



Programme Details

21 - 22 March 2026

The Anant Curatorial Forum has been conceived as a space dedicated to unpacking curatorial practice by inviting the experiences and perspectives of practitioners engaged in some of the most dynamic, critical and meaningful explorations within the arts.

The curatorial function has evolved to take on several forms, and has become increasingly relevant as a framework not just within the arts but across other disciplines and industries, and demands timely reassessment. The third iteration of the Anant Curatorial Forum, to be held on March 21 and 22, 2026, will examine some pressing issues that exist within the contemporary context of the arts in South Asia.

DAY 1 | SATURDAY, 21 MARCH 2026

Registration

9:30 AM - 10 AM

Opening Remarks by Mamta Singhania and Meera Menezes

10 AM - 10:15 AM

Panel 1

Sensory and Expressive Interventions

10:15 AM - 11:45 AM

What happens when a biennial or festival becomes an organism, shedding its temporal and material constraints as "event"? How does the exhibition as a creative and institutional formation hold embodied experience, functioning rather like a score? How do you curate with a focus on actions unfolding in time, in addition to space? What happens when we view "making sense" as a creative practice, gently pulling it away from its functional moorings in cognition? How do technologies of poetry and sound find their way into the curatorial matrix as

a way of making and questioning? This panel will discuss how sensorial, expressive and embodied possibilities manifest in exhibition making.

Moderator: Ranjana Dave

Panellists: Madeleine St. John, Mario D'souza, Natasha Ginwala

Tea Break

11:45 AM - 12:15 PM

Panel 2

Biennales and Beyond

12:15 PM - 2 PM

Over the past three decades, the biennale has become a key format through which contemporary art circulates globally. While it originated in Europe, some of its most significant transformations are taking place in the Global South, which has seen a pronounced proliferation of biennales since the turn of the century. Often termed as 'Janus-faced', the biennale format, its relevance and effect have been hotly debated and critiqued. It is seen as catering to a globalised art market with homogenizing exhibition formats, artists and works, while simultaneously establishing international discourse, rooted in local cultural specificities and contexts.

The ambition of this panel is to unpack, through specific case studies and differing vantage points, the changing cartographies of biennales in our region. Does one continue to think of biennales within the hegemonic frameworks of globalisation, soft power, tourism etc., or are there other more pertinent, even urgent, alternative configurations within which to frame a biennale? Can it rethink power relations and transnational solidarities using 'new internationalism' as a strategy? Can a biennale emerge based on questions of labour in a hyper local landscape? Can it invert the perception of an erstwhile politically restricted state by presenting a version of how the 'outside' world is viewed from within? And how does one deal with varying infrastructures of precarity while curating in their specific contexts? These, amongst others, are some of the critical questions that the panel will address.

Moderator: Pooja Sood

Panellists: Alia Swastika, Nikhil Chopra, Sabih Ahmed, Siddharth Sivakumar

Lunch Break

2 PM - 3 PM

Launch

A special issue of Art + Australia: "Every Heart Sings" edited by Dr. Natalie King OAM
3 PM - 3:30 PM

Panel 3

The Ethical Turn-ing

3:30 PM - 5 PM

The ethical turn in curatorial discourse has been frequently invoked as an orientation that foregrounds a certain texture of responsibility, testimony and moral positioning within artistic and institutional practices. Instead of reading this turn as a settled paradigm, this panel approaches it as a continuous movement, a series of fluctuations allowing us to lean into the ongoing negotiation between the contexts and frameworks through which art circulates. What emerges when we look beyond the now-familiar polarity of ethical positioning and dissensus?

Bringing together curators whose practices move across discursive spaces, this conversation asks how ethics and its trajectories of meaning enter curatorial practice as operation, pedagogy, performance and governance. Drawing from experiences of exhibition and space-making, the panel will reflect on how we might stage the frictions between ethics and aesthetics, rather than simply resolve their tensions. Through an engagement with questions of criticality, complexity, ambiguity and illegibility, it asks: how may we respond to a hardening of responsibility into moral clarity? How might institutional pedagogies and affect complicate the ethical demand rather than merely enforce it?

