

Submission — Sullivan+Strumpf

About us

Sullivan+Strumpf is a contemporary commercial gallery (established 2005) operating in Sydney, Melbourne and Singapore. We develop long-term careers and platform Australian and international artists, commission new work, build audiences and connect practice to global markets. We consistently exhibit at key global art fairs such as Frieze London and Art Basel Hong Kong. We've supported artists who have shown at important global events such Naminapu Maymuru-White at the Venice Biennale (2024), and who have had major museum exhibitions, currently Tony Albert at the MCA (2026), Sydney. We represent artists at all stages of their career, from established to emerging. For elaboration, please explore: www.sullivanstrumpf.com

Challenges and opportunities

- Financial fragility: rising rent, staffing and production costs and volatile political/economic cycles place many galleries on a knife-edge.
- Critical ecosystem gaps: arts journalism is narrowly concentrated, limiting discourse around contemporary, diverse and experimental practice.
- Market access: high freight, logistics and participation costs constrain international exposure.
- Audience shifts: digital and hybrid behaviours offer reach but require investment and capability-building.

What matters to us and our practice

- Sustained, career-long support for artists through production investment, market development and international platforms.
- Genuine First Nations leadership and broader representation across the sector.
- A diverse, well-resourced critical ecosystem that reflects contemporary practice.

Key recommendations

1. Recognise commercial galleries as cultural infrastructure

- Explicitly name commercial galleries in the policy's infrastructure framing. Galleries perform production, marketing, distribution and export functions complementary to public institutions.
- Consider tailored supports: targeted tax incentives for reinvestment, export assistance, and eligibility for partnership/funding programs that reflect commercial galleries' market development role.

2. Strategic international exhibitions and institutional collaborations

- Fund and incentivise major institutional collaborations that platform excellence in Australian practice within globally diverse curatorial contexts. Avoid framing projects as narrow national showcases; position Australian artists alongside international peers to strengthen critical credibility and institutional relationships.

- Create partnership streams that encourage co-curated projects between galleries and public institutions, with funding for freight, production and critical programming.

3. Diversity, First Nations, Leadership and workforce development

- Ensure commercial gallery staff are eligible for First Nations education, training and “future leaders” programs alongside not-for-profit and independent applicants.
- Include galleries in capacity-building initiatives and fund long-term programs that support First Nations artists’ careers, not only short-term projects.

4. Strengthen arts journalism and critical infrastructure

- Fund diverse arts journalism via fellowships, dedicated newsroom arts roles at key mastheads and support for independent long-form criticism and critical platforms. Broader, better-resourced criticism will deepen public understanding, diversify the canon and amplify underrepresented voices.

5. Reduce market barriers through targeted partnership programs

- Establish partnership pilots that fund joint gallery–institution international projects, with tiered grants covering production, freight and promotion, and weighted criteria for First Nations, regional and underrepresented applicants.

Conclusion

Policy that recognises commercial galleries as core cultural infrastructure—and that enables strategic international collaborations, develops workforce pathways and strengthens arts journalism—will better enable artists to build sustainable, internationally connected careers. Sullivan+Strumpf welcomes further consultation.