

MEDIA RELEASE February 2015

## **120 METRE FLOATING ARTWORK TO LAND IN DARLING HARBOUR: WORLD PREMIERE OF MAJOR INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION COMMEMORATING WW1**

Five leading artists from Europe and Australia have created a 120 metre floating artwork that will provide an opportunity for up to 20,000 visitors to have an immersive, reflective experience while floating in the middle of Darling Harbour.

Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority is committed to creative endeavours that bring the foreshore to life and is proud to host the World Premiere of ***Nomanslanding on Darling Harbour on 2 April***, as a part of the national Centenary of ANZAC commemorations. Remaining on display daily at Darling Harbour until 3 May, the artwork will then tour to the Merchant City Festival in Glasgow, Scotland and Germany's prestigious Ruhrtriennale.

The installation is a co-commission by Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, Glasgow Life / Merchant City Festival and Urbane Künste Ruhr / Ruhrtriennale.

"We posed a question, can we make site specific work that is both grounded in place, and able to tour?" said international curators Katja Aßmann, Michael Cohen and Lorenzo Mele.

In 2014, artists Robyn Backen (Australia), Andre Dekker (Netherlands), Graham Eatough (United Kingdom), Nigel Helyer (Australia) and Jennifer Turpin (Australia) were brought together at contemporary arts research centre Bundanon Trust for a hothouse arts laboratory. They collaboratively rose to the challenge with *Nomanslanding* – a work spanning public art, sculpture, theatre, sound design and environmental installation.

*Nomanslanding* draws on the maritime military heritage of three urban waterways – Darling Harbour in Sydney, The River Clyde in Glasgow, and the former Eisenbahnhafen in Duisburg Ruhrort, Germany.

Graham Eatough said, "As five artists from different parts of the world, each of us brings a different set of artistic influences and ideas to the collaboration. Hopefully these types of questions that all the artists have been asking from their particular points of view will make for a really engaging and significant piece of work."

*Nomanslanding* features a pair of floating, extendable walkways, reminiscent of early 20th century naval pontoon bridges. Visitors approach from opposing shores across the water, in an unfamiliar no man's land, to arrive in a dome structure in the middle of the bay. The dome structure is split in two and so visitors peer across a 10 metre divide of water at each other – all the while with the cityscape of Sydney rising above them beyond the bay. The two halves of the dome structure then move together and visitors from opposing sides are united in a chapel-like, shared space for contemplation.

“We are always trying to evoke a contemplative moment in which the artwork connects the audience with the actual physical site, and a deep sense of the *condition humaine*” says Dutch artist Andre Dekker. “At best an artwork creates a sense of place together with state of confusion and intense attention,” he added.

A whispering architecture forms in the curve of the dome, creating new resonance. There is sound and song, a poetic journey of a soldier’s experience.

Michael Cohen, Creative Producer at Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority said, “This creative collaboration between Australian, British and German organisations represents a poignant partnership between historical foes, 100 years on from the war that reshaped the globe. It has been a privilege to work with these artists as they created something so extraordinary.”

*Nomanslanding* will be on FREE display at Darling Harbour from 2 April – 3 May 2015, daily.

For more information, visit [darlingharbour.com](http://darlingharbour.com) or [nomanslanding.com](http://nomanslanding.com)

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## FAQ

### **How was the work conceived and developed?**

The artwork concept arose in January 2014 from an Australian creative development laboratory with the five artists, led by curators from Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, Glasgow Life and Urbane Künste Ruhr. During a period of two weeks the team worked with visiting experts in marine archaeology, urban planning, maritime history, social geography and marine engineering. The group collaborated via international communications technology and reconvened in late 2014 at the sites in Europe to confirm the final design. This innovative approach to public artwork curation was presented at the Sydney Festival 2014.

More information on the thematic concerns and development process can be found on the project website [nomanslanding.com](http://nomanslanding.com)

### **Why Darling Harbour?**

Darling Harbour played a significant role as a key loading port in the First World War. Darling Harbour’s innovative program for the Centenary of ANZAC will include a Poppy Remembrance Wall, a contemporary portrait installation *The Descendants*, educational tours, and a series of talks at the Australian National Maritime Museum and Monkey Baa Theatre for Young People at the Lend Lease Darling Quarter Theatre.

### **When will *Nomanslanding* be open?**

The installation will be in place for 4 weeks from 2 April – 3 May 2015. It will be open to the public from 10am, with the final session at 7:30pm.

