

Media Release  
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**PHOTO Australia announces first exhibition of Australian photography at prestigious French photography festival the Rencontres d'Arles in July 2025.**



Image: Tony Albert, David Charles Collins and Kieran Lawson, *Warakurna Superheroes #1*, 2017.

March 2025 Melbourne: PHOTO Australia, producers of the PHOTO International Festival of Photography in Melbourne, announces a landmark partnership with the Rencontres d'Arles, one of the world's most prestigious and longest running photography festivals. Together they will premiere the exhibition 'On Country: Photography from Australia' in Arles, France, from 7 July to 5 October 2025 – the first time there has ever been a regional focus on Australia at the Rencontres d'Arles.

Curated by PHOTO Australia Founder/Artistic Director Elias Redstone, Guest Curator Kimberley Moulton (Yorta Yorta), and PHOTO Australia Curators Pippa Milne and Brendan McCleary, 'On Country: Photography from Australia' highlights the depth and diversity of photographic practice in Australia to new international audiences through the work of 17 Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists and collectives.

The exhibition features over two hundred photographic works by established and emerging artists that bear witness to both the visible and invisible aspects of being 'on Country' – a term embodied by First Peoples in Australia to describe the lands, waterways, seas and cosmos to which they are connected.

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Prominent artists in the exhibition include Tony Albert (Kuku Yalanji), Maree Clarke (Yorta Yorta/Wamba Wamba/Mutti Mutti/ Boonwurrung) and Brenda L Croft (Gurindji/Malngin/Mudburra) alongside Adam Ferguson, Atong Atem and Ying Ang. Important emerging artists being exhibited internationally for the first time include wani toaishara, Tace Stevens and Liss Fenwick.

Exhibition highlights include:

- Tony Albert & David Charles Collins' series *Warakurna Superheroes* – produced in collaboration with children from a remote First Peoples community in the Northern Territory depicting Indigenous children with handmade costumes dressing up as superheroes and posing against the dramatic outback landscapes of their hometown, Warakurna.
- The artwork *Warakurna Superheroes #1* has been selected by Arles Festival Director Christoph Wiesner as the hero image for the 2025 festival, providing major exposure through the festival's branding, marketing, and signage – a testament to the significance of the exhibition.
- *Capemba Bumbarra*, a 38-metre cyanotype installation by Elisa Jane Carmichael & Sonja Carmichael (Ngugi/Quandamooka) that represents the flow of fresh water from a spring as it journeys along tidal pathways and flows through the bush, mangroves and out into the salty bay of Quandamooka, on the Queensland Coast.
- A site specific installation by Maree Clarke of her series *Ritual and Ceremony*, including a 3-metre tall portrait of the distinguished Elder, the late Uncle Jack Charles.
- The exhibition takes place in the historic Eglise Saint-Anne – a deconsecrated church built in the 1600s – and will be a centrepiece exhibition visible to the Rencontres d'Arles' estimated 160,000 festival visitors.

Accompanying the exhibition is the launch of 'On Country: Photography from Australia', a dedicated catalogue published by Melbourne-based Perimeter Editions. The publication will provide further insight into the artists and their works, including an accompanying essay by Kelli Cole (Warumunga/Luritja), extending the exhibition's reach beyond its physical space and creating a resource on Australian photographic practice now. The publication will launch at the Rencontres d'Arles and will be available for sale through Perimeter Distribution.

'On Country: Photography from Australia' marks a significant development in Australia's international artistic profile and is the result of PHOTO Australia's efforts championing Australian photography on the global stage. Following a series of international partnerships with the Victoria & Albert Museum and The Photographers' Gallery, London, and CONTACT Photography Festival, Toronto, the newly announced partnership with the Rencontres d'Arles comes as PHOTO Australia also shapes the next PHOTO 2026 Festival in Melbourne/Naarm, taking place 06–29 March 2026.

'On Country: Photography from Australia' will be on display at the Rencontres d'Arles 2025 from 7 July to 5 October 2025. The exhibition is co-produced by PHOTO Australia, Melbourne and the Rencontres d'Arles, France with support from the Australian Government through the International Cultural Diplomacy Arts Fund, the Bowness Family Foundation, and FACEF – French Australian Cultural Exchange Foundation. Additional support by the Australian Embassy, France and the French Embassy in Australia, and Michael & Emily Tong.

Quotes:

**Elias Redstone**, Curator, 'On Country: Photography from Australia' and Founder/Artistic Director, PHOTO Australia.

"'On Country: Photography from Australia' is a significant moment for Australian photography, amplifying the depth and diversity of our artists on a prestigious global platform. This exhibition is the result of years of dedicated advocacy by PHOTO Australia to ensure Australian photographers are seen, heard, and celebrated internationally. By bringing these works to Arles, we are not only elevating the voices of these artists but also reinforcing Australia's significant contribution to

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contemporary photography. We are incredibly proud to see this advocacy come to fruition through this landmark partnership with the Rencontres d'Arles."

Kimberley Moulton, Guest Curator, 'On Country: Photography from Australia'; Adjunct Curator Indigenous Art, Tate and Senior Curator, RISING Festival.

