



MEDIA RELEASE

NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA
MEDIA CONTACTS: MEDIA AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS, NGV
MARION JOSEPH | 0427 147 899 | MARION.JOSEPH@NGV.VIC.GOV.AU
PENNY FRANCE | 0439 543 833 | PENNY.FRANCE@NGV.VIC.GOV.AU
BONNIE HORNE | 0448 369 260 | BONNIE.HORNE@NGV.VIC.GOV.AU
BRIANA TOMASINO | 0408 333 399 | BRIANA.TOMASINO@NGV.VIC.GOV.AU
ALICE RAYMOND | 0499 690 472 | ALICE.RAYMOND@NGV.VIC.GOV.AU

NGV Triennial 2023: eight-metre-long bronze eel trap sculpture by Wurundjeri artist Aunty Kim Wandin presented in the NGV moat

NGV International | 3 December 2023 – 7 April 2024 | FREE



11 December 2023: A monumental new public artwork created by Wurundjeri artist Aunty Kim Wandin has been installed in the moat of NGV International on St Kilda Road as part of the NGV Triennial 2023.

Visible to Melburnians twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, the eight-metre-long eel trap sculpture, *luk bagurrk gunga*, was cast in bronze from an intricately woven form created by Wandin in 2023.

This major new public artwork acknowledges the profound connections between Wurundjeri people and the lands and waterways that they have been custodians of for generations. The installation also highlights the migratory paths of eels, which today traverse sewers

and underground waterways across and beneath Naarm (Melbourne).

Commissioned by the City of Melbourne in partnership with the NGV, the sculpture is a tribute to the history of Wurundjeri women, their tradition of weaving, and their relationship with the short-finned eel, known in Woiwurrung language as iuk.

As a leading Aboriginal artist, Wandin explores contemporary genres that both enhance and complement her basketry and fibre pieces. Her work speaks of space, texture and light, while giving reference to notions of movement.

Aunty Kim Wandin said: 'My weaving honours my Ancestors, my grandmothers and the Aboriginal women looking after family. 'iuk bagurrk gunga' also honours the eel and their journey through waterways and across land. Just like the eels, we are still here and this bronze monument is showing continuity for my Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Community.'

Tony Ellwood AM, Director, NGV, said: 'By presenting this monumental sculpture by Aunty Kim Wandin in moat at NGV International, it will be the first work visitors encounter upon their arrival, signalling the long history of creativity on this continent that pre-dates the arrival of Europeans. We are grateful for the generous support from the City of Melbourne to make this ambitious new commission possible.'

Myles Russell-Cook, Senior Curator, Australian and First Nations Art, NGV, said: 'It is as important as ever that the people of Melbourne, acknowledge and remember the traditional owners of our Country. Aunty Kim's work is a constant physical reminder of Indigenous sovereignty, and of the continuing importance of First Peoples as leaders, particularly when it comes to the sustainable management of the lands and the waterways on which we all live. Her work is a gift for future generations and will become part of the incredible artistic fabric that makes Melbourne so unique.'

Lord Mayor Sally Capp, said: ‘This is such an inspiring piece of work we are proud to support – honouring our Wurundjeri women, their creativity and ingenuity, symbolising that we are on Kulin Land. At the forecourt of our iconic National Gallery, it is the perfect way to welcome visitors to what is an unmissable exhibition. We want to thank Aunty Kim Wandin for her unique art and in bringing to life 80,000 years of history and culture.’

Aunty Kim Wandin’s *luk bagurrk gunga* is part of NGV Triennial 2023, which opened on 3 December. The free exhibition is a powerful and moving snapshot of the world today as captured through the work of over 120 artists, designers, and collectives at the forefront of global contemporary practice. Uniquely bringing art, design, and architecture into dialogue with one another and traversing all four levels of NGV International, the NGV Triennial features nearly 100 projects including over 25 world-premiere projects commissioned by the NGV.

luk bagurrk gunga by Aunty Kim Wandin is the second of three public art pieces commissioned by the City of Melbourne for the NGV Triennial series. The first commissioned work *Australian birds* by British artist Julian Opie was presented in the 2020 NGV Triennial. The final commissioned work will be presented in 2026 and all three works will form part of the City of Melbourne’s Art and Heritage Collection.

The NGV Triennial is on display until 7 April 2024 at NGV International, St Kilda Road, Melbourne. Entry is FREE. Further information is available via the NGV website: [NGV.MELBOURNE](https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au)

ABOUT AUNTY KIM WANDIN

Aunty Kim Wandin is a Wurundjeri Elder of the Woiwurrung language group and co-director of Murrup Biik public art initiative. She has lived and worked ‘on Country’ in Healesville, Victoria, her entire life. Her traditional basket-making has been handed down to her by direct lineage: from her grandmother, her great-grandmother and the Ancestors. Aunty Kim’s work represents a significant cultural position within the southeast of Victoria as part of an important group of arts practitioners. Her work adheres to and references traditional cultural practices.

As an Elder, she advocates for strengthening culture and sharing her knowledge. Aunty Kim Wandin is a passionate, caring, professional Aboriginal woman and artist who is committed to her family, Ancestors, Elders and Culture.

IMAGES: <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/16dr530leelfi6p3sdbgo/h?rlkey=c3284wub060xdpfr9t7ou4x50&dl=0>

Image caption: Aunty Kim Wandin with her work *luk bagurrk gunga* 2023, presented as part of the NGV Triennial and co-commissioned by NGV and the City of Melbourne, on display from 3 December 2023 – 7 April 2024 at NGV International, Melbourne. Photo: Eugene Hyland.

Media Contacts:

Marion Joseph, Associate Director, Media and Public Affairs, NGV

0427 147 999 | marion.joseph@ngv.vic.gov.au

Penny France, Media Manager, NGV

0439 543 833 | penny.france@ngv.vic.gov.au

Bonnie Horne, Media and Public Affairs Officer, NGV

0448 369 260 | bonnie.horne@ngv.vic.gov.au

Briana Tomasino, Media and Public Affairs Officer, NGV

0408 333 399 | briana.tomasino@ngv.vic.gov.au

Alice Raymond, Media and Public Affairs Assistant, NGV

0499 690 472 | alice.raymond@ngv.vic.gov.au

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