UNSETTLEMENT

Curators:
Charlotte Day, Shelley McSpedden and Elise Routledge

Artists including:
Dana Awartani (SA)
Monica Bonvicini (IT/DE)
Aliansyah Caniago (ID)
Jasmina Cibic (SI/UK)
Hiwa K (IQ)
Jill Magid (US)
Hayley Millar-Baker (AUS)
Archie Moore (AUS)
Amie Siegel (US)

Exhibition dates:
28 April – 7 July 2018

Opening function:
2 May 2018, 6 – 8pm

Monash University Museum of Art | MUMA presents *Unsettlement*, an international group exhibition exploring the ways that power manifests through architecture and in the built environments that surround us. The artworks presented register the material force and histories of architecture, and encourage a productive sense of upheaval and re-appraisal.

The exhibition features artists from Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, United States of America, Italy, Iraq, Slovenia and Australia. Encompassing a diverse range of media, including moving image, photography, installation and performance, the works in *Unsettlement* engage with specific architectural forms and histories in distinct local contexts.

MUMA Director and co-curator Charlotte Day explains:

"Architecture provides a tangible, physical form to the amorphous forces that shape our lives. It gives us a concrete starting point to address the histories, as well as the current-day economic and political influences, that define the world we inhabit."

'Unsettlement' is conceived as both a contemporary condition – in which our claim to the spaces we occupy is increasingly precarious – and a strategy for artistic, social and political engagement. From subtle gestures of reclamation to more radical remodelling, the works in *Unsettlement* strive to confuse architecture's functionality, undermine its authority or explode its mythologies. In doing so, they make visible the power dynamics and infrastructures shaping our world.

Of particular focus in *Unsettlement* are the myriad ways that state and economic power is expressed and exercised physically. Day reflects:

"The artists brought together in *Unsettlement* are highly attuned to how state and economic power both shapes and is safe-guarded by the built environment. This ranges from overt mechanisms of state control, such as prison camps, through to the use of the seductive language of architecture as soft power, such as in the commissioning of monumental buildings."

A broad spectrum of architectural manifestations of power is considered in *Unsettlement*. Jasmina Cibic’s *The Pavilion* 2015 reflects on the role of architecture in the nation-building activities of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in the early 20th century. In *Dynasty* 2017, Amie Siegel seizes a marble fragment from the lobby of the Trump Tower in New York to provoke questions about simulation and authenticity, wealth, trade and the corporatisation of politics in a global context.
Through their engagement with specific architectural forms, the works in *Unsettlement* offer insights into distinct cultural contexts and social struggles. Indonesian artist Aliansyah Caniago invites audience members to take up boxing gloves and pummel a boxing bag filled with rubble from a residential community recently demolished in Sunda Kelapa, on the outskirts of Jakarta. The work manifests the struggles and frustrations of the politically and economically disenfranchised population displaced by this rapid redevelopment. Gunditjmara artist Hayley Millar-Baker’s photographic assemblages present a personal mapping of her family history and connection to Country in southwest Victoria. They feature architectural forms that have played a central role for First Nation peoples in the region, including the Budj Bim eel trap system, basalt stone walls built with Indigenous slave labour and the Lake Condah mission, where families still gather despite the traumatic history of the site. Meanwhile, Saudi artist Dana Awartani’s video performance, in which she sweeps away an intricately designed sand drawing, meditates on the erasure of traditional Islamic design and architectural practices in the Middle East.

A preoccupation with a number of defining characteristics of our contemporary condition emerge in *Unsettlement*; namely the effects of accelerating globalisation and mass urbanisation, the legacies of colonial occupation across the world, and the control enacted by state and economic infrastructures.

*Unsettlement* features a number of ambitious projects by local and international artists. Australian artist Archie Moore’s major installation *Whipsaw* 2017 atmospherically transforms one of MUMA’s gallery spaces into a structure reminiscent of ones his grandmother once occupied. Slovenian artist Jasmina Cibic’s immersive installation *The Pavilion* creates a seductive optical game, while MUMA’s gallery walls will be cut up and re-assembled in Monica Bonvicini’s bold sculptural intervention *Structural Psychodramas #1* 2017. We are also delighted to present the Australian début of Jill Magid’s long-term project *The Barragán Archives*, which examines the legacy of Mexican architect and Pritzker Prize-winner Luis Barragán while also looking at the complex legal and cultural issues surrounding the custodianship of his archives.

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Free entry
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Images:
1. Dana Awartani, *I went away and forgot you. A while ago I remembered. I remembered I’d forgotten you. I was dreaming.* 2017 single channel SD video, stereo, 22min, video still. Courtesy of the artist and Athr, Jeddah
2. Amie Siegel, *Dynasty* 2017, Trump Tower marble fragment, two chromogenic prints (215 x 195 cm each), archival pigment print (61 x 28 cm), vinyl wall text, exhibition view, South London Gallery, London, UK. Courtesy the artist and Simon Preston Gallery, New York
3. Aliansyah Caniago, *Sunda Kelapa: Selamat Datang Jakarta* 2017, installation, performance art, HD-video, punching bag, 8 hours per day, video still. Courtesy of the artist
4. Jill Magid, *Barragan®* 2016, neon, 3 transformers, 78.7 x 7.6cm (31 x 3 inches), photo: Ramiro Chaves. Courtesy of the artist and the gallery