

19 February 2026



Works of transformation and wonder on show at 2026 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art: Yield Strength

“Yield strength’ refers to the point at which a material subjected to force begins to distort irreversibly. Metaphorically, the term exemplifies our physical and emotional capacities to respond to the limits of the world.’

- Ellie Buttrose, Curator, 2026 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art

Adelaide, Australia: Opening on 27 February, the *2026 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art: Yield Strength* assembles twenty-four leading Australian artists with works that reveal how materials, selfhood and society are tested - and transformed - under pressure. Taking over multiple spaces at the Art Gallery of South Australia as well as partner venues Samstag Museum of Art and Adelaide Botanic Garden, *Yield Strength* will launch with a series of artist talks, panel discussions, performances, DJ sets and more, in celebration of the 19th iteration of the nation’s longest-standing survey of contemporary Australian art.

Yield Strength curator Ellie Buttrose comments, ‘The 2026 Adelaide Biennial foregrounds how bodily experience and intellectual wonder are intimately entwined in the experience of art. Working across painting, sculpture, moving image, performance and installation, the artists in *Yield Strength* reflect an understanding of the pressures that shape this current moment, a respect for breaking points and a resourceful approach to cultural continuity’.

AGSA Director Jason Smith says, ‘Since its founding in 1990, the Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art has been the nation’s longest-running survey of contemporary practice, consistently championing experimental and ambitious approaches. The 2026 edition continues this legacy, affirming the Biennial’s role as a site of research and a reassertion that art can yield and reveal new modes of endurance, empathy, invention and profound transformation’.

Staged across three venues, artists reoccur in shifting combinations, enabling audiences to interpret practices within varying constellations across AGSA, Samstag Museum of Art and Adelaide Botanic

Garden. Artists stretch and test materials to their limits with new works that explore resilience and transformation, revealing the complex, dynamic relations between people and the world they inhabit.

At AGSA, **Erika Scott's** 10-metre-long installation melts and oozes plastic from household kitsch items, transforming the gallery into an environmental horror film set. Other artists examine how possessions can shape not only our sense of the world, but also our desires. The paucity of elaborative detail in **Prudence Flint's** delicately rendered oil paintings of women in domestic spaces means that the items and clothing accompanying the figures take on a potent charge. *Pocket Money*, 2025, a new video by **Emmaline Zanelli**, captures young adults in moments of leisure and labour – working in their first jobs, spending their wages, refining their hobbies and passing time with friends.

Within the Museum of Economic Botany at Adelaide Botanic Garden, **Archie Moore** creates a portrait of his father Stanley Moore in absentia through a series of objects cast in gold, in his major installation *Remnants Of My Father*, 2025. Mementoes referencing Stanley's life – a set of dentures, shiny crystals of pyrite (fool's gold), an anatomical heart cast, a possession notice for gold mining, a hand-drawn map, a eucalyptus leaf, World War II medals and a scuffed red bucket – fill wooden vitrines, infused with the metal that remained elusive to Stanley throughout his life.

Gold likewise appears in artist **Kirtika Kain's** abstract paintings. Gold and tar are charged substances for the Dalit community - a caste relegated to the base of the Hindu class system - as they signify materials associated with demanding labour. Kain harness the cultural weight of these materials and transforms them through her creative studio practice into colour field paintings.

Artists such as **Mark Maurangi Carrol** and **Nathan Beard** take a creative approach to inherited aesthetic traditions. Carrol presses paint through the back of his canvases to reveal figurative traces of people and places across the Avaiki Nui/Cook Islands. Beard reshapes his Thai inheritance and reimagines it in exquisite silicone casts of his hands and feet, rendered in hyper realistic detail. Claspings at durian fruits, pink orchids and 3D-printed Buddhas, some hands flick backwards in the style of the fon lep fingernail dance; others magically stretch until the fingers become long ropes of flesh.

To connect with his Yawuru ancestral land, **Robert Andrew's** kinetic drawing machine uses digital technology to reinstate the contours of Country onto the gallery walls. Mounted to an armature, a screen displays drone footage of Yawuru Country, twisting and moving with the coastline while charcoal is slowly dragged across the length of the wall, in a moving meditation on Country, history and language.

AGSA's activity space The Studio will be transformed for artist **Charlie Sofo's** installation *Time Capsule*, consisting of a universe of objects that encourage participants to think about the significance of and our relationships to objects. Visitors are invited to create their own time capsule using arrangements of objects, words, drawings or small items brought from home. Each capsule can be sealed and taken home as a keepsake or left behind for others to discover, creating an evolving archive of shared experiences and private worlds.

Yield Strength is on display from 27 February to 8 June 2026 as part of the 2026 Adelaide Festival, and feature new works by artists from across the nation:

Robert Andrew

Nathan Beard

Lauren Burrow

Francis Carmody

Mark Maurangi Carrol

Milminyina Dhamarrandji

Matthew Teapot Djipurrjtjun

George Egerton-Warburton

Prudence Flint

Brian Fuata

d harding

Matthew Harris

Helen Johnson

Kirtika Kain

Jennifer Mathews

Archie Moore

Josina Pumani

Julie Nangala Robertson

Erika Scott

Joel Sherwood Spring

Charlie Sofo

John Spiteri

Isadora Vaughan

Emmaline Zanelli

ABOUT THE ADELAIDE BIENNIAL OF AUSTRALIAN ART

The Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art remains the pre-eminent and longest-standing survey of contemporary Australian art. As a vital component of the Adelaide Festival since 1990, the 2026 Adelaide Biennial builds on its reputation and commitment to supporting and celebrating innovative and ambitious practices. Each Biennial responds to a different theme or premise and features new and commissioned works by leading contemporary practitioners nationwide. It has created career-defining opportunities for close to 500 artists and has been experienced by more than 1.8 million visitors.

ABOUT ELLIE BUTTROSE

Ellie Buttrose is Curator of Contemporary Australian Art at the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art and was the curator of *kith and kin* by Archie Moore in the Australia Pavilion at the 2024 Venice Biennale, which won the Golden Lion for Best National Participation and is now on display at QAGOMA. At QAGOMA, Ellie oversees collection development, realises ambitious commissions and delivers thought-provoking exhibitions and collection displays. Ellie has curated *Living Patterns*, 2023, focused on artists who deploy abstraction as a political as well as formal device; and *Embodied Knowledge*, 2022, a survey of contemporary Queensland art with co-curator Katina Davidson; and she was a member of the curatorial team for The Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art in 2024 and 2021.

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KEY DATES Media Preview | Thursday 26 February 2026, 11am
Vernissage | Thursday 26 February to Sunday 1 March 2026
Exhibition Season | Friday 27 February to Monday 8 June 2026

OPENING WEEKEND PROGRAM

<https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/whats-on/exhibitions/2026-adelaide-biennial-of-australian-art-yield-strength/yield-strength-vernissage-weekend/>

MEDIA PORTAL <https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/about/media/2026-adelaide-biennial-media-portal/>

SOCIAL MEDIA @agsa.adelaide #adelaidebiennial #agsaadelaide #adelaidefestival

Image caption: Nathan Beard, born Whadjuk Nyoongar Country, Boorloo/Perth, Western Australia 1987, *Cicerone*, 2025, painted silicone, PLA, steel, foam, resin, found objects, dimensions variable; Courtesy of the artist, FUTURES; photo: Christian Capurro.

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