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NATIONAL GALLERY ANNOUNCES NEW SCULPTURE GARDEN COMMISSION BY ARTIST LINDY LEE

Australian artist Lindy Lee will look to the stars to create her most significant work to date, an immersive, public sculpture, the *Ouroboros*, for the National Gallery of Australia's 40th anniversary.

Constructed from mirror polished stainless steel, around four metres high and weighing approximately 13 tonnes, and with a total budget of \$14million, it will be the biggest investment in a work by the Gallery and will be funded through the National Gallery's Collection Development Fund.

Ouroboros will also be a sustainable sculpture – incorporating recycled materials, maximising renewable energy, and work to minimise its carbon impact, helping make it one of Australia's first sustainable works of public art.

Based on the ancient symbol of a snake eating its tail, the *Ouroboros* will anchor a new public gateway for visitors to the National Gallery. People will be able enter the 'mouth' and walk into the curved space to experience darkness that is illuminated by light beams emanating from the hundreds of thousands of perforations on its surface.

With a practice spanning more than four decades, Lee will create a destination work for the National Gallery, marking 40 years since its official opening in 2022.

Director Nick Mitzevich said Lee's bold, experiential work is a signature project for the National Gallery as it looks to the future.

"This commission represents a defining moment in our history and aligns with our mission to reflect and respond to contemporary Australia," he said.

"It will be a landmark for the National Gallery and Canberra and is representative of our vision to be an equitable, inclusive and sustainable institution as we embark on the next 40 years."

The child of migrant parents, Brisbane-born Lee uses her work to explore her Chinese ancestry through Taoism and Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism – philosophies that see humanity and nature as inextricably linked.

Mitzevich said it was exciting for the Gallery to be working with Lee to bring to life this major commission to celebrate the first 40 years of the National Gallery.

"Lindy was asked to be bold and ambitious in her vision for this project and she has exceeded our expectations," he said.

"We are excited to be able to present a work that reframes and reinvigorates the Sculpture Garden but also spark conversations and is emblematic of the times."

Lee said: "The Ouroboros is symbolic of repetition and renewal, of the abundance of cyclical time, eternal flow, unity of the beginning and the end, transformation and alchemy."

"This work will become a beacon for the National Gallery, daytime or night-time, pulsing with light and energy. During the day its highly polished mirror surface will reflect the imagery of the floating world. The transience of passers-by, cars, birds in flight, and stunning clouds. And at night the *Ouroboros* will be lit internally, returning its light to the world.

"It is a dance between something that is solid and something that is just drifting off into stardust."

The proposed work will feature at the National Gallery's main entrance, at the corner of King Edward Terrace and Parkes Place East in the Canberra suburb of Parkes, and will be accessible day and night. It will be the first commission for the National Gallery's Sculpture Garden since the opening of James Turrell's Skyspace *Within without* in 2010 and forms part of the National Gallery's plan to renew the gardens, which were established 40 years ago.

The next milestone for the project is seeking National Capital Authority approval for the works, which will begin this month. The work is due to be completed in early 2024.

Media images are available [here](#).

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Image: Artist's impression of the *Ouroboros*