

LANDMARK WORK BY CELEBRATED ARTIST MARIA FERNANDA CARDOSO RISES 11 STOREYS HIGH OVER SYDNEY STREETS

The new mural, integrated into a new building designed by acclaimed architect Angelo Candalepas, is the largest public artwork by an Australian artist in the Sydney CBD.



Ripples and Droplets, by Maria Fernanda Cardoso, at Castlereagh Residences, 116 Bathurst Street Sydney. Photo: Jillian Nalty

Sydney, Australia: A major new public artwork inspired by the natural movement of water has been unveiled in Sydney's CBD by one of Australia's most celebrated contemporary artists. *Ripples and Droplets*, a mural by **Maria Fernanda Cardoso**, spans the length of one wall of a 36-storey residential tower in the centre of Sydney. Standing **11 stories high and covering 335 square metres**, the mural is believed to be the **largest public artwork by an Australian artist in the Sydney CBD**.

The artist was commissioned by United Development Sydney for the newly completed **Castle Residences** mixed development at 116 Bathurst Street. The project was designed by Candalepas Associates and realised by Hutchinson Builders. Maria Fernanda Cardoso worked closely with the architect, **Angelo Candalepas**, since the inception of the project in 2014, and developed the work with public art curator **Amanda Sharrad**. While the brief has evolved over time, the result is consistent with many of the themes

that have guided her practice for decades. A design by the team led by Angelo Candalepas and Associates was last week revealed as the winning design for NGV Contemporary, the new contemporary art and design gallery in Melbourne.

Maria Fernanda Cardosos's design—concentric circles and spirals like ripples on a pond, also the silky thread of a spider web—reflects the broad direction of her creative career. The artist is fascinated by the natural geometry of the world, and this work has allowed her to magnify the sort of details that remain hidden from sight.

Ripples and Droplets can be seen on the north facing wall above the entrance lane that runs between the Castlereagh Street facade of **116 Bathurst Street** and the Porter House hotel beside it. The work is designed to be seen laterally, given most vantage points will be from across the street or from beneath.

The mural is part of a series called *Drawing Paintings, Painting Drawings*. The name refers to a technique invented by the artist that allows her to draw and paint simultaneously. Instead of a brush, she works with a container that dispenses paint through a small plastic tube and needle, which creates droplet effects as she draws lines across the surface.

Maria Fernanda Cardoso grew up in Colombia surrounded by architecture and design. The daughter of two architects, she spent eighteen months studying architecture herself before switching to art. She has since been celebrated as an artist worldwide—from Bogotá to New York, Venice to London—for her distinctive vision and her curiosity about the hidden wonders of the natural world.

The Castle Residences and hotel will open in late April. An exhibition by Maria Fernanda Cardoso, detailing the creative process behind *Ripples and Droplets*, will be available for viewing in the Porter House during this time.

Artist Maria Fernanda Cardoso said: *“When I started to make public art, I just felt at such ease. I had prepared all my life for it. In a public space, scale is very important, because most things go unperceived. The scale makes them visible. The patterns are like ripples in water, and if you look closer, there are droplets. My concept from the beginning was about painting as a fluid. That is why it has ended up being ripples and droplets.”*

Public art curator Amanda Sharrad said: *“This artwork is a distinctive and exceptional landmark and Maria Fernanda Cardoso's most ambitiously scaled work to date. Cardoso delights in finding, revealing and celebrating beauty and magnificence in small and seemingly insignificant forms and forces of nature. The biophilic design of this work calls to mind natural phenomena such as rain on a web, ripples on water, growth rings of a tree—meticulously enlarged to the scale of the built environment. Changing fluidly according to one's vantage point, drawing the eye in from the street and upwards from below, the fine organic lines of white mineral paint contrast beautifully with the surrounding architectural order and urban colour, giving the artwork a quietly powerful presence.”*

Architect Angelo Candalepas said: *“There is a need for artworks on buildings to reflect the intentions of the architectural work, which is also art. We had wanted to add to the city something as strong as the Josef Albers sculpture in Martin Place or Alexander Calder's in Australia Square—but with an Australian artist. Maria Fernanda Cardoso listened to the building's needs and understood that the work deferred to the ancient idea of a circle in geometry, the sphere and the imperfection of pendulums in making these shapes. Her work reflects the tenuous nature of circles rather than their certainty, and in so doing it defers to nature. It has been completed through contemporary technology to appear both uncertain and permanent, at once of this time and absent of a time. It sits uneasily on microns off a concrete wall like the constellation of a thousand spiders. She leaves behind a great message about optimism in geometry, about the human ability to offer something joyous, with the arches of Castlereagh Street finding their source in this mirroring of nature.”*

