

NGV and Country Road announce recipients for the 2026 First Nations Commissions mentorship and exhibition program

FUTURE COUNTRY: Country Road + NGV First Nations Commissions | The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia | 20 March – 13 September 2026 | Free



3 October 2025: The **Country Road + NGV First Nations Commissions** will return in 2026 for the second iteration of the transformative national, biennial mentorship and exhibition program. The Commission pairs an outstanding emerging Australian First Nations artist or designer with an esteemed industry leader from each state and territory across Australia. The initiative provides a career defining platform for artists to make their most ambitious work to date, exploring new mediums, scales and ideas that push the boundaries of their practices.

Established First Nations mentors are invited by the NGV to participate, and each in turn nominate a remarkable early career practitioner for the opportunity. Artists are supported by their mentor in the conception, development and creation of their work which will respond to the theme of 'Future Country'.

The mentorship will culminate in a major exhibition at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, opening on 20 March 2026, with all works on display entering the NGV Collection and expanding its representation of work by contemporary First Nations artists.

The recipients of 2026 Country Road + NGV First Nations Commissions are:

- **Brook Andrew** (Mentor) and **Jahkarli Romanis** (VIC)
- **Clothilde Bullen** (Mentor) and **Katie West** (WA)
- **Megan Cope** (Mentor) and **Boneta-Marie Mabo** (QLD)
- **Brenda L Croft** (Mentor) and **Paul Girrorwah House** (ACT)
- **Karla Dickens** (Mentor) and **Charlotte Allingham (Coffinbirth)** (NSW)
- **Lola Greeno** (Mentor) and **Nunami Sculthorpe-Green** (TAS)
- **Doreen Jinggarrabarra** (Mentor) and **Stephanie Ali** (NT)
- **Yhonnie Scarce** (Mentor) and **Carly Tarkari Dodd** (SA)

The nominated artists represent a diverse range of disciplines, ranging from photography to video, sculpture, weaving and textiles, installation and more.

The mentorship calls on the expertise of some of Australia's most respected First Nations artists and administrators who bring with them a diversity of experience and leadership in the sector, both locally and internationally. The cohort of mentors will offer valuable guidance drawing on their own careers and practices exploring subject matter from reclamation of cultural practice to sharing of Indigenous knowledge and colonial histories.

Tony Ellwood AM, Director, NGV said: 'The Country Road + NGV First Nations Commissions offers a vital platform for emerging artists to expand their practices and create ambitious new work under the guidance of an experienced and respected industry mentor. We're grateful to Country Road for their support in realising this mentorship and national exhibition program, the first and only of its kind in Australia.'

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Dr Jessica Clark, Senior Curator, First Nations Art, NGV said: '*FUTURE COUNTRY* – the second iteration of the Country Road + NGV First Nations Commissions – invites artists to look to the future while simultaneously acknowledging the past. Bringing together eight emerging creatives with leading industry mentors, the exhibition acknowledges and celebrates the important relationships and creative exchanges that already exist amongst emerging and established First Nations artists.'

Helen Wright, Managing Director, Country Road said: 'We're proud to continue our partnership with the NGV through the Country Road + NGV First Nations Commissions, supporting First Nations artists with a national platform for storytelling, knowledge and cultural expression.'

FUTURE COUNTRY: Country Road + NGV First Nations Commissions will run from 20 March – 13 September 2026 at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia. Entry is free. For more information visit the NGV [website](#).

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IMAGES: <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/bfe0m36vdpomrc6xon3hj/AO2-oml37pDZfk11ND1gY14?rlkey=ahdvda5be1d8dijyxbt6da6c&st=hh3th3r5&dl=0>

IMAGE CAPTIONS (L to R clockwise): Jahkarli Romanis, Photo: Lachlan Beckworth; Brook Andrew, Photo: Jason Greer; Nunami Sculthorpe-Green, Photo: Jillian Mundy; Lola Greeno, Image: Courtesy of Handmark Gallery; Katie West, Photo: Machiko Abe; Clothilde Bullen, Image: Courtesy of Edith Cowan University; Charlotte Allingham (Coffinbirth), Image: Courtesy of the artist; Karla Dickens, Yhonnie Scarce, Photo: Janelle Low, Courtesy the Artist, and *THIS IS NO FANTASY*, Melbourne; Photo: Hugh Stewart; Carly Tarkari Dodd, Image: Courtesy of the artist; Megan Cope, Photo: Rhett Hammerton; Boneta-Marie Mabo, Image: Courtesy of the artist; Dorreen Jinggarrabarra, Photo: Renee Saxby; Stephanie Ali, Image: Courtesy Maningrida Arts & Culture; Brenda L. Croft, Image: Courtesy of the artist; Paul Girrawah House, Photo: The Canberra Times.

ABOUT THE COUNTRY ROAD + NGV FIRST NATIONS COMMISSIONS:

Representing the first partnership between the NGV and Country Road, the First Nations Commissions reflects both organisation's commitment to supporting First Nations artists and designers living and working today.

Presented in 2024, the inaugural First Nations Commissions exhibition, titled *My Country*, displayed new works by Alec Baker and Eric Barney (SA), Jan Griffiths (WA), Aidan Hartshorn (ACT), Sophie Honess (NSW), Mitch Mahoney (VIC), Cheryl Rose (TAS), Warraba Weatherall (QLD), and Johnathon World Peace Bush (NT).

The Commission series builds upon existing programs that meaningfully support First Nations communities, including Country Road's partnerships with Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair Foundation and the NGV's Indigenous Fashion Commission.

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