

# Mermer Waiskeder: Stories of the Moving Tide

The Ghost Net Collective self guided tour of the artworks in Exchange Square.



Come on the journey and discover Exchange Square, history, culture and conservation with us.

Image: Lynnette Griffiths



Exchange Square has a rich history as a place where the city's people and the harbour engage with each other. Away from galleries and museums, on the original harbour tideline, the floating fever of eagle rays *Mermer Waiskeder: Stories of the Moving Tide* swims in celebration of the multicultural nature of this remarkable city.

Each ray is made with an aluminium frame covered in a hand-stitched 'ghost net' skin, encouraging viewers to reflect upon aspects of maritime history and the living, growing city of the future. By using ghost net (abandoned fishing net) the artists raise awareness about the importance of ocean conservation. The sculptures speak about connecting people via the oceans and are a call to action to attend to the health of our oceans and the preservation of its marine life.

*Mermer Waiskeder: Stories of the Moving Tide*, curated by Nina Miall, is one of the largest hand-crafted public artworks in Australia.



Images: (top) Ghost Net Collective artists, left to right, Nancy Naawi, Diann Lui (art centre manager), Lavinia Ketchell, Lynnette Griffiths, Jimmy John Thaiday, Florence Gutchen, Marion Gaemers, and Racy Oui-Pitt; (above) stitching components. Images by Kieran James.

## Mermer Waiskeder: Stories of the Moving Tide

The eleven rays floating in Exchange Square, Barangaroo are hand stitched by a group of artists from the Ghost Net Collective in North Queensland. The collective brings together Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists to work together to share culture and viewpoints on ocean conservation. This project has seen Lynnette Griffiths and Marion Gaemers work with Erub Arts artists Jimmy John Thaiday, Lavinia Ketchell, Florence Gutchen, Emma Gela, Racy Oui-Pitt and Nancy Naawi as well as a dedicated group of volunteer stitchers. Together they have crafted this amazingly colourful artwork. Through workshops many people from various communities in Australia and across the Pacific stitched smaller rays, which have been incorporated into the works – swimming on the under side of the larger rays. The creation of the smaller rays enabled the group to collaborate more widely.

Ghost net – abandoned fishing net and rope rescued from our oceans and shores – has been washed, sorted, deconstructed, stitched and woven back together to create these works.

Images: Jason Loucas



### 1 Raynette

**Design:** Marion Gaemers, Lynnette Griffiths and Ghost Net Collective

**Construction:** Third ray to be constructed – 24 days plus component and miniature ray making

Raynette represents First Nations People with strong and distinct colours. This ray is swimming the path closest to Darling Harbour. The body is infilled with rays made by various community groups. The layered net in red, yellow, black and blue is strong, direct and distinct from the other rays.



### 2 Raychel

**Design:** Ghost Net Collective

**Construction:** Fourth ray to be constructed – 30.5 days plus component and miniature ray making

Raychel, named after one of the Erub artists, displays the Torres Strait colours as the second First Nations people. A small community of rays was stitched on the underside. The green plaited design was stitched to the skin and then a predominately green, white and blue patterning was developed.

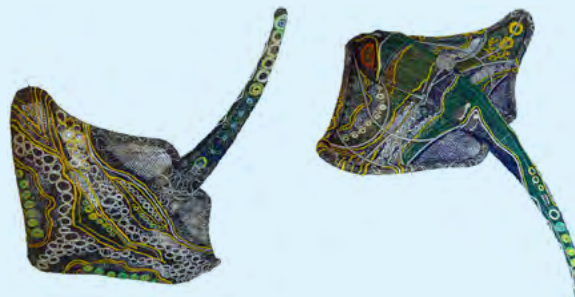


### 3 Raynbow

**Design:** Lynnette Griffiths

**Construction:** Ninth ray to be constructed – 29 days plus component and miniature ray making

The line of circles and community-made rays which run across the whole design represent the tideline. Two figures along the central spine stare out to sea, enjoying a moment. Making this ray was a particularly joyful time in the studio as stitchers had found their rhythm on this collaboration project.



### 4 Raylene

**Design:** Lynnette Griffiths

**Construction:** Tenth ray to be constructed – 30 days plus components

The original tideline running through Barangaroo needed to be acknowledged, historically this area had seen many changes from a place where people fished in bark canoes to wharfs, maritime industries including ropemaking and now as an urban waterfront precinct – a place to meet, work, live, eat and relax. Barangaroo has always supported livelihoods both simple and complex.



### 5 Rayanne

**Design:** Lavinia Ketchell

**Construction:** Eighth ray to be constructed – 21.75 days plus component and miniature ray making

A strong initial design and a highly stitched and finished middle underbelly made it easy for the artist to oversee the complimentary design ideas using components from Erub, predominantly beautiful circles. Yellow sand patterns on the underside added vibrancy, like shifting sand in the shallow waters. Community rays have been sewn to the top section.



## 6 Rayem

**Design:** Marion Gaemers

**Construction:** Fifth ray to be constructed – 21.5 days plus coral components

The design of this ray refers to the interactions between sand and water at the tideline, a place where people and ocean debris also encounter one another. The intricately patterned orange and white tail emerged from an artistic collaboration in Townsville; its masterful stitching conjures the reflections of sand and coral in the water.



## 7 Raydel

**Design:** Marion Gaemers, Lynnette Griffiths and Ghost Net Collective

**Construction:** Second ray to be constructed – 23 days plus component and miniature ray making

Working as a group we streamlined the process with this second ray, we began to appreciate the shapes and colours needed for the ray to have visual impact when viewed from a distance. Early 'skins' produced were highly detailed with a muted palette which didn't have the desired impact at scale and required addition of bolder elements.



