/Made in Sydney

March – June 2022

Online, Ikon and Museum of Contemporary Art Australia

Made in Birmingham/Made in Sydney is a ground-breaking 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.

'Who Are We Now'

British Film Institute and via BFI Player (across the UK)

From March 2022

Throughout 2022, ACMI, Australia's national museum of screen culture, the British Film Institute (BFI), the UK's lead organisation for film and moving image, and The National Film and Sound Archive of Australia (NFSA), Australia's national audio-visual archive, will present a series of programs across film, performance and moving image art that explore themes of representation and identity. At BFI Southbank an ACMI-curated season will ask 'Who Are We Now' with a film season that presents classic and contemporary film texts in conversation with moving image artworks and short films. At ACMI, a BFI-curated season will present contemporary British films exploring identity with a special presentation of Mark Jenkins's award-winning film *Bait* as the centrepiece of the season. The National Film and Sound Archive of Australia and the BFI National Archive are developing an exciting archive-to-archive collaboration which will screen in 2022 as part of the UK/Australia Season.

Bounce by Circa

April - September 2022 on tour

Wales Millennium Centre, Brighton Festival, Norfolk and Norwich Festival, Freedom Festival, Hull, Greenwich & Docklands Festival, London

Australia's leading circus company Circa, under the direction of Yaron Lifschitz, has spent two decades redrawing the limits of what is possible in circus. *Bounce by Circa* is their most ambitious project yet – a thrilling mixture of extreme skill and bold design. *Bounce by Circa* is a giant inflatable bouncing castle that doubles up as a circus tent. From the moment the audience approaches and puts on headphones, they are transported into a fully immersive world. On entering the tent, they become part of a moving, transforming experience: ceilings and floors rise and fall, acrobats tumble and leap and, of course, everyone bounces. London-based architects AL_A have imagined a luminous structure; the outside is a striking constellation of chrome bubbles, and inside awaits a world of wonder and delight.

Queensland Ballet's Young Artist Programme: 2022 Next Generation Festival

Royal Opera House

June 2022

Next generation talent will be on show in Queensland Ballet's (QB) Young Artist Programme, visiting the Royal Opera House (ROH) for the first time with an exciting triple bill. The Company's gifted Jette Parker Young Artists (sister initiative to the Royal Opera House's Jette Parker Young Artist Programme) will join featured former Young Artists who have joined Queensland Ballet as Company dancers in original new works by QB's Associate Choreographer Jack Lister and Resident Choreographer Natalie Weir, as well as Royal New Zealand Ballet's Resident Choreographer Loughlan Prior. Combining dynamic contemporary dance with technology, design and music, the performances are part of The Royal Ballet's Next Generation Festival at the Royal Opera House, London.

Between Tiny Cities

On tour in 2022

The raw, wild energy of Australia's B-Boys explored through the work of Sydney's 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.

Australian Chamber Orchestra

October 2022

The Australian Chamber Orchestra will return to London in October 2022 to present three concerts that epitomise the daring virtuosity, restless energy, and sense of adventure for which it is renowned worldwide. UK venue to be announced.

SCCI Architecture & Fashion Hubs @ Design Museum

28 - 30 October 2022, 4 - 6 November 2022

Design Museum, London

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.

Shaun The Sheep's Circus Show

Dates to be announced 2022

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.

Brixton Music Map

Dates to be announced 2022

Indigenous Australian musician Jessie Lloyd will create a new version of her Mission Songs Project at the invitation of Border Crossings' ORIGINS Festival, coinciding with the 40th anniversary of the Brixton uprising. Jessie's grandfather Albie Geia was a leader in the 1957 Palm Island Strike, which, like the events in Brixton, was labelled a 'riot'. Led by Jessie Lloyd the community will create the Brixton Music Map, a permanent musical commemoration of these histories.

Australian World Orchestra

Dates to be announced 2022

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.

Alongside the cultural programme in the UK, which will roll out across 2022, with further announcements to follow. The Australian Trade and Investment Commission, Austrade, will deliver a tailored business programme promoting bilateral trade and investment in key regions throughout the

UK. The Menzies Australia Institute King's College London will deliver a public engagement programme.

Presenters in Australia include Biennale of Sydney, Photo 2022, Ballarat International Photo Festival, Arts Centre Melbourne, Sydney Opera House, National Gallery of Australia, British Film Festival (BFI), Museums Victoria, Midsumma, National Museum Australia, National Portrait Gallery, Remix, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Diversity Arts Australia, Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Home of the Arts, National Gallery of Victoria, National Institute of Dramatic Art, Melbourne's UNESCO City of Literature, and the festivals in Brisbane, Sydney and Adelaide among others.

Leading and emerging UK institutions and artists will present new work in Australia, many for the first time, and collaborate with Australian artists to exchange cultural knowledge. Among these are Bernardine Evaristo OBE, 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, Electric Dreams, Science Gallery London, Watershed and Royal Shakespeare Company.

The High Commissioner for Australia, His Excellency The Hon. George Brandis QC, said: "Further to the Free Trade Agreement announcement last week, the UK/Australia Season 2021-22 is the most ambitious cultural exchange between the UK and Australia. It comes at a time of great change and opportunity for both of our countries, as we forge even closer ties. The Season gives both nations the opportunity to look at ourselves, and at one another, through fresh eyes. Australian audiences will experience some of the UK's famous companies and artists; UK audiences across the nation will experience new and innovative work coming out of Australia right now, alongside our globally recognised and world-class artists, major performing arts companies and cultural institutions."

The Season is funded through Australian Government and British Council support, as well as a philanthropic Patrons Board, co-chaired by Sir Lloyd Dorfman CBE in the UK and David Gonski AC in Australia, with members in both countries.

Website: www.ukaustraliaseason.com

#UKAUSeason

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Notes to Editors

Australia

Australia is a vibrant, multicultural and outward-looking society and country. Australia's First Nations culture dates back over 60,000 years and is the world's oldest continuous living culture. Home to people from all over the globe, Australia is a richly diverse, multicultural and multilingual society, which permeates Australia's creative arts. Australia's multifaceted arts sector includes nationally and internationally renowned artists, musicians, dancers, theatre companies, musicians, film-makers,

actors, designers, architects, and performers. It is home to a rich landscape of public and private arts and cultural institutions from the World Heritage listed Sydney Opera House to Tasmania's innovative Museum of Old and New Art (MONA). Australia's creative industries have built a global reputation for innovation, talent and energy and play an important role in the Australian economy. Australia is the third largest export market for UK cultural industries after USA and Europe. Sydney is now acknowledged as one of the top four film production centres in the world, alongside Hollywood, Mumbai and London.

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 the diverse societies that have emerged in both Australia and the UK through migration.

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

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