

# Skateboarders vs Minimalism

## WORLD PREMIERE

Shaun Gladwell, Australia



*"Shaun Gladwell is considered one of Australia's leading contemporary artists."*

### The Conversation

*"There is a contemporary reworking of romanticism that drives his practice. He blends urban and natural environments, representing them through his affinities with flight and extreme sports."*

### Concrete Playground

*"painterly footage – the skater's movement slowed to reveal the rhythmic, balletic quality of the act ... There is something sublimely post-apocalyptic about Gladwell's videos. There is beauty here too."*

### Frieze Magazine

Photo: Josh Raymond (Shaun Gladwell, MMV Breakless Session, Canberra 2006)

Contemporary Australian video artist **Shaun Gladwell** will be unveiling his largest work yet, *Skateboarders vs Minimalism*, as a world premiere at Sydney's new creative playground the Cutaway, Barangaroo Reserve as part of Sydney Festival.

In this latest work, one of the world's greatest skateboarders, **Rodney Mullen** will creatively misuse American minimalist sculptures. Gladwell's work plays on a series of videos that Mullen made in the 90s entitled *"Rodney Mullen vs..."* This unique video work will be projected as a triptych along the Cutaway's immense concrete wall with each screen measuring 16 meters wide and 9 meters high.

Well-known sculptural forms by **Donald Judd**, **Carl Andre** and **Dan Flavin** are launched upon and flipped off by the legendary skateboarder within a museum environment in a video scored by the music of **Philip Glass**.

**Rodney Mullen** began skateboarding at the age of 10 and is now credited with inventing such iconic tricks as the 'impossible', 'kickflip', '360 flip', and the 'flatground ollie'. In 2002 Mullen won the coveted Transworld Skateboarding Reader's Choice Award for Skater of the Year and was inducted into the Skateboarding Hall of Fame in 2013. Mullen was also a member of The Bones Brigade – the most celebrated team in skateboarding history and is regarded as one of the most influential skateboarders alive. His career today has taken an unexpected turn, now a thought leader and consultant, Mullen is a sought after speaker, and has spoken at the likes of TEDx and collaborated with the Smithsonian.

Gladwell is a leading Australian contemporary artist now based in London, he is renowned worldwide having exhibited everywhere from Europe, South America and Asia Pacific, and represented Australia at the 53rd Venice Biennale. He was nominated for the 2015 Archibald prize for his painted portrait of **Marc Donaldson VC**, a work that started out as a video portrait commissioned by the Australian War Memorial after Gladwell's tenure as the official Australian War Artist in Afghanistan in 2009.

Formerly a competitive skateboarder himself, Gladwell cited in an interview with The Sydney Morning Herald that his favourite sports are skateboarding, parkour and BMX riding, declaring that he considers them all a type of art. When questioned about video he explained that *"it has taken on a kind of privileged position now, because it has become like the new painting,"* and went on to say *"For me, video art has a different ability to capture movement than painting or sculpture, but I like it because that's the way I learnt – I would watch videos or watch TV as a kid ... stuck in the suburbs of Sydney, looking at sport through that medium. Video*

## MEDIA RELEASE

Level 5, 10 Hickson Road The Rocks  
Sydney NSW 2000 Australia  
Phone 61 2 8248 6500 Fax 61 2 8248 6599  
[sydneyfestival.org.au](http://sydneyfestival.org.au)



*just seems more of an effective medium ... it's a force to be reckoned with."*

A battle with the canon of American minimalist sculptors, *Skateboarders vs Minimalism* can be viewed alongside the construction of *The Ephemeral City*. For the full audio-visual experience, visitors can come by during Gallery Hour each day from 8pm to 9pm to fully appreciate the work alongside the music in a quieter environment.

Where the Cutaway at Barangaroo Reserve

When 8-24 January, 1pm-8pm  
26 January, 1pm – 3pm  
Closed Mondays

Gallery Hour  
8-24 January, 8pm-9pm  
26 January, 1pm-3pm

Price FREE

<http://sydneyfestival.org.au/skateboarders>



Commissioned by Catriona and Simon Mordant AM.

Presented by the Barangaroo Delivery Authority and Sydney Festival.

### For interviews and further information contact:

Jessica Keirle, Publicity Manager, 02 8248 6525 / 0438 805 109 [jessica.keirle@sydneyfestival.org.au](mailto:jessica.keirle@sydneyfestival.org.au)

Cath Hayes, Publicist, 02 8248 6546 / 0431417112 [cath.hayes@sydneyfestival.org.au](mailto:cath.hayes@sydneyfestival.org.au)

Julia Barnes, Publicist, 02 8248 6538 / 0402 678 589 [julia.barnes@sydneyfestival.org.au](mailto:julia.barnes@sydneyfestival.org.au)

**Barangaroo**

