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## Heavens below: Introducing Siloam, Mona's new extension



White House, 2015 by Ai Weiwei. Photo: Mona/Jesse Hunniford. Image Courtesy of Mona, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia.

**HOBART.** - [Mona](#) opened Siloam, a vast new subterranean excavation. This \$27 million extension is a complex of chambers, gallery spaces and connecting tunnels featuring artworks by Alfredo Jaar, Ai Weiwei, Oliver Beer, and Christopher Townsend.

Alfredo Jaar has created an immersive journey simulating heaven, hell and purgatory in *The Divine Comedy*, 2019. Visitors enter—ten at a time—into three pavilions interpreting each of the realms of Dante Alighieri's 14th-century epic poem. They will encounter fire and flood in *Inferno*; hover between life and death with American performance artist Joan Jonas (in a film) in *Purgatorio*; and, finally, simply exist in the sensory void of *Paradiso*.

Ai Weiwei's *White House*, 2015, is formed from the bones of a Qing Dynasty home, constructed from interlocking pieces of wood, all balanced on solid crystal glass. Weiwei has

something to say about the present constructing the past but, here at least, his work is a triumphant blend of anachronistic aesthetics.

Mona Confessional, 2016-9, by Oliver Beer is inspired by historical listening tubes and the conventions of religious confession. Visitors enter an underground chamber through a soundless spiral and can eavesdrop on, or even have a full—but disembodied—conversation with the people walking and talking outside above them.

Christopher Townend's sound installation, Requiem for Vermin, 2019, is the largest multi-channel sonic work in the world. Comprising 230 speakers and 218 channels, the scored musical composition is activated by hidden movement sensors in a new tunnel, leading visitors to experience aural illusions as the sound interacts with the space around them, while leading them to Pharos. It's so complex that we are having trouble making it work—art remains a mystery.

Siloam—the name comes a very early tunnel—provides an alternate connection between Mona and Pharos, and an alternative to academic art. The architectural inspiration is drawn from the Indian naked eye observatory Jantar Mantar, but the overall experience reconfigures religious processions (think the Stations of the Cross or circumambulating the Kaaba) as secular spirituals.

David Walsh said: 'The original Siloam was one of the first tunnels to be constructed from both ends. We dug our version of Siloam to connect two existing areas of the museum, filled it with art and made it greater than the sum of its parts. I liked the idea of approaching heaven from below and forcing our visitors to be part of a procession by traversing a tunnel to nowhere.'

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## Today's News

July 31, 2019

[Modern art trove seized from Portugese businessman Jose Berardo](#)

Nationalmuseum Sweden acquires painting by the French painter Coupin de la Couperie

[Mark di Suvero's tallest sculpture unveiled at Storm King this summer](#)

Three important works by Peter Lanyon acquired for the nation

[National Gallery of Victoria displays China's ancient Terracotta Warriors](#)

Multiple records fall as Heritage Auctions' Summer Trading Card event reaches \$8.3 million

[Foundation consortium acquires historic African American photographic archive](#)

National Postal Museum announces Smithsonian Philatelic Achievement Award recipients

[First museum survey of the work of Harmony Hammond on view at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum](#)

New exhibition 'Archive In Motion' celebrates 75 years of The New York Public Library Performing Arts Division

[Heavens below: Introducing Siloam, Mona's new extension](#)

Captivating past-meet-present photos show England's changing face

[The CAPC invites Scottish artist Ruth Ewan to exhibit in its iconic nave](#)

Sydney Contemporary announces artists for its innovative Installation Contemporary program

[Moderne Gallery makes trailblazing move](#)

World Monuments Fund names Bénédicte de Montlaur CEO

[Moscow's Roma theatre plays on against troubled backdrop](#)

The 10th edition of Beirut Art Fair will take place from 18 to 22 September 2019

[Taryn Simon's landmark performance work An Occupation of Loss released on vinyl by The Vinyl Factory](#)

Monash University Museum of Art opens a survey of contemporary artist book publishing

[New film by Oliver Payne explores the ANSI art scene](#)