

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JUSTENE WILLIAMS: THE CURTAIN BREATHED DEEPLY



Justene Williams: The Curtain Breathed Deeply
17 September - 30 October

Central Gallery and Gallery 1, 2 and 3
Curated by Artspace, Sydney and toured by Museums & Galleries of NSW
Opening: Friday 16 September, 6:30pm

The Curtain Breathed Deeply is Sydney based artist Justene Williams' first solo exhibition in Western Australia and features a series of newly commissioned video installations in a rich environment of pattern, colour and texture.

This leading Australian artist, who recently partnered with the Sydney Chamber Opera for a live performance during the Sydney Biennale, draws from many sources including her personal experience of dance classes and time spent in her father's wrecking yard; early twentieth century avant-garde art and theatre; and contemporary pop culture.

"The Curtain Breathed Deeply is Williams' largest and most ambitious undertaking to date and will seduce visitors into and through a series of hypnotising sets and video installations abounding in sensory overload and cacophony" says PICA Director Amy Barrett-Lennard.

“We are thrilled to be working with Justene , Artspace and Museums & Galleries of NSW on this significant project”.

Williams melds references from art history — painting greats such as Picasso, Leger and Kahlo — with a range of everyday pop cultural influences including hip hop music, Milli Vanilli and A Chorus Line. In her series of videos the artist draws on the performative rituals of Shamanism and Modernist Primitivism. Williams amasses together a collection of visual and aural curiosities through a wealth of patterns, colours, textures and tonalities, many of which draw from the artist’s own childhood. Calling upon memories of her father’s wrecking yard, her childhood training in dance, and her experiences constructing elaborate retail window displays, Williams uses found objects and waste materials to create dazzling theatrical environments.

Justene Williams elaborates: ‘I sometimes talk about my work or my way of working as a subtle knowledge or an emotional intelligence. I work from the heart and I’m interested in communicating visually — seeing, reading and hearing through colour and movement.’

On a more personal and somber note, the curtain and the exhibition pay tribute to her late father — to his life and work, as well as the hospital curtain that marked the final stage of his life when he passed away from lung cancer. The exhibition is at once poignant and celebratory, acknowledging the life of a loved one whilst also taking pleasure in the movement of living, breathing beings.

The exhibition will open with an exhilarating performance bringing to life the artworks in *The Curtain Breathed Deeply* as two dancers perform *Two Fold*, a concertina dance accompanied by music from a squeeze-box at 7pm, Friday 16 Sep.

The Curtain Breathed Deeply is accompanied by a 216 page colour monograph that has been produced by Artspace with essays by Anne Loxley, Erin Brannigan, Lally Katz and Pamela Hansford and will be available for sale at PICA.

This hypnotic exhibition curated and developed by Artspace, Sydney was originally supported by a Katherine Hannay Commission and is touring nationally in partnership with Museums & Galleries of NSW.

For all media enquiries including hi-res image & interview requests please contact PICA Communications Manager Renae Coles via:

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The generous bequest of the Catalyst: Katherine Hannay Visual Arts Commission has enabled Artspace to support Justene Williams in the development of this major new work at a pivotal moment in her career. This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body.

Images: Justene Williams, *The Joy of Life After Matisse/Madonna/Marcel*, 2014. Courtesy the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery.