

1.2 Public Art Plan

1.2 Public Art Plan

Overview, governance, heritage and principles

1.2.1 Overview

Our project centres around Aboriginal people, who are part of the DNA of the place and are telling their own stories. As Margo Neale, series editor of *First Knowledges*, has expressed it, there should be 'nothing about us without us'.

Aligned with this focus, art's role is to give voice to the knowledge, pride and connection of Aboriginal people to Country – and, quoting architect and competition juror Jefa Greenaway, to 'make the invisible visible'. We understand Country to be more than the land – Country is the ground beneath us, the waters, airs and skies around us, the people, kin, care, song and story that make the world whole. The public art for Harbour Park has been conceived to encompass all these manifestations of Country on what is, was, and always will be Aboriginal land. Landscape as a reflection of the resilience of mob is something the group has thought about.

The idea of Sky Country is important, and the ways the land is a reflection of the sky, and the sky a reflection of the land.

We recognise and want to work with the fact that, in the past, water was everywhere on the site that is concrete today and will be a park tomorrow. This is an aspect we are very much looking forward to exploring.

Our project work is based on the idea of equity, in design and every other respect. Quoting team member Kaylie Salvatori, a Saltwater Budawang (Yuin) woman, 'When we do right by mob, we do right by everyone.' There is no idea of exclusivity here. Everyone is welcome. Our team's combined form of art and design has considered users across generations with special thought to children. Questions we've asked include how people from all nations, demographics, age groups and walks of life can be made to feel welcome at Harbour Park and encouraged to stay for a while. What do residents and workers in the precinct want? What do the people living in the immediate vicinity of the site think, and what sorts of things would enrich their lives every day? What will attract them to return? What will make their neighbourhood a better place to live and be?

1.2.2 Governance

Public art and design projects should be meaningful to the professionals who make up the teams; otherwise, if the art and design are not meaningful to us, how can we be assured they will be meaningful to the public? Our team have worked together efficiently, professionally and harmoniously at the competition stage in a process notable for a complete



absence of barriers between the disciplines. We haven't agreed on everything, but the process has been respectful, convivial, positive and exciting. Even the word 'collaboration' doesn't describe how fluidly we've gotten along, an affinity that has prepared us well to deliver the project.

Role of artists and curator

The competition briefing documents and supporting information provide clear and sufficient guidelines. In particular, the Reporting Structure contained in Section 2.3 of the Draft Art Implementation Plan sets out clearly the revised governance framework and process for managing and delivering future public artworks at Barangaroo.

In our process, artists Scarce, Money and Davison are leading, directing and owning their projects.

Adherence to best practice has already ensured a working situation for the artists that is exemplary, in which they are encouraged to make their best work and realise their most ambitious ideas.

Non-Aboriginal team members have been asking advice, showing respect, and following protocols while working on Gadigal land without ghettoising or bias.

As curator, Flynn has provided research at the competition stage, to assist the artists to develop their concepts, identified technical expertise and future fabricators in order to cost the artworks proposed, and articulated the overall concept for public art and the artists' individual ideas.

If the team is successful in its submission, Flynn would hope to be approved by INSW to continue to provide services, including oversight of project development and delivery working alongside INSW's Barangaroo Curator, Felicity Fenner.

Draft Art Implementation Plan (2023)

Artists and curator have read the relevant section of the Draft Art Implementation Plan (Section 2.3, pages 31–33) and confirm they can work to its requirements. We note:

- + Artists Scarce, Money and Davison have been fairly selected.

- + Flynn has the experience, from managing contracts in other projects of this scale, to work with INSW personnel and the Barangaroo Curator to professionally administer the artists' contracts.
- + Artists Scarce and Flynn are experienced in the delivery of high-quality artworks on time and on budget; Money and Davison are less experienced but will be guided by them.
- + Flynn is expert in risk mitigation in projects, with skills garnered from the experience of having delivered 22 projects for the Sydney public domain.
- + Our team has asked about direct contact with the appropriate Traditional Owners, knowledge holders, Elders, family members and the larger community, and our Aboriginal team members have expressed eagerness for this contact. Scarce starts every project by approaching Traditional Owners and Elders. Davison is a Custodian of Gadigal Country. Flynn is well versed in consultation with diverse groups of stakeholders.
- + Flynn brings a predictive ability to projects and communicates immediately about any problems she sees arising with clients and stakeholders.
- + Several members of the team including OCULUS, Jiwah and Flynn have had direct involvement with Barangaroo initiatives. Flynn drafted the artist briefs for the Major Project and Through-site Link projects of Lendlease and the Barangaroo Delivery Authority in 2014, and led the competition and approval process for those projects – as she has done for the other projects she has delivered for the Sydney public domain.

1.2.3 Alignment with Heritage Interpretation Plan (HIP)

We have made an effort to ensure that the stories artists Scarce, Money and Davison tell align with the key themes and stories of the precinct documented in the HIP. These are: Badu (water); the connection to timeless spirit and culture; sustainable practices (it is hoped, if we are successful, that ours would be the most recent of many that have endured on the Barangaroo site); resilience and fortitude; and testimonies. These are all in the DNA of the artists, and of Kaylie Salvatori (Yuin) and Clarence Slockee (Bundjalung), the other Aboriginal members of our team.



1. Moon halo by Cihanyuce/Shutterstock.
2. Water ripples by Linus Nylund/Unsplash.

1.2.4 Public art principles

Excellence of art

In Yhonnie Scarce, Jazz Money and Joel Davison, we have artists who possess an original vision and make exceptional art that is unlike the art we've seen anywhere else, and we are privileged to be working with them. Their concepts have been developed assuming a public that is intelligent and able to handle complexity. Art for the project will spur thought and reflection and be relevant and multilayered enough to hold people's attention, day in and day out, for years.

Diversity of scale, materials, and sustainability

The artworks proposed are integrated, and though they are accessible in scale, can be described as major and landmark.

Art will touch down lightly. The artists' preferred materials are those already here: the earth of the landscape design, which art will further shape, and trees, water, air and the sky. The mediums that the artists have chosen to draw out are light, projection and sound.

Connection, place and story

For artists creating for the public domain, it is essential to work in close connection to the place where a project will be realised. The place needs to be considered in all its aspects, from its physical characteristics to its historical, cultural and emotional attributes. Considered as urban design, the place where the Barangaroo precinct has taken form is one of the most significant and newly dynamic places in Sydney.

As part of our conception, Money and Davison, two of the most exciting poets of their generation, will tell the story of the place. Davison speaks of 'working with the Gadigal words we have' – even Elders don't know all the words, a result of displacement and language bans. The things they write about are the things that Scarce visualises in her art: trees, moon, water, learning and stories – grandmother stories, campfire stories – to keep the kids close.

Meaning, purpose and community participation

Dillon Kombumerri (Yugembarri), Principal Architect, Office of the NSW Government Architect, reminds us that a place becomes a place only when the community is drawn to it and participates. 'Design inputs are meaningless unless the community is there to bring them alive.'

Art may not be the priority. Perhaps addressing other more pressing needs of the community may take precedence. If so, can this project accommodate those needs? What purpose will this place have after we've designed it? Can it provide lasting opportunities for people, including youth and the elderly? Will those groups feel comfortable coming here?

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Principles, concept and vision

Concepts and vision

Perhaps art and design can be geared to create opportunities: bona fide partnerships, co-design opportunities, roles for Aboriginal contractors and suppliers, paying jobs and training.

As we have conceived them, art and design for the site assume and are conducive to future activations outdoors – ceremony, performance, digital works – that may be temporary or permanent. We have conceived and designed space for activation and cultural practice.

Art can be the element that fulfils the potential of this place by attracting people to it. Let's consider what Harbour Park can be for Barangaroo and larger Sydney if the community comes: an embodiment of living culture, set on land that was once water.

Original and diverse

The word 'original' may be overused but there is no other word that captures the singularity that art for the public domain needs to possess to have an impact and be worth doing. As artists, Scarce, Money and Davison do not repeat themselves or promote one 'signature' style or way of working. When presented with a new opportunity, true to their vision, they work in a new and distinct way. The artworks they create for the project will look like nothing else in the Australian public realm.

As an example, we are familiar with Scarce's creation of suspended forms reminiscent of clouds and comprised of multiple hand-blown shards of glass. These works evoke the idea of bringing people together as one through the metaphor of the particles that make up a cloud. What she Scarce makes for this project will not be a repetition of these suspended glass works for which she has become known.

The artwork proposals of the three artists for Harbour Park were carefully vetted by Flynn. Flynn prizes knowledge of art and undertook extensive research in Stage 2, supported by research assistant Carla Dusevic. Any precedents for the art types the artists will pursue were identified in the practice of other artists worldwide. Artworks by 42 artists were identified and studied in this way, ensuring that the artworks proposed for Harbour Park are unique and original. One of them we looked into, Maya Lin's resonant work *Ghost Forest*, realised in Madison Square Park in 2021, certainly shares a purpose with Scarce's proposal, with the Lin work described as being a 'memorial to war – the one against nature'.

Lin's project was a temporary one, comprised of 49 Atlantic white cedar trees, each around 12 metres tall, transported to Manhattan from the coastal Pine Barrens of New Jersey where they had died as a consequence of being infiltrated by salt water – a result of climate change.

Dusevic's research also provided the artists with background information on the concepts and themes of interest to them, including haloes of the moon, casuarina species, and cycles of the seasons in the Aboriginal calendar.

Popular and accessible, providing experiences to discover

By being accessible to all, art in the public domain is uniquely capable of striking a popular chord. The art proposed for this project addresses topics at its core that are important to people, such as history and storytelling, quality of life, and climate change. It will have broad appeal without talking down.

1.2.5 Public art concept and vision

Country

Advised by team members Kaylie Salvatori (landscape architect) and Clarence Slockee (gardener, educator and songman), our team has developed an understanding of Country that is well expressed in this quote by Margo Neale. In the publication *Astronomy: Sky Country*, Neale says, 'In Aboriginal thinking, Country is not just land, it is a worldview ... It is a continuum that takes everything into its orbit, including land, waterways, sea and sky – all are incorporated into our understanding of Country, with little separation.'

City

The landscape scheme creates three major pathways leading east to the city. Art reinforces these by framing them. Art then adds a point of difference by contributing the feel of a tranquil oasis to the scheme, a place where you don't feel like you're in a city.

Concepts for a combined form of art and design

Care for Country is a central message of art and design for Harbour Park: care for the land we walk on, the air we breathe, and the waters we enjoy, navigate and drink from.

Barangaroo is a place replete with nature, and shaped by the forces of sun, moon, wind and the tides. Art for the park will use those forces; as Scarce has said, we will make a space for

the wind to whisper, and work with the wind and the sounds of birds and nature, not fight them. Our team has a name for the qualities of this place which we call 'Spirit of Place'.

As we have conceived them, art and design for the park will leave Country in a healthier state than how we have found it.

The tenor of the artworks will be quiet and contemplative, Scarce hopes, effective in encouraging people to slow down, touch things, and listen to what is going on – to what the air, wind and birds are doing. As part of this ethos, the artworks will be relatively simple to fabricate, install and care for. One strand of our research has involved checking for any precedent artworks that might have presented concerns. A few have helped the artists to refine their proposals.

