

## MEDIA RELEASE

13 March 2024



### HEIDE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART PRESENTS A NEW EXHIBITION EXPLORING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HAIR IN CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

#### *Hair Pieces*

4 May - 6 October 2024



**Melbourne, Australia:** Heide Museum of Modern Art announces a new exhibition that will explore the complex significance of hair in contemporary culture through a selection of Australian and international works of art. Presented from **4 May to 6 October 2024**, the exhibition titled *Hair Pieces* brings together historic and recent works encompassing a wide array of media such as painting, photography, video, installation, sculpture and recorded live performance.

For millennia hair has been a resonant and compelling site of meaning, transmitting ideas about gender, mythology, status and power, the body, psychology, feminism and notions of beauty. At once radiant and repellent, and often richly symbolic, it has always assumed a particular importance in relation to the self, history and society. *Hair Pieces* examines the myriad ways in which artists utilise hair to investigate themes encompassing growth, empowerment and transformation.

Spanning five decades and nine countries, the exhibition features works of art by **33** artists from **Belgium, China, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, South America, United Kingdom, United States, and Australia**. Highlights include Cuban-American performance artist **Ana Mendieta's** work *Untitled (Facial Hair Transplant)*, which documents the artist methodically glueing individual strands of her friend's beard to her upper lip. The work forms part of Mendieta's important experimentations during the early 1970s that involved the artist altering her physical appearance through a range of

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cosmetic interventions. These intimate private actions and live performances often employed hair and wigs to question and rupture gender constructions and stereotypes.

Also on display is *Relation in Time* by renowned collaborators **Marina Abramović** and **Ulay**, a physically demanding performance work that saw the artists seated back-to-back, with their hair bound together in a tightly formed coil for 17 hours. One of many iconic works that the duo performed together throughout their 12 years of collaborative practice, *Relation in Time* utilises hair as an intimate extension of the self, an indicator of time and the dynamic impermanence of life. Other performance works featured in the exhibition include British artist **Sonia Boyce's** *Exquisite Tension*, and Bahamian-born artist **Janine Antoni's** *Loving Care*, for which the artist dragged her ponytail saturated in black hair dye across a gallery floor like a brush.

From Belgium, artist **Edith Dekyndt's** video work *Indigenous Shadow* shows what appears to be a shredded and torn flag raised on a makeshift pole. Created from long strands of black human hair, the 'flag' was filmed in Côte du Diamant at the burial place of radical poet and philosopher Édouard Glissant. Not far from Glissant's grave, in 1830, a clandestine merchant ship carrying enslaved people from Africa went aground. Moving in the wind, the seemingly shredded flag performs as a marker of this historical event, and a spectral trace of the millions of individuals from around the globe whose lives were stolen and remain largely unrecorded.

Preeminent Australian artist **Christian Thompson's** three channel video installation *Heat* portrays the hair of three young female protagonists hypnotically floating, free of gravity. The work explores Thompson's memories of growing up in the desert surrounding Barcaldine in Central West Queensland, capturing the sensation that he associates with being on his country: the dry wind blowing through his hair. Another video work by cross-disciplinary artist **S.J Norman** titled *Magna Mater* documents 12 First Nations people who identify as men, having their hair brushed 100 strokes each day over the same moon cycle.

Occupying the Kerry Gardner & Andrew Myer Project Gallery is the work of early career Australian artist **Christina May Carey**. Carey's installation resembles a chaotic, precariously balanced home office setup of mobile telephones, and laptop screens, asynchronously showing the same sequence of video of hair being braided and upbraided. Titled *Hypnagogia* which refers to the sensation of slipping in and out of control of the body, between wakefulness and sleep, Carey's project is a response to a contemporary feeling of disequilibrium, as boundaries between work and leisure dissolve, and the distinction between screen spaces and the physical body blur.

**Heide Museum of Modern Art Senior Curator and Hair Pieces Curator Melissa Keys said:**

*"Intricately socially coded, materially rich and symbolic, hair is everywhere in art and life. Rather than tracing a series of narrow themes the Hair Pieces exhibition samples a wide array of ideas and approaches and reflects on the uncanny, strange and alluring presence of hair and its importance to us."*

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**Participating artists include:** Marina Abramović (SRB/USA) and Ulay (GER/USA), Janine Antoni (US), Polly Borland (US), Sonia Boyce (UK), Sadie Chandler (AUS), Edith Dekyndt (BXL/BE), Karla Dickens (AUS), Jim Dine (US), Mona Hatoum (US), Zhang Chun Hong (US), Lou Hubbard (AUS), John Meade (AUS), Ana Mendieta (US), S.J Norman (US), J.D 'Okhai Ojeikere (NRA), Patricia Piccinini (AUS), Wes Placek (AUS), C. J Pyles (US), Chuxiao Qu (AUS), Julie Rrap (AUS), Charlie Sofo and Debris Facility (AUS), Christian Thompson (AUS), Kemang Wa Lehulere (SA), Louise Weaver (AUS), William Wegman (US), Helen Wright (AUS), Zhang Chun Hong (US), Ai Yamaguchi (JPN), Shih Yung-Chun (TW).

A publication will accompany the exhibition with essays by Senior Curator **Melissa Keys**, Wiradjuri cross-disciplinary artist, writer and curator **S.J Norman** and Zambian-born Australian journalist, author and filmmaker **Santilla Chingaie**.

*Ends*

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**IMAGE CAPTIONS (L-R):** Chunxiao Qu, *Wig Shoes*, 2017. Shoes, synthetic wig, 45 x 15 x 32cm © the artist; Janine Antoni, *Loving Care*, 1992. Performance with Loving Care hair dye, Natural Black. Dimensions variable Photographed by Prudence Cuming Associates at Anthony d'Offay Gallery, London, 1993 © Janine Antoni. Courtesy of the artist and Luhring Augustine, New York; Ana Mendieta, *Untitled (Facial Hair Transplants)*, 1972. Suite of seven colour photographs © The Estate of Ana Mendieta Collection, LLC, Courtesy Galerie Lelong & Co. Licensed by ARS, NY 2023 and Copyright Agency, Australia

**IMAGES** available [HERE](#)

## EXHIBITION DETAILS:

*Hair Pieces*

4 May to 6 October 2024

Heide Museum of Modern Art, 7 Templestowe Road, Bulleen Victoria 3105

<https://www.heide.com.au/exhibitions/hair-pieces/>

## ABOUT HEIDE

Set on sixteen acres of parkland with Yarra River frontage, Heide Museum of Modern Art, or Heide as it is affectionately known, is one of Australia's most important cultural institutions. Once a significant Wurundjeri gathering place, the property was later a dairy farm before becoming known as a hub for Australian modernist art and writing after it was purchased by art patrons John and Sunday Reed in 1934.

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The Reeds opened their home to the most progressive artists of their era, including Sidney Nolan, Albert Tucker, Joy Hester, John Perceval, Charles Blackman and Danila Vassilieff. Nolan's famous Ned Kelly series (1946–47) was painted in the dining room of the Heide farmhouse.

Continuing this spirited legacy, today Heide works to inspire creative talent, collaborating with emerging and mid-career artists as well as celebrating those who have made major contributions to Australian and international art.