

News Release



V&A to open landmark exhibition celebrating contemporary art from the Asia Pacific region

Rising Voices: Contemporary Art from Asia, Australia and the Pacific

The Porter Gallery, V&A South Kensington

16 May 2026 – 10 January 2027

Vam.ac.uk

Lead Sponsor Aēsop.

In May 2026, the V&A will present *Rising Voices: Contemporary Art from Asia, Australia and the Pacific*, a landmark exhibition bringing together the work of more than 40 artists from 25 countries across the Asia Pacific region. A partnership with the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA) in Brisbane, the exhibition will draw on more than 30 years of QAGOMA's Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, offering an unparalleled view of the region's dynamic creative landscape. More than 70 works spanning sculpture, photography, painting, ceramics, weaving and body adornment – many of which have never been exhibited outside of the region – will foreground First Nations perspectives and reflect the interconnected, ever-changing cultures of the Asia Pacific today.

Home to 60 per cent of the global population, Australia, Asia and the Pacific comprise one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse parts of the world. The Asia Pacific Triennial was established in 1993 and remains the only major recurring series dedicated to the region's contemporary makers. *Rising Voices* will draw on the Triennial's legacy, arranged across an introduction and three thematic sections. **Re-Visioning History** will demonstrate how artists respond to political conditions, from histories of migration to domestic conflicts and social upheaval. **Enduring Knowledge** will explore artistic heritage and ways of making with local materials, featuring works informed by long-standing traditions and ceremonial customs. The exhibition will conclude with **Evolving Faith**, a section considering how spirituality and systems of faith are expressed in contemporary practices.

Positioned at the exhibition's entrance, **Michael Parekōwhai's** life-sized fibreglass sculpture of a Māori security guard, *Kapa Haka (Whero)* (2003), offers a potent reflection on the stereotypes faced by Māori men even today. Under his watchful gaze, the exhibition will unfold through works that reveal the ongoing significance of ancestral knowledge, histories and connections to place that continue to influence artists' practices today. Following an introduction that centres Indigenous knowledge and diverse artistic languages, the exhibition's first section, **Re-Visioning History**, will include **Pala Pothupitiye's** *Kalutara Fort* (2020–21), a reimagined map of Sri Lanka's historic military camp, initially built by Portuguese occupiers, later captured by Dutch settlers and ultimately surrendered to British colonial powers. This section will also

feature artists **Brenda Fajardo, Elisabet Kauage, Mathias Kauage** and **John Siune**, whose work *There is still a war going on in Bougainville* (1995) responds to Papua New Guinea's Bougainville conflict (1988–98), the largest and most deadly conflict in Oceania since the end of the Second World War. Photography will also play a prominent role in this section, with works by **Naomi Hobson** and **Michael Cook** capturing intimate portraits and stylised scenes of life, both real and imagined.

The second section of *Rising Voices*, **Enduring Knowledge**, will foreground practices rooted in ancestral memory and long-standing connections to place and community. Materials drawn directly from the natural environment – including feathers, mother-of-pearl, bamboo and coconut husk fibre – will feature throughout in handbags, baskets, fans and body adornments, alongside examples of miniature painting and ceramics. Highlights will include necklaces by **Lola Greeno**, crafted from iridescent maireener and abalone shells, and a selection of vibrant works on paper by **Khadim Ali, Saira Wasim, Pushpa Kumari** and **Nusra Latif Qureshi**, who challenges conventions of South Asian miniature painting by centring her female subjects. A series of porcelain busts by **Ah Xian** will be displayed alongside, illustrated with delicately rendered landscapes in cobalt glaze – a porcelain painting technique perfected in Jingdezhen in central China during the Ming and Qing dynasties.

