

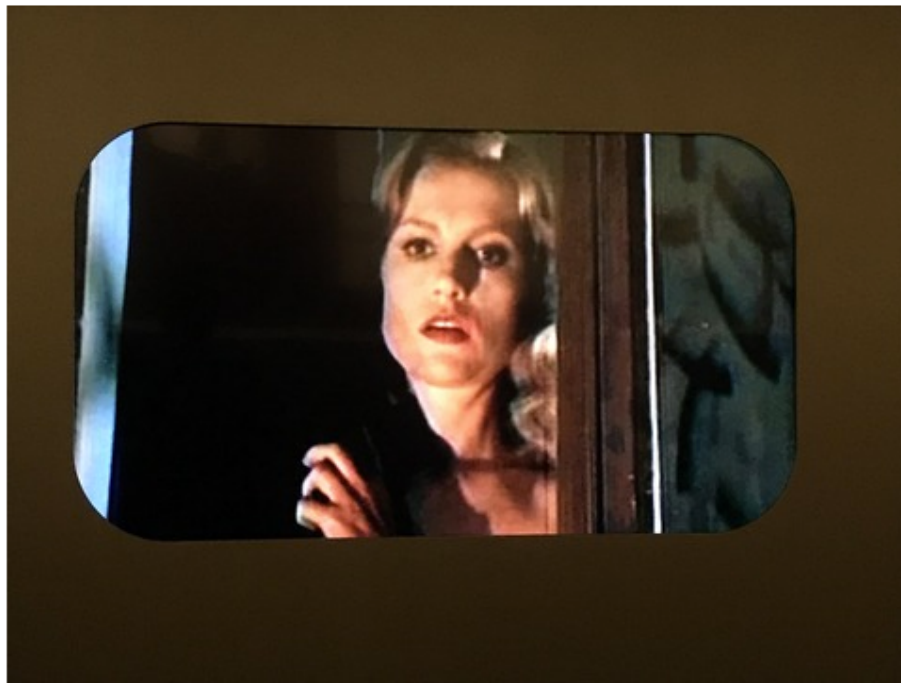


State of the nations: our pick of the Venice Biennale pavilions

Highlights from the Giardini and Arsenale as the art world's biggest event gets underway

May 10, 2017

JAVIER PES, GARETH HARIS



Tracey Moffatt's *Vigil* (2017) in the Australian pavilion (Photo: G. Harris)

Australia

Tracey Moffatt, *My Horizon*

Moffatt's *Vigil* film (2017) splices footage of rickety refugee boats with Hollywood stars peering through windows, giving the impression that movie icons such as Elizabeth Taylor and Kathleen Turner are seemingly horrified by the disasters unfolding in front of them. Moffatt also presents two new photographic series, *Body Remembers* (2017) and *Passage* (2017). The former shows a maid deep in contemplation against a series of barren, sepia-tinged backdrops (Moffatt is the maid depicted). "My mind went to film noir. I was also thinking of Edward Hopper," she says. The saturated images in *Passage* show a motorcycle cop, along with a mother and baby, languishing on a mysterious waterfront, evoking clandestine journeys and treacherous border crossings. Her most intriguing work, *The White Ghosts Sailed In*, is a grainy, shimmering film of "found" footage showing the horizon from what is now Sydney harbour. The artist says she discovered the film that had been shot by natives using a camera left by Captain Cook just as the Royal Navy returned. "It's an invasion film" she says. Further video works are screened on the exterior of Australia's modernist black-box pavilion in the Giardini.