



Wilderness Journal issue #033

This issue contains wondrous creatures: bilbies, peacock spiders, golden bats and more. Stories of people celebrating and helping the vulnerable and threatened to survive.

Threatened Species Day, 7 September marks the day the last Thylacine died in captivity in 1936. A day to contemplate the vast number of native species under threat.

Day of the Species community art project photographed by [Genevieve French](#)

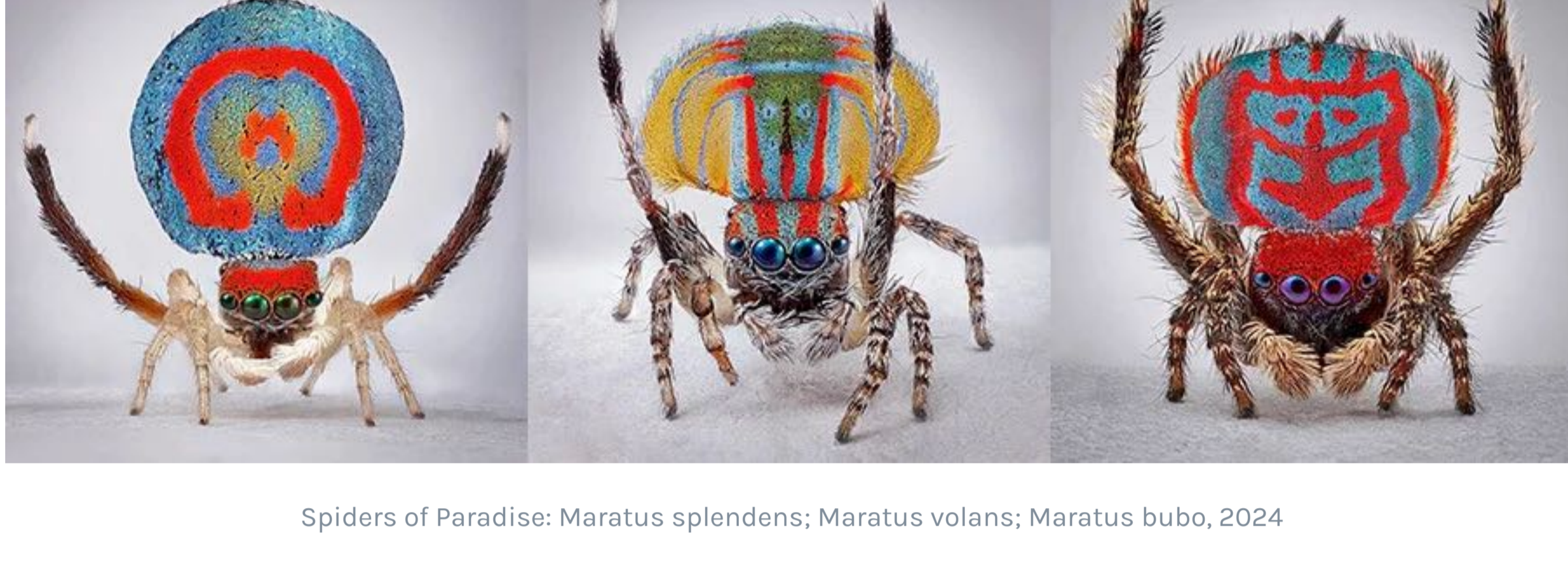
Spiders of Paradise

Photographs by Maria Fernanda Cardoso

"I think if paradise existed, it would be inhabited by beautiful creatures such as these."



Spiders of Paradise: Maratus amabilis, 2024



Spiders of Paradise: Maratus splendens; Maratus volans; Maratus bubo, 2024

For Maria Fernanda, the *Maratus* spider holds a special place in the natural ecosystem:

"The *Maratus* spiders of Australia are the most colourful, flamboyant, sexy, and charming spiders on the planet. To me, their use of colour, gesture, sound and movement makes them sophisticated visual and performing artists. They are also the smallest performers I know of, on average about 3–5mm in size, smaller than a grain of rice."



Spiders of Paradise: Maratus karrie; Maratus plumosus; Maratus vespertilio, 2024



Maria Fernanda Cardoso. Photograph by Jillian Nalty

"The male has to try extremely hard (both in visual communication as well as in charm and perseverance) to be 'chosen' by her. She exercises her right to choose, and drives him to display an excess of vibrant colour and performance virtuosity in a complex courtship ritual."



Spiders of Paradise: Maratus madelineae, 2024

Cardoso has worked with renowned scientific imager Geoff Thompson and entomologist Andy Wang from the Queensland Museum, who specialise in deep focus microphotography and microscopic specimen preparation to create these large-scale photographs. Each specialise in deep focus microphotography and microscopic specimen preparation to create these large-scale photographs. Each specialise in deep focus microphotography and microscopic specimen preparation to create these large-scale photographs.



Maria Fernanda Cardoso was born in Bogota, Colombia in 1963. She has lived and worked in Sydney since 1997. Drawing inspiration from the natural world, her work incorporates a range of non-traditional materials transformed into installations, sculptures, performances, photography and video. Maria Fernanda Cardoso has exhibited widely in Australia and internationally for over four decades.

Developed and toured by MCA Australia, [Maria Fernanda Cardoso: Spiders of Paradise](#) celebrates the wonder of the Australian Maratus spider. It will be presented in six galleries across Australia, starting in Cairns.

- Cairns Art Gallery, QLD: 31 August – 24 November 2024
- Tweed Regional Gallery, NSW: 10 May 2025 – 3 August 2025
- Geraldton Art Gallery, WA: 23 August – 2 November 2025
- Bunjil Place, VIC: 27 November 2025 – 22 February 2026
- Orange Regional Gallery, NSW: 7 March – 17 May 2026
- Canberra Museum & Gallery, ACT: 30 May – 23 August 2026

We thank Maria Fernanda Cardoso and the MCA gallery for sharing this amazing work. All images pigment print on paper, framed, courtesy the artist and Sullivan+Strumpf, Sydney ©Maria Fernanda Cardoso.