

## "Unsettling Queenstown:" The Australian Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale 2023 Explores Themes of Decolonization



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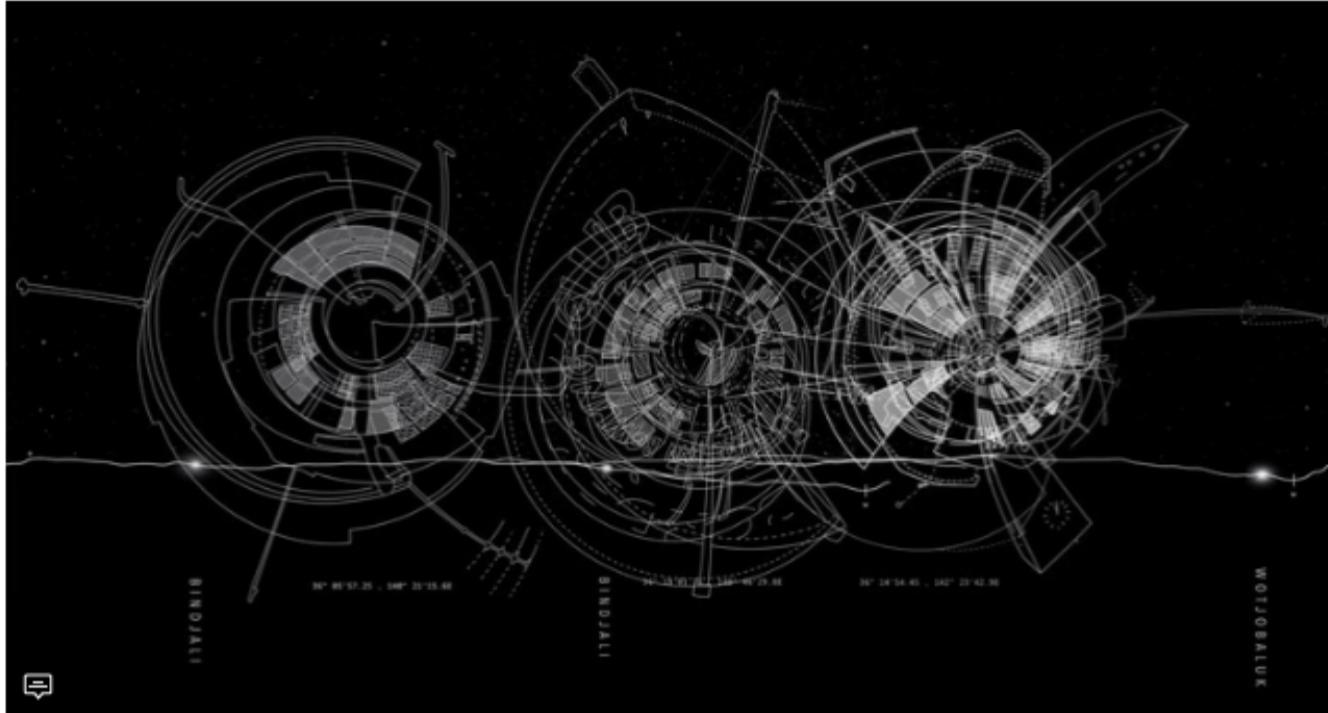


Written by Nour Fakharany

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At this year's International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, the Australian Institute of Architects will present *Unsettling Queenstown*. Tackling themes of decolonization, the exhibition is a multi-faceted and multi-sensory installation. Creative directors Anthony Coupe, Julian Worrall, Emily Paech, Ali Gumillya Baker, and Sarah Rhode have curated this exhibition as a response to the overarching theme of the Biennale – "The Laboratory of the Future." Moreover, *Unsettling Queenstown* will encourage audiences to imagine the future and its possibilities.

There are Queenstowns all throughout the former British Empire: in Australia, New Zealand, Asia, Africa, and the Americas. This construct symbolizes Australia's colonial inheritance at the end of the Second Elizabethan era, marking a period of decolonial struggle worldwide. The exhibition will explore and interrogate the relationships between people and the environment under the logic of colonialism and resource exploitation. Furthermore, it will unfold these truths by looking at real and fictional Queenstowns.



The display's focal point is the island of Lutruwita, where there is a copper-mining town called [Queenstown](#) in Tasmania. Additionally, in South [Australia](#), on Kaurna Yarta Puulti there is another [Queenstown](#). The exhibition will portray and reimagine both areas with film and voice. At the center of the Pavilion, a ghostly fragment of colonial architecture will be on display, a 70% scale model of the belvedere town's Empire Hotel. The model is made from a wire frame with copper tubing and will be accompanied by immersive sounds, voices, and visuals.

Settler colonialism has consistently involved overwriting Aboriginal Territory and stamping British names and symbols into Indigenous grounds. *Unsettling Queenstown* is an act of demapping, exposing hidden histories of the land where colonies were established. This demapped Kingdom comprises multilayered depictions and will be included in an archive of modern practices. Furthermore, the exhibition confronts questions of temporality and narrative, providing pathways to reimagined futures and escaping the confines of our numerous inherited Queenstowns.

*“ The British Imperial hangover is pervasive in every corner of the globe: there is quite literally a [Queenstown](#) on every continent, bar Antarctica. *Unsettling Queenstown* unites decolonial theory and praxis, weaving elements from real places and gleanings from current architectural intelligence in search of ingredients to contribute to [Venice's Laboratory of the Future](#).*

*-- Creative Director Team: [Anthony Coupe](#), [Julian Worrall](#), [Emily Paech](#), [Ali Gumillya Baker](#), and [Sarah Rhode](#)*

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Several other countries have announced their Pavilions for [La Biennale di Venezia 2023](#), with many curatorial projects looking at national histories and heritage. The [National Pavilion of Kosovo](#) explores migration, diaspora, and states of transcendence in the country's history. Also diving into the past, the [Hungarian pavilion](#) showcases the Museum of Ethnography in Budapest, exploring Hungarian traditions and rural communities. Similarly, the [Taiwan Pavilion](#) studies the intelligence embedded in [Taiwanese local vernaculars](#) and explores ways of applying these models to future decision-making.

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