



Centre for
Contemporary
Asian Art

30
Years

MEDIA RELEASE



Courtesy of the artist. Digital image © Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook

Discover the artists and stories that have shaped 30 years of Asian Australian contemporary art in this landmark exhibition.

July 2026, Haymarket — 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art (4A) presents **Archetypes: 30 Years of 4A**, a major exhibition that reflects on the organisation's founding impulse and evolving cultural role in Australia and the Asia-Pacific.

Established in 1996 amid calls for greater representation of Asian Australian voices within national arts institutions, 4A was created as both a site of visibility and resistance: an incubator for diasporic storytelling, artistic experimentation, and cultural agency. This exhibition traces the political, social, and demographic shifts that have shaped 4A's trajectory, from its early years of identity-based advocacy to its growing ambition as a connector across regions, generations, and artistic disciplines.

Archetypes: 30 Years of 4A stages an intergenerational conversation about legacy, cultural memory and the responsibilities of the present moment through newly commissioned and critically important existing artworks.

Pioneering artists Maria Cruz, Dacchi Dang, Emil Goh, Jumaadi, Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook and Koji Ryui are presented in dialogue with the next generation: Samraing Chea, Spencer Lai, Yasmin Smith, Amy Stuart & MSAC Collective, Sarah Ujmaia and Yusi Zang. Together, these artists offer nuanced new narratives in the perception of Asian-Australian contemporary art.



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“Archetypes is both a celebration and a reckoning. Thirty years ago, 4A was established because Asian Australian artists were too often excluded from the stories Australia’s cultural institutions were telling about themselves. While much has changed, the motivations that shaped our founding remain urgent. This exhibition brings together artists across generations to reflect on those questions and to honour the extraordinary artists, curators, communities and cultural workers who have built 4A into one of Australia’s most important platforms for contemporary art and diasporic storytelling.” said Thea Baumann, CEO/Artistic Director of 4A.

The exhibition is guest curated by Amelia Winata, Editor of Memo Review and Curator at ACMI.

“Representing the past and future of 4A in a single exhibition is both an honour and a huge responsibility” said Amelia. *“This is an organisation that has played such a critical role in platforming some of Australia’s greatest artists at the earliest stages of their careers, and has played stage to countless key moments in contemporary Australian art history. As curator I reflect on that history while also considering the ways in which the next generation of artists is expanding upon the designation ‘Asian-Australian.’”*

The title of the exhibition, ‘Archetypes’ has a tongue-in-cheek intention. This exhibition interrogates the “archetypes” of what many people may think of what Asian-Australian art should look like, and pushes against them.

Thea added that, *“at a time when conversations about identity, belonging and representation continue to evolve, Archetypes remind us that culture is never fixed. It is continually being reshaped by those willing to challenge the archetypes they inherit.”*

For example, visitors will be able to see a new commission from artist Sarah Ujmaia, a collection of carbonised tablets that make reference to ancient cylinder seals—linked to Mesopotamia/Babylon where Chaldeans have roots—but imprinting them with everyday objects, locating them firmly within ordinary life processes.

Meanwhile, Spencer Lai’s work builds upon a 2025 solo exhibition at Mackintosh Lane in London, Impressions, and looks at modernist aesthetics in education.

Across its 30 years, 4A has shown the work of some of Australia’s best-known artists. Through her research in the 4A archive, curator Winata discovered some key legacy artists who have been less celebrated, despite their achievements and contributions to the organisation.

In particular, **Archetypes** platforms previously lost video works by Emil Goh. Goh exhibited in 4A’s inaugural 1997 exhibition curated by Melissa Chiu and continued to be an important member of the 4A community up until his pre-mature death in 2009. The role of international artists in shaping 4A’s history is also highlighted in Archetypes. A video work by one of Thailand’s most influential artists Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook is a vital acknowledgement of this international dialogue. In 2014, Rasdjarmrearnsook had a solo exhibition at 4A, titled Storytellers of the Town. In the twelve years since then, she has shown at numerous high-profile organisations including the Guggenheim New York and documenta 13.

Join us in marking this important milestone in 4A’s history.



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ARTISTS

Samraing Chea
Maria Cruz
Dacchi Dang
Emil Goh (1966-2009)
Jumaadi
Spencer Lai
Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook
Koji Ryui
Yasmin Smith
Amy Stuart & MSAC Collective
Sarah Ujmaia
Yusi Zang

OPENING CELEBRATION

Friday 10 July 2026
6:30pm – 8:30pm
4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art
181–187 Hay Street, Haymarket NSW 2000

EXHIBITION

Archetypes: 30 Years of 4A
11 July – 20 September 2026
4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art
181–187 Hay Street, Haymarket NSW 2000

ARTIST TALK

Saturday 11 July 2026
2:00pm – 4:00pm
4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art
181–187 Hay Street, Haymarket NSW 2000

MEDIA CONTACTS

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ABOUT 4A CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY ASIAN ART

Since 1996, 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art has championed the creative practice and representation of Asian and Asian Australian artists and arts workers. 4A fosters excellence in contemporary culture through the commissioning, presentation, documentation and research of contemporary art. Our program, based out of our Haymarket gallery, is presented throughout Australia and Asia, where we ensure that contemporary art plays a central role in understanding and developing the dynamic relationship between Australia and the Asian region.

ABOUT AMELIA WINATA

Amelia Winata is a curator and writer based in Naarm Melbourne. She is currently an editor of Memo Review and Curator at ACMI. She was previously Curator at Gertrude Contemporary. Winata has written for numerous publications including Artforum, The Saturday Paper, and ArtReview, and for institutions including Monash University Museum of Art (MUMA) and Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA). Recent exhibitions include *Phuong Ngo: Inheritance* (West Space, 2025); *Metropolis* (Arts Project Australia, 2025); *And This Time the Well Is Alive* (Gertrude Contemporary, 2024); and *Sarah Ujmaia: Marmoreum* (Gertrude Contemporary, 2024). In 2024 she was awarded a PhD in Art History from the University of Melbourne. Her thesis is a monograph of the West German artist Charlotte Posenenske (1930-1985).



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