"The land we know as Australia is made of hundreds of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations, with complex relationships to waterways, the cosmos, land, the subterranean and embodied knowledge that sits in a relational space of past, present and future, this is what we call Country. Today we share Country with many guests that also make it their home and through this exhibition we profile the multiplicity of connections and relationships within this, from our Ancestral pasts to our political and social present. 'On Country: Photography from Australia' is an important moment in positioning significant photography from Australia to a global audience emphasising the local and the transnational pertinence of their work."

Christoph Wiesner, Director, The Rencontres d'Arles:

"Bringing 'On Country: Photography from Australia' to the Rencontres d'Arles 2025 marks a monumental moment in the recognition of Australian photography on the world stage, and is certainly the most significant showing of Australian artists ever at the Arles festival. This exhibition not only introduces international audiences to the breadth and complexity of contemporary Australian photographic practices but also creates a powerful dialogue on land, history, and identity that many European audiences may not be aware of. We are honoured to be the first to showcase such a significant body of work in Arles."

Lynette Wood, Australian Ambassador to France:

"'On Country: Photography from Australia,' is a testament to the vibrant and diverse artistic talent that Australia has to offer. It beautifully showcases the depth of our cultural heritage and contemporary practices. Cultural cooperation between France and Australia, as highlighted in the Australia-France Roadmap, is crucial in strengthening our bilateral relationship. By bringing this exhibition to the Rencontres d'Arles, we are not only celebrating Australian photography but also fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation between our two nations."

Full List of Exhibiting Artists in Alphabetical order:

- Tony Albert (Kuku Yalanji) & David Charles Collins
- Ying Ang
- Atong Atem
- Elisa Jane Carmichael (Ngugi/Quandamooka) & Sonja Carmichael (Ngugi/Quandamooka)
- Maree Clarke (Yorta Yorta/Wamba Wamba/Mutti Mutti/Boonwurrung)
- Michael Cook (Bidjara)
- Brenda L Croft (Gurindji/Malngin/Mudburra)
- J Davies
- Liss Fenwick
- Adam Ferguson
- Robert Fielding (Yankunytjatjara/Western Arrernte peoples)
- The Huxleys – Will Huxley & Garrett Huxley (Gumbaynggirr/Yorta Yorta)
- Ricky Maynard (Pakana)
- Lisa Sorgini
- Tace Stevens (Noongar/Spinifex)
- wani toaishara
- James Tylor (Kaurana)

Notes to editors

About Les Rencontres d'Arles

Taking place in the town of Arles in southern France, the Rencontres d'Arles is an annual summer

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photography festival founded in 1970 and has earned an international reputation for showcasing contemporary photography every summer. Between early July and early October, the public is invited to explore about 40 exhibitions at various heritage sites throughout the city, from 12th-century chapels and cloisters to 19th-century industrial buildings, as well as contemporary and unexpected sites.

## About the Curators

Elias Redstone is Founder/Artistic Director, PHOTO Australia. He has curated exhibitions for institutions globally including Barbican Art Gallery, London, and Storefront for Art & Architecture, New York. His book 'Shooting Space: Architecture in Contemporary Photography' is published by Phaidon.

Kimberley Moulton (Yorta Yorta) is Adjunct Curator Indigenous Art, Tate and Senior Curator, RISING Festival. She is Curator Emeritus, Museums Victoria.

Pippa Milne is Curator, PHOTO Australia. She was Senior Curator, Museum of Australian Photography; Curator, Centre for Contemporary Photography; and Associate Curator, International Art, QAGOMA.

Brendan McCleary is Curator, PHOTO Australia and has worked across PHOTO 2021, 2022 and 2024. He was Lead Curator for Queer PHOTO at PHOTO 2024.

## About PHOTO Australia & PHOTO 2026 International Festival of Photography Melbourne

PHOTO Australia is a champion of Australian photographic arts on the world stage. Every two years PHOTO Australia produces the PHOTO International Festival of Photography, a global celebration of the artform in Melbourne/Naarm—Australia's capital of photography—and cities across Victoria. Presented in collaboration with museums and galleries, the festival presents a free trail of exhibitions and ambitious outdoor artworks that activate public spaces, alongside events, film screenings, tours and more.

To date, PHOTO 2021, PHOTO 2022 and PHOTO 2024 have featured over 400 artists and have been experienced by over 500,000 people. The next festival PHOTO 2026 is programmed around the festival theme 'Show Me Love' and will take place in the streets and galleries of Melbourne 06–29 March 2026.

PHOTO Australia plays a vital role in commissioning, publishing, and mentoring artists, while also strengthening the sector through networking, events, and professional programs.

## Further Info

> View the On Country Press Kit, including exhibition artworks, artists headshots, and bios:  
<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/drclg63p9x07per0nlpjq/AEviFxiRZvb7GiMJ52Fifs4?rlkey=77ob13wyt8ebqr0nnp00vjlg&dl=0>

> Learn more about PHOTO Australia: <https://photo.org.au>

> Learn more about Les Rencontres d'Arles and the 2025 Festival Program:  
<https://www.rencontres-arles.com/en>

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