The artwork will be in Scotland in July and Germany in August- September 2015.

## How do I participate?

The artwork is free of charge and entry will be on a first come first served basis. There are two points of entry near Dockside Pavilion and the Imax in Darling Harbour.

People in wheelchairs may access the installation with assistance.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

### Robyn Backen

Robyn Backen is an interdisciplinary artist and recipient of the Australia Council Fellowship for 2012-15. Backen's new body of work evolves from her research into the acoustics of ancient whispering architecture and their unique communication patterns of sending and receiving. Her installations actively engage with the spaces in which they inhabit –whether gallery, landscape or building.

Some of her major works to date include *Weeping Walls* at Sydney International Airport, 2001; *Delicate Balance*, Ballast Point Park for the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, 2009; *Walls that Whisper*, Museum of Australian Democracy at old parliament House, Canberra 2009. She completed a commissioned performance for the Bundanon Trust Last Word 2012, and *Night Watch*, a 3 storey LED light work for the Brisbane City Council and the ATO in 2013. Backen Coordinates the Masters of Studio Arts at Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney. [www.robynbacken.com](http://www.robynbacken.com)

### Andre Dekker + Observatorium

Artist group Observatorium – founded 1997 by Geert van de Camp, Andre Dekker and Ruud Reutelingsperger in Rotterdam – The Netherlands, creates sculptures which give new meaning and provoke new use in environments that are in transit. Waste lands, urban wilderness and suburbia are investigated and pioneering uses of the public realm explored, using sculpture, landscape architecture and participatory place making. Very often the architectural sculpture is a place to experience a sense of wonder. Andre Dekker is an author, editor and guest professor at universities in the Netherlands, France and Germany. In 2003 he founded the Open-air University, and is an advisor to Sculpture International, Rotterdam. [www.observatorium.org](http://www.observatorium.org) with kind support of CBK Rotterdam.

### Graham Eatough

Graham Eatough is the co-founder of Suspect Culture Theatre Company, along with writer David Greig. He was the Artistic Director and Chief Executive of Suspect Culture from 1995 until the company ended in 2009. Productions include *Killing Time* in 2006 and *Missing* in 2009. Recent projects across visual arts and film include directing *HeLa* by Adura Onahsile, winner of Scottish Arts Club Best Scottish Production at the Edinburgh Fringe, and *The Making of Us*, an interdisciplinary collaboration with artist Graham Fagen for Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art 2012. [www.grahameatough.com](http://www.grahameatough.com) / [www.suspectculture.com](http://www.suspectculture.com)

### Nigel Helyer

Dr. Nigel Helyer (a.k.a. DrSonique) is an independent sculptor and sound-artist who has forged an international reputation for large scale sound-sculpture installations, environmental public artworks and new media projects.

Nigel graduated from a BA Honours in Sculpture from the Liverpool College of Art, UK (1974), followed by an intensive three year research Masters in Environmental Media at the The Royal

College of Art, London (1979). Formal studies were concluded with a Doctorate at the University of Technology Sydney (1997) which focussed on the relationship of Soundscape, the Body and Architecture. His Bio-Art collaborations include *GeneMusik*, a biological music remixing system, the LifeBoat project in Oslo Fjord 2004, on a Baltic cruise ship during ISEA 2004 and in Zagreb 2006. He is currently working on environmental collaborations with the University of Tasmania and Bundanon Trust. [www.sonicobjects.com](http://www.sonicobjects.com)

### **Jennifer Turpin**

Jennifer Turpin is a public artist with 20 years experience creating kinetic installations engaging water, wind and light as sculptural media. Together with artist Michaelie Crawford, she creates dynamic site-specific kinetic artworks in the public realm at the interface of art, science, nature and the built environment.

Jennifer has worked collaboratively on public art projects in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Singapore and regional NSW. To realise their innovative sculptural projects Turpin + Crawford Studio work closely with scientists, engineers and specialist designers. They have participated in multi-disciplinary design teams and embrace specialist curatorial projects as part of their studio practice. Jennifer recently received a Churchill Fellowship to research the cultures of water in urban environments in the Middle East, India and Europe. [www.turpincrawford.com](http://www.turpincrawford.com)

## **ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS AND SITES**

This project is a co-production between Glasgow Life / Merchant City Festival, Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority and Urbane Künste Ruhr.

