

MEDIA RELEASE

Fremantle Biennale announces program for second edition: UNDERCURRENT 19



(Waterlicht by Studio Roosegaarde, Credit Studio Roosegaarde)

Fremantle Biennale announced today **UNDERCURRENT 19**, the second edition of the city-wide contemporary art program showcasing experimental site responsive work from established and emerging artists from across the world. Opening **UNDERCURRENT 19**, the Fremantle Biennale will present the internationally acclaimed light installation **[WATERLICHT](#)** by **Studio Roosegaarde** founded by Dutch artist **Daan Roosegaarde**. Marking the first time the studio have presented this work in the Southern Hemisphere, the installation calls attention to rising water levels and the climate change crisis.

Now running for three weeks from **1-24 November 2019**, the Fremantle Biennale will also present **15 new commissions** including large-scale artworks, installations, architectural pavilions, performances and group exhibitions realised in new and found sites across the port city. **Over 40** local, national and international artists will respond to the history, landscape and communities that make-up Fremantle to reveal and celebrate the cultural, social and historical distinctiveness of the port-city in Western Australia.

Founded in 2017, the Fremantle Biennale is a distinct visual arts program that celebrates and builds on Fremantle's history and reputation as a creative city through the presentation of internationally recognised and experimental site-responsive contemporary art practices. The first incarnation **HIGH TIDE 17** ran for two weeks in November 2017 with work from over 35 international, local and national artists. The program included the first major commission in Australia by Swiss artist **Felice Varini, Arcs d'Éllices**, an installation stretching 800 metres along Fremantle's High Street. **UNDERCURRENT 19** is the second edition of the Fremantle Biennale and will this year expand to a three-week program.

Fremantle Biennale Co-Founder and Artistic Director **Tom Müller** said: *Art has always been a fundamental component of Fremantle, with its creative community almost as renowned as its port. The Fremantle Biennale builds on this reputation and following the success of our first edition, we are thrilled to expand the program to run for three weeks in November. Artists from across Australia and the world will respond to the transience and transitional flow of Fremantle as a port town through a variety of different artistic practices. All art forms will inform and be informed by the space and history of Fremantle, whilst also addressing key topical issues of today.*

UNDERCURRENT 19 highlights include:

Internationally-renowned **Studio Roosegaarde** founded by Dutch artist **Daan Roosegaarde** will present the large scale light installation [WATERLICHT](#), marking the first time the studio have presented this work in the Southern Hemisphere. Illustrating the universal power and poetry of water, cascading waves of blue light will be projected in **Esplanade Park**, simulating a virtual flood and calling attention to rising water levels along Fremantle's shoreline. The work will embrace the unique physical features of the site, acknowledging its past as reclaimed land and a significant site for the Whadjuk people. An accompanying soundscape podcast will feature local histories and current realities of Fremantle's waterfront, by traditional custodians, prominent civic figures, historians and artists. The soundscape podcast will remain an enduring legacy of the work, and serve as a call-to-action for a state-wide conversation around water initiatives and the current climate crisis (1-3 November, Esplanade Park).

A major new commission by WA artist **Bennett Miller**, [Behavioural Ecologies \(Red\)](#) is a series of interventions, installations and live performances that take place across multiple sites throughout Fremantle. The work is conceived of as a 'roving tableau' that responds directly and indirectly to the unique formal, topographical and historical qualities of the port city. Unfolding over the month of November, '**Behavioural Ecologies (Red)**' will occupy and leave a trail across the city, beginning at South Beach and its surroundings, passing through the West End and the Port, and ending at the North Mole. Residents and audiences alike are invited to keep an eye out for the movements and markings of this mysterious cohort while they go about their leisure and their work (1-24 November, across Fremantle).

A resort like no other will be built on South Mole in a major living installation created by **The Commonwealth of New Bayswater** led by Perth artist **Jessee Lee Johns**. [South Mole Resort](#) will consist of several temporary bungalow like structures, set within the industrial environment of the working port. This large-scale performative installation operates autonomously as an isolated community behaving like a self proclaimed republic, where visitors can engage with the day spa for relaxation, visit the tattoo parlour, shop at the souvenir store, undertake a guided visit at the museum, and even spend a night at the hotel (Sept - Dec, South Mole).

