



JOAN ROSS EXPLORES – AND EXPLODES – THE NATIONAL GALLERY

“I feel we are holding on to some very strong colonial views without actually realising how entrenched they are – so, that made me want to collapse the whole museum.” – Joan Ross

For this year’s Enlighten Festival, the National Gallery of Australia has commissioned Sydney-based artist Joan Ross to explore – and explode – the museum.

For her largest commission to date, Ross presents *Collector’s Paradise* – which will illuminate the façade of the National Gallery over the course of one of Canberra’s most beloved festivals.

“The Enlighten Festival presents a unique opportunity for collaborations with contemporary artists as we saw with the success of past projects by Tony Albert and Club Ate,” said Assistant Director of Artistic Programs, Natasha Bullock. “The National Gallery is delighted to welcome another Australian artist to open up a critical discussion as they illuminate the building.”

Joan Ross: Collector’s Paradise asks us to think about museums as places that keep, acquire, and classify objects – continuing the artist’s critique of the ongoing impacts of colonisation, a field in which she has worked for twenty years.

The legacy of colonisation remains at the heart of Ross’s practice. “One of the reasons that I make the work that I do is that I don’t think you can be anywhere in Australia and not consider that we’re on Indigenous land,” says Ross, who was born in Glasgow and came to live in Australia as a child. “I’m constantly aware of the colonial influence, and the disjunction between that and nature.”

“For this commission, Ross has explored a narrative that sees the flapping wings of a fluorescent moth cause a series of chaotic events that eventually lead to the collapse of the museum and the return of its site to nature,” said Curator Elspeth Pitt.

The work is accompanied by a soundscape that captures the building cracking and crumbling against a rising chorus of birdsong. For one night only, Canberrans can also experience a special interactive event inspired by *Collector’s Paradise* – Enlighten Live – on Friday 5 March with art making activities, live performances and more.

The National Gallery of Australia is built on the unceded lands of the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples.

Joan Ross: Collector’s Paradise will be on from 26 Feb – 8 March and is a Know My Name project presented in partnership with Events ACT.

Images: available for download [here](#).

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Caption: Joan Ross, still from the *I give you a mountain* video animation, 2018, image courtesy of the artist.

JOAN ROSS: COLLECTOR'S PARADISE PUBLIC PROGRAMS



THURSDAY ART TALK: JOAN ROSS

THU 4 MAR 2021 | 12.45PM – 1.30PM

James Fairfax Theatre | free, with bookings

Hear from 2021 Enlighten artist Joan Ross as she discusses her illuminated projection *Collector's Paradise* with Elspeth Pitt, Curator, Australian Art.

SPECIAL EVENT: ENLIGHTEN LIVE

FRI 5 MAR 2021 | 8 - 10PM

Parkes Place East | free, with bookings

Open your ears, sing your song and step into the future at our special Enlighten event celebrating Joan Ross's commission *Collector's Paradise*. For one night only, participate in a range of art making activities along Parkes Place East inspired by *Collector's Paradise*. Cash bar and food will be available.

Numbers are strictly limited due to COVID-19 and registration is essential.

For bookings, <https://knowmyname.nga.gov.au/events/>

Caption: Joan Ross, still from the *Collector's paradise*, 2021, image courtesy of the artist.