

Maria Fernanda Cardoso awarded 2020 NSW Visual Arts Established Fellow



Maria Fernanda Cardoso has been named the recipient of the 2019/20 *New Dimensions: NSW Visual Arts (Established) Fellowship*, developed in partnership with Create NSW and Museum of Contemporary Art Australia (MCA). The partnership between Create NSW and MCA is in its second year and supports the ongoing professional practice of visual arts practitioners in New South Wales with a grant valued up to \$50,000.

Colombian-born, long-time Sydney resident Maria Fernanda Cardoso is internationally renowned for her practice using unconventional and organic materials to explore ideas around nature and its links to culture and science. Maria Fernanda Cardoso has exhibited widely across Australia and abroad with a diverse practice encompassing sculpture, installation, performance and photography.

Cardoso will receive \$30,000 in funding from Create NSW to focus on a self-directed professional development program and will also undertake an additional project or acquisition commission from the MCA up to the value of \$20,000.

The *New Dimensions: NSW Visual Arts (Established)*

Fellowship will enable Cardoso to create a new series of largescale digital portraits documenting various species of the brightly coloured Australian spider, the *Maratus*. For this project, Cardoso will work in collaboration with leading photo-microscopy expert Geoff Thompson to photograph up to 20 of the 80 species, and the pair will work consultation with museum curators and scientists with interest in the genus.

On being awarded the New Dimensions Fellowship, Maria Fernanda Cardoso said, 'I am extremely grateful to Create NSW and the MCA for this opportunity and am excited to create new work around these extraordinary tiny creatures. Australia has immense invertebrate diversity, yet it is relatively understudied and certainly little known by the general public.'

This year's Fellowship was selected by an industry panel made up of experts including Michael Dagostino (Create NSW Visual Arts Board member and Director and CEO Campbelltown Arts Centre), independent curator, writer and educator Emily McDaniel and the MCA's Megan Robson and Rachel Kent.

Create NSW Executive Director Chris Keely said, 'Maria Fernanda is a fantastic choice for our New Dimensions Fellowship and I love that this opportunity will give arguably one of the world's best looking spiders its time in the spotlight. I look forward to seeing her development through this project, and the works that it leads to.'

MCA Director, Elizabeth Ann Macgregor OBE added, 'We are delighted that this award is going to Maria Fernanda who has an international as well as national reputation for her thought-provoking work about the natural environment and our relationship to it. She is highly deserving of this fellowship and we look forward to working with her to deliver the outcome of the partnership through presentation or acquisition of the new work.'

This marks the second year of a partnership between Create NSW and MCA for the NSW Visual Arts (Established) Fellowship, Denis Beaubois was the previous recipient awarded in 2019.

Artist biography

Maria Fernanda Cardoso was born in Colombia and lives in Sydney. She has a Master's degree in Sculpture and Installation from Yale University, and is known for her unconventional use of materials and the use of animals as inspiration.

Cardoso has exhibited her work in major museums and galleries in the US, Latin America, Australia and Europe, including Sydney's Museum of Contemporary Art, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the National Gallery in Canberra and the Tate Gallery in London. She has won numerous awards and scholarships and represented Colombia at the Venice Biennale in 2003.

Image: Maria Fernanda Cardoso in studio, 2020. Photo by Daniel Boud.

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