

Choose one artwork  
from biennale of  
sydney on cockatoo  
island. how does this  
artw...



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## **Choose one artwork from biennale of sydney on cockatoo Island. How does this artwork engage with the site/history of cockatoo Island**

Artwork at Cockatoo Island: Jumping Castle War Memorial In all societies, expressive symbolism is sustained and enriched by aesthetic activities manifested in music, dance, and arts, among others. The arts help celebrate occasions that are significant to a particular group of people. The artist is a specialist in creating symbolic representations that convey the spirit of a culture, or an age, or even a religion. Artistic creations are therefore significant for scholars of diverse endeavors. In the study of expressive symbolism the humanist and the social scientist find common ground.

Australia, particularly Sydney, had been a venue of contemporary arts as expressed by an array of artists the world over. The international collaboration of artistic showcase has been known as Biennale of Sydney (BOS), celebrated every two years. The year 2010 would be the 17th BOS with the presentation of artworks being directed by Davit Eliote.

Accordingly, Elliot averred that the Cockatoo Island was chosen as the major exhibition venue because the island is “ historically significant as both a prison and an industrial powerhouse; it offers a variety and vastness of space, which is a fantastic challenge and privilege for artists. It is one of the unique environments of Sydney and we will be filling it with art” (Australian Government, 2010, par. 4). The island’s vast expanse of spaces accords opportunities to display art forms of different genres and forms. In addition, its rich historical background provides the perfect landscape to exhibit contemporary and international art expressions of people from all walks of

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life.

One of the artists participating in the event is Brook Andrew, known as an “interdisciplinary artist working in photography, neon, screen print, mixed media, public art and installation” (Brook Andrew, 2010). His Jumping Castle War Memorial, a seven meter wide black and white Wiradjuri patterned jumping castle, will showcase his artistic talent on the 17th BOS. As proffered by Gardner, the Jumping Castle War Memorial “is surely a perverse oxymoron. What is a memorial, after all, but a space of solemn contemplation, a testament to lives lost, a lasting monument... appear to be antithetical interests: on the one hand we have the uprightness and adult reflection often associated with memorials, with their sombre concerns for the past, their rigid angularity and equally rigid stonework; and on the other hand, the bouncing castle that reverberates with the giggly squeals and spongy jumps of children locked in the throes of forgetting the world around them” (Gardner, 2010, par. 1).

The theme for the 17th BOS is The Beauty of Distance: Songs of Survival in a Precarious Age saw the beauty in distance as manifested in giving self-expression through qualities and capabilities as well as in the condition of art in its very nature (BOS: Theme, 2010, pars. 2 &3). Using this theme, Andrew gave an aesthetic rendition of his art through exemplifying contrasting meaning: solemnity of the reminiscing the victims of genocide but at the same time giving space for joy and happiness for not remembering any traces of death through his art.

As emphasized by David Eliote, the theme “explores the affirmative power of art in the face of unprecedented threats to us all: war, famine, poverty,

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disease, environmental pollution, and global warming” (Elliotte, 2010, 50). Despite various challenges and trials that people all over the world strive to survive, art finds expression in various forms and themes. As creatively crafted by Andrew, this artwork is a clear indication of expression of a form of tribute to victims of lost lives but people making the tribute are encouraged to remember them in joy and peace through a unique art form. Utterly antithetical but truly realistic and contemporary in form, theme and artistic medium. As aptly summed by Andrew, “ it is easier today for people to feel hatred and fear because cultural boundaries are shifting. Today we have a chance to move on. To bring to the front a new order of knowing, exploring, and learning and sharing. We exist as multiples like we have never existed before. We all need to own our selves; we should let people do this” (Retake, n. d. par. 4). His artwork at the 17th BOS is a true manifestation of artistic expression of beauty in contemporary art.

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