

RISING :

SHADOW SPIRIT

A new First Nations exhibition in Flinders Street Station.

RISING acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands on which we live, learn and work. We pay our respects to the Kulin nation and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders.

ABOUT RISING

RISING is a festival that you do, in the city that does it best; music, food, art and culture, under moonlight, in the heart of Naarm. The next festival takes place 07—18 June 2023.

A major cultural event the festival takes place each June on the unceded lands of the Kulin nations. The name RISING reflects a festival that emerges from the city's roots.

RISING relates Melbourne's story to the world. It's an expression of Melbourne's identity as a diverse city of artists, musicians and creative thinkers who together create an unmissable cultural destination.



RISING:
SHADOW
SPIRIT

ABOUT SHADOW SPIRIT

A new First Peoples exhibition in Flinders Street Station's abandoned rooms. Be immersed in Ancestral systems of knowledge. Traverse time and celestial worlds. Reflect on the shadows of Australia's history.

Ascend to Flinders Street Station's top floor for an exhibition that shares spirit worlds, heeding warning and bringing protection. Enter a new dimension where time undulates between the past and present, and where spirits and creatures of country ask us to listen deeply. Thirty of the most exciting First Peoples artists and collectives from across Australia, invite you into these realms.

A cavernous gymnasium hosts water spirits, existing on country and on Ancestral plains. Abstracted desert worlds speak to old wisdom still in practice. The ballroom weaves plant and animal ecologies with the spirit of senior artists that share song and ceremony, immersing you in country. Works illuminate protective guardians, that warn and cause mischief. Some sing. Some whisper. Some rock and roll.

There are layers to the shadows of history; to the spirit of these memories. They're not myths or legends. They're real to the people and the land. These expressions exist within systems of deep knowledge that connect to space between what the body feels, and the mind knows.

Come upstairs. Worlds await.

FROM THE CURATOR

CURATORIAL STATEMENT

First Peoples in Australia hold stories of spirits and other worldly beings that heed both warning and protection. Across the continent there are accounts of Ancestral creatures that have created and inhabit rivers and oceans, and celestial beings that map the cosmos illuminating ancient story and navigation systems. There are beings that protect land and the subterranean, and tales of energy that might lead you astray.

Further to these stories embedded in the spirit of country; there are connections to the metaphysical and multidimensional space of time, and to people who heal through old knowledge and pass messages through dreams. We have histories in this land that have been forgotten with time, or that sit beneath the surface and in the shadows of cities and towns, but are carried in the memory of decedents that survived.

These stories both light and dark are not myths or folklore, they are networks of First Peoples knowledge and inherited memory. They also link to the universal human experience of connecting to place and ecologies—some we are yet to understand.

Shadow Spirit is an exhibition of contemporary works by First Peoples artists from across the country. With fourteen newly commissioned works, and existing video work, the artists generously share their connections to the themes of the exhibition, from personal and cultural to imaginative and historical perspectives.

FROM THE CURATOR

“In my community and for First Peoples across Australia we hold stories of spirits and other worldly beings that heed both warning and protection.

Across our lands there are accounts of Ancestral creatures that have created the rivers and mountains, that swim in the oceans and protect waters ways and there are tales of beings that entrap minds and children or lead you astray causing you mischief. There are stories of beings that bring new life of babies and protection of country that guide you in ways to safety and care.

These stories both light and dark are not myths or folklore, they are real to the people and to the land and linked to the human experience of connecting to place and ecologies we are yet to understand.

Further to these stories embedded in the spirit of country there are connections to the metaphysical and multidimensional space of time, between mind and matter with people and animal kin that are said to travel on astral plains beyond what we know on earth, that shapeshift and connect, who heal and pass on messages.

My ideas for this exhibition have come from the many years of yarns with Elders and community—the stories told around the kitchen table and campfires—and my passion to share community voice and culture, these stories relate to deep networks of knowledge. My aim for Shadow Spirit is to inspire and share with respect and integrity the many stories that relate to this theme—from the personal, the imaginative, the historical, and the cultural perspectives of the artists.”

— Kimberley Moulton, *Yorta Yorta*, Senior Curator and Artistic Associate,
RISING



The background features a complex, abstract pattern of vibrant blue lines on a solid black background. The lines are thick and wavy, creating a sense of movement and depth. They form various shapes, including what looks like stylized leaves or petals, and intricate, overlapping patterns that resemble a topographical map or a dense network of paths. The overall effect is organic and dynamic.