Combining film and commissioned performance, [Pearls and Blackbirds](#) by Australian artist and curator **Kelsey Ashe Giambazi** examines both dark and light undercurrents of Western Australia's historically significant pearling industry through contemplation of the lives and stories of female Indigenous pearl divers and Japanese migrants who traversed through the port of Fremantle and Northern WA in the late 19th century. Filmed underwater in the seas around Western Australia, this work includes true stories acknowledging instances of human spirit and resilience (1-24 November, WA Maritime Museum).

[Somnus](#), a duration theatrical installation by **Theatre of the Sea** blurring the boundaries between art and ritual, performers and audience, waking and sleeping states. Incorporating elements of poetry, movement, stage design, sound and site activation, **Somnus** will take place over a period of three days and is staged as both an experiential work inquiring into the nature of sleep, and as ritualised spectacle, addressing the endangered status of sleep in a world rife with insomnia (8-10 November, PS Art Space).

Japanese artist **Kayako Nakashima** will intervene with the architectural fabric of the Old Customs House for [Sleeping with the Sun](#). By drawing and manipulating natural light into a dimly lit space, she will reimagine the internal void of the significant building, transforming the space into a sea of sunlight. The viewer is invited to lie on a bed, and witness the subtle dance of golden rays converse with the space of the atrium (1-24 November, Old Customs House).

[Radar](#), a new contemporary dance work by **Brooke Leeder & Dancers** in collaboration with musician **Louis Frere-Harvey** and lighting designer **Nemo Gandossini-Poirier**, will merge dancer, light, live music and electronic tracks in a performance exploring the connection between sirens, sound and human movement in response to the nature of the inner port (21-24 November, B-Shed).

Australian Contemporary dance artist **Sete Tele** and Canadian interdisciplinary artist **Lisa Hirmer** respond to the precarity of water systems around the world in a new participatory project [Drinking Water](#). The multifaceted work examines the movements of water relative to human life, at the scale of the body, inter-human and human-place relationships, and at the scale of the planet (1-24 November, Moores Building Contemporary Art).

Australian Composer [Lawrence English](#) will create a new sound work for the internal volume of the HMAS Ovens Oberon Class submarine at the WA Maritime Museum. **Standing Wave** is a

sound work echoing from within the submerged politics of the cold war; exploring variable pressure, material acoustics and the intensities of resonance (1-24 November, WA Maritime Museum).

UNIT, a trail of architectural and landscape installations on 13 selected waterfront sites within the Victoria Quay, Bathers Beach and Fishing Boat Harbour at Fremantle's western edge. The set of 13 sites are located on the ocean side of the original shoreline of this part of the river mouth and form the foundation of the narrative of 'Unit'. The sites are spaced so as to allow the individual Units to stand alone, but with the next adjacent Unit visible (1-24 November).

Additional programming includes **MAKING: a Living?**, a symposium exploring the relationship between artists and their supporters (2 November, Tannock Hall Lecture Theatre, University of Notre Dame Australia); **Western Current**, a survey of work curated by **Ron Nyisztor** featuring select West Australian realist painters with shared references to the Indian Ocean and a recurring coastal gothic narrative (1-24 November, Fremantle Arts Centre); **Ebb & Flow**, a sound sculpture expressed collectively by the act of toning performed by **Undercurrent Choir**, responding to the spatial aspects of **PS Art Space** and forming a single channel of voices guiding the audience through space by sound alone (15 – 17 Nov, PS Art Space); **The Twist of the Sea**, a new three-channel video work by Western Australian **Artist Penny Coss** with a focus on local histories centered around the working Fremantle Port and the lives of the Seafarers (1 - 24 November, Moores Building Contemporary Art Gallery); **Soundmarks** evokes the passage of time in a journey along Gage Roads: the deepwater shipping lane that connects the port of Fremantle to outside world. Temporal and spatial dimensions of this liminal zone are explored in a sound installation by husband and wife duo composer, **Ryan Burge** and visual artist, **Jenn Garland** (1 - 24 November, Shipwreck Museum's Storehouse Gallery); **Desire Lines**, an audiovisual poem to the disused spaces of Fremantle by acclaimed filmmaker **Matt Sav**, this film and sculptural work pays homage to what was before, and what might come after (1 - 24 November, PS Upstairs); **Fervor** is a unique dining experience where locally sourced native produce forms partnership with local communities, traditional owners and businesses (1-2 November); and **Midnight Blue Lagoon** a series of Sunday dance parties on the balcony of the Maritime Museum by **ClubbMedd** (17 and 24 November, WA Maritime Museum).