In one line of inquiry, we investigated how introducing lighting into the exterior public domain requires developing a checklist of procedures to follow to avoid any possible harm to birds and wildlife. Two examples have informed Scarce's design and our, at this stage, draft notes for a project operations manual. One is the 9/11 *Tribute in Light* (2002) at the World Trade Center site in New York. It was found to be trapping birds in its beams, and since 2005, bird scientists, ecological volunteers and the memorial's sponsors have worked together to try to reduce the harm – 'a collaboration now yielding new scientific insights and increasing support for protecting birds in New York and other cities.'

Closer to Sydney, correspondence between Flynn and Emma Pike, Senior Curator, confirmed that Museum of Old and New Art (MONA), Hobart, had experienced no issues with the light-beam artwork *Spectra [Tasmania]* (2013) by Ryoji Ikeda. According to Pike, 'There hasn't been any reports of birds being impacted by the work, or concerns flagged by experts. We are constantly keeping our eye on it, and I'm sure if there was a way of knowing that this was happening, we would be informed about it by now.' Informed by what we have learned about how issues have been addressed in similar projects worldwide, art will present no threat to birds, wildlife or the environment, and may even encourage wildlife to return.

Where equipment is involved, the team possesses the networks and prior experience to design out any of the problems that we might foresee. Thus, to assist Money and Davison with their project, Flynn is drawing on know-how she developed (optimal quantity of text, pacing, brightness) through working with Jenny Holzer on *I STAY (Ngaya ngalawa)* at 8 Chifley Square. Flynn also has an existing working relationship with projector suppliers Panasonic

Australia from two prior projects, including Pipilotti Rist's down-projection work at Central Park in Sydney. As at Central Park, housings for the projectors at Harbour Park will protect them from the effects of moisture, salt, dust and UV light. The lip of the cave-like form can be designed by OCULUS and DS+R to accommodate the housings.

Vision and creative collaboration

Our team has been composed following our conviction that, in today's world, it is Aboriginal Australians who are best equipped to address and make sense of this site, city, state, Australia – this place. Their creations in art, writing, architecture and landscape architecture are informed and current while retaining a commitment to Country.

Thus, in Yhonnie Scarce, Jazz Money and Joel Davison, we are working with a group of artists that is 100 per cent Aboriginal. Reinforcing this direction, team members Clarence Slockee and Kaylie Salvatori are two of the most visionary and experienced Aboriginal experts working in Australia. Their collaboration in Stage 2 has been exceptional. Scarce is Elder among the three artists but the exchange has been equal. It was fascinating to observe them discover that their ideas and hopes for the park site were the same. People would be given places to be engaged with Country and get in touch with the seasons; care and learning would be positioned at the heart of the works; and oral traditions of storytelling would be revived.

Australia was not equitably or peacefully settled by the newcomers; Aboriginal sovereignty was never ceded, and yet many people died or were taken away. Country was harmed, and continues to be harmed through the colonial project. To right the balance, works by Aboriginal artists are multilayered, addressing topics and histories that have gone unacknowledged and little discussed for 200 years.



1. Smoking ceremony by Adam Phelan/UNSW PVC Indigenous.

1.2 Public Art Plan

Integration with design response and introducing the artists

1.2.6 Art aligned with design response

What we are striving for

Art for Harbour Park will work with the land itself – with Country – and use the natural features created for the space by landscape design. When art, architecture and landscape architecture work together meaningfully in this way, the collaboration creates a significant new place, one that is safe, comfortable and inviting.

What we mean by ‘integrated’

Our understanding of the term ‘integrated’ is art that looks like it belongs there. It is the opposite of the public art we see that looks random and out of place, as if it has been dropped in somewhere without any thought for its environs or physical context, or for the stories and values of the place it is in. One way to achieve art that looks ‘right’ is by starting the process of identifying and selecting the artists, as this project has allowed for, early enough for integration to occur. All the design disciplines have already been carefully coordinated with public art from the earliest stages of the project, and this will continue as we move forward.

Even if the claim is made often, artworks that look ‘right’ and are fully integrated are rarely achieved. How will the works proposed by Scarce, Money and Davison be truly integrated?

- + The art they make will employ the same natural materials used by the landscape design – earth, trees, water, air, sky, light – and only those.
- + The content of what they make – what the art is about – will be comprised of the very elements of the site and nothing beyond the site: the watery world that was here, the story of the shark and the stingray, the connection between earth and sky, to name a few.

Locations for art

Art everywhere

We asked what the optimal locations for art would be, and where art can be located to have the greatest impact, possibly to shift the very identity of the precinct. Thinking of the plan of the park as if it were a painting to compose or an exhibition to install, we thought turning over two significant swathes of area, one to Scarce and the other to the collaboration between Money and Davison, would be an effective device to ensure a powerful impact. This has the effect of creating an immersive precinct in which the entire park is the integrated artwork.

Art and design merge in a creative collaboration

The two cornerstones of our design are the raised moon-shaped plateau of sandstone in the north-western half of the park and the landmass in the shape of a stingray with lifted wing in the south-east. In discussion, the plateau in the north-west took a circular shape – what our team calls the ‘disc’ – imposing in scale and presence; Scarce interpreted it as a moon, while Money and Davison, responding to plans to carve and cut into it, interpreted it as the ripples created by dropping a stone into water. The disc is tilted to create the curving, concave, grotto-like space that inspired Money and Davison’s idea: to write a living body of poetry in response to the site and project it on a shallow, 2-millimetre film of water in a pool in the ground. When people get in under the lip created by the cave, against walls of sandstone where plants have taken root, they will experience a kind of poets’ microclimate of feeling and expression. The mood will be still, and the invitation extended will be to enter and take in the text, and to return another time to experience something different.

