studio A

Media Release
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Bird Life Jungle Disco colours UTS Central

Artists from social enterprise Studio A have completed a stunning 175 square metre mural in a new, vibrant student hub at the heart of University of Technology Sydney.

The large-scale mural, titled *Bird Life Jungle Disco,* was painted by Victoria Atkinson, Katrina Brennan, Emily Crockford, Annette Galstaun, Meagan Pelham, Lisa Scott, and Damian Showyin of Studio A which is a supported studio that creates professional pathways for artists with intellectual disability.

Studio A tackles the barriers that such artists face in accessing conventional education and professional development, supporting them to achieve their artistic and economic aspirations.



With the support of a small team, the seven artists hand-painted the design in less than two weeks. Their individual personalities are evident in all the details, giving the work a unique energy and quality.

The artwork winds through the new UTS Central Food Court which is now open to the public.

UTS Central is a new student hub and faculty space at the heart of the city campus. As well as the new UTS Library, the building is home to a scholarly Reading Room, the colourful Hive Superlab, three unique large collaborative classrooms, a wealth of student study spaces, and new public art by Australian artists.

"Contemporary art and artists reflect our values as a university and a society," said Stella Rosa McDonald, Curator, UTS ART.

"*Bird Life Jungle Disco* tells a colourful story of birds and animals at play in a busy social world. The mural speaks to the character and passion of each of the artists who made it, and to the diversity and energy of the UTS community itself. UTS ART is committed to working with individuals and organisations dedicated to social purpose and we are thrilled to have worked with Studio A to enliven the university's newest social space and tell the story of the wider world in which our students live and learn."

Gabrielle Mordy, CEO and Artistic Director, Studio A, elaborated on the role of art in creating pathways to education, noting that, "Studio A artist Annette Galstaun has long dreamed of going to university. So, it was with great pride and excitement that she accepted this invitation, knowing her and her fellow artists' work would enliven UTS for years to come.

"Diverse bird life of all shapes, sizes and colours defines Studio A's artwork. Their diversity empowers their capacity, and they hope the work brings fun, respite and surprise to the UTS community. We are honoured to work with UTS ART to contribute public artwork that deepens the quality of cultural life at UTS," Ms Mordy said.

About Studio A
Studio A is a Sydney-based arts company that tackles the barriers that artists living with intellectual disability face in accessing conventional education, professional development pathways and opportunities needed to be successful and renowned visual artists. It is structured to operate as a social enterprise, meaning revenue derived from Studio A programs is invested back into the organisation to increase its artistic and social capacity. Studio A contributes to various personal outcomes for the artists, including increased self-esteem and aspirations, broader social networks and a sense of belonging, financial security and improved mental health. Studio A actively works to reduce stigma associated with people with disability and increase diversity and inclusion within the broader community. The only studio of its kind in NSW, Studio A is driven to ensure artists with intellectual disability have a voice in contemporary Australian culture. Studio A has partnered and collaborated with organisations, arts institutions and collections including Carriageworks, Westpac, Mud Australia, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney College of the Arts, UNSW Art & Design, Underbelly Arts Festival, Artbank and the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

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Hi-res images are available to download here; http://bit.ly/BirdLifeJungleDisco_UTSCentral

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Image: Studio A: Victoria Atkinson, Katrina Brennan, Emily Crockford, Annette Galstaun, Meagan Pelham, Lisa Scott, Damian Showyin, Bird Life Jungle Disco, 2019, site-specific wall painting. Installation view, UTS Central. Photo: Motel Picture Company.