

MEDIA RELEASE

COMMON GOOD

Design exhibition exclusive to Powerhouse Museum

The Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (MAAS) will open a major contemporary design exhibition on 2 March 2018 to celebrate the 20th **Sydney Design Festival**. Curated by and exclusive to the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, **Common Good** explores design trends in Australia and neighbouring regions and the positive design-lead responses to social, ethical and environmental challenges.

“Design practice is constantly evolving, reacting to the challenges of its time. With **Common Good** we examine the place of ground-breaking designers from our region in shaping solutions for our future society,” said **MAAS Director and CEO, Dolla Merrillees**.

“MAAS is pleased to be working with a new generation of socially-engaged designers from Australia and Asia, to both display and acquire works through this exhibition.”

“The Asia-Pacific is our creative commons. This exhibition is an opportunity to broaden our lens to explore the work and practices of a new generation of designers who are boldly taking action to affect positive change and influence long-term sustainability in our region,” said exhibition **curator, Keinton Butler**.

Common Good surveys contemporary design practices from Australia and the Asia-Pacific. Designers from a range of disciplines and countries are profiled, including leading international designers and architects **Nendo, Studio Swine, Bijoy Jain, Jo Nagasaka, Kwangho Lee** and **WOHA**, as well as globally recognised local designers **Ken Wong, Lucy McRae** and **Henry Wilson**.

The exhibition is framed by five themes that address increasingly complex challenges including housing affordability, waste management, population pressures and technological obsessions.

Life Cycles explores emerging sustainable design practices in a reference library of design materials, including those made from industrial and agricultural waste. Award-winning Japanese designers **AMAM** demonstrate how algae and agar bio-materials can be used in packaging that could ultimately replace non-biodegradable plastics. The Life Cycles resource library will be made available during and beyond the exhibition, contributing to the education of emerging designers.

Return to Craft profiles contemporary designers preserving cultural heritage through collaborative projects with artisans, craftspeople and manufacturers. Crafts such as woodworking, enamelware, ceramics and weaving are being given new relevance when worked by technologically driven designers. For instance, South Korean designer **Kwangho Lee** is reviving the ancient practice of Ott-chil high-gloss lacquering in projects such as the *New Armor* stool. Such projects bring fresh attention to otherwise forgotten traditions and can contribute to the survival of centuries-old crafts.

Connected Experiences demonstrate the ability of technology to generate social awareness and influence personal behaviour. In an exclusive commission for MAAS called *Watermelon Sugar Wellness Lab*, graphic designer and visual artist **Pamm Hong** invites you into an immersive installation where your online behaviour is transformed into a personalized virtual organism, providing a health check on your digital engagement habits.

Community Engagement explores projects that address social integration and poverty in the face of rapid urbanisation as well as international development initiatives and fully integrated, collaborative design concepts.

Design Fictions considers the role of the designer in shaping our future. Through their speculative and critical design projects, designers are questioning and debating the possible social implications of our scientific and technological developments, through carefully staged fictional scenarios. The *Rare Earthenware* project by **Unknown Fields** is the result of an expedition to Inner Mongolia, in which toxic mud was taken from a radioactive rare earth tailings lake and used to craft a set of ceramic vessels into the shape of highly valuable and recognisable

Ming dynasty porcelain vases. Each vessel is sized in relation to the amount of waste created in the production of three items of technology: a smartphone, a laptop and an electric car battery cell. Such projects shape our patterns of excessive consumption and waste into powerful statements.

Common Good opens as part of the **Sydney Design Festival**, an annual celebration of design with over 100 events at venues across Sydney from 2 – 11 March 2018.

EXHIBITION DETAILS

What: *Common Good*

When: 2 March – 2 December 2018

Where: Powerhouse Museum, 500 Harris Street, Ultimo NSW 2007

Price: Included in general admission

Website www.maas.museum/event/common-good/

Sydney Design Festival

2 – 11 March 2018

Full program to be announced in January 2018

<https://sydneydesign.com.au/2018/>

Keinton Butler – Senior Curator, MAAS

Keinton Butler is Senior Curator with a focus on design and architecture at MAAS. Keinton recently returned to Australia after ten years in the UK, where she worked as an independent design curator on a wide range of multidisciplinary exhibition projects including exhibitions with Damien Hirst and the British Council. Keinton graduated from Furniture Technology at RMIT University in Melbourne, after studying key developments in furniture production. She holds a Master of Arts in Curating Contemporary Design from the Design Museum in London and Kingston University.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Freya Lombardo	ARTICULATE	T: 0403 162 220	E: freya@articulatepr.com.au
Kym Elphinstone	ARTICULATE	T: 0421 106 139	E: kym@articulatepr.com.au
Eli Wallis	MAAS	T: 0402 359 016	E: eli.wallis@maas.museum

About the Museum of Arts and Applied Sciences

Powerhouse Museum, alongside Sydney Observatory and Discovery Centre, is part of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (MAAS), Australia's contemporary museum for excellence and innovation in applied arts and sciences. The Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences founded in 1879 has a vast and diverse collection of over 500,000 objects.