The discussion will look at how the speakers think and work with the realities of community, collaboration and openness, considering how these terms intersect with contemporary urgencies. It will explore the dimensions of third spaces in curatorial approaches today—critical terrains that unsettle hardened binaries between aesthetic autonomy and political responsibility, identities and their hyphenations, disciplines and institutional forms. In doing so, the panel will reflect on the shifting vocabularies and instabilities of the curatorial role itself, asking how curating today might sustain complexity, ambiguity, and speculative political imaginations.

Moderator: Annalisa Mansukhani

Panellists: Andrea Thal, Chus Martínez, Shuddhabrata Sengupta

DAY 2 | SUNDAY, 22 MARCH 2026

Registration

9:30 AM - 10 AM

Panel 1

Craft, Metier, Utopia

10 AM - 11:30 AM

In this panel, Pramod Kumar KG examines the tension between craft as a lived practice and as a curated object, questioning whether curatorial discourse fetishizes artifacts while neglecting the social systems that produced them. Kristine Michael presents her decade-long curatorial career with artisanal and contemporary ceramics, with specific concentration on the Kumbhar caste and neo-craftspeople. Annapurna Garimella situates her research through leather craftspeople for whom world-making spans poetry, politics, spirituality, utilitarian making, music and more. She explores how, in keeping this at the center, leather, leather craft, and leather craftspeople might change the curator.

The panel unpacks what it would mean to present craft not only as object but as a social model to imagine equitable futures through structures of work, collaboration, and shared responsibility. Are there any lessons to be learnt through the “métier of curatorship” and if yes, what are they?

Moderator: Shaleen Wadhwana

Panellists: Annapurna Garimella, Kristine Michael, Pramod Kumar KG

Tea Break

11:30 AM- 12 PM

Panel 2

Decolonial Currents

12 PM -1:30 PM

In recent years, vigorous debates have taken place in the field of art history and curatorial studies, to define the decolonial without any clear answers. To decolonise is hardly a singular phenomenon, for structures of power are opaque, with several layers and underpinnings. The post-World War II era of social restructuring, harboured the potential worldwide, to make way for more equitable societies. However, in many parts of the world,

where nation state identities were imagined as inclusive and progressive, as a bulwark against cultural conservatism, the failure to dismantle existing social hierarchies and make space for marginalized voices, has led to even more disturbing consequences. Today, as we reckon with forces of de-democratizing powers, through militarization and authoritarian, oligarchic economic structures, where increasingly the infrastructure of art and exhibition making through which curators and artists function, too is controlled by the same constructs of dominance, what forms of curatorial strategies can be developed to dismantle the misuse of power? The panel will discuss how they navigate the fraught terrain of today's curatorial possibilities, steering along "decolonial currents", a term that suggests invisible flows that can redirect our perceptions of the world.

Moderator: Shukla Sawant

Panellists: Anish Gawande, Beatriz Cifuentes, Suheyyla Takesh

Lunch Break

1:30 PM - 2:30 PM

Panel 3

Indigenous Pluralities

2:30 PM - 4:30 PM

A range of curatorial practices drawn from the interaction with dynamic Indigenous cultures become a site to unravel questions of agency, representation and control. Recognising hierarchies of identity and access, the panel unpacks assumptions of formal categories and exemplifies modes of collaboration between knowledge systems and the creation of multifaceted alliances.

Through a diverse set of prolonged engagements with communities from northern Europe, to Australia and the Indian subcontinent, our panellists navigate the role of class and gender, the construction of tradition and heritage and commodification of artefacts within current modes of consumption. They examine the evolution of practices within the scope of institutional mediation and interventions, mapping shifts in the use of mediums and spaces in the shaping of popular perceptions. They attempt to problematise, frameworks of power through exploration of individual subjectivities, socio-economic predicaments and continuities/ discontinuities in the politics of narratives.

These provocations anticipate a nuanced discussion around the imagination of indigeneity, as a plural and heterogeneous condition, at the intersection of inherited systems of knowledge and contemporary life-worlds, entangled with histories of colonialism and modernity.

Moderator: Abeer Gupta

Panellists: Jyotindra Jain, Katya García-Antón, Mayur Vayeda, Nancy Adajania, Dr. Natalie King OAM

Closing Remarks by Meera Menezes