

MEDIA RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
01 MARCH 2024

Art as Action – ‘52 ACTIONS’ Opens at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT)

From launching online to touring the nation: ‘52 ACTIONS’ brings the essence of contemporary Australian art to MAGNT.

Artspace’s acclaimed ‘52 ACTIONS’ continues its national tour at MAGNT, featuring works from 52 Australian artists and collectives from each state and territory. As the title suggests, ‘52 ACTIONS’ is grounded in art as action. Guided by the local, the artists’ actions speak to critical global concerns including systemic discrimination, climate change, forced migration and colonial legacies. Notions of freedom are ever present, as are First Nations’ perspectives, the importance of family and community and speculations about our shared future.

The exhibition evolved from Artspace’s online commissioning platform of the same name, which from 2020 to 2021 presented new works each week by the 52 participants on Artspace’s website and standalone Instagram [@52artists52actions](https://www.instagram.com/52artists52actions). In close collaboration with Artspace, MAGNT brings together a selection of these works and others in an adaptive, site-specific exhibition that is responsive to our unique context.

‘52 ACTIONS’ features 52 Australian artists and collectives across generations, geographies and cultural backgrounds, working in a wide variety of mediums. Together they highlight the diversity, complexity and dynamism of contemporary Australian Art.

With participating artists: Eddie Abd, Abdul Abdullah, Adrift Lab, Brook Andrew, Aphids, Archie Barry, Nathan Beard, Naomi Blacklock, Diego Bonetto, Pat Brassington, Johnathon World Peace Bush, Chun Yin Rainbow Chan, Erin Coates, Lill Colgan & Sab D’Souza, Michael Cook, Nici Cumpston, Léuli Eshrāghi, Ruha Fifita, Guo Jian, Rochelle Haley, Tyza Hart, Larissa Hjorth, Naomi Hobson, Jannawi Dance Clan, Karrabing Film Collective, Gillian Kayrooz, Loren Kronemyer, Adam Linder, Dani Marti, Pilar Mata Dupont, Hayley Millar Baker, TV Moore, Raquel Ormella, OLC Art Collective, Henri Papin (Meijers & Walsh), Jason Phu, Patricia Piccinini, Kenny Pittock, Yhonnie Scarce, Sancintya Mohini Simpson, Rolande Souliere, Stelarc, Shahmen Suku, Sēini F Taumoepeau, James Tylor, Unbound Collective, Ivey Wawn, Kaylene Whiskey, Min Wong, Chris Yee, Gutinjarrā Yunupinju, Louise Zhang.

52 ACTIONS was developed and curated by Artspace, Sydney. The exhibition is touring nationally with Artspace, Sydney, with support from Museums & Galleries of NSW. This project is proudly funded by the NSW Government through Create NSW. It has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Visions of Australia program and through Creative Australia, its arts funding and advisory body. It is also supported by the City of Sydney and by the Copyright Agency’s Cultural Fund.

Quote from MAGNT Director Adam Worrall

“52 ACTIONS’ offers Territorians a rare opportunity to witness the diversity of contemporary Australian art today. MAGNT is excited to present the work of 52 artists and collectives from around the country, including some of Australia’s best known and loved artists such as Patricia Piccinini and Kaylene Whiskey.

“For the duration of the exhibition, MAGNT will host a vibrant showcase of the diversity, complexity and dynamism of contemporary Australian art now.”

Quote from Bryony Nainby, Senior Curator of Art

“Contemporary artists today explore and reflect on what art is and what it can do, as a political motivator, as a means for understanding, or as a tool for shifting perspectives, holding memory and inciting change. ‘52 ACTIONS’ explores the many roles of artists today, from creator to witness and facilitator to provocateur.

“We are excited to have Erin Coates, an artist interested in the connection between humans and marine mammals, visiting Darwin to talk about art and freediving and to present a drawing workshop. Tracks Dance will also be in the gallery exploring the interface between dance and contemporary art through improvised performances.”

Quote from Rebekah Raymond, Curator of Aboriginal Art & Material Culture

“It is great to see powerful works from Aboriginal artists commissioned as part of 52 ACTIONS including Michael Cook, Gutinjarra Yunupingu, Kaylene Whiskey and Johnathon World Peace Bush. It is lovely that so many Northern Territory artists are included and that local audiences can see these works closer to home.”

EXHIBITION DATES

‘52 ACTIONS’ opens to the public at MAGNT Darwin on Saturday 2 March 2024 until 2 June 2024 and is free entry.

Visit www.magnt.net.au for more details.

-ENDS-

Media enquiries:

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About MAGNT Bullocky Point

Set in a scenic location overlooking Fannie Bay in Darwin, MAGNT Bullocky Point is home to internationally renowned artistic, cultural and scientific collections and research programs. Each year MAGNT presents a dynamic program of exhibitions carefully curated from the collection, as well as the best travelling exhibitions from around Australia. It is also the home of the annual Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards - the most significant celebration of its kind in Australia. MAGNT is a not-for-profit organisation.

