

Tuesday 20 February 2024

OFFICIAL

Art
Gallery
NSW

Media release

Journey into the world of art nouveau, extraordinary monographic exhibitions and music at the Art Gallery of NSW in 2024

The Art Gallery of NSW releases first major program announcement for this year



Alphonse Mucha *The Seasons: Summer* 1896, colour lithograph, 103 x 54 cm © Mucha Trust 2024

A major winter blockbuster exhibition on the life and work of one of art's great stylistic innovators, **Alphonse Mucha**, leads the Art Gallery of New South Wales 2024 exhibition program, bringing the human figure to the fore, alongside Australia's favourite portrait award, the Archibald Prize.

Abstraction will also be under the spotlight in two distinct and exciting moments: the first major art museum survey of Australian abstract painting pioneer **Lesley Dumbrell**, and the first solo exhibition in Sydney of one of the world's most significant and influential contemporary minimalist painters and sculptors, South Korea's **Lee Ufan**. Igniting the program will be the second iteration of *Volume*, which will again transform the Art Gallery with its electrifying program of live music and sound.

Exclusive to Sydney with the support of Destination NSW, from 15 June to 22 September, *Alphonse Mucha: Spirit of Art Nouveau* will be the most comprehensive exhibition of the pioneering and enduringly popular artist's work ever seen in Australia. In seductive, bold compositions, Czech-born Alphonse Mucha (1860–1939) created a new language that defined the look of late 19th-century Paris and led him to develop some of the most recognisable work in modern European art.

A theatre poster commission for arguably the world's first global celebrity, French actress Sarah Bernhardt, propelled Mucha to sudden fame. His radically styled posters created for the 'Divine Sarah' (who visited Sydney in 1891 to wild acclaim) became ubiquitous in Paris and were ripped from the streets by artists and collectors as soon as they were pasted up. His depictions of this superstar client and the other modern women he featured in advertising and decorative work helped emphasise art nouveau as a movement propelled by a spirit of liberation and experimentation.

Presented as the first exhibition of historical art in the Art Gallery's North Building and realised in close cooperation with the Mucha Foundation, Prague, the exhibition is drawn from the Mucha Family Collection and brings together a range of works from the artist's five-decade career, including posters, illustrations, jewellery, interior decoration, photographs, and an immersive digital experience of his late great painting cycle the *Slav Epic*, created between 1912 and 1926.

OFFICIAL

Alphonse Mucha: Spirit of Art Nouveau is proudly supported by the NSW Government through its tourism and major events agency, Destination NSW. It is one of four major ticketed exhibitions to be presented at the Art Gallery in 2024. The Art Gallery will announce two 2024–25 international blockbuster exhibitions later this year.

Minister for Arts, Music, Night-time Economy, Jobs and Tourism **John Graham** said: ‘Declared “the greatest decorative artist in the world” by the New York News in 1904, Alphonse Mucha was one of the most fascinating and popular artists of his time. Working in Paris, the Czech painter, illustrator and graphic artist pioneered the development of French art nouveau. This is the greatest single exhibition of the artist’s works to be seen in Australia.’

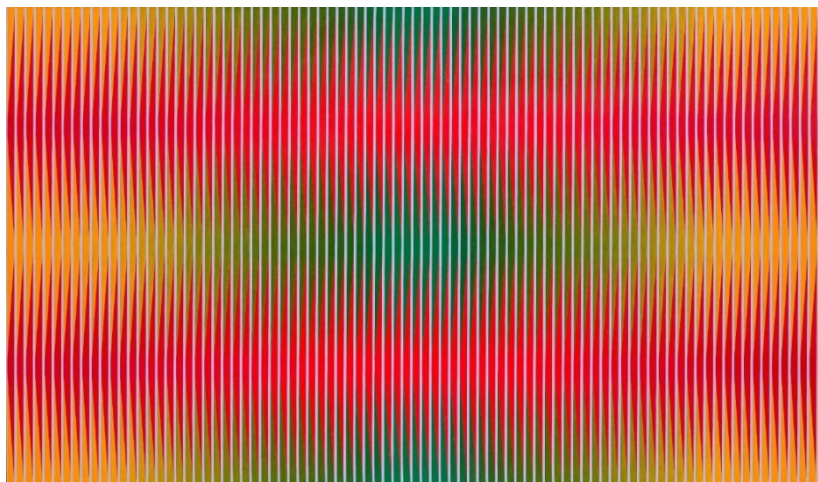
Art Gallery of New South Wales director **Michael Brand** said: ‘Thanks to the close and generous collaboration with the Mucha Foundation in Prague, this extensive exhibition brings many of Alphonse Mucha’s exceptionally important works to Sydney, revealing an artist and designer whose powerful influence remains with us today, some 85 years after his death.’