Each partner organisation is concerned with similar thematic questions in relation to their sites—urban connection to waterways, urban development and maritime echoes of WWI. Each partner produces temporary, public art projects in urban settings that are accessible and provocative.

On a deeper level, this partnership represents a centennial regrouping of historical friends and foes: country members that were both enemies and allies during WWI. One hundred years on, this meeting of histories will be the site of a powerful arts collaboration.

### **Darling Harbour Sydney, Australia**

**Partner: Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority / NSW Centenary of ANZAC**

Located in the centre of Sydney, Darling Harbour was once an industrial port area and the site of troop embarkation for the Great War in 1915. It was completely rebuilt and re-established as a cultural and entertainment precinct for Australia's Bicentenary in 1988, and is now visited by more than 25 million people annually. Despite this, Darling Harbour is continuing to improve its urban connectivity and between 2014- 2016 it is undergoing significant urban redevelopment.

*Nomanslanding* will premiere in Sydney in April 2015 as a part of Australia's Centenary of ANZAC commemoration events.

Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority owns and manages some of New South Wales' most significant assets, including Sydney's heritage and cultural precincts at The Rocks and Darling Harbour. Between them, the precincts attract around 40 million visitors annually. In working to achieve its vision to make extraordinary places the world talks about, the Foreshore Authority produces an annual program of major arts and innovative heritage interpretation events in its public spaces. The Foreshore Authority has a long history of delivering water-based artwork and spectacle and frequently stages public art activations attended by more than 100,000 people.

**The River Clyde Glasgow, Scotland**  
**Partner: Glasgow Life / Merchant City Festival**

The River Clyde runs through the middle of Glasgow. The city has reinvented itself as a post-industrial cultural and retail destination with significant regeneration and re-imagining of urban sites. However, the river remains under-used and the city's relationship with it neglected. The Clyde was the shipbuilding centre of the British Empire between 1850 and 1950, with hundreds of ships and a significant number of naval war vessels built there.

Glasgow Life will present *Nomanslanding* as part of the Merchant City Festival in July – August 2015.

Glasgow Life (the trading name of Culture and Sport Glasgow) is a private company and a charitable trust which manages Glasgow City Council's cultural and sporting infrastructure and resources on its behalf through a service agreement. The company manages the city's leading museums and art galleries, including the Gallery of Modern Art, Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, and the Zaha Hadid-designed Riverside Museum. It also manages the internationally renowned Tramway, as well as leading international festivals such as Celtic Connections and Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art, and emerging festival platforms, such as the Merchant City Festival and Glasgow Mela. Glasgow Life was also responsible for the cultural programme alongside the Commonwealth Games in 2014. Tramway will host the Turner Prize in 2015.

**The Eisenbahnhafen Duisburg Ruhrort, Germany**  
**Partner: Urbane Künste Ruhr / Ruhrtriennale**

Located at the intersection of three important waterways—the rivers Rhine, Ruhr and the Rhine-Herne-Canal—Duisburg is the harbour city for the whole Ruhrregion. Duisburg-Ruhrort was founded in the 17th century and was the starting point for the growth of the biggest river harbour in Europe during the Industrial Revolution. The former Eisenbahnhafen is a relic from industrial times which was used as a ferry port to connect the main railway-tracts on the two sides of the river Rhine. The area around the Eisenbahnhafen is the site of significant urban development.

Urbane Künste Ruhr will present *Nomanslanding* as part of the Ruhrtriennale from 15 Aug to 13 Sep 2015.

Kultur Ruhr GmbH currently consists of four independent programs: Ruhrtriennale, ChorWerk Ruhr, Tanzlandschaft Ruhr and Urbane Künste Ruhr (Urban Arts Ruhr). 'Ruhrtriennale –Festival of the Arts' has the greatest yields among the four programs within the GmbH and is the most important public presence of Kultur Ruhr GmbH. With its new program department Urbane Künste Ruhr, which began at the end of 2011, Kultur Ruhr GmbH is returning to key experiences from the year of European Capital of Culture RUHR.2010. Urbane Künste Ruhr initiates and implements artistic projects in urban spaces, temporary architectural structures, urban interventions and artistic research projects. Kultur Ruhr GmbH has extensive experience in realising indoor and outdoor art productions on both small and large scale. Art in public space has always been part of the artistic profile of Kultur Ruhr GmbH, and this has increased since the establishment of Urbane Künste Ruhr.

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