

## **Acknowledgement of Country**

Good evening everybody. To begin, I have the solemn, important duty of acknowledging country. There has been a lot of important discourse around this ceremony and its need to evolve beyond the lip-service formality it has become. We are on Wurundjeri country, which has long been the home of the Kulin, the Woiworung and Boonworung and was traversed by countless other groups of Aboriginal people before colonists arrived here. Acknowledging their sacred connection to our country, and continued sovereign rights to its governance, is a commitment to learn and to act in respect to Aboriginal people, particularly Elders who have carried traditions, rituals, stories and art through generations of genocide, trauma and discrimination that continues to this day. Please take an opportunity tonight to donate even a nominal amount to an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisation - particularly one supporting Indigenous people who are disabled. If you cannot donate, take the time to find out about the needs of our First Nations communities - get involved and invested. Tonight's event exists by their grace and hospitality, and in the lineage of the artistic and ecological practices they invented and preserved for thousands of years.

I, myself, was born on Kurna land and grew up between there and Djabuganjdji and Yidinjdji land. My name is Bayley Turner, and it is my great honour to welcome you as your MC to this exhibition by Teague Leigh, The Reclamation of Terra. Tonight I'll be providing an introduction to the space and the exhibition, followed by two short speeches.