

## UNSETTLING QUEENSTOWN: THE AUSTRALIAN PAVILION IN VENICE REFLECTS ON THE SCARS OF COLONIALISM

With the 'Unsettling Queenstown' exhibition, the Australian Pavilion at Venice Architecture Biennale explores the despoliations of colonialism and extractivism.

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'Unsettling Queenstown' exhibition at the Australian Pavilion at Venice Architecture Biennale 2023 – Photos: courtesy of the Australian Pavilion.

*Architecture* – The **Australian Institute of Architects** presents *Unsettling Queenstown* at the Australia Pavilion at the **Venice Architecture Biennale**. Anthony Coupe, Julian Worrall, Emily Paech, Ali Gumillya Baker, and Sarah Rhodes curated a multi-faceted and multi-sensory exhibition exploring themes of decolonisation and decarbonisation.

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There are two **Queenstown** in Australia, a colonial copper-mining town in Tasmania and a suburban settlement in South Australia. Both cities clearly reveal the despoliations of colonialism and extractivism.

*"Australia's identity is built on a double rupture: the expropriation of First Peoples' lands; and the displacement of settler populations from their ancestral motherlands. The country's wealth is based on an extractive relation to nature, regarding it as a standing reserve for exploitation."* Explain the curators.



*"The British Imperial hangover is pervasive in every corner of the globe: there is quite literally a Queenstown on every continent, bar Antarctica. The Unsettling Queenstown exhibition unites decolonial theory and praxis, weaving elements from real places and gleanings from current architectural intelligence."*





At the centre of the Pavilion, a ghostly fragment of colonial architecture – a 70% scale model of the Empire Hotel in Queenstown – hangs from the ceiling. The structure is made from copper tubes nodding to the city's copper mining past.

The room is filled with immersive sounds, voices, and images narrating hidden histories of the Aboriginal Country, which was overwritten by British colonialism.

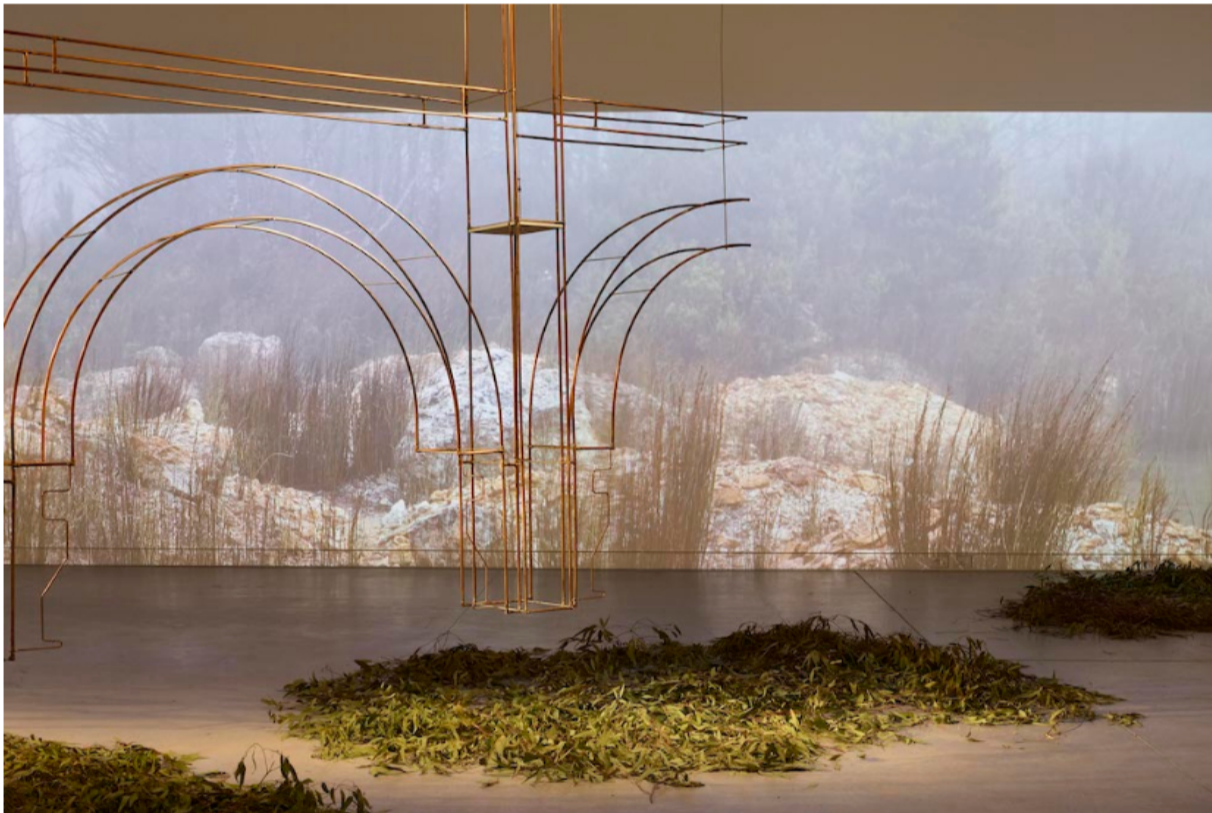


*"Now that the Queen has died and we are at the beginning of a new reign, it is time to question the relics of the British Empire and Australia's place within the Commonwealth."*





Unsettling Queenstown constitutes an act of 'demapping,' These layered representations of demapped Country will form part of an archive of tactics and methods from contemporary practice, engaging themes of temporality and narrative, offering ways toward reimagined futures, transcending the encirclements of our many inherited Queenstowns.



All photos are courtesy of the Australia Pavilion.





Australian Institute of Architects | Venice Biennale

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