

Connections: MCA x Tate opens at MCA Australia

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A landmark exhibition celebrating one of the most significant international partnerships in Australian contemporary art has opened at the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia (MCA Australia).

[Connections: MCA x Tate](#) brings together works acquired through the MCA and Tate International Joint Acquisition Program, offering the Australian public the opportunity to experience this exceptional collection.

Connections: MCA x Tate showcases significant acquisitions jointly collected by MCA Australia and Tate Modern. Including works from the MCA Collection and newly commissions, this exhibition examines Australia's recent and ancient cultural histories through a powerful First Nations lens.

At the heart of *Connections: MCA x Tate* is the MCA and Tate International Joint Acquisition Program (2015–2022), an innovative collaboration between two iconic cultural institutions made possible through a generous \$2.75 million corporate gift from the Qantas Foundation.



The Program was established to expand the global visibility of Australian artists. Through shared research and institutional dialogue, the partnership has enabled 35 significant works by 24 Australian artists to enter two major international collections, creating unparalleled opportunities for audiences around the world to engage with contemporary Australian art.

Works from the Joint Acquisition Program were first presented at Tate Modern in 2021, in the hugely popular exhibition *A Year in Art: Australia 1992*, which attracted close to 1.5 million visitors, and transformed international awareness of Australian contemporary art. The partnership also supported a major opportunity for First Nations artist Richard Bell, whose celebrated installation *Embassy* was presented in Tate Modern's Turbine Hall in 2023.

Curated for an Australian audience, *Connections: MCA x Tate* focuses on themes of cultural exchange and trade, travel, migration and diasporic experience. It also considers how artists have used their work to address cultural frictions arising from British colonisation, by tracing contested histories and creating forms of protest in an effort to catalyse social change.

Artists who have been commissioned to create new work for the exhibition include Meriam artist Gail Mabo – daughter of the renowned land rights activist Eddie Mabo – who reimagines 'old-style' star maps once used throughout Zenadth Kes/Torres Strait, reflecting both inherited cosmological knowledge and histories of maritime navigation throughout the region.



Yolŋu artist Helen Ganalmirriwuy Garrawurra of East Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory has created a lipa'lipa (wooden dugout canoe) with a woven dhomola (sail or cloth), incorporating knowledge passed down through generations following historical exchange between Yolŋu people and Maccassan traders from Indonesia.

Sydney artist Shireen Taweel presents a new sculpture related to a sacred pilgrimage she undertook across Australia using Arabic heritage practices of astronomy and celestial navigation to chart her course. The work extends her practice of piercing, scoring and moulding copper into highly embellished forms.

The commissions expand the exhibition's scope while creating new dialogues with the works from the MCA and Tate International Joint Acquisition Program.

"The MCA and Tate International Joint Acquisition Program represents one of the most significant cultural partnerships in Australian contemporary art," said Suzanne Cotter, Director, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia.

"For more than a decade, it has transformed the visibility of Australian artists on the world stage while building a shared collection of remarkable works that speak to the histories, experiences and ideas that shape this country."

"*Connections: MCA x Tate* is an opportunity to revisit these acquisitions together and to consider the enduring relevance of the artists' perspectives within contemporary global conversations," said Cotter.



“*Connections: MCA x Tate* highlights the strength and cultural resilience of First Nations artistic practice,” said Keith Munro, Director, First Nations Art and Cultures, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia.

“These works carry knowledge, stories and connections to Country across generations, while asserting cultural sovereignty and speaking powerfully to contemporary experiences. Together, they demonstrate art’s capacity for truth-telling, continuity and self-determination.”

The exhibition was conceived and curated by Rebecca Ray, First Nations Guest Curator; Anneke Jaspers, MCA Australia Senior Curator, Collection and Manya Sellers, MCA Australia Associate Curator, Collection.

Connections: MCA x Tate The Museum of Contemporary Art Australia Exhibition continues to 1 March 2027 Entry fees apply

For more information, visit: www.mca.com.au for details.

Images: Yhonnie Scarce, *Remember Royalty*, 2018, installation view *Connections: MCA x Tate*, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, 2026, photographs, screen print on fabric, hand-blown glass, vintage objects, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia and Tate, with support from the Qantas Foundation in 2015, purchased 2022, courtesy Museum of Contemporary Art Australia © the artist, photograph: Anna Kucera | Gail Mabo, *Zenadth Kes*, 2026, installation view *Connections: MCA x Tate*, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, 2026, bamboo, twine, cotton cord, shells, courtesy the artist and Museum of Contemporary Art Australia © the artist, photograph: Ravyna Jassani | Helen Ganalmirriwuy Garrawurra, *Lipa’lipa ga dhomola (dugout canoe and woven pandanus*

sail), 2026, installation view *Connections: MCA x Tate*, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, 2026, gunga (*Pandanus spiralis*), balgurr (kurrajong bark, *Brachychiton megaphyllus*), natural plant dyes, gulu (kapok tree, *Bombax ceiba*), hardwood, courtesy the artist and Milingimbi Art & Culture © the artist, photograph: Anna Kucera | Vernon Ah Kee, *tall man*, 2010, installation view *Connections: MCA x Tate*, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, 2026, multi-channel digital video, colour, sound, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia and Tate, with support from the Qantas Foundation in 2015, purchased 2016 © the artist, photograph: Anna Kucera