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Australian Pavilion Explores "The Despoliations Of Colonialism And Extractivism" At Venice Biennale

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The [Australian Pavilion](#) has installed a suspended, [copper](#) structure that mimics the Empire Hotel of Queenstown where the two real Queenstowns are reimagined as a fictional narrative at the 2023 Venice Architecture Biennale.

Called [Unsettling Queenstown](#), the pavilion, curated by Anthony Coupe, Ali Gumillya Baker, Julian Worrall, Emily Paech and Sarah Rhodes, aims to show "the despoliations of colonialism and extractivism" in a particular clarity.

On the other hand, the [pavilion](#) translates the outlines of an alternative future are being formed within its spaces.

The 2023 [Venice Architecture Biennale](#) has opened to the public on Saturday 20 May and will be on view until Sunday, 26 November, 2023 at the Arsenale and Giardini venues.



The curators have installed a copper, suspended fragment of the arched belvedere of the town's Empire Hotel that takes place at the heart of the exhibition.

Profiled in a copper tubing, "this colonial ghost encloses community voices and frames atmospheric landscapes, immersing the viewer in its dark magnetism," stated in a project description.



"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," explained the pavilion.

"The country's wealth is based on an extractive relation to nature, regarding it as a standing reserve for exploitation. A dominion within the Commonwealth, Australia's statehood is bound to the British Crown."

As the curators emphasized, the Australian Pavilion unfolds relations with land, people, and nature in which they are inscribed in the patterns of its settlements, its architecture the spatial language of this inscription.



"Queenstown' is the name we give to this pattern of relations. At the end of the second Elizabethan Age, as the voice of First Peoples calls for reckoning, and with planetary urgencies pressing, the settled configuration of this contested inheritance is under question," said the curators.

"Queenstown is being unsettled. This **exhibition** explores and participates in this unsettling, weaving elements from real places and gleanings from current architectural intelligence in search of ingredients to contribute to Venice's Laboratory of the Future."

"Queenstown is a construction both real and imagined, and there are many Queenstowns," the curatorial team continued.



This exhibition explores the two real Queenstowns to construct its fictional version: "The first is a colonial copper-mining town on the island of Lutruwita."

"Here the despoliations of colonialism and extractivism are revealed with particular clarity, while the outlines of an alternative future are being formed within its spaces."



"The names and narratives of Queenstown obscures those of prior inhabitations; Aboriginal Country is overwritten by colonial maps. A process of 'demapping' accompanies the reimagining of Queenstown, revealing hidden histories," the curators emphasized.

The team reflects a layered representation of a demapped Country, combining Aboriginal toponymy drawn from the second Queenstown on Kaurna Yarta land, are projected upon the colonial spectre.



An archive of tactics and methods from contemporary practice, engaging themes of temporality and narrative, complements the exhibition, offering openings towards a reimagined future, transcending the encirclements of our many inherited Queenstowns.







The Australian Pavilion can be visited at the Giardini venue. To see more pavilions from this year's biennale, you can also visit WAC's Instagram/[Reels](#) for exclusive videos.

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[Australian Pavilion](#) [copper](#) [exhibition](#) [pavilion](#)

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