

the red queen

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MEDIA RELEASE

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THE RED QUEEN* Art that shows why art is made

Dates: June 19, 2013 to April 21, 2014

THE RED QUEEN* – curated by Olivier Varenne, Nicole Durling, David Walsh and the MONA team
Art that shows why art is made

The Red Queen exhibition continues our inquiry into the messy machinery of human nature by asking a rather big question: why do humans make art?

Anthropologists have discovered rocks we carved, bones and tools we honoured and marked, and caves we painted thousands of years ago, along with rituals and ceremonies we enacted. If evolution is about unrelenting determination to adapt and survive in order to continue our species, then carrying out tasks that are time and resource wasting seems counterintuitive - unless, of course these skills made us who we are today.

During the last three decades a number of thinkers have written on this unexplored subject:

Geoffrey Miller, Steven Pinker, Leda Cosmides and co-worker John Tooby, and Brian Boyd are those we have considered.

More than **100 pieces** including works and objects from the Mona collection: from Neolithic arrowheads to Egyptian scarabs, carvings and funerary art, from gold and silver Bactrian and Indo-Greek coins from ancient Afghanistan to commissions made this year; loans from the National Gallery of Victoria; The Museum of Everything (the world's only travelling museum for undiscovered, unintentional and untrained artists from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries); and The Holmes à Court Collection in Perth

New commissions – 15; number of artists – 46

Mona till Midnight: being winter and the solstice and all we are inviting the public to attend **The Red Queen opening night on June 18 from 6pm till midnight.** The whole Mona site will be alive with music, food, art and fun.

Quotes from the Curators:

Olivier Varenne: 'We are trying to show that there is really no difference between the people who drew on the caves of Lascaux more than 17,000 years ago and the artists who are part of this exhibition today.'

'It's been a huge job because when we talked to the artists and told them what we were trying to achieve and we asked if we could use a particular work, many of them were so interested in the idea they wanted to do a piece specifically for **The Red Queen**. That's why we have such a lot of commissioned works.'

Nicole Durling: 'We didn't want to contain **The Red Queen** in a traditional way in its own series of galleries because if the works and objects we are showing reveal the various theories on the driving forces behind art – then we should also include the rest of the collection. On the other hand, we do want to tell particular stories and to take visitors on a journey, so the O device will direct them to **The Red Queen** works, but they are then free to look around them and make their own links to other works nearby. We have reconfigured 75% of the museum, which has been challenging and exciting.'

'The act of taking on each project changes you, and so Mona has evolved and will continue to do so – as we all must to survive.'

Curator Profiles:

Olivier Varenne is Mona's senior curator for international art, based in London and started working for David Walsh in 2006. Before joining us he worked in New York, and London with Gagosian Gallery's sales team. For Mona, Olivier seeks out potential artists and purchases contemporary works for the collection. He worked on the Moscow Biennale 2009 and co-curated *On and On* at Casa Encendida Museum (2010), Madrid.

Other significant projects include: Céleste Boursier Mougénot's *From Here to Ear* (2009); *The Heart Archive*, Christian Boltanski (2010); *Monanism* (2011 – ongoing); *Wim Delvoye* (2011 – 2012); Chiharu Shiota's *In Silence* (2011) and *Theatre of the World* (2012 – 2013), Yannick Demmerle (2012) and the art component of our Mona Foma and Dark Mofo festivals.

Nicole Durling has been senior curator since 2006. Based in Melbourne, Nicole was Sotheby's contemporary art specialist before joining us. She is a key collaborator in the building, curatorial direction and installation of the collection. She co-curated *Monanism* (2011 – ongoing); *Wim Delvoye* (2011 – 2012); and *Theatre of the World* (2012 – 2013), along with the art component of our Mona Foma and Dark Mofo festivals.

List of artists.

Some of the participating artists:

Shachiko Abe (Japan)|Marina Abramović (Serbia/USA)|Francis Alys (Belgium)|Kutlug Ataman (Turkey)|Pierre Bismuth (France/USA)|Mircea Cantor (Romania)|Chen Zhen (China/France, 1955–2000)|David Claerbout (Belgium)|Henry Joseph Darger Jr (USA, 1892–1973)|Hubert Duprat (France)|Tessa Farmer (UK)|Michel François (Belgium)|Anna Halprin (USA)|Rafael Lozano-Hemmer (Mexico/Canada)|Ryoji Ikeda (Japan/France)|Ali Kazma (Turkey)|Joseph Kosuth (USA)|Laith McGregor (Australia)|Yves Netzhammer (Switzerland)|Chris Ofili (UK)|Yazid Oulab (Algeria/France)|Brigita Ozolins (Australia)|Mike Parr (Australia)|Julius Popp (Germany)|Sam Porritt (UK)|Alex Rabus, Léopold Rabus, Renate Rabus, Till Rabus (Switzerland)|Cameron Robbins (Australia)|Leni Riefenstahl (Germany, 1902–2003)|Şarkis (Turkish-born Armenian/France)|Lindsay Seers (UK)|Chiharu Shiota (Japan/Germany)|Roman Signer (Switzerland)|Taryn Simon (USA)|Sung Hwan Kim (South Korea/USA)|Tamuna Sirbiladze (Georgia/Austria)|Rirkrit Tiravanija (Argentina/USA)|Rover Thomas (Australia, 1926–1998)|Uta Uta Tjangala (Australia, 1926–1990)|Christopher Townend (Australia)|Wang Jianwei (China)|Erwin Wurm (Austria)|Zang Huan (China/USA)|Toby Ziegler (UK)

*The Red Queen Hypothesis embodies one of the key concepts of late 20th century evolutionary biology: that organisms must constantly adapt and evolve - not merely to gain a reproductive advantage, but also simply to survive pitted against ever-evolving opposing organisms. So life is a treadmill not a ladder. Of course, we are co-opting the Queen for our own purposes but she's been corrupted already: the title is borrowed from Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*, which has the Red Queen and Alice constantly running, yet remaining the same place.

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June 18 to September 16, 2013

Todd McMillan, Ten Years of Tears - curated by Nicole Durling

Location: Mona Library Galleries

Focusing on his repetitious ruminations on bodies of water, this exhibition surveys McMillan's past 10 years of work as he explores and documents the shiver and shake of our existence.

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MONA the Museum of Old and New Art opened in January 2011 to exhibit the private collection of founder David Walsh, and to explore new ways to encounter art. Since then we have welcomed more than 835,000 visitors. Each January since 2009 we have held MONA FOMA celebrating music and art, curated by Brian Ritchie, and for the first time we celebrate the winter solstice rites with **Dark Mofo – June 13 to 23, 2013.**

Ends

Operating Hours: MONA is open Wednesday through Monday. Closed Christmas Day. **Entry fee:** \$A20/adult, concession \$A15; under 18 years free

Getting to Mona from Hobart: MRI fast ferry from Brooke Street Pier; or the Mona Roma bus, or bicycle.

Check our website: www.mona.net.au for updates or become a *Monad* on our MONA Facebook page.

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