

Design sensation Bethan Laura Wood receives the 2023 MECCA x NGV Women in Design Commission

NGV International | December 2023 – April 2024 | Free entry

8 March 2023: The NGV and MECCA have announced London-based designer **Bethan Laura Wood** as the recipient of the **2023 MECCA x NGV Women in Design Commission**, a major series inviting internationally renowned female designers and architects to create a significant new work for the NGV Collection.

Wood is the second recipient of the annual, five-year commission series, which has been made possible by a significant contribution from MECCA's social change program, M-POWER, which champions equality and opportunity for women and girls, including elevating women in art and design. The first and only commission series of its kind in Australia, the MECCA x NGV Women in Design Commission creates a platform to present topical, world-premiere works of international significance to highlight the contributions and practices of female designers to Australian and global audiences.

MECCA's support of this commission will strengthen the representation of women in the NGV's Collection of Contemporary Design and Architecture and advance the NGV's ongoing efforts towards redressing historical gender imbalance in the Collection.

Since establishing her eponymous design studio in 2009, Wood's radical approach to materiality, colour, and pattern has garnered a cult following. Fascinated with the cultural and historical significance of surface design and colour in domestic space and the interior, she explores unlikely combinations of colour and shape, developing unique timber veneers, material composites and textiles for furniture, lighting, objects, installations, and accessories.

Wood has presented work at Design Miami, Victoria and Albert Museum and Sketch, London; and has works held in permanent collections including The Art Institute of Chicago, SFMOMA and Victoria and Albert Museum.

Opening in December 2023, Wood's installation for the MECCA x NGV Women in Design Commission ingeniously combines a range of elements, including furniture, textiles and scenography, to delve into the gendered history of education and learning.

While her style is often described as "maximalist," Wood's creative work is layered with meaning, designed to engage on an emotional and intellectual level. Wood's installation at the NGV draws inspiration from diverse British eighteenth and nineteenth century references, including the kaleidoscope, Regency furniture, and the women's intellectual network known as 'bluestockings'. Her work invites audiences to contemplate how knowledge has been learned and shared throughout time and the roles played by gender.

Tony Ellwood AM, Director, NGV, said: 'The NGV is delighted to announce Bethan Laura Wood as the recipient of the 2023 MECCA x NGV Women in Design Commission, an inspiring multidisciplinary designer who embraces an artistic agenda fuelled by experimentation to create unique and flamboyant furniture, objects, textile and interior designs.'

'The NGV is grateful to MECCA for their visionary support to profile the practices of leading female designers and to enrich the NGV Collection for current and future generations to admire.'

Jo Horgan, founder and co-CEO, MECCA, and NGV Foundation board member said: 'The enormous talent and contribution of designers like Bethan remind us how important it is to ensure that women are represented not just in design schools, but in studios, galleries and leadership positions in the design industry. Bethan's multidisciplinary approach also reminds us that creativity, diverse thinking and curiosity can achieve remarkable things, and help us to see the world in new ways. MECCA M-POWER is all about championing equality and opportunities for women and girls, and we're so delighted to be able to help bring Bethan's work to new audiences and inspire women and girls in Australia to dream big.'



Bethan Laura Wood said: 'I am honoured to produce new works which will become a permanent addition to the NGV Collection. This commission, supported by MECCA, will allow deeper exploration into my practice of material investigations and offers a unique opportunity to present my contemporary design pieces in conversation with historical works from the NGV Collection.'

Mexican architect Tatiana Bilbao presented the inaugural MECCA x NGV Women in Design Commission in 2022, an installation titled *La ropa sucia se lava en casa* (*Dirty clothes are washed at home*), drawing on the notion of clothing as a symbol of protection for the body. Bilbao's work is on display at NGV International until 19 March 2023.

The 2023 MECCA x NGV Women in Design Commission will be on display from December 2023 – April 2024 at NGV International, St Kilda Road, Melbourne. Free entry. Further information is available via the NGV website: [ngv.melbourne](https://www.ngv.melbourne)

Images: <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/l291mafta5065ugv2ui3o/h?dl=0&rlkey=v70e3i1x2yahxxlvhd4ivalzl>

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Image caption:

Portrait of designer Bethan Laura Wood

Photo: Mark Cocksedge



WOMEN IN DESIGN COMMISSION

ABOUT THE MECCA X NGV WOMEN IN DESIGN COMMISSION

The MECCA x NGV Women in Design Commission is MECCA's single largest commitment to an Australian cultural institution, through this significant contribution MECCA's support will strengthen the NGV's Collection of Contemporary Design and Architecture works by women and advances the NGV's ongoing efforts towards redressing historical gender imbalance in the Collection.

Over five years, commissioned designers will be revealed annually at an event coinciding with International Women's Day in March, with the final work being revealed by year's end. The partnership will culminate in a major exhibition to showcase the five bodies of work and the remarkable Collection outcome.

The MECCA x NGV Women in Design Commission is made possible by a significant contribution from MECCA through their philanthropic program, M-Power. Driven by a vision to advance equality and address the global gender gap, M-Power delivers programs that provide opportunities for women and girls.

ABOUT THE MECCA X NGV PARTNERSHIP

Since 2016, the NGV has partnered with MECCA on a number of ongoing initiatives designed to empower and engage female artists and designers, including Tatiana Bilbao, Nadia Hernández, Naomi Hobson, Louise Zhang, Tammy Kanat, Claudia Moodoonuthi, Atong Atem, Rebecca Baumann and Tanya Schultz.

Each year, MECCA and the NGV collaborate with a female artist or designer to create the brand's annual limited-edition holiday packaging and campaign. As part of the collaboration, MECCA supports the NGV to acquire work by the selected artist for the NGV Collection, helping to enrich its holdings of contemporary art and design. The acquired work is also displayed at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia each year.

The NGV has also worked with MECCA on their M-Power grant program which offers emerging female artists and designers a 12-month tailored mentoring program, professional development and networking opportunities, as well as ongoing learning opportunities with industry experts.

ABOUT THE NGV DEPARTMENT OF CONTEMPORARY DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE

Established in 2015, the NGV's Department of Contemporary Design and Architecture was the first of its kind for an Australian art gallery. The collection features an ever-growing selection of important examples of 21st century international and Australian object design, product design, architecture, contemporary jewellery, craft, speculative and critical design.

The Collection holds internationally significant works by Patricia Urquiola, nendo, Faye Toogood, Formafantasma, Neri Oxman, Teamlab, and Estudio Campana. The NGV presents a range of contemporary design and architecture programs and projects annually, including Melbourne Design Week, Melbourne Design Fair and the NGV Architecture Commission.

The NGV Department of Contemporary Design and Architecture is generously supported by The Hugh D. T. Williamson Foundation.

ABOUT MECCA

Since opening the doors to its very first store in Melbourne in 1997, MECCA has completely redefined the Australian beauty landscape, championing retail innovation and delivering the ultimate beauty experience to customers.

Founded by Jo Horgan, over the past 25 years MECCA has grown to become Australasia's largest prestige beauty retailer, serving more than four million customers each year. With more than 100 stores across Australia and New Zealand, as well as online stores in both countries and T-Mall global, MECCA offers an exclusive edit of the best in beauty from more than 200 brands. Today, MECCA has a growing team of 5,000 spread across its Support Centre, Distribution Centre and store network, all working towards a shared purpose of helping people to look, feel and be their best.

From the very beginnings, the MECCA team has shared a passion for education and equality. MECCA's social change program, M-POWER was established in 2017, and aims to educate, elevate and empower women and girls to help create a world where everyone has the same rights and opportunities.