

PHOTO Australia

Curatorial Policy

PHOTO Australia's Curatorial Policy underpins PHOTO International Festival of Photography's artistic vision and programming. It drives our work and provides a framework for our partners to adhere to, ensuring a cohesive Festival experience.

Curatorial Principles

1. **Collective curation:** Each edition of the Festival is focused on a central theme set by PHOTO Australia, allowing a multitude of curatorial and artistic voices to come together.
2. **Contemporary practice:** The Festival is focused on contemporary practice, premiering new work by Australian artists and presenting the work of international artists in Victoria for the first time. Presentations of existing or historic work are intended to illustrate, or serve as a precursor to, contemporary practice and the contemporary moment.
3. **Breadth of practice:** With a focus on photography as a visual art, the Festival champions an expanded understanding of photography, including but not limited to portraiture, documentary, collage, multimedia and more. We look to present a multitude of genres and styles, as well as providing opportunities for emerging, mid-career and established artists.
4. **Inclusion, access and representation:** The Festival actively engages a wide range of backgrounds, and no artist can be excluded on the bases of ethnicity, race, nationality, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or mental health. Our Festival strives to be accessible for artists and audiences.
5. **Cultural sensitivity:** Artworks should be made with appropriate levels of consultation when making work with communities. Artworks must not discriminate against or vilify a person or section of the community on account of ethnicity, race, nationality, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or mental health. All artworks that are intended for outdoor display must be appropriate for the public realm with a sensitivity to broad audiences.
6. **Supporting artists:** PHOTO Australia ensures all the artists we work with directly are paid, that we curate and commission with care, and that we provide opportunities for professional development and growth. Exhibition partners must embrace their own best practice in working with artists.
7. **Curatorial independence:** PHOTO Australia's Board appoints the Artistic Director to make curatorial decisions for the organisation independently of the Board, funders and other third parties. In the case of co-presentations and co-commissions, PHOTO Australia works collaboratively with organisations to ensure the curatorial process reflects both organisation's curatorial values.

Selection Criteria

All proposals are reviewed by PHOTO Australia against the Selection Criteria in the sequence below:

1. **Response to theme:** All PHOTO Australia exhibitions and partner exhibitions must clearly respond to the Festival Theme to create a cohesive and interconnected experience.
2. **Artistic excellence:** Artworks must be of the highest quality to captivate, inspire and challenge audiences. Artistic excellence extends to the curation and installation of exhibitions.

Decision-Making Process

Decisions are based on:

1. Exhibition proposals meeting the Selection Criteria.
2. How well exhibitions address the Curatorial Principles.
3. Advice put forward by Curatorial Advisors.
4. Creating a balanced and engaging program with a plurality of voices and practices.

Curatorial Process

1. Outdoor Exhibitions

PHOTO Australia curates the Festival's outdoor exhibitions in response to the Festival Theme, with oversight and direction from PHOTO Australia's Artistic Director. Artists are either invited directly or are invited following an Open Call process.

Applications to the Open Call are reviewed by PHOTO Australia's Curatorial Advisors and Curator(s) who recommend artists for inclusion in the Festival. PHOTO Australia's Artistic Director makes the final decisions based on the Decision-Making Process.

Artists invited directly by PHOTO Australia to exhibit are selected by PHOTO Australia's curator(s) in consultation with the Artistic Director. Curatorial Advisors are invited to nominate artists for consideration.

2. Museum and Gallery Exhibitions

Museums and galleries are invited to curate their own exhibition in response to the Festival theme. This ensures the Festival incorporates a multitude of curatorial voices that come together to shape the Festival's artistic program and to provide access points for a broad variety of artists to participate. PHOTO Australia prioritises exhibition partners who are committed to artistic and curatorial excellence, to championing photography in their programs, and that reside in one of our Festival Precincts.

Proposals by museum and gallery partners must be approved by PHOTO Australia's Artistic Director and, if further consultation is required, one or more Curatorial Advisors. Exhibition proposals are assessed against our Selection Criteria and alignment with our Curatorial Principles. Museums and galleries then curate and deliver the exhibitions following their own best practices.

Commercial galleries will be charged a participation fee, which can be reduced or waived if they are presenting a non-commercial exhibition. This is at the discretion of PHOTO Australia.

Curatorial Advisors

PHOTO Australia invites local and international specialists to serve as Curatorial Advisors for each edition of the Festival. They review applications to the Open Call, and can nominate other artists for consideration for Outdoor Exhibitions. Curatorial Advisors are available for further consultation as and when appropriate, such as reviewing exhibition proposals, suggesting speakers for talks, and providing guidance and support.

Timeline (year prior to festival)

January / February:	Open Call
March:	Partner exhibition proposals due
September:	Program finalised
November:	Program announcement