Hutchinson Project Manager Timothy Ferguson said: “*Hutchinson has worked closely with Maria-Fernanda Cardoso and Amanda Sharrad to bring to life the artist’s vision, which is nestled off the side face of the 11-storey hotel facade under the main building’s cantilever. It has been challenging and rewarding to create and project this piece of art on such a large scale and to a detail that mimics the artist’s original concepts.*”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Traditional Owners: The traditional custodians of this land are the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation

Artist: Maria Fernanda Cardoso

Artwork title: *Ripples and Droplets*

Date installed: March 2022

Location: 116 Bathurst Street, Sydney

Commissioner: United Development Sydney / Hutchinson Builders

Architects: Candalepas Associates, Angelo Candalepas

Public Art Curator: Amanda Sharrad

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MEDIA CONTACTS: To request artist interviews or press imagery please contact Articulate: Ashleigh Wilson, ashleigh@articulatepr.com.au, 0402 217 613 or Kym Elphinstone, kym@articulatepr.com.au, 0421 106 139.

IMAGES: A selection of high res images of the project, including artist portraits, can be accessed in this Dropbox [link](#).

VIDEO: A new video interview with Maria Fernanda Cardoso, exploring *Ripples and Droplets* in the context of her broader artistic career, can be accessed [here](#).

ABOUT MARIA FERNANDA CARDOSO: Maria Fernanda Cardoso is a leading Colombian Australian contemporary artist who lives and works in Sydney. Her pioneering and multidisciplinary career spans more than three decades, 32 countries, 46 solo shows, hundreds of group shows, public art commissions and live performances. The daughter of two architects, she spent eighteen months studying architecture herself before switching to art. She left Colombia at the age of 24 to study in the United States, obtaining a master’s degree in sculpture at Yale in 1990. Her artworks have been acquired by the Tate Modern and other major collections in the United States, Europe and Latin America. She has exhibited at prestigious institutions around the world including the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Centro Reina Sofia in Madrid and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney. She represented Colombia for the Venice Biennale in 2002 and Australia at the Sydney Biennale 2012. She was recipient of the Australia Council for the Arts’ prestigious Creative Australia Fellowship in 2014 and won first prize at the first Bogota Biennale in 1990. One of her best-known works, *The Cardoso Flea Circus*, was a sensation at the Sydney Festival and later entered the collection of Tate Modern. Recent public art projects include *While I Live I Will Grow* (2018) commissioned by the City of Sydney, *Sandstone Pollen* (2016) Darling Harbour, commissioned by Lend Lease, and *Velvet Water* (2014), commissioned by Wollongong Central.

ABOUT THE CASTLE RESIDENCES: Construction of the 36-storey tower began in late 2018 and includes the sensitive refurbishment of the 142-year-old heritage-listed Porter House next door. Located on Sydney’s busy Bathurst and Castlereagh Streets, the project brings together high-end apartments with boutique luxury hotel services and amenities—a distinctive offering in the Australian market. Sitting above an eight-level basement, Castle Residences will be home to 131 stunning apartments. The stand-out façade boasts beautifully crafted off form concrete domes on the lower floors that perfectly complement the repetitive moulded sandstone veneer of Porter House. Beyond level 11 it will cantilever 12m off the side

and continue 25 storeys above, suspended gracefully over Porter House. The top of the tower offers five levels of stunning stepped sky gardens to its residents. The building, formerly known as Dixson & Sons Tobacco Factory, was originally constructed in 1876 in Victorian Classic style and has a significant presence on the streetscape even with its relatively sympathetic scale. This development ensures it will continue to be an important piece of Sydney's urban fabric, especially with its proximity to St George's Presbyterian Church.

ABOUT ANGELO CANDALEPAS: Angelo Candalepas was born in Sydney and graduated from the University of Technology in 1992. In 1994 he established his own architecture studio which, in its first year of practice, won an international competition for housing in 'The Point', Pyrmont. The project was the recipient of several awards and in the following five years Angelo won and was shortlisted on several national and international competitions. In 1999, Angelo established Candalepas Associates. Since then, the company under his leadership has won a significant number of awards, including the Australian Institute of Architects Sulman Medal for Public Architecture in 2009 and 2018, the Frederick Romberg Award for Residential Architecture - Multiple Housing in 2011, the Harry Seidler Award for Commercial Architecture in 2016 and the Aaron Bolot Award for Residential Architecture - Multiple Housing in 2011, 2013, 2017 and 2019. In 2016, he was awarded the NSW Premier's Prize for Architecture. Angelo was made a Life Fellow of the Australian Institute of Architects in 2019 and in 2020 was presented with the University of Technology Alumni Award for Design, Architecture and Building, recognising his commitment to the profession. Recent projects include Punchbowl Mosque, winner of the 2018 Sulman Medal for Public Architecture, Church of the Living God, Hurstville, 72-84 Foveaux Street, Surry Hills, 511 Botany Road, Zetland and 1 Lawson Square, Redfern.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

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