

Ancestral Memory digital projection returns to Hamer Hall facade



Photo credit: Eugene Hyland

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, 10 JUNE 2022 – A huge digital projection of the Spirit Eel will weave its way along the facade of Hamer Hall for the second time this July. Titled [Ancestral Memory](#), it will give Victorians another opportunity to watch the story of the Spirit Eel's journey after the first unveiling was marred by a pandemic lockdown.

The physical manifestation of the Spirit Eel in *Ancestral Memory* was created by First Nations interdisciplinary artist **Maree Clarke** (Mutti Mutti/Yorta Yorta/Boon Wurrung/Wamba Wamba) and emerging artist **Mitch Mahoney** (Boon Wurrung/Barkindji).

“Both Mitch and I are super excited that so many people are going to see it this time around. Especially for young ones to see work on this scale that you can dream as big as you can dream, and it can end up somewhere like Hamer Hall. I love that!” says Clarke.

For *Ancestral Memory*, Clarke collaborates with her nephew to tell the mysterious journey of the short-finned eel of the Birrarung and Maribyrnong River systems as it crosses land, river and sea, taking on many forms on its path to maturity.

“All of my practice is about the revitalisation and celebration of South-Eastern Aboriginal culture. I try to create works that are designed to spark interest and educate people. Where I can, I like to create works that are collaborative and bring the public into an art space to learn and be involved in the art making process,” said Mahoney.

For the peoples of the Kulin Nation the eel is a protector spirit, food source, seasonal marker and timekeeper. The metaphor of the Spirit Eel connects time and place, a story of resilience and adaptation that has been pushed below the surface but never lost.

This remounting provides First Nations communities with a new connection to the Hamer Hall site honouring their custodianship of the land and gives greater visibility to their cultural heritage.

Victorians are invited to visit Hamer Hall every day throughout July from sundown until midnight to see the visual spectacle in its finest form to learn and reflect on one of the greatest Aboriginal stories.

Ancestral Memory was first commissioned by Arts Centre Melbourne and RISING.

About Maree Clarke

Maree Clarke is a pivotal figure in the reclamation of south-east Australian Aboriginal art practices, reviving elements of Aboriginal culture that were lost – or lying dormant – over the period of colonisation. Her work explores the customary ceremonies, rituals and language of her ancestors and reveals her long held ambitions to facilitate cross-cultural dialogue about the ongoing effects of colonisation. Maree is known for her open and collaborative approach to cultural practice consistently working through intergenerational collaboration to revive dormant cultural knowledge, using technology to bring new audiences to contemporary south-east Aboriginal arts. For more information visit vivienandersongallery.com/artists/maree-clarke/

About Mitch Mahoney

Mitch Mahoney is an emerging artist and a descendant of the Boon Wurrung and Barkindji peoples of south-east Australia. Mitch works on a large range of artworks specialising in the revitalisation of South-Eastern Aboriginal practices. He works on cultural items such as possum skin cloaks, kangaroo tooth necklaces, line work drawings and South-Eastern Aboriginal design. Along with his Aunt Maree Clarke, Mitch facilitated several state-wide workshops to bring traditional Aboriginal art forms to communities across Australia. In 2015 he was awarded with the National Gallery of Australia's prestigious National Summer Art Scholarship. For more information visit facebook.com/MitchMahoneyArt/

Images can be found [here](#).

Ancestral Memory
by Maree Clarke and Mitch Mahoney
Commissioned by RISING and Arts Centre Melbourne
Hamer Hall facade | 1 – 31 July | from sundown 'til midnight
For more information visit artscentremelbourne.com.au

We're excited to be welcoming visitors back to all our venues for live experiences in line with the most recent Victorian Government guidelines on COVID-19. We will continue to offer engaging online experiences via our digital hub – [Together With You](#).

For more information including: our current health and safety policies; bookings for free and ticketed events; and other digital content and experiences, please visit artscentremelbourne.com.au.

For more information about Arts Centre Melbourne, please visit www.artscentremelbourne.com.au or phone 1300 182 183. Become a fan of Arts Centre Melbourne on [Facebook](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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