## 8 Rayron

**Design:** Diann Lui with Ghost Net Collective

**Construction:** Sixth ray to be constructed – 29 days plus component making

This piece posed a challenge with some of the large, blue, coral-like components made off-site in Townsville. The yellow circles encasing the body were made by Erub primary school students in their art program. All the elements were then brought together in the adapted design. There was a collective sigh of relief at the realisation that we were now over halfway through production.



## 9 Raymond

**Design:** Racy Oui-Pitt

**Construction:** Seventh ray to be constructed – 29 days plus component making

This design required some interpretation from the initial drawing to studio production. Racy's strong concept for the middle of the body imagined rays swimming among the coral. Despite some striking individual pieces for this narrative, the challenge lay in translating it from the larger green sections on the inner wings to the fine orange coral motifs on the wing tips.



## 10 Raynaldo

**Design:** Ghost Net Collective

**Construction:** First ray to be constructed – 27.5 days plus component making

This design was developed as a group in the Cairns studio by layering different net together and working with ready made components. This practical process with discussion informed the design possibilities for future rays and from this process the artists were able to draw and work out further designs that fed into the larger narrative. It was important that the LED lighting covering be resolved so it illuminated as part of the body.

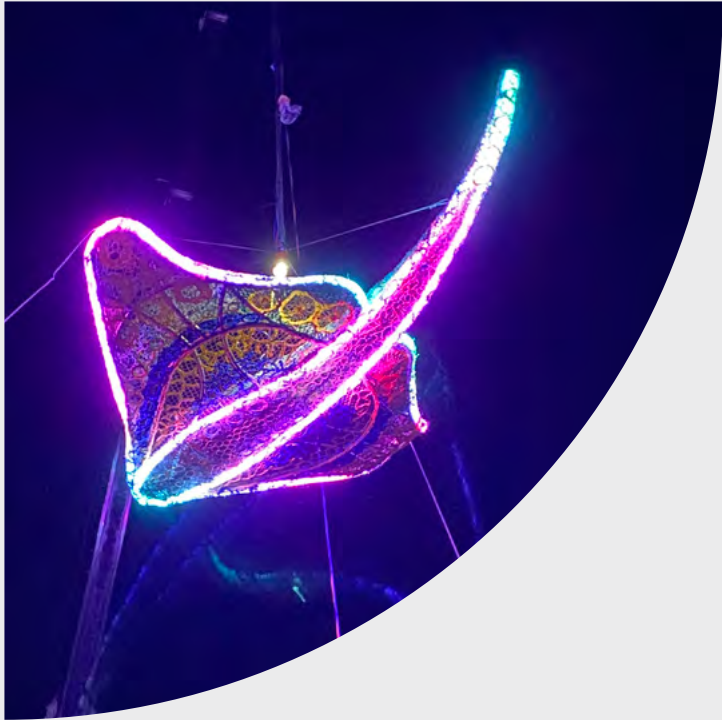


## 11 Raycee

**Design:** Jimmy John Thaiday and Florence Gutchen with Ghost Net Collective

**Construction:** Eleventh ray to be constructed – 49.5 days plus component and miniature ray making

The group stitched this ray together in celebration of many months of work. Named after one of our founding art centre artists, Racy Oui-Pitt, this design wove many different elements together. The top of the ray depicts the land and sea. Placed in the centre of Exchange Square, Raycee symbolises collaboration: one united voice for all Australians.

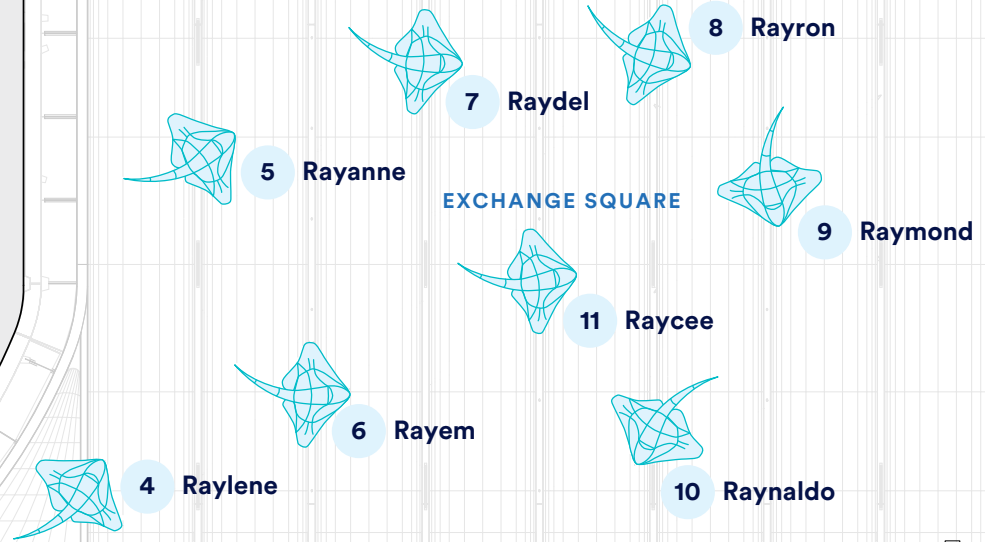


**Rays after dark:** Each night the rays illuminate in a spectacular show of inbuilt lighting. The rays dance and pulse their way through Exchange Square in an immersive experience.

INTERNATIONAL TOWERS, TOWER THREE

INTERNATIONAL HOUSE

SUSSEX ST



EXCHANGE SQUARE

WYNYARD  
WALK BRIDGE