RISING :

EXHIBITION THEMES

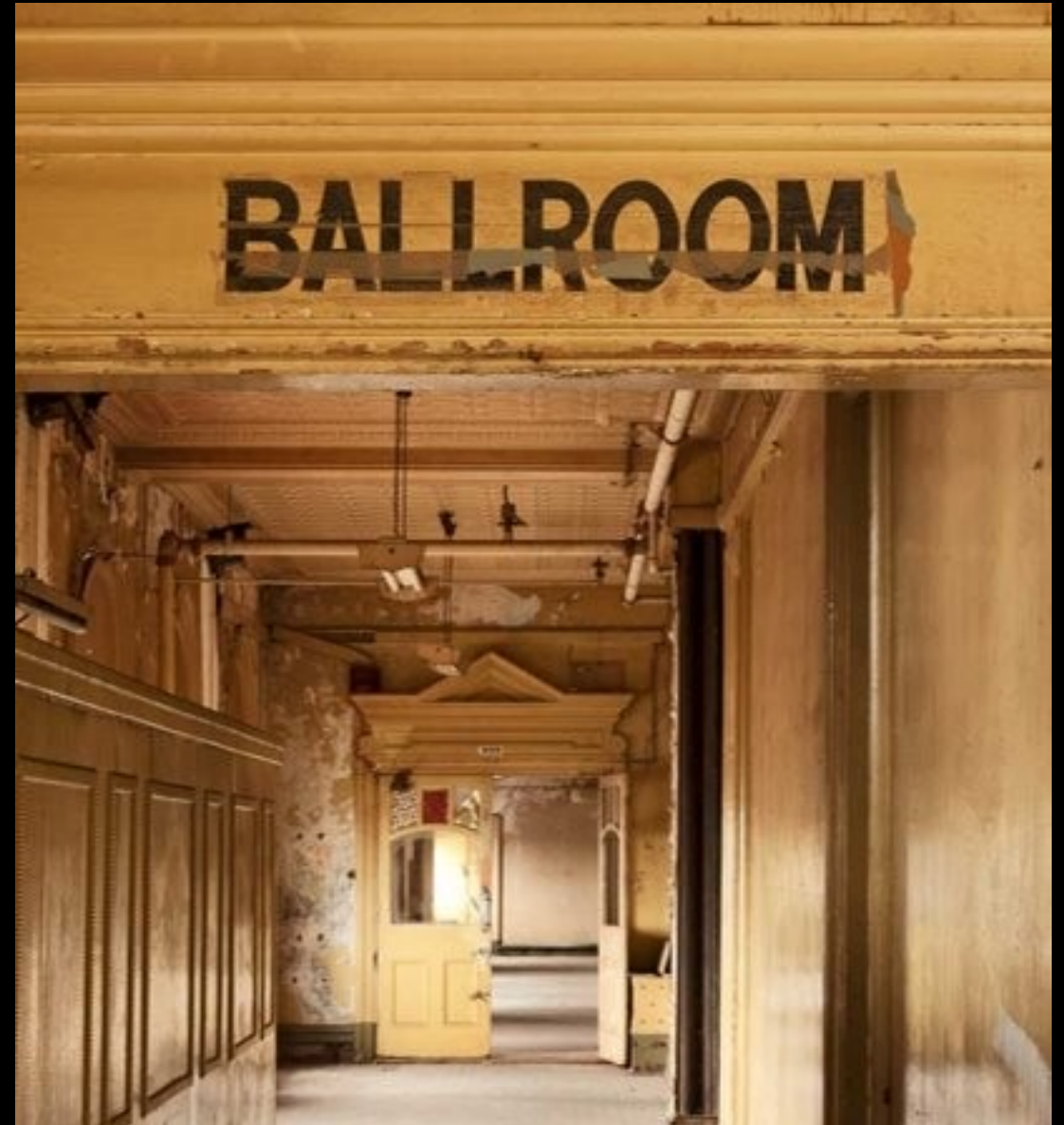
HISTORY OF FLINDERS STREET STATION

Flinders Street Station was first opened in 1854, but the current building was completed in 1910 after winning a design competition in 1902. Since its opening in 1910 until 1985 the Flinders Street Station Administration Building (FSSAB) was a hub of social and community activities for the growing city of Melbourne.

The third floor was home to the Victorian Rail Institute, which dedicated itself to the betterment of its members - current and former railway employees. Facilities included a gymnasium, billiards room, lending library and classrooms, as well as a roof top running track. Other parts of the building hosted creche facilities, child welfare services, shops, and dance studios.

The Ballroom, which was originally a lecture room, hosted many dances, performances and social events and was rented by university clubs and community groups. Though some small additions were made to the building over time, such as the band balcony in the ballroom built in the 1960s, only minimal maintenance was carried out on the building. It gradually fell into a state of disrepair and eventually was closed for public access in 1985. In the 60s and 70s there had been several proposals to redevelop the site, however after public push back the cultural and architectural value of the FSSAB was reassessed and it was added to the Victorian Heritage Register in 1982.

