

Titles will unlock Biennale's beauty

Adam Fulton

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IF THE meanings of artworks such as a 25-metre chain of polystyrene foam, an artificial fog "sculpture" and hundreds of origami cubes suspended with "breast clouds" are not immediately clear at the 18th Biennale of Sydney, which opens today, its co-director has a word of advice.

"To help people go around - because we have developed a kind of art walk - [there is] like, a key to each exhibition," the co-artistic director of Australia's biggest visual-art show, Catherine de Zegher, said. "The key is in the title in every venue."

At the Art Gallery of NSW's exhibition, which includes maps of big cities made from 25 kilograms of baby powder and a life-size sculptural replica of a living room, that title is *In Finite Blue Planet*. "It's very much about existence, about life and death, and the life and death of the Earth as well," de Zegher said.

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On Cockatoo Island, another of the five main venues in the free three-month biennale, that key is *Stories, Senses and Spheres*.

"It's much more about zooming in - about intimate relationships to each other. You will have a lot of participatory projects there. Some artists are staying there for three months. Artists have really dedicated their heart and soul to the Biennale, and it shows."

Free ferries will run daily between Circular Quay and Cockatoo Island during the sprawling exhibition. Titled *All Our Relations* and themed on the relations between people and their world, it contains the work of more than 100 artists from about 45 countries. It runs until September 16.

At the Museum of Contemporary Art, the key is *Possible Composition*, dealing with the fragmentation of the world and artists' approaches to reconnecting it.

Standing under her suspended installation involving hundreds of origami cubes with scores of glass "clouds" modelled from breasts, Pinaree Sanpitak described how the work "becomes a body for me".

It combines the Thai artist's ongoing theme of breasts, representing qualities such as nurturing and passion, with the winged cubes. She was probably subconsciously linking milk and water, she said. "Amazingly, they connect."

The piece incorporates 16 pieces of music that are triggered as the audience moves under it, and can play simultaneously. "Anything can happen," Sanpitak said.

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