Money describes the intent as bringing the water that has been so long underground to the surface. Caves filter water and the setting for art will be inviting – moist and warm, and abundant and rich with plants and wildlife. For Davison, the inclusion of water as a material connects the artwork to Sydney Harbour, which was the main source of food for the Gadigal people before the arrival of the newcomers. He notes that the tidal movements of the harbour next to the park ‘tell you where you are’, while a complementary set of signals to the middens that were all along the harbour’s edge ‘tell you of the seasonal cycles’.

Scarce has selected two thick groves of casuarina trees at the centre of the park as the location for her work. It will be a place for slowing down and listening, for silent time and recuperating, with things to touch and look at.

Through art and architecture that tell the true stories of this place, this will be made an environment in touch with resiliency and the changes culture has gone through.

Building on the intelligent use of water that is already a hallmark of Barangaroo, our design calls for water throughout the park, reminding us that the site was once entirely under water. Evoking what once was, we will create a watery environment, ‘a sponge for the city’, with rivulets everywhere and movements of water evoking the tides. With commentary by Dillon Kombumerri in mind, the team’s art and design treat water as living, with the awareness that it supports and gives life – our scheme releases and uncovers it where it flows underground.



1.2.7 The artists

We are working with three artists: Yhonnie Scarce (Kokatha/Nukunu, born Woomera, SA, 1973), poet Jazz Money (Wiradjuri, born Sydney, 1992), and poet Joel Davison (Dunghutti/Gadigal, born 1993).

The art and practice of Scarce came to mind at the earliest stages of thinking about the competition. The team could see that in so many ways, the artist would be the person best suited in intellect and sensitivity to meld the project into its surroundings and allow it to speak to a history of this place that is calling out to be reconstituted. Scarce’s art doesn’t shy away from telling the true story. There were massacres, and children were taken away. Further deepening her sense of purpose and engagement, the artist’s family history is one of forebears who experienced the destruction of atomic testing at Maralinga. Like the life stories of many Aboriginal Australians, it is a painful story of destruction and degradation of the land and the people of the land. In ‘express[ing] the inseparable oneness of Aboriginal people with Country, a familial relationship established for millennia’, the profound sadness of these stories is transformed by Scarce into something positive: art that presents a constructive view of existence and a way forward.

Money’s achievements are many. Her debut poetry collection, *how to make a basket* (University of Queensland Press, 2021), was winner of the David Unaipon Award that year, and she will release a second collection in 2024. In 2022 she was awarded the prestigious Dreaming Award from the Australia Council for the Arts, and has won or been shortlisted in many of Australia’s most significant poetry prizes.

1. Jazz Money, *these words will remain*, 2021 (installation view) Construction mesh installed upon the Fremantle Traffic Bridge. Noongar translations by Aunty Sandra Harben. Graphic design by Jenna Lee.
2. Jazz Money, *£100000*, 2021 (installation view). Vinyl, soil. Exhibited *No Show*, Carriageworks, Sydney, Photo by Zan Wimberley.



Money crosses boundaries in the ways she thinks, writes and presents her art. She has set words onto the ground in ephemeral materials, like dirt, and allowed them to waft in the wind on fabric. Her words on the page are physical, like beings in space. Her writings about bila – river – could be a script for our design:

and bila moves now towards the sea
 a cut stream known
 by banks winding
 slow river ways and fast river ways
 until under streets submerged a wide swamp of suburban delta
 and the city appears upon aquifer disturbed
 water under concrete
 through pipe and channel and drain
 redirected rerouted and dispelled
 yet bila continues

Davison likewise brings a range of diverse and fascinating experiences to writing, having worked in horticulture and technology. He writes poetry ‘to send a message about resilience in the face of colonisation’. Another of his active concerns is the loss of language data sovereignty and the ethics of using AI to retrieve language. Davison was also co-writer and performer on Midnight Oil’s track *Gadigal Land*, which won the Australian Performing Rights Association (APRA) Peer-Voted Song of the Year award in 2021.

1.2 Public Art Plan

Artworks and methodology



‘When I think about space, it’s not only the ground, it’s the sky, too.’
– Yhonnie Scarce

1.2.8 The artworks

Money and Davison hope that people will linger and take time in the grotto-like space contemplating the words of their poetry, which will be projected downward on a flat rock and shallow expanse (2 millimetres) of introduced saltwater.

Scarce has conceived an artwork composed of rings of light evoking lunar haloes that will be strategically placed in two thick groves of casuarina trees that will create gathering places at the heart of the park. Another grouping of rings of light will settle on the ground to evoke the idea of the campfires that people gather around, and have gathered around for millennia. Drawing on the many conversations with Scarce, Salvatori speaks of how

For thousands of years, women would fish from their nawis on the harbour, like stars in the night sky, the fires from their nawis twinkling across the deep blue harbour, smoke wafting across the water, song ringing through the air. The casuarina forests littering the coastline serving as perfect nurseries while mothers gathered, cooked and crafted.

These actions, practices all led and guided by celestial movements and phenomena - the sky above telling us when the time is right.

Yhonnie's work connects all of these practices, speaking to women's connection with the moon, and the Sky Country's connection to what is happening on the ground. Her work speaks to memory and the persisting presence of these connections.

Detail of the artwork proposed by Yhonnie Scarce

Casuarina glauca trees

In Scarce's world view, the spirits are in the trees, which represent the old people whom she imagines standing around the campfire. Barangaroo herself was responsible for preserving sustainable fishing practices: women have always cared for this place. A pair of trees, one tall and one small, conjure the image of a mother and child.

