

ARTFORUM

SCENE & HERD: The Artforum Diary

A Common Thread

SYDNEY 07.06.12

WHEN I ARRIVED at the Art Gallery of New South Wales last Tuesday night for the first of the weeklong celebrations for the Eighteenth Biennale of Sydney, the forecourt was packed with local dignitaries waiting to hear Michael Brand's maiden speech. It was only Brand's second day on the job as gallery director, but his opening remarks were charmingly good-natured, good-humored, and, perhaps most significantly, in good taste. His acknowledgment of the gallery's staff, as well as the other big Sydney institution, the Museum of Contemporary Art, and its director, [Elizabeth Ann Macgregor](#), did not go unnoticed. Indeed, after the thirty-three-year tenure of [Edmund Capon](#), the excited buzz over a new order somewhat overshadowed talk of the biennial.

For many among the international contingent, which included Art Basel Hong Kong director [Magnus Renfrew](#) and dealers such as Finola Jones (of Mother's Tankstation), [Courtney Plummer](#) (of Lehmann Maupin), and [Tyler Rollins](#), Sydney was the last stop on a vigorous itinerary counting art fairs (Frieze, Art HK, Art Basel), exhibitions (Manifesta, Documenta), and, let's face it, lots of parties in the name of "work." There would be no shortage of celebrations here, so before we commenced the carousing, we all got a glimpse of the show.



Left: Collector Stephanie Grosse, biennial artist Alwar Balasubramaniam, dealer Deepak Talwar, and collector Julian Grosse. (Photo: Dave Wade) Right: Biennial artist Pinaree Sanpitak with dealer [Tyler Rollins](#).