‘Mucha was a prolific and versatile artist whose work spanned many areas of design, from the iconic theatrical posters that made his name, to design and advertising, to jewellery, sculpture and interior design, book illustration and, of course, painting. As an artist, activist and philosopher, Mucha moved beyond art nouveau in his search for an art to elevate the human spirit, coming to focus attention on the socio-historical issues affecting the Slavic peoples then under the domination of the Austro-Hungarian Empire,’ said Brand.

The international exhibition coincides with Australia’s favourite art awards, the annual Archibald, Wynne and Sulman Prizes. Winners will be announced on 7 June and on display to the public from 8 June. Following the exhibition in Sydney, the Archibald Prize 2024 and Wynne Prize 2024 finalists will tour to regional galleries across New South Wales, with Archibald finalists also making a stop in the Northern Territory for the first time.

Tickets for *Alphonse Mucha: Spirit of Art Nouveau* will go on sale in May alongside tickets for *Archibald, Wynne and Sulman Prizes 2024*.

From 28 May, visitors will get an insight into how an artist thinks and works with *Wendy Sharpe: Spellbound*, a sumptuous aesthetic journey into the nature of creativity, which features drawings, sketchbooks, artist-made books, paintings, ceramics, sculptural forms and site-specific wall murals by a much-admired, Archibald Prize-winning Australian artist. Sharpe herself will also regularly be in residence, creating art within a special space in the Art Gallery’s South Building that partially reconstructs her own Sydney studio.



Lesley Dumbrell *Solstice* 1974, Liquitex on canvas, 173 x 296 cm, Art Gallery of New South Wales, purchased with funds provided by the Patrick White Bequest 2019 © Lesley Dumbrell

In winter, *Volume* returns, proudly supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW’s Blockbusters Funding Initiative and featuring some of the globe’s most inspiring and experimental pop, hip-hop, R’n’B, alternative and electronic artists pushing the limits of sound and live music performance in the Tank and across the Art Gallery’s two buildings. Dates and line-up for the ticketed and free events to be announced.

‘In addition to our exciting ticketed program, the Art Gallery is also pleased to present a large, bold and diverse program of free exhibitions, including a major new commission for the Tank, two significant monographic exhibitions of senior Australian and Asian artists, and a suite of new works by contemporary artists from around New South Wales across our expanded art museum,’ said Brand.

The free program for the year began in February with *ARTEXPRESS 2024*, which showcases outstanding student artworks developed for the art-making component of the HSC examination in Visual Arts in 2023.

In March, the Art Gallery is proud to be one of several venues for the 24th Biennale of Sydney titled *Ten Thousand Suns*, which features new work from some of the most exciting artists working today. Opening simultaneously, *What Does the Jukebox Dream Of?* is a new exhibition showcasing some of the most intriguing works from the Art Gallery’s time-based art collection. On display for the first time in Australia, Susan Hiller’s *Die gedanken sind frei (Thoughts are free)* 2012 is a large-scale installation featuring a customised Wurlitzer jukebox that plays more than 100 revolutionary anthems, spanning 16th-century German peasant ballads to anti-fascist folksongs and contemporary rap.

Lesley Dumbrell: Thrum is the first state art museum survey of one of Australia's most significant and respected abstract painters. Opening in July, the exhibition spans more than five decades of Dumbrell's practice as well as recent forays into sculpture, showcasing the Thailand-based artist's unique language that probes the nuances of colour, rhythm and visual perception.

The Art Gallery continues to celebrate the enduring legacy of key living artists that have shaped contemporary art with an extraordinary free exhibition this August by senior South Korean artist **Lee Ufan**. The Art Gallery is working directly with the France- and Japan-based artist to present an exhibition which distils over six decades of considered experimentation into a series of new paintings and sculptures.