Scarce's concept also considers trees as part of a complex natural system, not as a commodity. The name 'casuarina' derives from the Latin word for 'cassowary' – due to the tree's fine, textured evergreen foliage, made up of very fine ridged branches or 'branchlets' that look like the feathers of the cassowary bird. Often mistaken for pine trees, casuarinas have fine cones full of seeds that attract birds. This 'branchlet' structure contributes to the tree's adaptability.

The tree is an exemplar of the kind of sustainability the Harbour Park project aspires to promote. The gaseous exchange that plants require to live occurs via stomates, which on many plants are located on the surface of leaves. In casuarinas, the stomates are found on the inside furrows of the ridges of each branchlet, which means that little water is lost by the plant. Also, as the branchlets fall to form a thick blanket underneath the tree, acting as a wonderfully rich mulch that suppresses weeds and helps to stabilise soil from erosion. As Money points out, these carpets of needles 'are loved by Koori communities as an area of safe play for children, a place where jarjums are safe from snakes and other potential harm'.

Casuarina glauca and eucalypts were used by Aboriginal people to construct nawi canoes, a practice closely connected to Harbour Park and its location on Sydney Harbour. The bark of the tree was cut as a single piece and moulded over a fire; then, when the nawi were in use, a fire was lit inside for warmth and to cook fish. Casuarina wood is dense and very hard, which made it optimal to use to make shields, clubs and boomerangs.

Moon haloes

A moon halo is a bright ring visible around the moon when there are ice crystals in the air. Moon haloes were and are used by Aboriginal peoples all over Australia as a weather predictor. Oral tradition tells of counting the number of stars between the moon and the halo, to indicate how much rain there would be.

The halo effect will be achieved by lifting tubes of light into the trees. The curving lines of light will also serve to remind us of the horizon line which Scarce speaks of needing to see 'whenever she has a big decision to make'. The work will have daytime and night-time lives, with haloes that operate 24/7, and are silver in the day and blue at night.

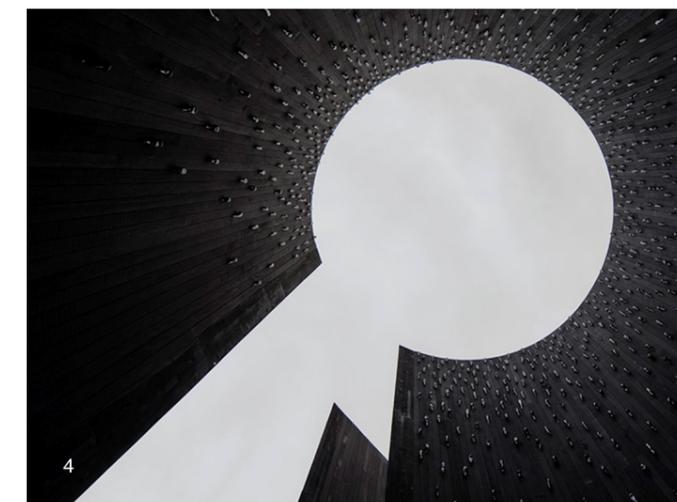
The concept of Sky Country is important to Scarce, who has held onto the experiences of bright stars against a black outback sky of her childhood, which isn't the same in the city. The work will invite views of the sky through the trees, framed by the haloes of light which the artist sees as at least a reminder of the way things were – and can be – without the effects of light pollution.

The image of people walking under the trees and looking up is important to the artwork – of using the tall forms of the trees and placing the lighting tubes up high to guide the eye to the sky. Other works of Scarce's have introduced an oculus at their top to frame the sky, including *In Absence*, her winning 2019 Melbourne Architecture Commission in collaboration with architecture firm Edition Office for the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

Scarce grew up in outback South Australia with the knowledge of moon haloes as a marker of the seasons and the best times to collect bush food: 'What's up there is down here.' Aboriginal people have used astronomy to know when plants are blooming and animals breeding, growing and becoming suitable as resources for consumption.

Matt Poll, Manager Indigenous Programs, Australian National Maritime Museum, has researched how the young Gadigal woman Patyegarang shared her language and her knowledge of the night-time sky with William Dawes, lieutenant in the First Fleet. Poll writes that the fact that Patyegarang's vocabulary included names for relatively obscure night-sky phenomena such as buduwanung (the two Magellanic Clouds), and even specific names for its component parts galgalyung (the larger) and ngarangalyong (the smaller), 'gives an inkling of just how detailed First Peoples' knowledge of the night-time sky was'. The assigning in 2016 of the NSW Government's highest heritage protection to preserve the engravings at Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park known as 'Moon Rock' added further weight to national evidence demonstrating that Aboriginal people were keen observers of the sky and were indeed the world's first astronomers.

Encouraging a rewriting of the story of Aboriginal astronomers and scientists is a driver of Scarce's artwork. Kamilaroi woman, astronomer, PhD candidate and lecturer Karlie Noon is one of a generation of female scientists who are collecting the scientific heritage of Aboriginal communities before it disappears. A co-author with Krystal De Napoli of the study *Astronomy: Sky Country* (2022) in the *First Knowledges* book series, Noon says that from Australia to Canada, detailed scientific knowledge of the natural world has been handed down through generations via stories and oral tradition, but this information is rarely formalised or even distributed beyond small communities. Case in point: Noon didn't know anything of the astronomical tradition of her own Kamilaroi people until she was in her early twenties.



1. *Casuarina glauca* trees near Lane Cove River by Poyt/Flickr.
- 2 + 3. Artwork concept images.
4. Yhonnie Scarce and Edition Office, *In Absence*, 2019. Timber, hand-blown glass yams. Commissioned by the NGV Architecture Commission. Photo by Benjamin Hosking.

1.2 Public Art Plan

Artists, materials and fabrication methodology

‘We're all responding to similar qualities - water, Sky, Country, seasonal changes.’

