

# Judy Watson

## n̄vus 23rd biennale of sydney



Image: Judy Watson, Ngarunga Nangama, 2016. Photograph: Four Minutes To Midnight, 2022

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# Judy Watson, *Ngarunga Nangama*, 2016

The most prominent public art piece at 200 George Street in Sydney is a 300 square metre masterpiece from well-known Indigenous artist, Judy Watson. Judy was commissioned by Mirvac to create artwork for the lobby of the building.

The title of the artwork is *Ngarunga Nangama*, which means Calm Water Dream. Judy Watson consulted with Gadigal Elder, Uncle Allen Madden, to create the design, which is crafted from sandstone excavated from beneath the building during construction and celebrates the heritage of the area, reflecting the pre-settlement Sydney shoreline.

Early maps of the area are carved into the sandstone and overlaid with imagery including water, text and objects from the excavation of the site. Painted lines of shells are included in the artworks, which represent Indigenous shell middens.

Shell middens are places where the debris from eating shellfish were accumulated. Early colonists burnt the shells to extract lime, which was used for mortar in the early building, linking the building with the Indigenous past.

The artwork's watery, light effects are a reference to the Tank Stream that once ran parallel with George Street. The new building straddles the banks of the Tank Stream at first settlement and the water also pays tribute to the two water wells which were discovered in the basement of the building during their demolition.

The lighting, which will occur in the evenings as the sun sets on the artwork, references the water beneath the ground to create a living water element.



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