Lee Ufan painting on stone, Hakone Valley, Japan, 1998, photo courtesy Studio Lee Ufan

The work of 10 artists from around Australia will feature in the 2024 edition of the *Dobell Australian Drawing Biennial*, which opens in September and focuses on the compelling and allusive languages of abstraction.

Late this year, the Art Gallery will present the first major solo exhibition of work by Pakistan-born, Melbourne-based artist **Nusra Latif Qureshi**, who revisits tradition through contemporary practice. Trained in the intricate art of Mughal miniature paintings, Qureshi recontextualises historical archives in collage, photographs and beautifully crafted paintings that bear witness to the asymmetries of life and its representation.

A major new site-specific commission, *Angelica Mesiti: The Rites of When*, will see one of Australia's most acclaimed contemporary artists, **Angelica Mesiti**, take over the Art Gallery's iconic Tank from 21 September to present a rich visual and sonic experience. Paris-based Mesiti's large-scale video and sound installation adapts choreography, vocal choruses and instrumentation to reimagine collective and communal rituals in relation to seasonal cycles, at a time of environmental uncertainty and flux.

Unfolding throughout the year, the new Contemporary Projects series highlights the work of emerging and mid-career artists from New South Wales. The series includes three artist projects by **Jelena Telecki** (March), **Emily Hunt** (June), and **Leyla Stevens** (November). Stevens' project is proudly presented in partnership with Artspace, one of a series of new shared initiatives, where she is a 2024 resident studio artist at the newly reopened contemporary art centre in neighbouring Woolloomooloo.

Major artwork commission *bíal gwiýúño (the fire is not yet lighted)* by celebrated Wiradyuri and Kamilaroi artist **Jonathan Jones** is also scheduled to open this year. The living artwork is the final and largest of the nine major works commissioned by the Art Gallery from leading Australian and international artists as part of the Sydney Modern Project. Located at the heart of the expanded art museum, this piece of living Country with creative links to both buildings responds to the site's history on Gadigal land. More details will be announced soon.

A major new touring exhibition will begin in 2024, drawing from the extensive collection of **Brett Whiteley** artworks held by the Art Gallery and the Brett Whiteley Studio. *Brett Whiteley: Inside the Studio* features paintings, drawings, sculptures, photography, collage, ceramics and a tapestry, and will also display rarely seen archival photographs depicting Whiteley at work – and sometimes at play – in studios in London, New York and Sydney. The exhibition will tour from July 2024 until August 2025 to Queensland, Western Australia, New South Wales and Victoria.

For full details of current and upcoming exhibitions and events, visit the [Art Gallery website](#).

Art Gallery of New South Wales 2024 exhibitions and events

ARTEXPRESS 2024 | 7 February – 21 April 2024 | Senior programs producer, Learning: Louise Halpin | South Building | Free

24th Biennale of Sydney: Ten Thousand Suns | 9 March – 10 June 2024 | Curators: Cosmin Costinaş and Inti Guerrero | South Building | Free

What Does the Jukebox Dream Of? | 9 March – 22 September 2024 | Curator: Ruby Arrowsmith-Todd | North Building | Free

Jelena Telecki: Mothers, Fathers | 9 March – 2 June 2024 | Curator: Johanna Bear | North Building | Free

Wendy Sharpe: Spellbound | 25 May – 11 August 2024 | Curator: Natalie Wilson | South Building | Free

Archibald, Wynne and Sulman Prizes 2024 | 8 June – 8 September 2024 | Curator: Wayne Tunnicliffe | South Building | Ticketed

Alphonse Mucha: Spirit of Art Nouveau | 15 June – 22 September 2024 | Curators: Tomoko Sato (Mucha Foundation) and Jackie Dunn (AGNSW) | North Building | Ticketed

Emily Hunt | 22 June – 7 October 2024 | Curator: Nick Yelverton | North Building | Free

Volume 2024 | Dates to be announced | Curator: Jonathan Wilson | North and South buildings | Ticketed & Free

Lesley Dumbrell: Thrum | 20 July – 13 October 2024 | Curator: Anne Ryan | South Building | Free

