

María Fernanda Cardoso

Maratus: Spiders of Paradise

February 27 to April 12, 2026



Sicardi |
Ayers
Bacino

Arañas del Paraíso

Complete series



Spiders of Paradise

2014-2024

“The role of art and science is to make the invisible visible”

Maria Fernanda Cardoso

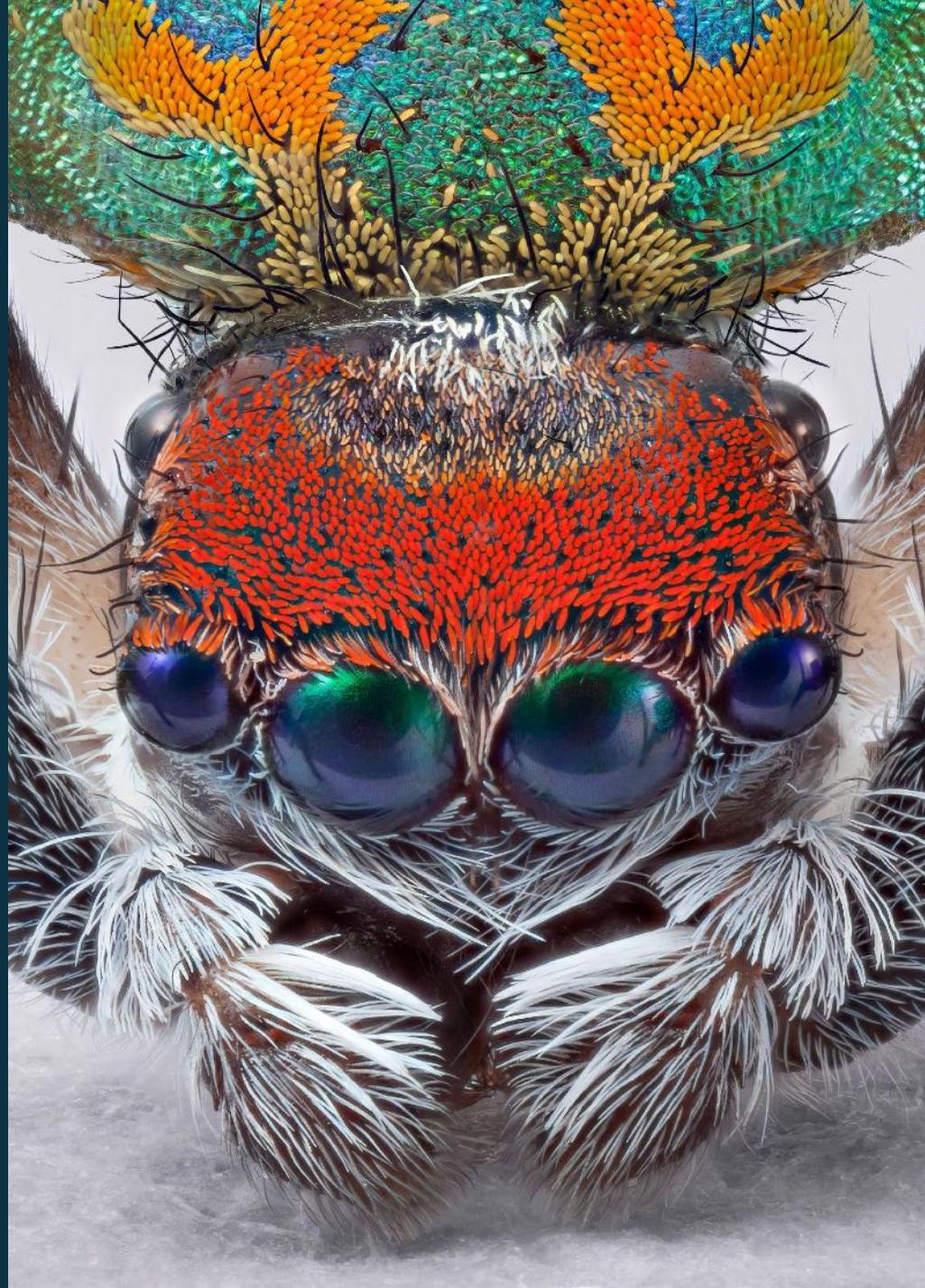
Maria Fernanda Cardoso: Spiders of Paradise presents the complete series from Cardoso's *Spiders of Paradise* focus stacked microphotographic portraits (2014–2024), alongside her acclaimed video work *On the Origins of Art I-II* (2016). Cardoso's subject is the tiny Australian Maratus spider – measuring less than 5mm in size – and their unique, brightly-coloured patterned abdomens, which form part of their elaborate mating rituals.