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'52 ACTIONS' Public Programs

Contemporary art unleashed: '52 ACTIONS' at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT) features dynamic talks, workshops and dance interactions.

The '52 ACTIONS' exhibition at MAGNT is set to captivate audiences with a series of engaging talks, workshops and performances featuring renowned artist Erin Coates and Darwin's esteemed dance company, Tracks.

Erin Coates, known for her multidisciplinary practice merging human elements with marine life forms, will lead talks such as 'Art and Freediving,' where she explores the connection between humans and marine mammals through underwater videos and breath exercises.

In 'Art and Science in Ecological Research,' Coates delves into creative responses to altered underwater ecologies, discussing human impacts on estuarine ecosystems in Western Australia. She will also conduct a 'Graphite Drawing and Collage Masterclass,' guiding participants through concept development.

Adding a dynamic movement element, Darwin's Tracks dance company will present 'Practice Practise meets '52 ACTIONS' - a unique dance interaction with contemporary artworks. This fusion of dance and visual art, incorporating diverse techniques and improvisation, promises a captivating experience for all ages.

Bryony Nainby, Senior Curator of Art at MAGNT, will host a tour highlighting the social and cultural importance of '52 ACTIONS', exploring some of the critical contemporary ideas in '52 ACTIONS', such as environmental activism and migration stories.

The public programs aim to showcase the diversity, complexity and dynamism of contemporary Australian art during the '52 ACTIONS' exhibition, which runs from 2 March to June 2, 2024, at MAGNT. Admission is free.

Talk | '52 ACTIONS'

'52 ACTIONS' brings together 52 leading Australian artists to present the diversity, complexity and dynamism of contemporary Australian art now. The exhibition highlights the social and cultural importance of artistic practice and art as action in times of uncertainty and transformation. Artists and collectives explore critical contemporary ideas including environmental activism, migration stories and the sovereignty and culture of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Presented in partnership with Artspace and Museums and Galleries of NSW.

Join MAGNT Senior Curator of Art, Bryony Nainby, for a tour of highlights of the exhibition.

Thursday 2 April | 11am – 12pm
Suitable for ages 16+ | Free

Performance | Practice Practise meets '52 ACTIONS'

Dance artists from Darwin's much loved dance company Tracks, flex their artistic and physical practice, incorporating diverse techniques, improvisation and movement enquiry as they interact with contemporary art works from touring exhibition '52 ACTIONS'.

Thursday 4 April | 10 – 11.30am

Suitable for all ages | Free | In situ performance in Gallery 1

Performance | Practice Practise meets '52 ACTIONS'

Dance artists from Darwin's much loved dance company Tracks, flex their artistic and physical practice, incorporating diverse techniques, improvisation and movement enquiry as they interact with contemporary art works from touring exhibition '52 ACTIONS'.

Thursday 2 May | 10am – 11am

Thursday 16 May | 10am – 11am

Suitable for all ages | Free | In situ performance in Gallery 1

Talk | Art and Freediving

'52 ACTIONS' artist, Erin Coates, works across drawing, sculpture and film. Her practice focuses on the limits of our bodies and physical interaction with and within given environments. Her recent work has centered on the oceanic Gothic in relation to Australia's unique marine flora and fauna and presents hybrid forms that merge human elements with various endemic life forms. In this presentation Erin will discuss her own background in freediving and her deep interest in the connection between humans and marine mammals. The artist will present some of her underwater videos, discuss freediving and conduct a mini breath exercise activity.

Saturday 4 May | 11am – 12pm

Suitable for ages 16+ | Free

Talk | Art and Science in Ecological Research

Join '52 ACTIONS' artist Erin Coates, in this fascinating presentation on creative responses to altered underwater ecologies. Erin works across drawing, sculpture and film and her practice incorporates freediving and an interest in marine biology. Erin will discuss some of the human impacts on estuarine ecosystems in Western Australia, such as the removal of oyster shell reefs, nutrient loading and heavy metal accumulation. She will talk about the conservation and creative work she's undertaken in response, including her work for the last Biennale of Sydney and her involvement in creating habitats for black pygmy mussels.

Saturday 4 May | 2 – 3pm

Suitable for ages 16+ | Free

Workshop | Graphite Drawing and Collage Masterclass

Artist Erin Coates will lead participants through the process of concept development and composition, encouraging thoughtful consideration of each individual's creative interests. Erin will cover the technical basics of drawing such as how to prepare the design, paper and tools, shading techniques and other tips and tricks. Participants will have the opportunity to either draw directly from the Museum's collection of bones and marine specimens or learn collage techniques which can be extended with drawing. Images and illustrations from vintage nature books and all other materials required for the class will be provided.

Sunday 5 May | 10am – 1pm

Suitable for ages 16+ | \$80.00 per person

Talk | '52 ACTIONS'

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Join MAGNT Senior Curator of Art, Bryony Nainby, for a tour of highlights of the exhibition.

Tuesday 7 May | 11am – 12pm

Suitable for ages 16+ | Free

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Visit www.magnt.net.au for more details.

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