The exhibition's final section, **Evolving Faith**, will focus on spirituality and religion in contemporary art across the region. Exploring relationships between the sacred and the secular, artists in this section will demonstrate how belief systems intersect with systems of power and the everyday. Key works will include **Nomin Bold**'s 2012 painting, *Labyrinth game*, which utilises elements of Tibetan Buddhist *thangka* (scroll) painting to capture the complex urban landscape of Ulaanbaatar in Mongolia, and **Montien Boonma**'s monumental sculpture *Lotus sound* (1992), a celebrated work inspired by the temple grounds of Wat Phra That Doi Suthep in Chiang Mai. Enchanted by the temple's chiming bells and blooming lotus flowers, the artist alludes to symbols of wisdom and enlightenment in Buddhist philosophy. Nearby, **Takahiro Iwasaki**'s three-metre-long suspended sculpture, *Reflection Model (Perfect Bliss)* (2010–12) – constructed from Japanese cypress to mirror its architectural inspiration, the sacred Phoenix Hall in Japan's Byōdō-in Temple complex – will close the exhibition.

Across geographies and communities, and reflecting on a changing relationship to the past, *Rising Voices* will reveal both diversity and commonality in art making across the region, marking a pivotal moment in the dialogue between the local and the international that the Asia Pacific Triennial has championed for over three decades.

Daniel Slater, Director of Exhibitions at the V&A, said: “Rising Voices *brings together an extraordinary group of artists whose works reveal stories that are at once deeply rooted in place and urgently resonant on a global stage. These works have never been seen in the UK before, yet they speak to histories and perspectives that are essential to a fuller understanding of our shared contemporary world. From the enduring strength of ancestral knowledge and faith to powerful reflections on colonial legacies and conflict, the exhibition unfolds narratives that deserve far greater visibility here. It is a privilege to present such varied and compelling practices at the V&A, and to offer UK*

audiences the opportunity to encounter the depth, vitality, and creative force of the Asia Pacific region.”

Tarun Nagesh, Curatorial Manager, Asian and Pacific Art, QAGOMA, said: “Rising Voices has been carefully curated to celebrate the great depth and dynamism of contemporary art from the Asia Pacific region, signalling influential moments and featuring pioneering artists across its immense range of artistic contexts. Through rich material practices and diverse approaches to art making, the exhibition will emphasise how histories, belief systems and social conditions are expressed by artists of the region today, while revealing how cultural knowledge is carried and nurtured through communities and across generations. It has been a great privilege to develop this exhibition in close collaboration with the V&A, selecting artwork with great consideration to its collections, context and audiences.”

Rising Voices: Contemporary Art from Asia, Australia and the Pacific is a Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art exhibition presented in partnership with the Victoria & Albert Museum, supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland.

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A selection of press images is available to download free of charge from pressimages.vam.ac.uk.

Notes to Editors

- *Rising Voices: Contemporary Art from Asia, Australia and the Pacific* opens on 16 May 2026.
- The exhibition is co-curated by Daniel Slater, Director of Exhibitions at the V&A and Tarun Nagesh, Curatorial Manager of Asian and Pacific Art at the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA).
- Tickets for the exhibition are on sale 4 March 2026 at vam.ac.uk.

Social Media

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Facebook: [@VictoriaandAlbertMuseum](https://www.facebook.com/VictoriaandAlbertMuseum)

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About V&A South Kensington

The V&A is a family of museums dedicated to the power of creativity.

V&A South Kensington is a world of extraordinary global creativity, with unmissable exhibitions, experiences and educational programmes for all. One of London's most iconic buildings, it is home to national collections of art, design, fashion, photography and furniture to theatre, performance, architecture, and ceramics, as well as the UK's National Art Library. It is a place where everyone can experience a story of creativity that spans 5,000 years and every creative discipline, which brings that story to life through programmes and activities for all ages and specialisms, and world-leading research and conservation.

About QAGOMA and the Asia Pacific Triennial

Based in two architecturally acclaimed buildings in Brisbane, Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA) is one of Australia's premier institutions for the visual arts. As well as presenting current and historical Australian and international art, QAGOMA has a globally significant collection of contemporary art from the Asia Pacific region, developed through its flagship exhibition series, the Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art. Since 1993, the Triennial has drawn more than four million visitors with its ever-evolving mix of new work by more than one thousand artists from 50 countries.

About Aēsop

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