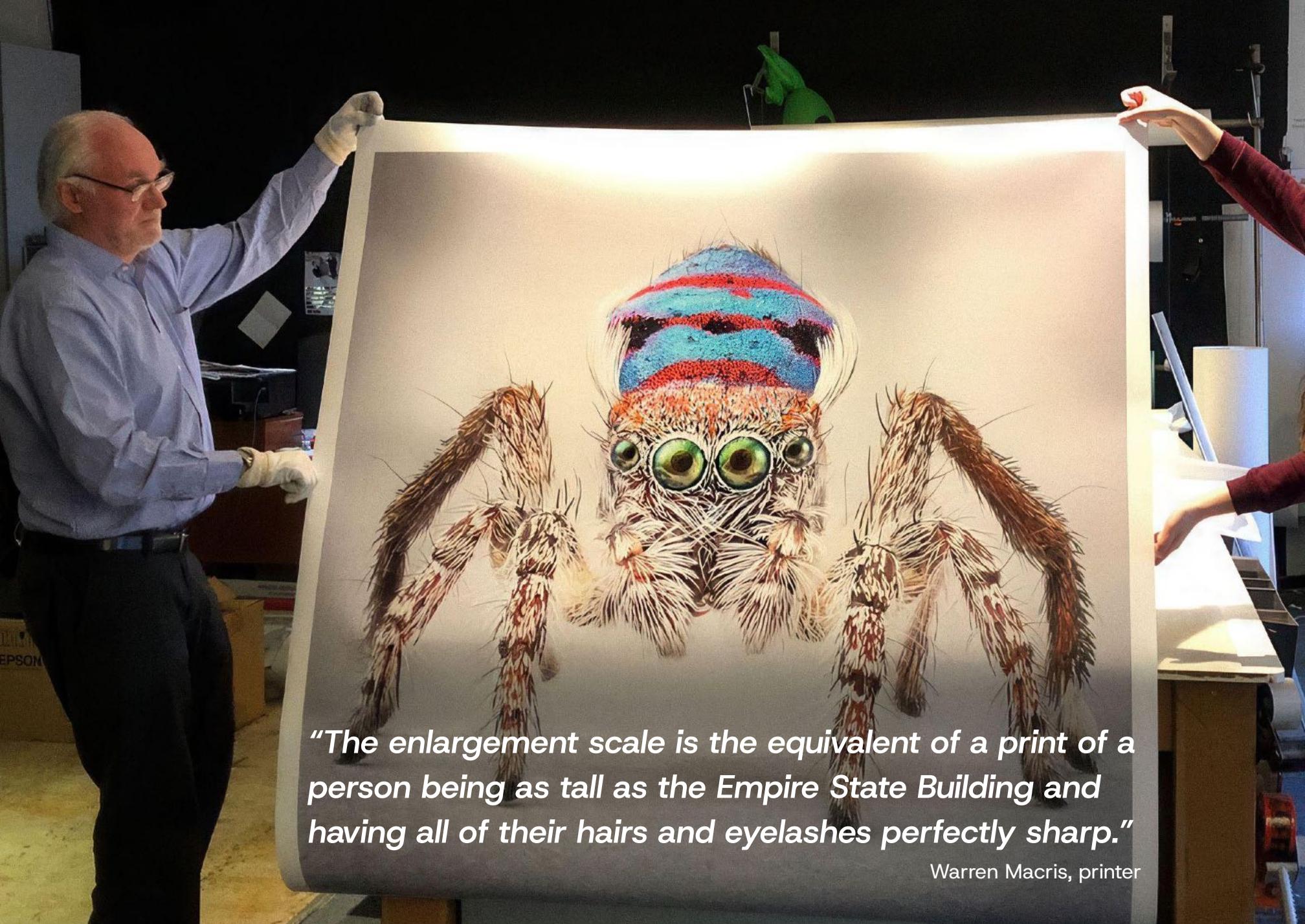
Spiders of Paradise

2014-2024

Across a suite of large-scale photographs, the exquisite multi-coloured patterns of various species of *Maratus* are presented as individual portraits.

Produced in collaboration with scientific imager Geoff Thompson and entomologist Andy Wang from the Queensland Museum, Australia, each image is comprised of over 1000 individual photos, which together reveal stunning nuances of colour and form in incredible detail.





"The enlargement scale is the equivalent of a print of a person being as tall as the Empire State Building and having all of their hairs and eyelashes perfectly sharp."

Warren Macris, printer



Maria Fernanda Cardoso: Spiders of Paradise is a touring exhibition developed by the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia. Exhibited across eight different art galleries in Australia from 2024 to 2026



The immersive installation *Arañas del Paraíso* was also exhibited as part of the International Art and City Biennial of Bogotá - BOG25 between September and November, 2025. Notice the oval vibratory platform with tactile spider sounds.

On the Origins of Art I – II

2016

1080 upscaled to 4K, one channel colour video.

Hyper realistic sound with tactile dimension.

Duration: 6:54 min

Edition 3/3 + 2 AP

USD\$45,000

Collections:

- TATE Gallery (UK)
- MCA Museum of Contemporary Art Australia
- Private collection



[Click here to watch the video](#)



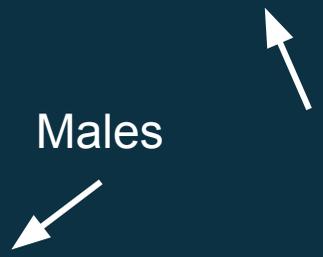
Cardoso's videos *On the Origins of Art I-III* propose that the visual and performing arts have a biological origin and are not exclusively a human phenomena.

To demonstrate that she presents the complex courtship ritual of the Maratus at an immersive scale. It showcases the spiders' sophisticated communication through dance and vibration, culminating in the display of their colourful patterned abdominal flap. Bringing together science, art technology and nature, this exhibition celebrates the beauty of the natural world and reveals the sophisticated lives of creatures of such minute scale that they are not usually witnessed.



Males

Female



"It's a beauty contest where the female is the one who judges".

Maria Fernanda Cardoso

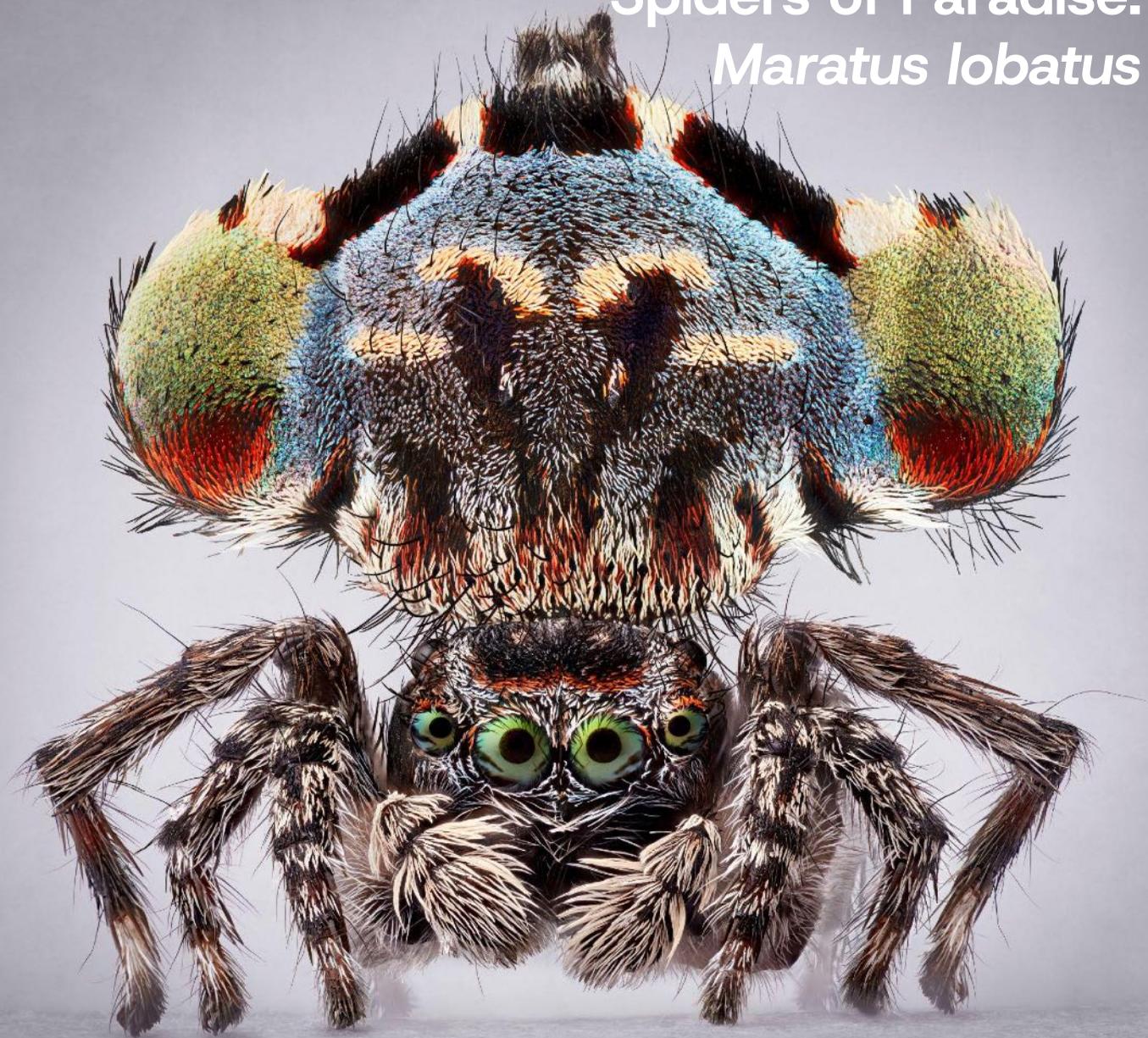


*“I love
working
at the
edge of
perception.
What
fascinates
me about
the small
is that it’s
even more
complex
than
the big.”*

