

Jamie North: *Rock Melt*

Friday 16 January, 2015

NGV International, Federation Court | 27 March – 13 July, 2015 | Free Entry



At NGV International six monumental rock columns entwined with native flora will reach skywards in Federation Court from Friday 27 March, 2015. Informed by Federation Court's bluestone architecture and its former history as an outdoor sculpture garden, *Rock Melt* is a major new commission by Sydney-based artist Jamie North.

Constructed from recycled slag (a bi-product of smelting iron ore) and concrete, *Rock Melt* consists of a group of columns of ranging height that stand up to 5 metres tall, dwarfing the viewer as they consider each towering form.

Endemic flora (local plants) play a key role in North's practice and the artist has sourced a Melbourne native vine: the *pandorea pandorana*, known colloquially as Wonga Wonga, found all along the east coast of Australia. The Wonga Wonga sports clusters of creamy, tubular bell-shaped flowers with pink or red throats that may bloom in Federation Court as the plants spread and grow over the course of the exhibition.

Rock Melt is inspired by native flora growing randomly from mortar cracks in buildings and the aesthetics of mineral extraction and industrial waste, exploring the relationship between nature and architecture, decay and regeneration and the traditions of cultivated gardens.

"Jamie North's *Rock Melt* brings nature inside the walls of NGV," said Tony Ellwood, Director, NGV. "North's work elicits an elegant dialogue between the natural and the industrial. These sculptures look ancient, like ruins, an especially clever effect given that the sculptures are in fact modelled from a bi-product of an industrial process."

Jamie North's *Rock Melt* has been commissioned as part of the NGV's ongoing series of Federation Court commissions - which has previously featured projects by international artists including Carsten Höller, Paola Pivi and Pedro Reyes - and is generously supported by the Loti and Victor Smorgon fund.

From the opening of NGV International, designed by Roy Grounds in 1968 until its renovation by Mario Bellini completed in 2003, Federation Court was an open-air sculpture court, showcasing works by master sculptors including Auguste Rodin and Henry Moore. The court was repurposed and enclosed following Bellini's architectural interventions yet *Rock Melt* playfully recalls the court's original function.

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Jamie North: Rock Melt is presented as part of the NGV's ongoing series of Federation Court commissions and will be on display at NGV International, Federation Court from 27 March – 13 July, 2015. Entry is free.

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Media contact:

Tim Jones | 0412 620 003 | t.layton.jones@gmail.com

Marion Joseph, Senior Publicist | 03 8620 2346 | 0427 147 999 | marion.joseph@ngv.vic.gov.au

Image caption:

Jamie North

The Inconstant Ones 2014 (detail)

cement, marble waste, limestone, steel slag, coal ash, plastic fibre,

tree fern slab, various Australian native plants

223.0 x 26.0 x 26.0 cm; 191.0 x 26.0 x 26.0 cm

Collection of the artist

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Photo: Ashley Barber