

DS+R and Woods Bagot to design new Adelaide Cultural Complex

New York-based interdisciplinary firm Diller Scofidio + Renfro (DS+R) and Australian architecture firm Woods Bagot have won an international competition to design a dynamic new art space on Adelaide's celebrated North Terrace.



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"The winning team's concept design reconciled the brief for a dynamic people-friendly new place with a skilfully organised gallery, while also incorporating a performance lab, a dramatic 'super lobby', floating top-floor sky galleries and a suspended rooftop garden," said Arts South Australia and competition organisers Malcolm Reading Consultants in a statement.

"The garden, inspired by 'minkunthi', the Kurna word 'to relax', would display the planting of a pre-colonised South Australian landscape, linking the idea of the contemporary to Kurna ecological and cultural history."

'Soft beacon'



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The building was described by the team in their presentation as a charismatic soft beacon on North Terrace that would reflect the sky by day and, at night, glow with galleries – allowing visitors to glimpse the art collection as they passed the building outside formal opening hours and, in this sense, ‘giving the art back to the city’.

The nine-strong international jury, chaired by Michael Lynch AO CBE, found the concept design to be resonant to Adelaide and its famous festival culture, promising to create spectacle and attract new audiences with dynamic, multipurpose spaces while also displaying a sound understanding of current art practice and offering a flexible but distinctive gallery configuration on a nine-square model.

The new arts complex will be a national focal point for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and cultures as well as new spaces for major exhibitions, and the opportunity to unlock the hidden treasures of South Australia’s State collections.



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Embracing art in all its forms

"The winning team's concept design responds to this once-in-a-generation opportunity for a landmark building in the heart of the city, positioned on the edge of the Botanic Garden. In a city famous for its festivals, the design creates a new place that embraces art in all of its forms and appeals to a broad audience, both local and international," said Lynch.

"The design foregrounds South Australia's exceptional collections and capitalises on the momentum of the Art Gallery of South Australia's recent successes in celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and culture."

"I'd like to join the jury in thanking all six finalist teams for their high calibre presentations and congratulate Diller Scofidio + Renfro and Woods Bagot on their inspired design," said Peter Louca, executive director of Arts South Australia.



"The overwhelming global attention this process has invited from design, creative and infrastructure leaders and the world's media has put the creation of Adelaide's next great cultural destination on the international map."

"This was reflected in the high calibre of teams and proposals which challenged the international jury."

Adelaide is located on the traditional lands of the Kaurna people and the project site, close to the Art Gallery of South Australia and part of the former Royal Adelaide Hospital site, is rich in Kaurna heritage.

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