Read more about the station in Stories Above the Tracks:
<https://rising.melbourne/wormhole/stories-above-the-tracks>



WEAVING TIME

Astral Planes, Multiverse, Dream Space

There is a multi-dimensional space in our world that goes back to the morning of the first sunrise. There are Ancestor creators that are in an ever-present slip stream of what we know as time. It was then, it is now, and it is yet to happen. Through dreams and through travel between mind and matter, astral plains, and multiverses that weave and undulate.



Weaving Time by Dylan Mooney.

THE GUIDES

Protection, Healing, Playful

There are guides in our lives, connected to who we are and to the land. There are stories of beings that bring new life of babies and protection of country. Illuminating and safe, they can be playful and cheeky. Guides take different forms, Ancestral star constellations, to changing seasons and animal kin that move with everchanging wind – we must listen deeply.



ABSCENT PRESENCE

Mischief, Malevolent, Warning

There is the space between what we feel and what we know, what the body tells us in opposition to what the mind wants us to think. There are things that feel very present but that cannot be seen. Sometimes they bring warning or mischief, sometimes they feel unwanted.





THE IN-BETWEEN

Memory, Shapeshifting, Spirit

There are shapeshifting multiverses, where the eagle becomes man, and the sand knows your name. Where humans become animal, and animal become Kin. What are the memories of the ocean waters or the wind? Do the mountains remember the first tree that sprouted? Are we remembering, or are we imagining?

SPIRIT ECOLOGIES

Country/Land/sky/water

Country has spirit and holds stories and legends of energies and other worldly beings that heed both warning and protection. Across the continent, there are accounts of creatures that live in the rivers and mountains, that swim in the oceans and protect waterways. These spirit ecologies are dynamic and change across the country, they are on land and subterranean, in waters and live amongst the stars.



water shadow by Judy Watson, 2023.



RISING :

MEET THE
ARTISTS

MEET THE ARTISTS

For artist biographies and links to their websites, visit:
<https://shadow-spirit.rising.melbourne/artists>



Aunty Zeta Thomson (VIC)
Wurundjeri/Yorta Yorta



Brian Robinson (TSI/QLD)
Maluyligal/Wuthathi



Dylan Mooney (TSI/QLD)
*Yuwi, Torres Strait Island and
South Sea Islander*



Hayley Millar Baker (VIC)
Gunditjmara/Djabwurrung

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John Prince Siddon (WA)
Walmajarri



Judy Watson (QLD)
Waanyi



Julie Gough (TAS)
Trawlwoolway



Karla Dickens (NSW)
Wiradjuri

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Maningrida Arts & Culture (NT)
Kuninjku



Paola Balla (VIC)
Wemba Wemba/ Gunditjmara



Rene Wanuny Kulitja (NT)
Pitjantjatjara



The Mulka Project with
Mulkuṅ Wirrpanda (NT)
Yolṅu

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Tiger Yaltangki (SA)
with Jeremy Whiskey (SA)
*Yankunytjatjara and Pitjantjatjara/
Yankunytjatjara*



Dr Vicki Couzens (VIC)
Keerray Wooroong/ Gunditjmara



Warwick Thornton (NT)
kaytej

ABOUT THE CURATOR



Kimberley Moulton is a Yorta Yorta woman who grew up in Shepparton country Victoria and is an accomplished Senior Curator and writer. She is an Artistic Associate at RISING and a Senior Curator, First Peoples at Museums Victoria. Kimberley works with knowledge, histories and futures at the intersection of First Peoples historical collections and contemporary art and her practice works to extend the paradigm of what exhibitions and research in and out of institutions can be for First Peoples communities in Australia and globally.

She has held Senior curatorial and community arts development roles at Museums Victoria for fifteen years and independently has curated numerous exhibitions and written extensively for art and museum publications worldwide. She has held curatorial and writing research fellowships across Europe, UK, U.S.A, South Asia and North America which have looked at both musicological collections of First Peoples belongings and contemporary art practices.

In 2019 Kimberley won the University of Sydney Power Institute National Indigenous Art Writing Award and is currently a PhD research candidate for the Wominjeka Indigenous Research Lab and Monash University Melbourne. Kimberley is currently the deputy chair of the board for Shepparton Art Museum and a director of the board for non-for-profit The Adam Briggs Foundation.



The background features a complex, abstract pattern of bright blue lines on a black field. The lines are thick and wavy, creating a sense of movement and depth. They form various shapes, including what looks like stylized leaves or petals, and a dense, textured area in the upper right. The overall effect is organic and dynamic.

RISING :

REFLECTION

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER DURING YOUR VISIT

1. How have the themes in Shadow Spirit been explored through the works?
2. What was the first thing you noticed when you arrived in the space?
3. What artwork was your favourite and why?
4. How is connection to Country explored through the works?
5. In what ways is First Peoples Spirituality explored through these works?
6. How are oral stories and information interpreted through visual work?
7. Reflection: Analyse the ways artists in Shadow Spirit used different technologies, techniques, and arts materials to bring their concepts to life through their work



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