Spiders of Paradise:
Maratus amabilis female



Spiders of Paradise:
Maratus lobatus



Spiders of Paradise:
Maratus calcitrans



Spiders of Paradise:
Maratus bubo



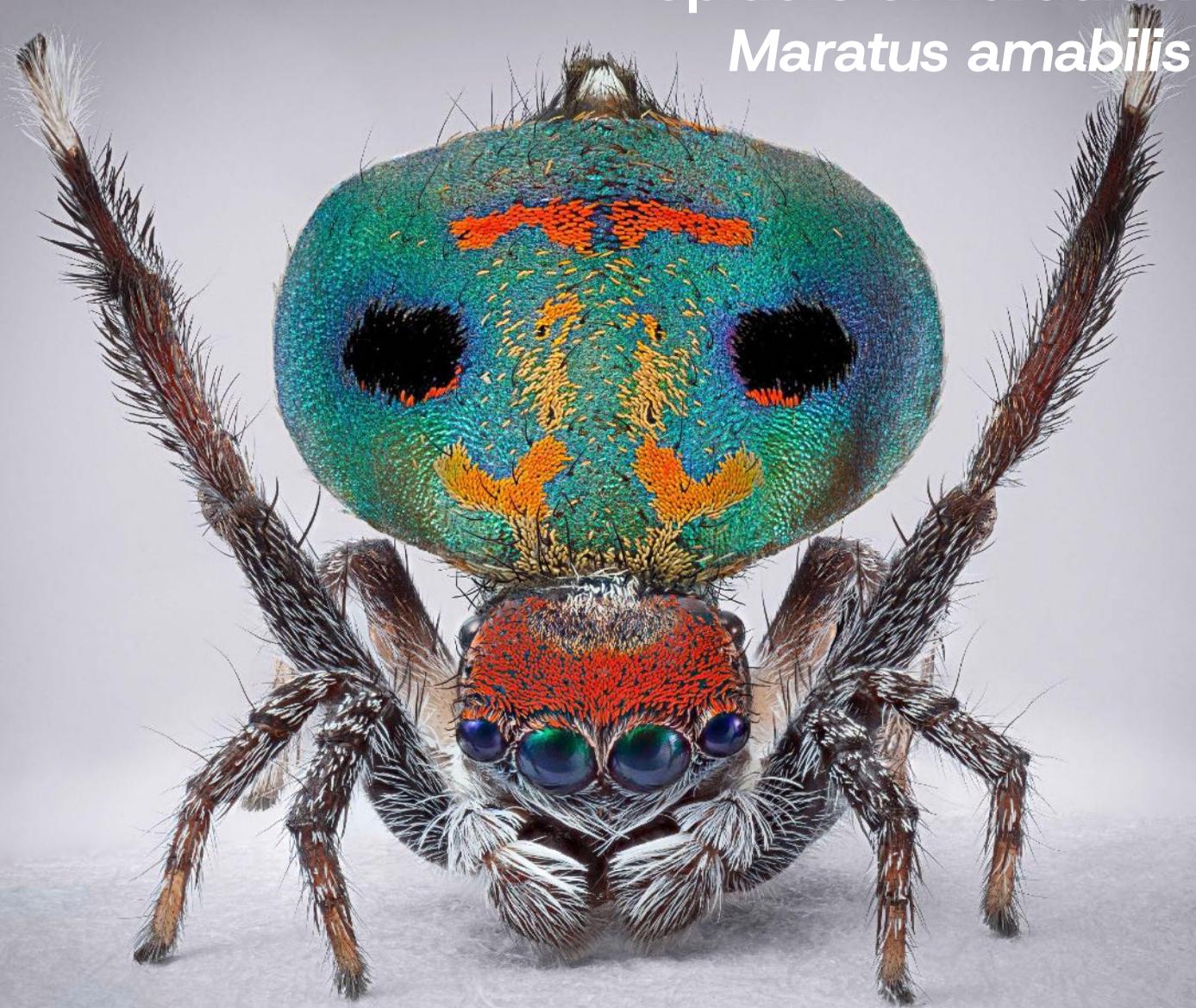
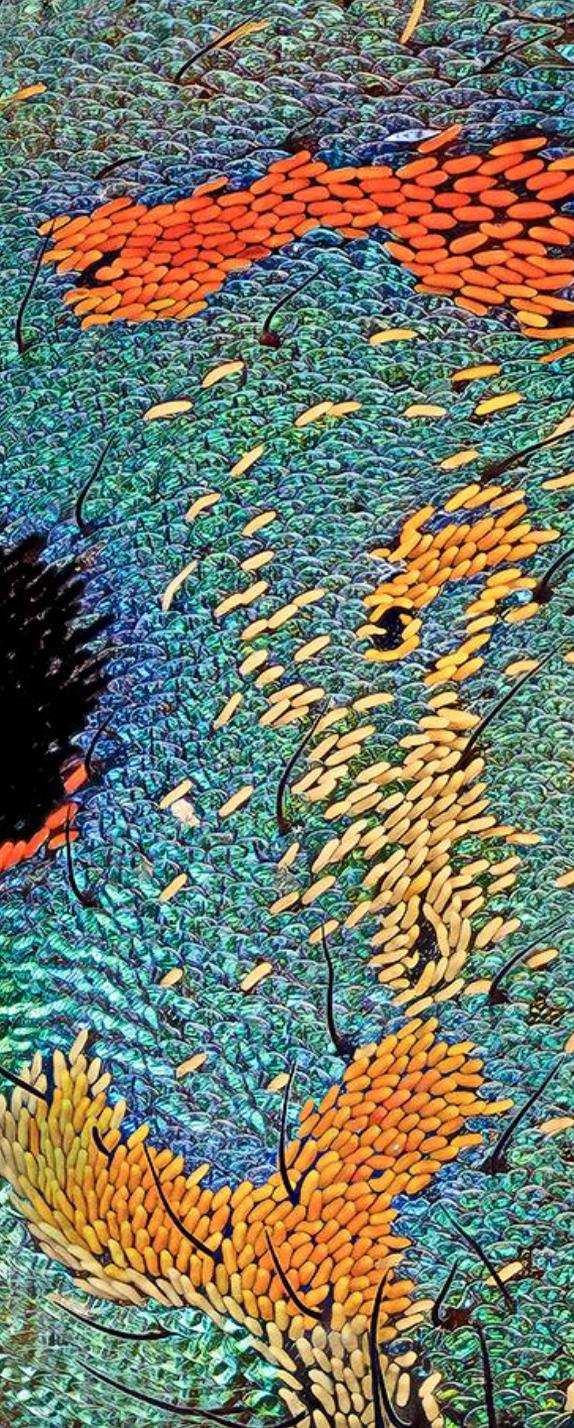
Spiders of Paradise:
Maratus anomalus



