

YAVUZ GALLERY | PRESS RELEASE | 31 AUGUST 2021

New Gold Mountain

Christian Thompson AO

Exhibition dates: 9 September to 9 October 2021
Location: Yavuz Gallery Sydney
86 George Street, Redfern, NSW 2016 Australia

Yavuz Gallery is proud to present *New Gold Mountain*, Christian Thompson AO's inaugural solo exhibition with the Gallery. Comprising two of the artist's now iconic large-scale flower walls and an immersive audio soundscape, the exhibition plunges us into Thompson's intersectional identity. While further exploring his Bidjara experience, Thompson also reflects upon his Southern Chinese background for the first time. Intensely personal, *New Gold Mountain* also speaks to Australia's broader history, and draws a lens onto the country's complex relationship with national identity.

Accompanying *New Gold Mountain*, writer and independent curator Chelsea Hopper's thought-provoking essay provides further insight into this new body of work:

"For Thompson, flowers are not only a vital signifier but also provoke questions around ownership, power structures, and identity. In earlier photographic iterations where Thompson himself dons selected flora reconfigured into crown-like structures—exemplified during his formal training in sculpture—is shrouded in them, or visually concealed from the viewer. Here, a new framework has emerged over recent years in the form of a flower wall: selected blooms are pruned, amassed, and woven into richly filled lattices. They form expansive and immersive configurations that allow Thompson to emerge and re-emerge, time and time again, inviting us into these portal-like worlds to reflect and consider what such questions mean to us.

In his new photographic work, Xin Jin Shan (New Gold Mountain) (2021), Thompson continues his signature flower-wall motif, incorporating a selection of chrysanthemums, lilies, and orchids, which pay homage to his Southern Chinese heritage. Thompson's paternal grandmother, Harriet Woods, who was a seamstress and carer to the artist's great uncle after he returned from World War II, is also a direct descendant of the Chinese migrants who immigrated during the Victorian gold rush in the early 1850s. This specific historical lineage has spurred renewed interest for Thompson, as an introspective guide but also to pivot us toward a publicly lesser-known side of his own heritage."

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Dr Christian Thompson AO (b. 1978, Australia) is a Bidjara man of the Kunja Nation from central western Queensland. His practice spans across video, photography, sculpture, performance and sound, evolving through a process of auto – ethnography. While employing various modes of research, he connects his own experience to larger social, political, cultural meanings and understandings. Thompson grew up in rural and urban environments in the 1980s and 90s and he interweaves references to his Bidjara culture throughout his multidisciplinary practice to address issues of colonialism, identity and cultural representation. His doctoral research and art practice has had a critical impact on International and Australian art. In 2018 he was made an Officer of the Order of Australia for distinguished services to the visual arts and as a role model to young indigenous artists in the Queen's Birthday honours list.

Thompson has exhibited widely both nationally and internationally. His solo exhibitions include *Bayi Gardiya*, Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne; and *We Bury Our Own*, The Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, UK. His work has been included in prestigious group exhibitions including *11th Shanghai Biennale: Why Not Ask Again*, Power Station of Art,

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Shanghai, China; *APT8: The 8th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art*, Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, Australia; *The Other and Me*, The Sharjah Museum, United Arab Emirates; *Australia*, The Royal Academy for the Arts, London, UK; *Undisclosed 2nd National Indigenous Triennial*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; *Shadowlife*, Bangkok Art and Cultural Centre, Thailand; *SOLO*, Modern Art Oxford, Oxford, UK; *Tell Me Tell Me: Australian and Korean Art 1976-2011*, National Museum of Korean Art, Seoul, South Korea, and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Australia; and *The Beauty of Distance/ Songs of Survival in a Precarious Age: 17th Biennale of Sydney*, Australia. From 2017 to 2019, a major survey exhibition of Thompson's work curated by Charlotte Day and Hetti Perkins, *Christian Thompson: Ritual Intimacy*, toured across Australia. Thompson was the winner of the Bowness Prize in 2020 with his epic four-panel work 'Rule of three' (2020), a finalist of the Bowness Prize in 2021, and a finalist in the The National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Awards (NATSIAA) in 2021. Thompson is a research affiliate at the Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford, UK.

For inquiries and more information, please contact:

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Selected Images



New Gold Mountain (Xin Jin Shan), 2021, C-type print on Fuji Pearl Metallic Paper, 250 x 250 cm (4 framed pieces, each 120 x 120 cm), Edition of 4 + 2APs

New Gold Mountain (Xin Jin Shan), 2021, C-type print on Fuji Pearl Metallic Paper, 120 x 120 cm, Edition of 6 + 2APs

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Double Happiness, 2021, C-type print on Fuji Pearl Metallic Paper, 250 x 250 cm (4 framed pieces, each 120 x 120 cm), Edition of 4 + 2APs

Double Happiness, 2021, C-type print on Fuji Pearl Metallic Paper, 120 x 120 cm, Edition of 6 + 2APs

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