



## Four weeks until Sydney Opera House sails are transformed with a ground-breaking First Nations animation

### YARRKALPA - HUNTING GROUND, 2021

BY THE MARTU ARTISTS AND CURIIOUS

WITH SOUNDTRACK BY ELECTRIC FIELDS FEATURING THE VOCALS OF THE MARTU ARTISTS

(INSPIRED BY YARRKALPA – ALWAYS WALKING COUNTRY 2014)

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- *Lighting of the Sails* is a free projection that runs each night of Vivid Sydney from 6pm - 11pm AEST -

- The global premiere will be streamed live on Friday 27 May via the Opera House [Facebook page](#) and [Stream](#) -

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**Sydney – Friday 29 April, 2022.** A new digital artwork *Yarrkalpa – Hunting Ground, 2021* will illuminate the Sydney Opera House sails from **27 May – 18 June** for **Vivid Sydney**. The annual festival of Light, Music and Ideas will transform the Harbour City over 23 nights, with more than 200 events celebrating the essence of Sydney's soul including its diversity, beauty, resilience, First Nations culture, and vibrant creative community.

Two years in the making, the First Nations projection is a collaboration between the East Pilbara-based **Martumili Artists** and Sydney-based creative technologists **Curiious**, bringing to life the Parnngurr community and its surrounding landscape, with an accompanying soundtrack by **Electric Fields'** **Zaachariaha Fielding** and **Michael Ross** featuring the vocals of the Martu Artists and the voices of **Antara singers** from Zaachariaha's Anangu community.

The stunning animation is inspired by the Martu Artists' collective painting *Yarrkalpa - Hunting Ground, Parnngurr Area 2013* and the video artwork *Yarrkalpa - Always Walking Country 2014*, directed by internationally renowned artist and filmmaker **Lynette Wallworth** in collaboration with the Martu Artists and **Anohni**. The complex painting by eight Martu women represents an intimate connection with Country; cataloguing seasons, traditional burning practices and cycles of regrowth, hunting, land management and vital natural resources, as well as ancestral stories passed down to the next generation.

**Martumili Artist, Ngalanka Nola Taylor**, says: *"We painted Yarrkalpa on a canvas together, biggest canvas we did together, everybody. It's like a map showing our ngurra (home Country, camp). It's about storytelling, what we used to do. The Hunting Ground where we come from, the kapi (water), yinta (permanent spring), nyurnma (burnt country). Everybody all done little pieces, places we came from. We are happy and excited to see Yarrkalpa alive on the Sydney Opera House sails for the first time."*

**Sydney Opera House Head of Contemporary Music and Vivid LIVE Curator, Ben Marshall**, says: *"Having grown up in the Pilbara, it's an especial joy to be welcoming this beautiful collaboration between the eight immensely talented Martumili Artists and Sydney's ingenious Curiious. One of our most outstanding commissions ever, this bold artwork will strike across the Sydney Opera House sails, animating and sharing fresh perspectives on ancestral practices and knowledge of Country. With an original soundtrack created by our friends Electric Fields, Yarrkalpa - Hunting Ground spectacularly embodies Vivid LIVE's celebration of community. I'd also like to thank Rhoda Roberts AO for providing this wonderful project with her continuous guidance and care."*

**Minister for Enterprise, Investment and Trade, Minister for Tourism and Sport and Minister for Western Sydney Stuart Ayres** said, *"The Lighting of the Sails is iconic to the Vivid Sydney program and will signal to*



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*the world that the Harbour City is open and reinforce our position as the events capital of the Asia Pacific. We're so proud to share this incredible digital artwork which celebrates our First Nations communities and showcases incredible Australian talent to millions around the world. The Opera House sails are lit up each night of Vivid Sydney and I encourage everyone to come down to Circular Quay and enjoy this phenomenal artwork, enjoy the Light Walk and immerse yourself in the Vivid Sydney program."*

The bold animation created by Sydney's Curriious utilises a range of techniques to create a seamless connection between the tactile painting and the digital artwork, bringing to life the vibrancy, energy, language and rich storytelling of the Martu.