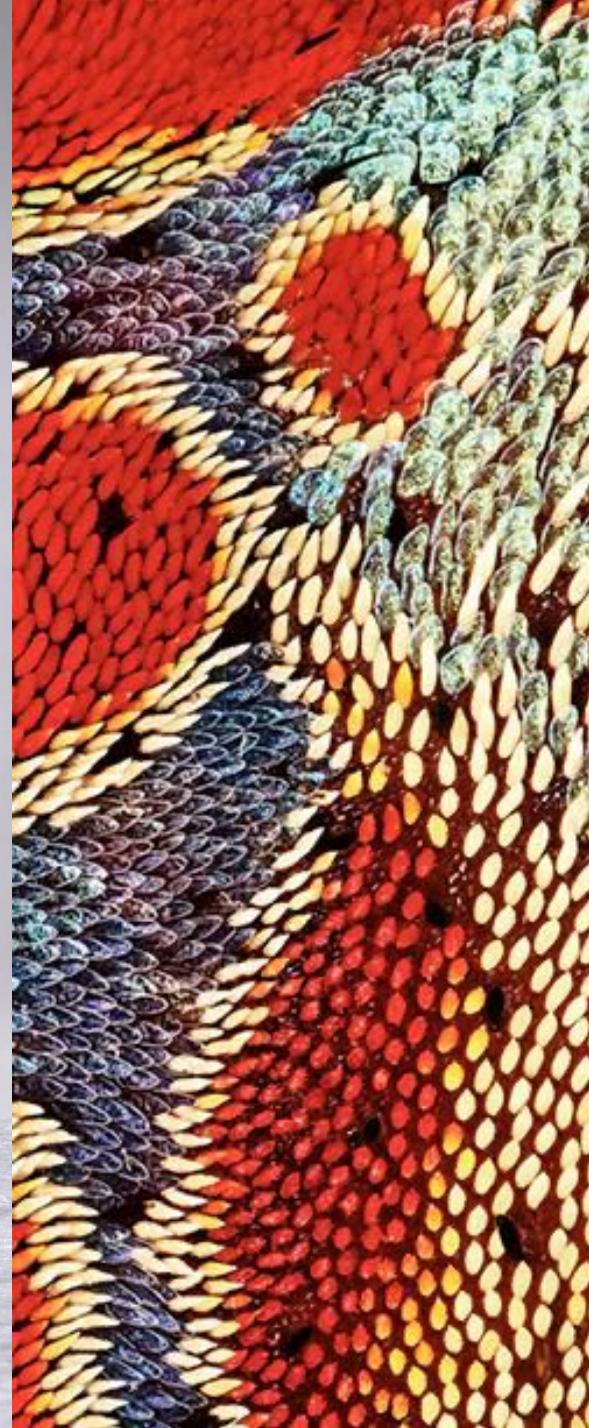
Spiders of Paradise: *Maratus australis*