A program of public tours, education programs and public programs will also run alongside the program.

Joining City of Fremantle, University of Notre Dame Australia and Minderoo Foundation as partners will be Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, Water Corporation WA, Western Australian Museum, University of Western Australia, Murdoch University, Artsource and PS Art Space.

The full program can be viewed here: www.fremantlebiennale.com.au

Media images can be downloaded [here](#).

Ends

Media enquiries: Articulate PR Sasha Haughan, sasha@articulatepr.com.au, 0405 006 045 or Kym Elphinstone kym@articulatepr.com.au, 0421 106 139

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Fremantle Biennale

The Fremantle Biennale is a distinct visual arts program that celebrates and builds on the history and reputation of Fremantle as a creative city. A not for profit organisation, the Fremantle Biennale creates a platform for the development and presentation of nationally and internationally recognised and experimental site-responsive contemporary art practices. A program of local, national and international artists promotes a cultural dialogue and exchange of ideas to reveal, interrogate and celebrate the cultural, social and historical distinctiveness of the port city.

The Minderoo Foundation

Minderoo Foundation is a modern philanthropic organisation that takes on persistent issues with the potential to drive massive change. Minderoo has over AUD \$1.5 billion committed to a range of global initiatives, including ending modern slavery, global cancer research, creating parity for Indigenous Australians, and innovative community development and environmental conservation initiatives.

The University of Notre Dame Australia

The University of Notre Dame Australia (est.1989) is a national Catholic university with campuses coast to coast in Fremantle's historic West End, in the heart of the Kimberly in Broome and in Sydney's university precinct. With 12,000+ students in undergraduate and postgraduate programs across 9 schools (Arts & Sciences, Business, Education, Law, Philosophy & Theology, Medicine, Nursing & Midwifery, Health Sciences and Physiotherapy) Notre Dame is focused on developing creative and critical thinking skills, essential in today's rapidly changing world, through a liberal arts education. The University is renowned for having the best 'overall quality of educational experience' and 'graduate employment' rate in the State (qilt.edu.au).

Western Australian Museum

The Western Australian Museum is the State's premier cultural organisation, housing WA's scientific and cultural collections. For more than 125 years the Museum has been making the State's natural and social heritage accessible and engaging through research, exhibitions and public programs. The Museum has six public sites including at the Perth Cultural Centre where a newly redeveloped museum will reopen in 2020; WA Shipwrecks Museum and WA Maritime Museum in Fremantle; Museum of Geraldton; Museum of the Goldfields; and Museum of the Great Southern, in Albany.

The Department for Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries

The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries is a recently created Government Department which is an amalgamation of the previously titled; Department of Culture and the Arts, Department of Sport and Recreation, Department of Racing, Gaming and Liquor, and the local government and office of multicultural interests functions of the Department of Local Government and Communities plus the Department of Aboriginal Affairs' Aboriginal History Research Unit.

City of Fremantle

The City of Fremantle is a local government authority that services approximately 30,000 residents in the historic port city. The City of Fremantle has a focus on responsible social, economic and environmental management, and is one of only two councils in Australia to achieve national One Planet certification for sustainability. The City is also renowned for its support for arts and culture and owns and runs the iconic Fremantle Arts Centre and world-renowned festivals including Fremantle International Street Arts Festival.

Water Corporation

Water Corporation is the principal supplier of water, wastewater, drainage and bulk irrigation services in Western Australia to hundreds of thousands of homes, businesses and farms. Employing over 2,700 people, Water Corporation has offices in Perth, Bunbury, Albany, Karratha, Geraldton, Northam and Kalgoorlie, and a number of depots, providing a high level of expertise and strong commitment to serving communities across the State. Water Corporation delivers water services across the 2.6 million square kilometre expanse of the State, and its purpose is the sustainable management of water services, to make WA an even better place to live.