**Creative Director & Lead Animator, Curriious, Frederic Simard** says: *"Bringing Yarrkalpa to life on the Opera House sails is the ultimate tribute to the Martu Artists. The Sydney Opera House sails have allowed us to enliven the narrative hidden within the painting, while offering a new perspective on their art for audiences to discover the deep connection the Martu have with Country. It is a humbling reminder that we all have an essential role to play in preserving our ecosystems."*

**Electric Fields' Zaachariaha Fielding and Michael Ross** added: *"We created this composition inspired by the story of the Yarrkalpa painting and the textural tempo of the animation by Curriious. Working with cyclic repetition, we have taken moments of traditional songs and woven together a composition bringing material from both the Martu communities and Antara singers from Zaachariaha's Anangu community."*

**Blind and vision impaired visitors** and their companions are invited to listen to live audio visual description of the sails lighting, with sessions on Tuesday 14 and Wednesday 15 June at 6pm. [Registration is free and essential](#). For more audio description videos of Vivid Lights, please go to the [City of Sydney website](#).

#### EVENT DETAILS

**WHAT:** [Yarrkalpa - Hunting Ground](#)

**WHEN:** Lighting of the Sails runs every night of Vivid Sydney at 6pm - 11pm AEST from 27 May – 18 June

**WHERE:** In-person at Circular Quay or online via the [Opera House Facebook page](#), [Stream](#), [YouTube](#) and on the [Opera House's Vivid LIVE website](#)

**VIDEO:** <https://vimeo.com/553150375/8afd5fcc9d>

**IMAGES:** <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/eav2vls5sl7xtaccqy9zm/h?dl=0&rlkey=s36kquz2qpnm6hikwnki96q>

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For more information on Vivid Sydney including the full program, go to [www.vividsydney.com](http://www.vividsydney.com)

For more information on Vivid LIVE including the full program, go to [www.sydneyoperahouse.com/festivals/vivid-live](http://www.sydneyoperahouse.com/festivals/vivid-live)

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#### Curriious

Curriious create ground breaking entertainment and education experiences. Whether it is large scale public events, stunning interactive films or immersive learning and engagement, we are driven to constantly improve communication through creativity & technology.

#### Martumili Artists

Martumili Artists was established by Martu people living in the communities of Parnpajinya (Newman), Jigalong, Parnngurr, Punmu, Kunawarritji, Irrungadji and Warralong, and it draws on strong influences of Aboriginal art history. The artists and their families are the traditional custodians of vast stretches of the Great Sandy, Little Sandy and Gibson Deserts as well as the Karlamilyi (Rudall River) area. Most Martu people maintain an entirely independent, nomadic desert lifestyle until the 1950s and 1960s when they walked into settlements in response to a long and severe drought. Today, Martu people live in their own communities and regularly visit regional centres such as Newman and Port Hedland. Martumili Artists are based in the East Pilbara Arts centre in Newman, with artists working in the 6 other remote East Pilbara communities.

#### Vivid LIVE

Vivid LIVE is the annual centrepiece of the Opera House's year-round Contemporary Music program, and features

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Australian exclusives, world premieres, one-off projects and unmissable performances from ambitious Australian voices and select global icons to Sydney's vibrant local communities. In 2022, Vivid LIVE will continue to transform the Opera House inside and out in a contemporary music takeover, curated for the seventh time over eight years by the Head of Contemporary Music, Ben Marshall. The Sydney Opera House and Destination NSW co-curated this year's Lighting of the Sails, a new digital artwork *Yarrkalpa – Hunting Ground, 2021*, created by the Pilbara's Martu Artists and Sydney-based Currious and bringing to life the Parngurr community and its surrounding landscape, with an accompanying soundtrack by Electric Fields and the Martu Artists. In 2016, the ground-breaking *Songlines*, transformed the Opera House sails into an animated canvas of Indigenous artwork, and in 2019 Chinese-American artist Andrew Thomas Huang created *Austral Flora Ballet*, a lush homage to Australia's native flora and the intersection of human movement with nature.

#### Vivid Sydney

Vivid Sydney is an annual celebration of creativity, innovation and technology, which transforms Sydney for 23 days and nights. Staged for its 12th year in 2022, Vivid Sydney fuses mesmerising art displays and 3D light projections with exhilarating live music performances and deep-dive discussions from some of the world's brightest minds, as well as the Sydney Opera House Lighting of the Sails. Vivid Sydney is owned, managed and produced by Destination NSW, the NSW Government's tourism and major events agency.

#### **Media Contacts**

##### **Vivid LIVE**

Julia Barnes

Senior Communications Manager Sydney Opera House

M: 0402 678589

E: [jbarnes@sydneyoperahouse.com](mailto:jbarnes@sydneyoperahouse.com)

##### **Vivid Sydney**

Greg Vekiarellis

Business Director, Ogilvy PR

M: 0401 873 217

E: [greg.vekiarellis@ogilvy.com.au](mailto:greg.vekiarellis@ogilvy.com.au)