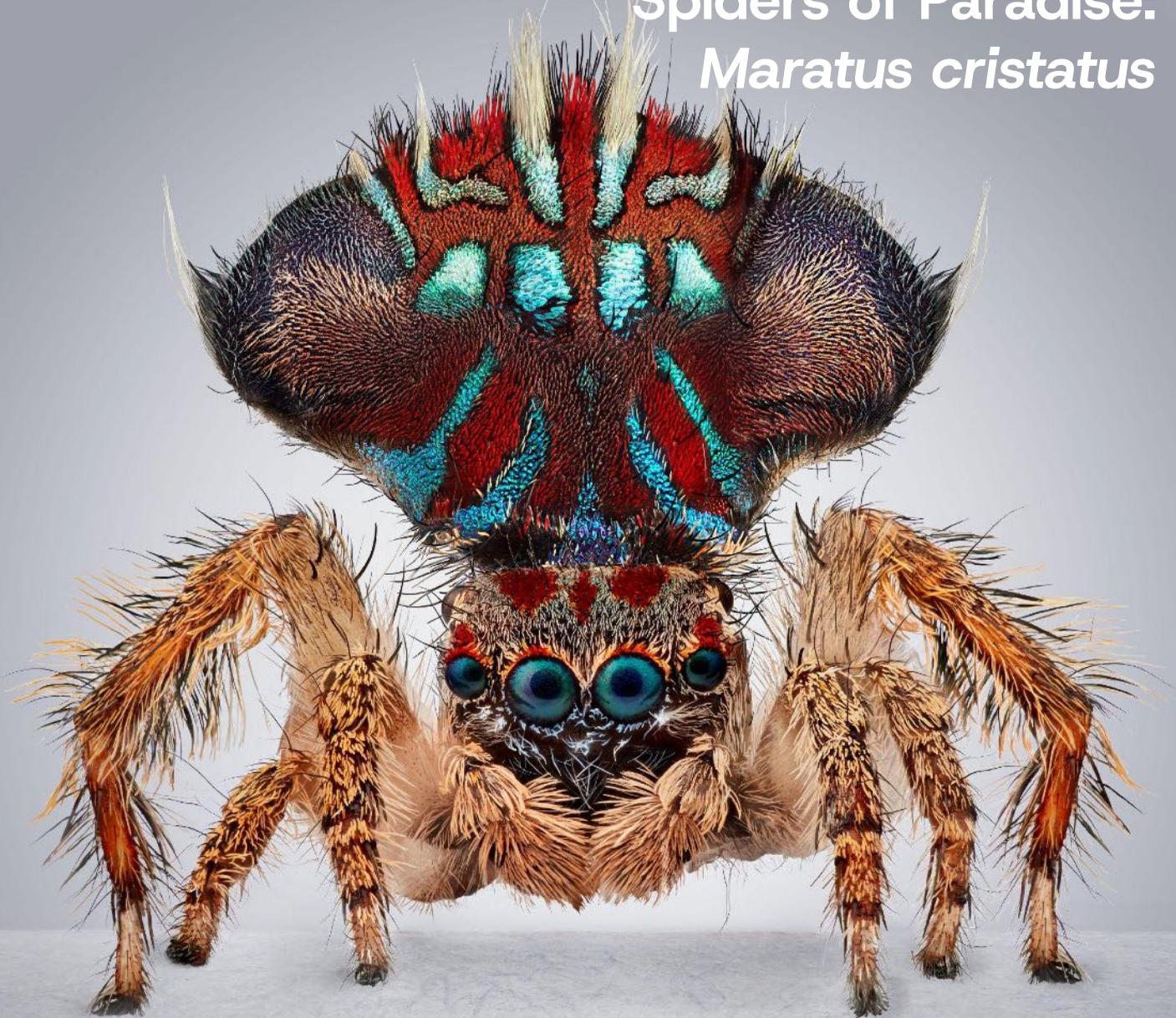
Spiders of Paradise:
Maratus amabilis



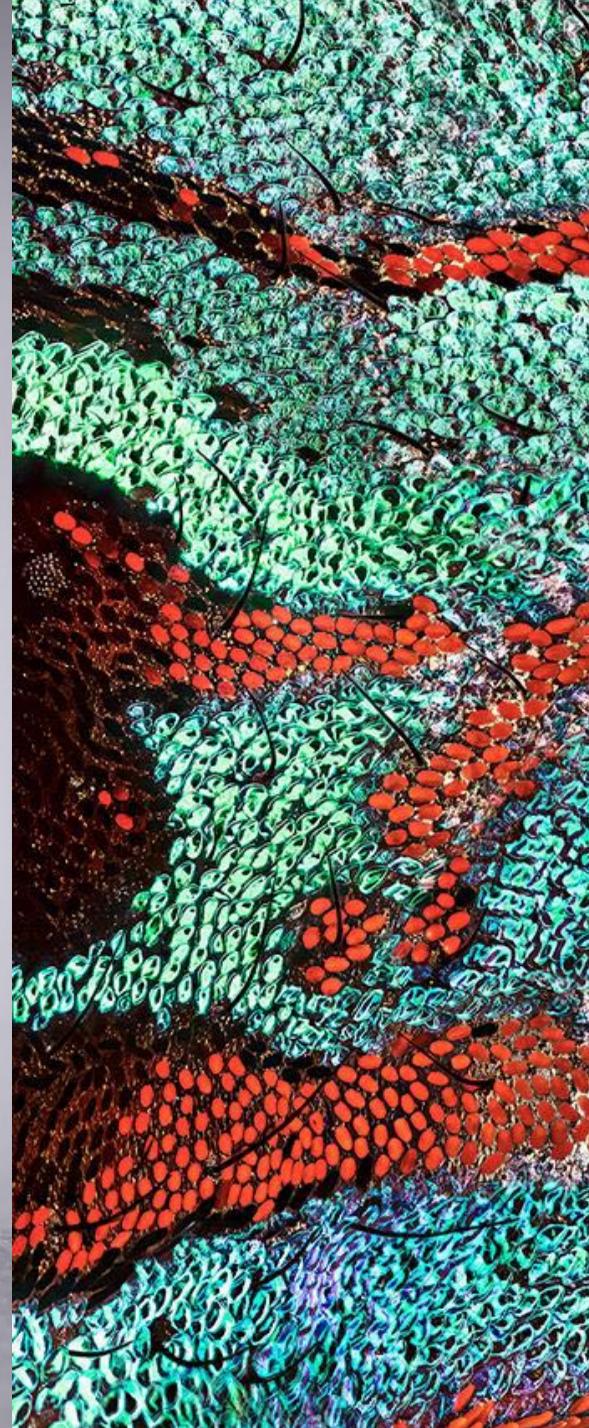
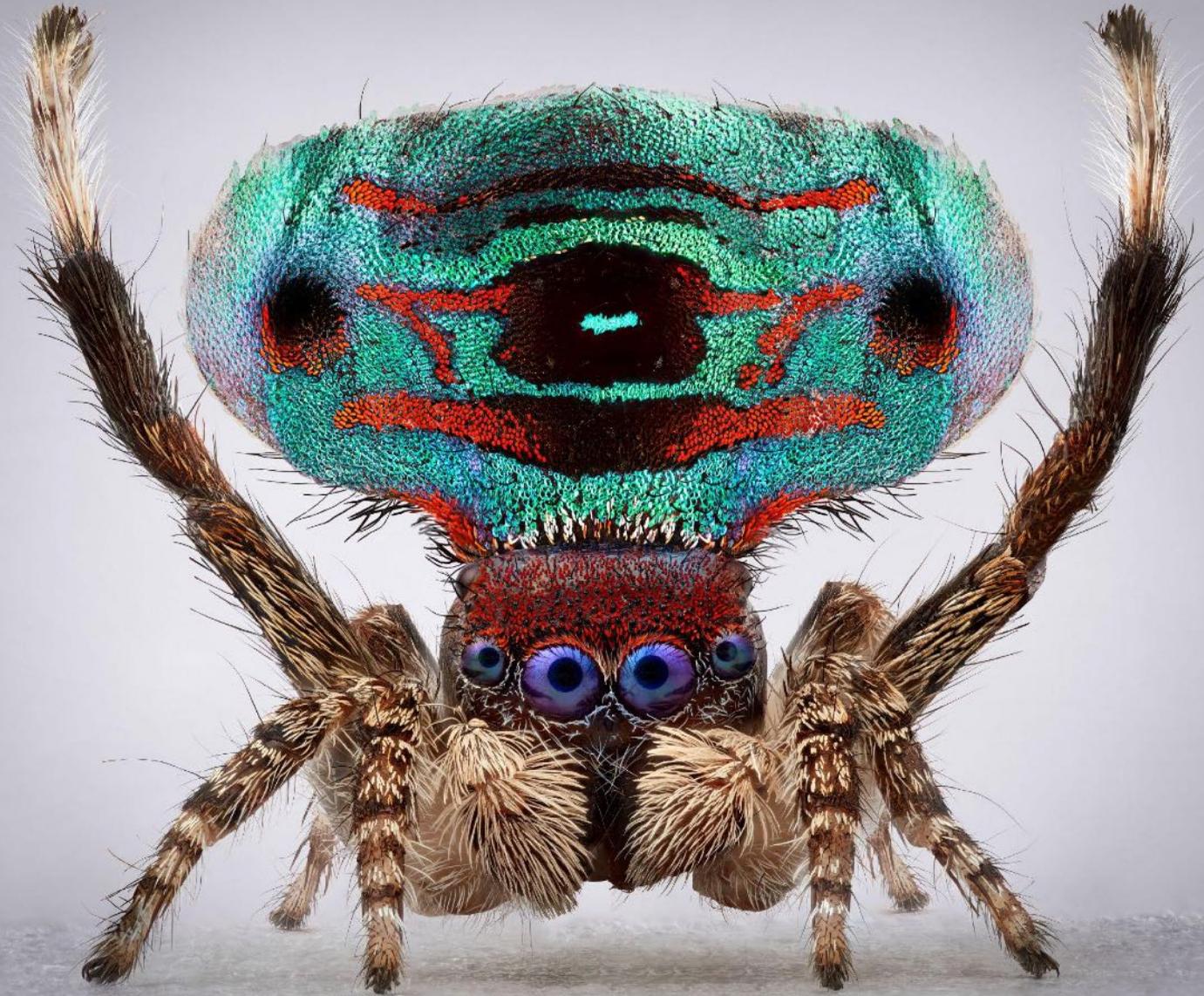
Spiders of Paradise:
Maratus elephans



