

BUXTON CONTEMPORARY ANNOUNCES MAJOR SOLO EXHIBITION BY HODA AFSHAR



The **University of Melbourne's Buxton Contemporary** has announced a major solo exhibition by internationally acclaimed artist **Hoda Afshar**, running from **30 October 2026 – 24 April 2027**.

Titled ***a/part*** and curated by **Charlotte Day**, Director, Art Museums, and Associate Curator **Shanyisa McConville**, Museums and Collections at the University of Melbourne, the exhibition brings together key photographic and video works spanning Afshar's practice. It marks her first solo exhibition of this scale in Melbourne, where she lives and works.

Known for work that explores the unspoken forces and structures that determine who is permitted to appear, speak and be heard, and who is excluded from the social and political order, **Afshar** challenges the divisions between participation and exclusion, prompting audiences to question the ways of seeing that sustain them, and to see differently.

Central to the exhibition is an expanded iteration of **Afshar's** major work *Code Black/Riot* (2025), a multi-channel video work developed in collaboration with renowned artist **Vernon Ah Kee** and writer and human rights defender **Behrouz Boochani**. Co-commissioned by Buxton Contemporary and the Biennale of Sydney, the work premiered at the 2026 Biennale of Sydney: *Rememory*. For its presentation at Buxton Contemporary, *Code Black/Riot* will be reconfigured as a large-scale immersive installation, with eight channels and a soundscape that audiences move through, amplifying the gravity and physicality of the work.

Filmed largely in North Queensland with the support of Change the Record and Youth Empowered Towards Independence (YETI), the work confronts the realities of detention for Indigenous young people. Through testimony, moving image and collective authorship, including interviews with young people and detention centre staff, as well as footage of the children at play, it draws urgent attention to the mass incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth in Australia.

Code Black/Riot is accompanied by a series of collaborative portraits by **Afshar** of young people with lived

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experience of incarceration, invited to conceal their identities using a means of their own choosing while making a personal statement of strength and spirit. Alongside these are a group of colour-field paintings by **Ah Kee**, representing the detention centre's system of emergency codes, and text by **Boochani** reflecting on his more than six years inside the Australian government-run Manus Island Regional Processing Centre, and the parallels he sees with the system of Indigenous youth detention.

The exhibition's earlier works extend these concerns, exploring themes of witnessing, displacement and the application of institutional power through the experiences of people whose lives have been shaped by systems of authority.

Remain (2018) sees a photographic series and video installation weaving together the stories of stateless men who remained on Manus Island after the centre there closed in 2017, contrasting their accounts of violence, uncertainty and displacement with the seemingly idyllic tropical environment.

Agonistes (2020) turns to whistleblowers, comprising nine portraits of former government employees from the military, intelligence services, immigration, youth detention, and aged and disability care, examining the ethical tensions of witnessing and dissent, and the personal consequences experienced by individuals who challenge institutional practices.

Together, the works in *a/part* explore the impacts of systems of detention and questions of institutional power in Australia through the experiences of individuals whose stories are often overlooked.

Hoda Afshar said: *"The works in this exhibition are interconnected and tell an interconnected story. Together they explore forms of incarceration and exclusion in Australia and - importantly - the policies, structures and ways of seeing that enable or justify them. Each work presents a case study and focuses on the individuals subjected to these systems. I wanted to focus on their experiences and present their stories not as distant or abstract issues, but as Australian stories. These are issues that demand an Australian response, and ultimately, an Australian solution."*

Charlotte Day, Director, Art Museums, University of Melbourne said: *"We are honoured and privileged to present this important exhibition by one of Australia's most significant contemporary artists in the city Hoda calls home, and to continue Buxton Contemporary's commitment to ambitious, research-led exhibitions that foster critical dialogue."*

Ends

IMAGES [HERE](#)

MEDIA CONTACTS

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ABOUT BUXTON CONTEMPORARY

The University of Melbourne's Buxton Contemporary opened in 2018 and is one of Melbourne's must-see contemporary art spaces. Designed by renowned architects Fender Katsalidis, the museum comprises four public exhibition galleries, and dedicated teaching facilities. Buxton Contemporary is located on the University's Southbank Campus, in the heart of Melbourne's Arts Precinct. The Campus is also home to the Victorian College of the Arts and Melbourne Conservatorium of Music. For more information visit buxtoncontemporary.com.



ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE'S MUSEUMS AND COLLECTIONS

The University's 15 museums and galleries and more than 30 individual collections play a distinctive role in the University's commitments to its academic mission and civic engagement. The Museums and Collections Department is responsible for Buxton Contemporary, Science Gallery Melbourne, Potter Museum of Art, Old Quadrangle Treasury, MPavilion Parkville and the Grainger Museum and has strategic responsibilities for the University Collection.

ABOUT HODA AFSHAR

Hoda Afshar is a visual artist whose practice focuses on the intricate relationships between politics and aesthetics, knowledge and representation, visibility and violence. She is interested in the ways that image-making can either reinforce or challenge our common sense, and the forces that shape perception. Her works invite audiences to reflect on and to rethink how and what we see, often by drawing attention to parts of the political and visible order that have previously been excluded.

IMAGE CAPTIONS: Hoda Afshar, *Untitled #02*, *Untitled #01* and *Untitled #03*, from *Code Black / Riot (Portraits)* series 2025, inkjet prints. Courtesy of Hoda Afshar and Milani Gallery.