Lee Ufan | 31 August 2024 – September 2025 | Curator: Melanie Eastburn | South Building | Free

Dobell Australian Drawing Biennial 2024 | 14 September 2024 – 12 January 2025 | Curator: Anne Ryan | South Building | Free

Angelica Mesiti: The Rites of When | 21 September 2024 – mid 2025 | Curator: Beatrice Galton | North Building | Free

Leyla Stevens | 2 November 2024 – 16 February 2025 | Curator: Johanna Bear (AGNSW) and Katie Dyer (Artspace) | North Building | Free

Nusra Latif Qureshi | 9 November 2024 – 9 February 2025 | Curator: Matt Cox | South Building | Free

Brett Whiteley Studio

Brett Whiteley: Chapters 1959–69 | Ongoing | Curator: Beatrice Galton | Free

Touring exhibitions

Brett Whiteley: Inside the Studio | Curator: Beatrice Galton and Nick Yelverton

Logan Art Gallery | 20 July – 7 September 2024

John Curtin Gallery, Perth | 25 October – 15 December 2024

Orange Regional Gallery | 22 March – 8 June 2025

Art Gallery of Ballarat | 28 June – 10 August 2025

Archibald Prize 2023 tour | Curator: Anne Ryan

Goulburn Regional Art Gallery | Until 3 March 2024

Hawkesbury Regional Gallery | 15 March – 28 April 2024

Tamworth Regional Gallery | 10 May – 23 June 2024

Glasshouse Port Macquarie | 5 July – 18 August 2024

Archibald Prize 2024 tour | Curator: Wayne Tunnicliffe

Orange Regional Gallery | 21 September – 17 November 2024

Ngununggula, Southern Highlands Regional Gallery | 30 November 2024 – 26 January 2025

Casula Powerhouse | 7 February – 6 April 2025

Araluen Arts Centre, NT | 24 April – 15 June 2025

Lismore Regional Gallery | 5 July – 31 August 2025

Wynne Prize 2023 tour | Curator: Anne Ryan

New England Regional Art Museum | Until 7 April 2024

Wagga Wagga Art Gallery | 20 April – 16 June 2024

Wynne Prize 2024 tour | Curator: Wayne Tunnicliffe

Western Plains Cultural Centre | 28 September – 24 November 2024

Tweed Regional Gallery & Margaret Olley Art Centre | 6 December 2024 – 2 February 2025

Bathurst Regional Art Gallery | 14 February – 6 April 2025

Blue Mountains Cultural Centre | 22 April – 15 June 2025

William Kentridge: I Am Not Me, the Horse Is Not Mine | Curator: Nicholas Chambers

Tamworth Regional Gallery | 7 September – 3 November 2024
Lismore Regional Gallery | December 2024 – February 2025

Hoda Afshar: A Curve is a Broken Line | Curator: Isobel Parker-Philip
UQ Art Museum | 16 July – 14 December 2024

Media contacts:

Sarah Shields
Communications manager
+61 408 283 091
sarah.shields@ag.nsw.gov.au

James Ricupito
Communications specialist
+61 466 894 044
james.ricupito@ag.nsw.gov.au

Ella Beer
Communications advisor
+61 420 236 608
ella.beer@ag.nsw.gov.au

**About the Art Gallery of New South Wales
On Gadigal Country**

The Art Gallery of New South Wales acknowledges the traditional custodians of the Country on which it is located, the Gadigal of the Eora nation, and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. From its magnificent site in Sydney, the Art Gallery is one of Australia's pre-eminent art museums and the state's leading visual arts institution. Its mission is to serve the widest possible audience as a centre of excellence for the collection, preservation, documentation, interpretation and display of Australian and international art, and a forum for scholarship, art education and the exchange of ideas. The transformation of the Art Gallery – now with two buildings – brings together art, architecture and landscape in spectacular new ways with dynamic galleries and seamless connections between indoor and outdoor spaces. The expansion is the most significant cultural development to open in Sydney in half a century and is a prominent new destination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and culture. artgallery.nsw.gov.au

Thanks to our supporters



Strategic sponsor



Leadership partner



Presenting partners



Major partners and sponsors



Media partners



Hotel partner



Support and event partners