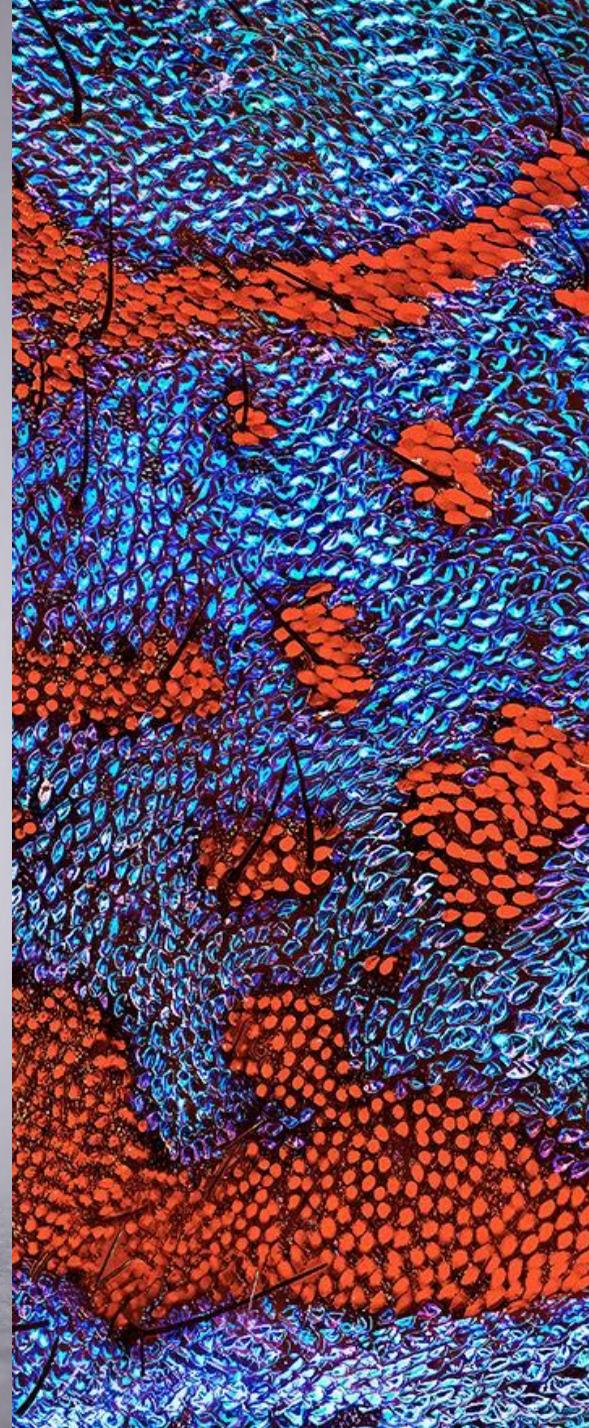
Spiders of Paradise:
Maratus cristatus



Spiders of Paradise: *Maratus karrie*



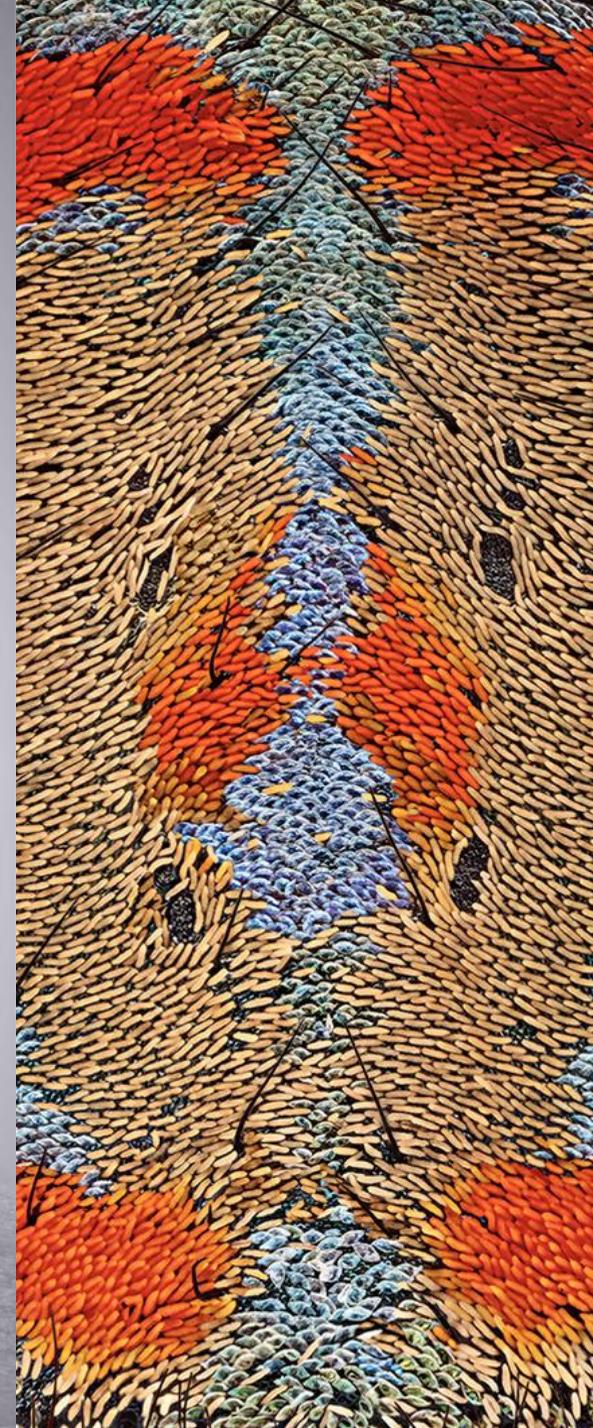
Spiders of Paradise:
Maratus madelineae



Spiders of Paradise:
Maratus plumosus



Spiders of Paradise:
Maratus pavonis



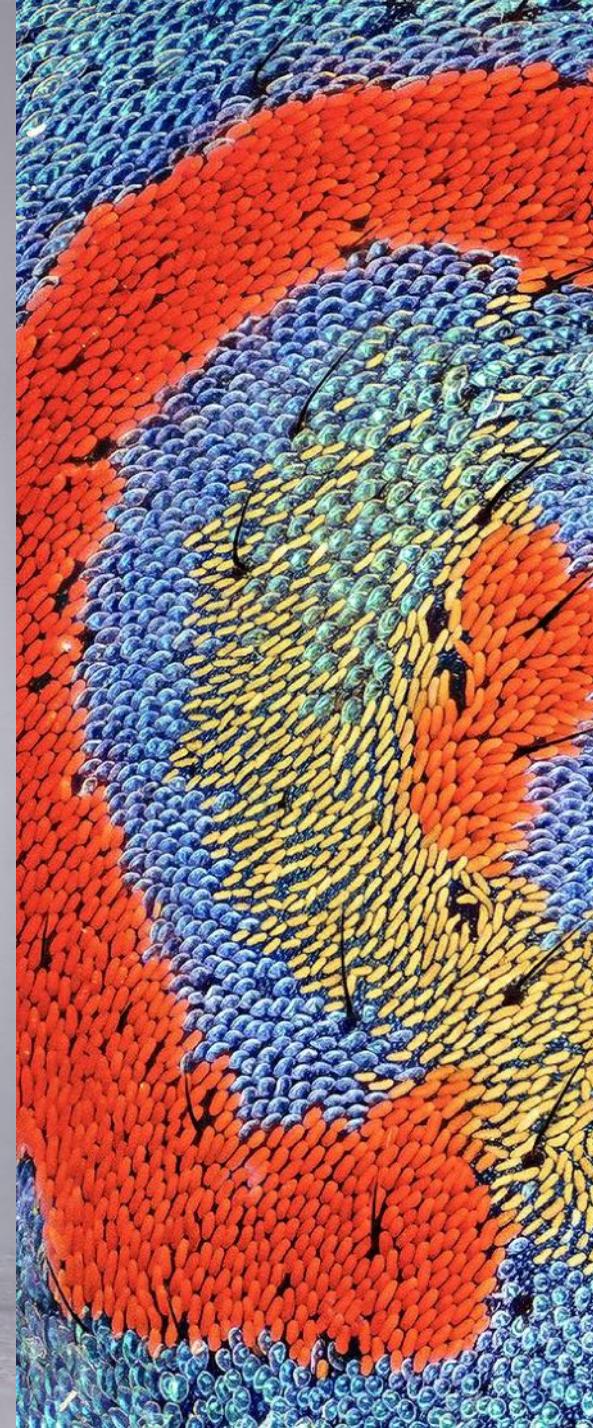
Spiders of Paradise:
Maratus vespertilio



Spiders of Paradise:
Maratus speciosus



Spiders of Paradise:
Maratus splendens



Spiders of Paradise:
Maratus volans





Spiders of Paradise series

2014 – 2024

Pigment print on premium photo paper 300gr mounted on Dibond.

Focus stacked microphotography from over 1000 source images.

Each photograph:

Framed: $61 \frac{3}{4} \times 61 \frac{7}{8} \times 2$ in. / $156.8 \times 157.2 \times 5.1$ cm