– Kaylie Salvatori

Fire/Campfire

Eight rings of light, amber in colour and embedded in the ground, will operate from 6 to 11 pm daily to evoke the idea of fire and the campfire, which Scarce hopes will provide a gentle suggestion for Aboriginal people to remember the old times and create ‘a place for ceremony and storytelling where the smoke can reach the sky at night-time’.

Fires and floods are the dangers we are facing today, and represent the degradation of land that Aboriginal people know well how to protect. Aboriginal culture encompasses many traditions and beliefs associated with fire. Smoking ceremonies, campfires, cultural burning and signal fires are all Aboriginal uses, and knowing the difference between them is primary knowledge. The frequent use of fire by Aboriginal people in daily life intentionally resulted in a fine-grained mosaic of different vegetation and different stages of growth of fuel for burning across the landscape. As a result, large intense bushfires, which are today a common feature in Australia, were once uncommon.

A work of contemporary art that takes cultural burning as its subject is the landscape work *bial gwiyo* (*the fire is not yet lighted*) by Kamilaroi/Wiradjuri artist Jonathan Jones, which has taken on the challenges of implementing an ongoing program of cool cultural burns in a Sydney public space (scheduled to be completed in mid-2023 for the new North Building of the Art Gallery of New South Wales).

Detail of the artwork proposed by Jazz Money and Joel Davison

Money's and Davison's artwork will be Country speaking: lines of poetry composed by the two artists in English and Gadigal, projected and with animated effects and iterations that change according to the lunar cycle, celestial movements and the motion of the tides. The artists describe the setting as a safe space, a sea cave, created as part of the landscape architecture, a curving, concave, grotto-like space under the protruding lip of the moon-shaped disc, along the disc's southern edge. This is one of the places in our design where we have allowed the water to flow in, saltwater, rising and lowering with the tide.



Areas of text projected in a downward direction in shallow water and on flat raised sandstone rocks will come into view as a kind of surprise as people walk along the arc.

The work is about language, the moon and water – water that fluctuates and is alive and brought to the surface. Affected by the elements, both water and text will change and provide something different for people to see every time.

Artists are still discussing whether the texts will change every day, and across the course of the day, or every week. They are leaning toward changing them every week, with 52 poems in Gadigal (authored by Davison) and 52 poems in English (Money) to comprise the body of text. Whatever the quantity and pacing, this dynamism will ensure the viability of the work over time as a space for audiences to return to.

Projecting on water and the action of wind will produce a somewhat fugitive, feathered and fractured effect the artists embrace. The projection quality and legibility of the text will be better at night and when projected on sandstone. Sydney is sandstone Country: the use of sandstone here echoes its use throughout our scheme as a form of celebration. Water has always had a role in shaping this land of sandstone; texture here will derive from the idea of water moving all the time, and variations in the depth of the water (with no depths exceeding what is allowed by the code). An accompanying soundtrack will play to provide a daytime experience and the sound will carry far and wide, literally enlarging the presence of the artwork.

The artists see their work as ‘having a heartbeat’, belonging to community, and being firmly anti-monumental, a gem in a sought-out kind of space of the sort that used to exist and isn't around much anymore. Quoting Slocock: ‘As Blakfellas we want to get away from plonk art.’ Money notes that Aboriginal people don't put up monuments – they remember and honour ancestors by being part of an oral tradition, underlining the importance of the audio component of the work.

The work is conceived as a teaching space and learning tool, especially for the young, who might use it to familiarise themselves with expression in poetry and Gadigal language, and a multitude of other practices and phenomena that are interconnected in an Aboriginal way of seeing the world: dance, ceremony, and the seasons of Country. (There will be a ready audience of children enjoying the waterplay area adjacent.)

To bestow the artwork with a long life, a program of future events will be conceived and initiated by the artists, timed and tied to a celestial or lunar event. These will be audience-centric and incited via an invitation to local people, who will shape and make the events their own. A book is planned (and has been costed), to be authored by the poets; the content will create a ‘calendar of Gadigal Country told through poetry, and be a really special book -- something that people can take home with them.’ (Money).

Materials

Scarce's artwork will be composed of light embedded in the ground and placed in the trees and the shadows they cast.

Scarce's evocation of moon haloes will be created through the use of five light tubes, imperfect circles of varying diameters measuring 2000mm, 3500mm, 3800mm and 4000mm and suspended in the trees from fishing wire. The tubes will be cylindrical in cross section and 40-50mm in diameter.

The ground-based lighting elements to evoke campfires will be embedded flush to the ground to avoid becoming a trip hazard. Eight rings, square in profile, imperfect circles of varying diameters (2 x 2000mm; 2 x 1800mm; and 4 x 1200mm), will evoke the idea of a campfire.

Views of the artwork are important from far away and close up, and the light sources will need to be made bright enough to be seen from a distance but not so strong as to be uncomfortable to view from close up. Works of impact by other artists – Jenny Holzer, Ryoji Ikeda and the creators of *Tribute in Light* – have relied on the use of xenon searchlights of significant brightness and wattage. Scarce's light quality will be more muted to better evoke the idea of moon haloes and smouldering fire. By being less aggressively bright, the artwork will not add to light pollution or create discomfort for future residents or disruption in the pattern of birds.

The moon haloes will be lit day and night. The brightness of the blue and silver colours will be carefully vetted to ensure the artwork causes no disturbance to area residents. Artist and curator are aware that curfew hours at night might be set by the authorities.

The moon haloes will be positioned in two groves of *casuarina glauca* trees. One grove of 74 trees encompassing an area of 118 square metres will inhabit the southern-most edge of the raised plateau/moon-shaped disc, becoming a location for art. A larger grove of 139 trees planted in an area measuring 280 square metres, will become a second location for art on a lower level of the design, south-east of the disc.

