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Press Release

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## IMMERSIVE PROJECTIONS ACROSS BIRMINGHAM, SRI-LANKAN/ AUSTRALIAN FAMILY SAGA & LIVE CREATION OF NEW AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL ANTHEM

### UK/ AUSTRALIA SEASON AT THE BIRMINGHAM 2022 FESTIVAL

The UK/Australia Season, the largest and most ambitious cultural exchange between our two nations, announces new commissions as part of Birmingham 2022 Festival – a six-month celebration of creativity that surrounds the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.

UK / Australia Season Director Michael Naphali said: “At a critical time worldwide and a pivotal point in the UK/Australia relationship, artists, policy makers, thought leaders and academics have come together to explore and reflect on ‘Who Are We Now’ - our history, present, and imagined future. More than 200 events have, and continue to, take place across our two nations and we are excited to see the Australian talent showcased at the Birmingham 2022 Festival. From an epic Sri Lankan-Australian family saga to schoolchildren re-writing the Australian National Anthem, the Birmingham programme reflects contemporary Australian creativity, diversity and innovation as part of UK/Australia Season.”

*IN MUVA WE TRUST*, a large-scale video installation and performance party (5 – 10 July 2022), will receive its UK premiere as part of the Season and Birmingham 2022 Festival. Australian collective Club Até will transform Birmingham’s Chamberlain Square with a colossal projected artwork inspired by Filipino folklore narratives. The work is informed by the artists' shared Asian/Australian ancestry and close connection to Australia’s BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ communities. Presented by Fierce, In Muva We Trust depicts worlds both real and imagined, whilst celebrating diversity. On 9 July, characters, themes, and motifs extend from the video for a one-night-only performance party Club Muva, featuring hundreds of local participants. Taking place at Symphony Hall, Club Muva showcases a diverse programme of performances from featured artists together with various members of the Queer, Asia-Pacifica, Indigenous, dance and artistic communities.

Schoolchildren across Tasmania have worked with arts organisation **Terrapin** to re-write the Australian national anthem into a song which speaks of their community, their dreams, and their vision of the country, brought to life via a game of ping pong. **Anthem Anthem Revolution** invites audience members to battle a table tennis robot for the chance to unlock

the new anthem, which has been recorded by the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra. The work will be performed in Solihull Town Centre in July 2022.

Sydney-based theatre company Belvoir bring their award-winning production, *Counting and Cracking*, (19 – 27 August) to Birmingham Rep for one of only two UK dates. Featuring a cast of 19 performers hailing from six different countries, it follows the journey of one Sri Lankan-Australian family over four generations, from 1956 to 2004. While telling this family's epic story of break up and reunion, the narrative also tells the tale of two countries: Sri Lanka post-independence and Australia as an immigrant nation.

*Made in Birmingham/Made in Sydney* (10 June – 29 August) is a new collaboration between Ikon in Birmingham and the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia in Sydney. The project invites Fijian-Australian artist Salote Tawale and British-Afghan artist Osman Yousefzada to create new work in response to the UK/Australia Season theme "Who are we now?" The exhibition opens at Ikon on 10 June and work will also be available to view online.

*Made in Birmingham/Made in Sydney* is shown as part of Ikon's *Arrivals* programme, alongside a new installation by Australian Aboriginal artist Yhonnie Scarce. Scarce will continue her residency at Ikon, which began in early 2020 and was disrupted by the pandemic, before unveiling a major new work on 10 June. Born in Woomera, South Australia, Scarce belongs to the Kokatha and Nukunu peoples. Working with glass, she explores the political nature and aesthetic qualities of the material, in particular the crystallisation of desert sand as a result of British nuclear tests on her homeland between 1956-63.

Exploring the theme "Who are we now?" the UK / Australia Season 2021 – 22 will deliver an ambitious programme of events in the UK in 2022 including the UK dance tour of *Between Tiny Cities* - choreographed by internationally-renowned Sydney hip-hop dance artist Nick Power; Brisbane's *Circa Contemporary Circus* bring Stravinsky's seminal *The Rite of Spring* to the circus stage at Brighton Festival; and Queensland Ballet's new talent will be on show at the Royal Ballet's Next Generation Festival. More announcements will take place in March and April, and for more information visit [ukaustaliaseason.com](http://ukaustaliaseason.com).

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**Press Pack:**

For more information about the programme, bios and press assets, visit:

<https://bit.ly/3i9hSHq>.

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

**About UK/Australia Season 2021-22:** The UK/Australia Season is a joint initiative by the British Council and the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The Season highlights the breadth of partnership between Australia and the UK and aims to deepen and extend cultural connections. The Season started in September 2021 and

concludes in March 2022 in Australia and in December 2022 in the UK. The theme ‘Who Are We Now?’ will reflect on our history, explore our current relationship, and imagine our future together. The Season will feature programming for all ages and will celebrate the diversity of cultures and languages in both countries. It will emphasise Australia’s First Nations voices, enable cultural exchange with Wales, Scotland, England and Northern Ireland, and the diverse societies that have emerged in both Australia and the UK through migration. [ukaustriaseason.com](http://ukaustriaseason.com)

**About the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade:** The Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) works closely with a broad range of partners to advance Australia’s security and prosperity globally. Relationships are at the heart of our work. Through initiatives like the UK/Australia Season, DFAT works with partners to showcase Australia as an innovative, creative, diverse, and tolerant nation, which assists with strengthening Australia’s influence, reputation, reach and relationships overseas. [dfat.gov.au](http://dfat.gov.au)

**About the British Council:** The British Council is the UK’s international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. It builds connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education, and the English language. In 2019-2020 the British Council reached over 75 million people directly and 758 million people overall including online broadcasts and publications. Founded in 1934 the British Council is a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body and receives 14.5 per cent core funding grant from the UK government. [britishcouncil.org.au](http://britishcouncil.org.au)

**About Birmingham 2022 Festival:** The Birmingham 2022 Festival unites people from around the Commonwealth through a celebration of creativity, in a six-month long programme, shining a spotlight on the West Midland’s culture sector. Running from March to beyond the conclusion of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games in September, the festival aims to entertain and engage over 2.5 million people in person and online. [birmingham2022.com/festival](http://birmingham2022.com/festival)