Edition of 5 + 2AP

\$18,000

Framed: $35 \frac{7}{8} \times 35 \frac{7}{8} \times 1 \frac{3}{4}$ in. / $91.1 \times 91.1 \times 4.4$ cm

Edition of 6 + 2AP

\$10,000

Actual Size series

2016 – 2021

Pigment print on premium photo paper 300gr mounted on Dibond.

Focus stacked microphotography from 825 source images.

Each photograph:

Framed: $61 \frac{3}{4} \times 61 \frac{7}{8} \times 2$ in. / $156.8 \times 157.2 \times 5.1$ cm.

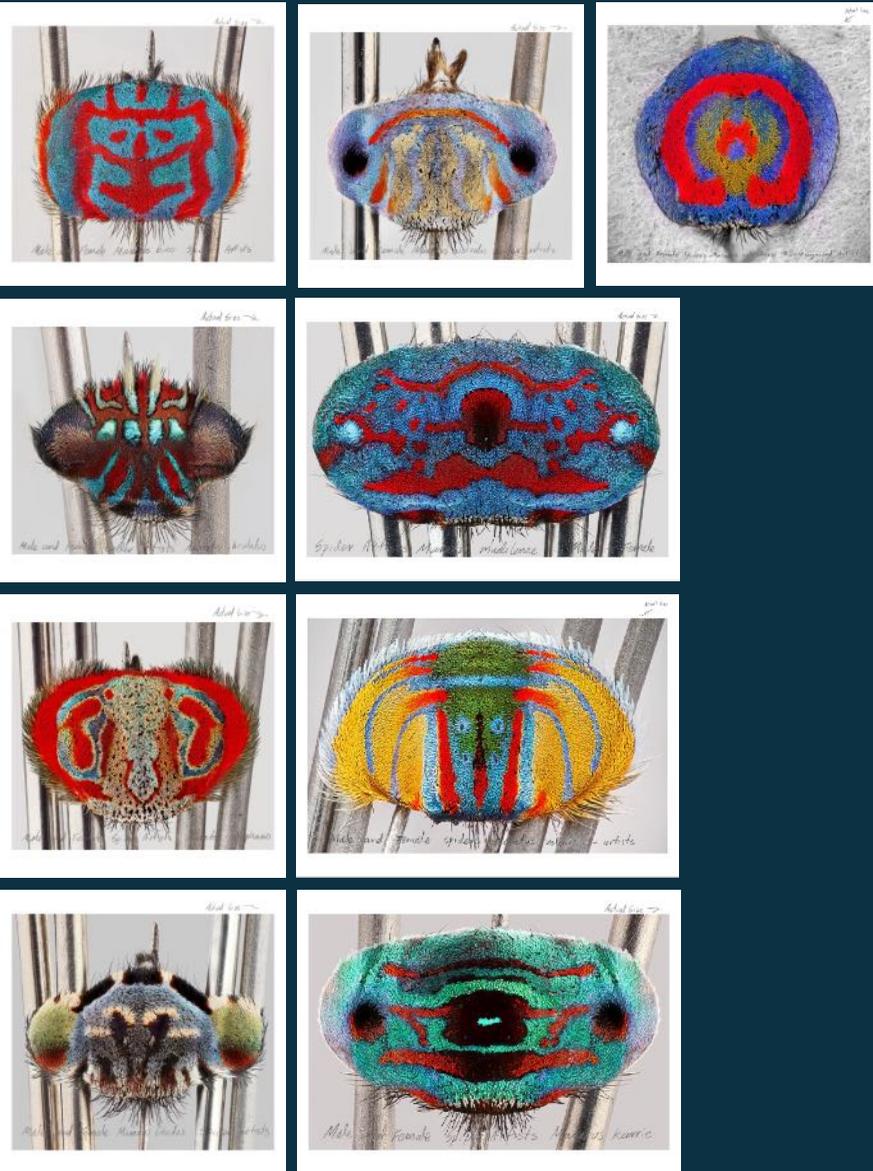
Edition of 5 plus 2 AP

\$18,000

Framed: $61 \frac{3}{4} \times 71 \frac{7}{8} \times 2$ in. / $156.8 \times 182.6 \times 5.1$ cm.

Edition of 5 plus 2 AP

\$20,000



Actual Size series

2016-2021

If paradise were to exist, all its spiders would be artists. They would sing, dance and make beautiful pictures.