The haloes amid the trees of the artwork, in the words of the artist, ‘will grow with the trees’. Quite literally: The artwork will launch initially with the eight elements of the campfires and only two of the five haloes that are part of the artist's conception. The decision has been made in order to protect the trees.

The two haloes being implemented from day 1 will be placed in two young trees, low – 3000mm off the ground – a height that won't harm them.

One of the two trees that will have art from day 1 will be planted at the southern edge of the grove on the disc; its halo will measure 2000mm in diameter. The other tree will be planted below at the eastern edge of the lower grove; its halo will measure 3800mm.

With a soil scientist and arborist involved, footings will be designed and installed along with thin metal supports with metal rings attached to support the young trees as they grow. The metal supports will be removed at a later date.

The two haloes placed low will remain for the life of the project. The one in the grove on the disc will be added to in year 5 with a second halo higher up in the tree (measuring 4000mm in diameter and located 6000mm off the ground), once the tree has grown to a size and strength stable enough to support the halo without damaging the tree. In the lower grove, two additional haloes will be installed in year 5, each on its own fully grown tree. One halo will measure 3800mm and be placed 5500mm off the ground. The other will measure 4000mm in diameter will be placed 6000mm off the ground.

The haloes will be spaced 3600mm apart. The eight rings of the ground-based campfires will be located in the lower grove at a distance of 3000mm away from the nearest halo.

To design and cost the lighting elements, the team has consulted with the world-leading lighting division of Arup's Sydney office on Scarce's behalf. Our consultant is Rhiannon West, Senior Lighting Designer, Arup.

Shadows play an important role in Scarce's art. Like the trees, she sees shadows as ‘representing the old people’ who have been here and walked this land since time immemorial. Shadows can be understood as a layer of her artwork for Harbour Park as important as trees, light and all other elements.

Money's and Davison's artwork will be created by projecting lines of text from three Panasonic projectors over a total area of approximately 48 square metres. Two of the projected orbs will be located along the edge of the rim of the disc due south and the third, a small distance from them to the east. The height of the sandstone lip varies across its length. Projector 1 will be suspended in its housing 3495mm off the ground; Projector 2 (at the centre of the ensemble of three), 4200mm off the ground, and Projector 3, 3600mm off the ground. The throw distance of the projector type we have identified will accommodate these variations in height off the ground.

The lenses that have been identified and costed allow for flexibility when it comes to image size; to date, the artists are considering an image size of 2000mm (2300mm on the diagonal).

1. Artwork concept images.

1.2 Public Art Plan

Public art methodology and concluding remarks

Curator and artists are aware of the importance of discreetly embedding the projectors in their housings within the sandstone of the lip. With the entire landscape of the park to be made new, the team is optimistic that this will be possible. A quarry or stonemason will be required to cut out the three voids from the stone to the dimensions of the three housings; Attachment C, Public Art Cost Plan Template has allowed for this cost.

The gentle intervention of projected light on a landscape is an important layer of the artwork, a material that is adaptable and changeable. A special font has been selected, Oracle by Dinamo Studio. Animation will be a part of the work; this will be produced collaboratively with an Aboriginal motion graphics artist to be identified. Drawing on skills developed working in the technology sector, Davison will work closely with the graphics artist to generate the code that will inform and change the movements and iterations of the text.

The audio layer of Money's and Davison's artwork will be piped through embedded speakers placed discreetly throughout the length of the cave-like space. The audio will be recorded in the artists' voices, creating a soothing and hypnotic space that evokes the storytelling that has always existed at this place.

Fabrication methodology

It is important to think ahead in the earliest stages of concept design and design development, about how to make the works that artists are investigating – just as we have done in this project. Working closely with the artists, who have the final say, the team is in the process of identifying a bespoke fabricator for each artwork and has identified the right maker to fit the vision for each one. (It should perhaps be said that Flynn has worked extensively in past projects with Arup and Panasonic Australia, and has been able to share what she has learned with the artists, without in any way influencing their decision to work with light and projection.)

Both the moon haloes and campfires will be bespoke products tailor-made by either of two companies, Artemide or 3S Lighting, for an outdoor application. They will be rated to withstand weather and vandalism and UV stabilisers will ensure they will not discolour over time. Lighting consultants Arup estimate the longevity of the light elements at 15 years. Attachment C, Public Art Cost Plan Template, has been completed to allow for the cost of replacement for a lifespan of 15 years.

Cable runs will be designed by Arup, and cabling and the cylindrical and square-profile light elements will be installed by electrical contractors, with two companies having been consulted to complete the Stage 2, Attachment C, Public Art Cost Plan Template. The power source and cabling for both the moon haloes and the ground-based lighting elements will be located in a well ventilated, dry and accessible location nearby. Artist and curator would prefer no seams or segmenting in the rings of the haloes and campfires, and are investigating how large the rings can be to be fabricated in a single piece. A strategy is being discussed and will be further developed prior to the haloes being installed, to prevent the rings from breaking and distending as the trees continue to grow.

For Money and Davison, three Panasonic PT-RZ120 projectors with ET-DLE105 lenses comprise the equipment required. Projectors last for five years on average and the project budget documented in the submission cost plan allows for four projector changes over the 15-year lifespan of the artwork. Bespoke housings will be supplied by Tempest (US), and cabling and back-to-base systems will be designed by Arup, and installed and monitored ongoing by East Coast Audio Visual.

1.2.9 Public art methodology

Artist identification and selection

We identified Scarce, Money and Davison to work with us by applying these criteria for success, which is ensured by artists like them who make art that is:

- + memorable, timeless, and enduring, in artistic content and longevity of material
- + original and at the forefront of visual art and experimentation
- + exciting visually, and
- + unique to Sydney.

We knew Scarce, Money and Davison could make art that would:

- + have integrity
- + be relevant and appropriate to the context
- + be consistent with current state and local planning, heritage, community and environmental policies
- + consider public safety, and the public's access to and unfettered use of the public domain.

The artists' capacity to be considerate of others and to work well as part of our team was also important to us, as was their ability to meet the allocated budget and delivery program.

Delivering the project

Three basic actions are critical to achieving success:

- + starting to work in close cooperation with the artists as early as possible, as we have; starting early with artists makes co-designing possible

- + showing the artists respect and giving them free rein to think deeply about the project
- + providing the artists with whatever support and encouragement they need to realise their visions.

The competition period has been relatively short, which has limited the time available to fully develop the artworks. We believe the works are inspiring and entirely viable in their current state, however, should we be successful, we would also welcome input from the jury and commissioner.

Future ownership and care of works of art

Commissioning and owning art brings with it obligations for care and maintenance that are reinforced by Australian moral rights law. The relevant question is: who is going to own, maintain and care for a suite of permanent artworks over their 15-year lifespan? There are different possible structures for ownership that conform to the industry standard. Key to these efforts is the production of a maintenance manual authored by the commissioned artists and overseen by Flynn. Maintenance is best undertaken by trained specialists accustomed to handling, caring for and conserving works of art, such as the sort of trained specialist personnel working in art museums

Budget

Program and budget need to be closely aligned. This will avoid modifications occurring late in the process that will add to cost, and that will jeopardise the public art curator's and artists' commitment and efforts to realise the artworks within the nominated budget.

Cost plan

Though our conception for the project is for art to be closely aligned, even synonymous, with landscape, the \$8 million allocated for public art will go only to art. Attachment C, Public Art Cost Plan Template, has been completed accordingly.

Flynn has developed a cost plan that can be applied across public art projects, which she can make available for the use of the project. It sets out the responsibilities of the respective parties clearly and provides a basis for contracting artists in more detail than the cost plan completed and provided with this submission.

Consultation

Our Aboriginal team members have been sensitive to the opportunity for direct contact to ask the associated Traditional Owners, knowledge holders, Elders and family members, and larger community if they think art can find a place here. If so, where, and made by whom? What kind of art would they like to see? What are the narratives it could meaningfully address?

The opportunity for this direct contact with community members has not yet been afforded. When consultation is permitted, remembering that 'wherever you come from and whatever stories you bring, you are always a guest on

someone else's Country', we will:

- + show respect, acknowledge, share, listen
- + be aware of trauma and the hurt that has been inflicted
- + allow everyone to engage in the way they feel comfortable engaging and to provide only the information they feel comfortable providing
- + be clear about who on the project team is making decisions
- + understand that when community shares cultural stories, it is sharing technical knowledge.

1.2.10 Conclusion

Artists Yhonnie Scarce, Jazz Money and Joel Davison, bring the kind of intelligence and sensitivity to the project that will ensure a profound connection with the philosophy of the Barangaroo precinct and previous innovations.

An important component of the art and the poetry would be the way our group will involve communities at Barangaroo and across the city, New South Wales and Australia. Scarce and Money have familiarity with working with Elders and community off Country, and Davison is Dunghutti and Gadigal – from here. What is planned is more than physical works only. It will be like an invitation to involvement. Our effort has been directed to making art, landscape and architecture profound and meaningful enough to truly move and motivate people, so that people will be drawn to this place and make it theirs.

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5. Anne Barnard, 'The 9/11 Tribute lights are endangering 160,000 birds a year', *New York Times*, 9 September 2019, www.nytimes.com/2019/09/09/nyregion/911-tribute-birds.html.
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9. At the meeting of Scarce, Flynn and Virginia Overell of OCULUS, 2 May 2023.
10. Many examples of this are given, for example, in Robert S. Fuller, 'The astronomy and songline connections of the Saltwater Aboriginal peoples of the New South Wales coast', PhD thesis, UNSW, Sydney, 2020.
11. Matt Poll, 'Patyegarang's sky world', *News from Powerhouse*, 31 January 2019, www.maas.museum/magazine/2019/01/patyegarangs-sky-world/.
12. The first Aboriginal woman in New South Wales to graduate with a double degree in mathematics and physics. Noon went on to earn an ANU/CSIRO Masters of Astronomy and Astrophysics (Advanced) degree in 2019. She was appointed as the first Indigenous consultant to the Australian Academy of Science's National Committee for Astronomy, and in 2020–21 was Sydney Observatory's first Astronomy Ambassador. Noon is also an accomplished science communicator, and her work includes co-hosting the ABC podcast *Cosmic Vertigo* with Corey Tutt. For further information about Noon and her work, see Karlie Noon, 'Ancient Indigenous astronomers made discoveries attributed to Galileo and Newton, says Karlie Noon', *The Feed*, 29 May 2017, www.sbs.com.au/news/the-feed/article/ancient-indigenous-astronomers-made-discoveries-attributed-to-galileo-and-newton-says-karlie-noon/k0qlp7i4h; and Ellen van Neerven, 'Astronomer and astrophysicist Karlie Noon on opening up educational pathways for Aboriginal youth', *SBS News*, 10 November 2020, www.sbs.com.au/topics/voices/culture/article/2020/11/05/astronomer-and-astrophysicist-karlie-noon-opening-educational-pathways-aboriginal.
13. Yhonnie Scarce, conversation with Barbara Flynn, 2 May 2023.
14. Kaylie Salvatori has noted that we would want to use sandstone in a way that does not represent taking from Country. The team has begun to discuss a plan to talk with Traditional Owners about making stone available from various places/ Country.