The *Actual Size* series features the colourful courtship displays of minuscule Australian jumping spiders. They are surely the world's smallest artists. Magnified hundreds of times their own size, we perceive all the magnificent colours, diverse structures and mesmerising patterns that the males have perfected to seduce their hard-to-get females.

The top right-hand border of this picture includes a portrait of the male and female of the species reproduced at actual size (to show scale). I marvel at the beauty of the pictures these tiny artists have collaboratively created. How can creatures with such minuscule brains have created such beauty and complexity? And while you might not believe me, they don't just make beautiful pictures, they actually do sing and dance.



Actual size VI (Maratus karrie)



Male and female spider Artists Maratus karrie

Actual Size VII (Maratus elephans)





Actual Size VIII (*Maratus lobatus*)



Actual Size X (*Maratus australis*)

Actual Size XI (*Maratus bubo*)



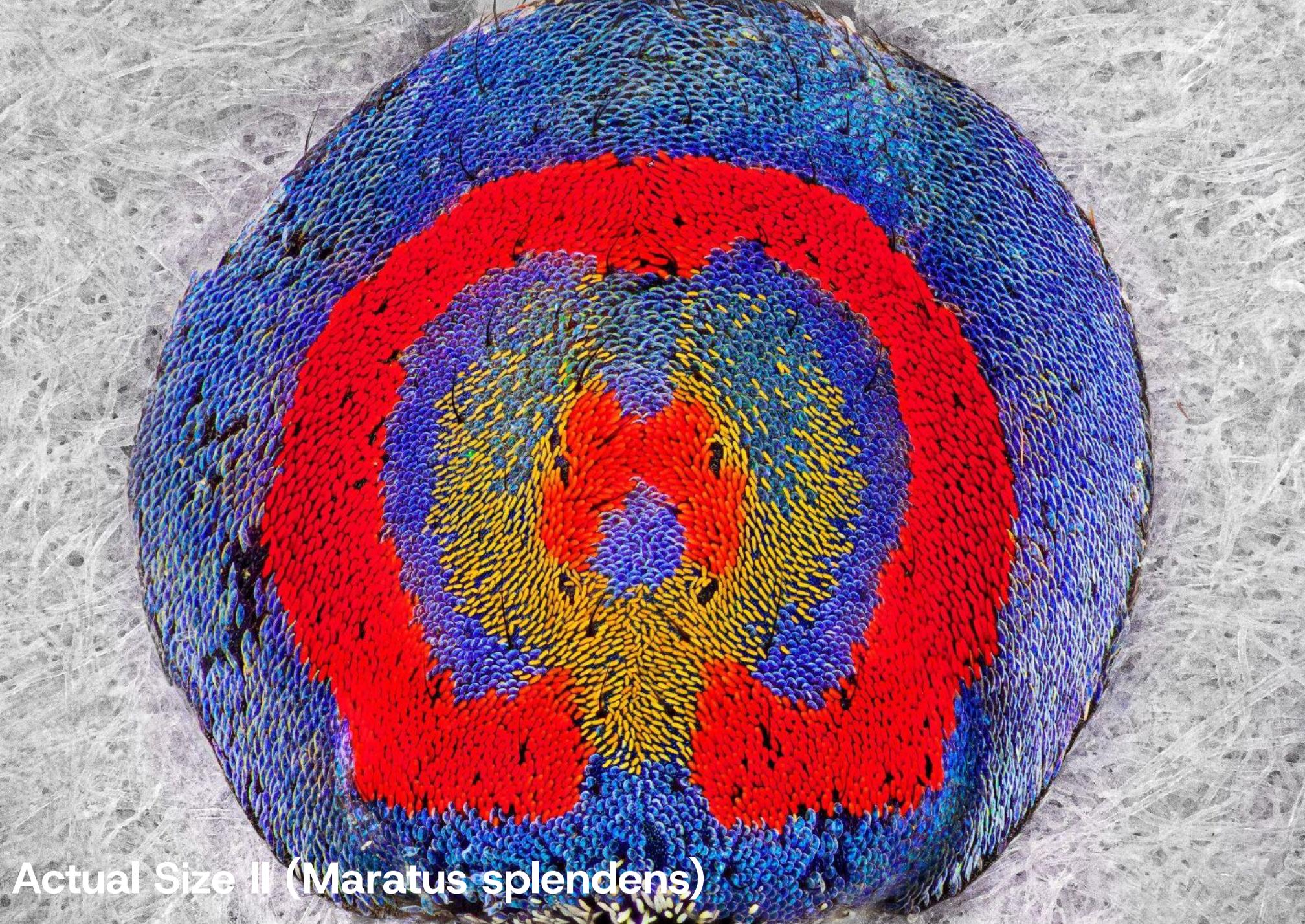
Actual Size IX (*Maratus christatus*)



Actual Size V (*Maratus madelineae*)



Spider Arthropods *Maratus madelineae* Male & Female

A large, roughly spherical object covered in a dense, intricate texture of small, overlapping elements. The object features several concentric, irregular bands of color. The outermost band is a vibrant blue. Inside this is a wide band of bright red. The next band inward is a deep purple. The innermost, most prominent band is a bright yellow. The overall appearance is that of a biological specimen, possibly a seed pod or a piece of coral, with a complex, woven or layered structure. The background is a light, fibrous material.

Actual Size II (*Maratus splendens*)



Actual Size | (Maratus volans) | Maratus volans - artists

María Fernanda Cardoso

María Fernanda Cardoso (born 1963, Bogotá, Colombia) is a Sydney-based international artist whose work explores the intersections between nature, art, science and technology. Over more than four decades, she has developed a practice grounded in close observation of the natural world, revealing its complexity, beauty and intelligence.

A central focus of her work in recent years has been her extensive research into Australian *Maratus* spiders, commonly known as Peacock Spiders. Through her major ongoing project *Spiders of Paradise*, Cardoso has created large-scale photographic portraits and immersive installations that magnify these minute creatures to monumental scale. Each image is composed of over 1,000 individual photographs, meticulously assembled to reveal the spiders' extraordinary colour, structure and performative mating displays. By enlarging what is almost invisible to the human eye, she transforms scientific observation into aesthetic experience.





The project has toured through the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia from 2024–2026 and continues to travel, including the 2025 immersive presentation *Arañas del Paraíso* at the Bogota Biennale for Art and City BOG25. The spider works extend Cardoso's long-standing interest in the aesthetics of reproductive morphology, and the creative forces of the biological phenomena of sexual reproduction, theme she previously explored in her PhD research and in her immersive *Museum of Copulatory Organs MoCO* (2012).

Across her career she has presented 83 solo exhibitions and more than 291 group exhibitions internationally, including at the Museum of Modern Art (New York), Centre Pompidou (Paris), Fundación La Caixa (Barcelona), DAROS Foundation (Zurich), and Museo Reina Sofía (Madrid). She represented Colombia at the Venice Biennale (2003). She has lived and worked in Sydney since 1997.





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