SUNA (Middle Ground)

22 July 2025 – 6 December 2025
University of Queensland Art Museum

Eric Bridgeman + Haus Yuriyal, *SUNA (Middle Ground)* 2020. Installation view exterior for the 22nd Biennale of Sydney (2020), Cockatoo Island. Commissioned by the Biennale of Sydney with generous support from Arts Queensland and the Australia Council for the Arts. Courtesy of the artist; Milani Gallery, Brisbane; and Gallerysmith, Melbourne. Photograph: Alex Robinson.

Artist: *Yuriyal Bridgeman*
Curator: *Jocelyn Flynn*
Curatorial / Cultural Advisor: *Aunty Sana Balai*

Curatorial Synopsis

Yuriyal Bridgeman's monumental installation *SUNA (Middle Ground)*, 2020 is a beacon for storytelling, idea-sharing, and connection. The artwork brings a replica of a raun haus – a traditional Papua New Guinea (PNG) Highlands round house – to the UQ St Lucia campus. A place of safety, rest, and creativity it represents the raun haus that is home to the artist and his extended family, the Yuri Alaiku tribe, as well being the heart of his renowned artistic practice in the Waghi Valley, PNG

In the Waghi Valley, the raun haus serves as the meeting point for the collective founded by Bridgeman, Haus Yuriyal. More than just their studio, the raun haus is a safe place to gather in times of tribal warfare, as well as to share and exchange cultural knowledge through artmaking. As Bridgeman states, "Suna is a word in Yuri language used to describe a middle ground, a safe and central location in a village ideal for gathering, and distant enough from potential conflicts at the borders… Our headquarters is a place of collaborative learning and expression where we tell stories, address conflict, party, draw, paint, film, photograph and come together at times when it is most needed". Audiences are invited by the artist to step into *SUNA (Middle Ground)* in the spirit of original as an action to connect, share, and exchange, to overcome difference and create pathways of deeper understanding of one another.

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For inquiries and image access please contact:
Dr. Alex Tuite, Senior Manager, Advancement and Community Engagement, UQ Art Museum. Email: a.tuite@uq.edu.au

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SUNA (Middle Ground) 2020.
Installation view interior for the 22nd Biennale of Sydney (2020), Cockatoo Island.
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Biography

Yuriyal Bridgeman
Yuri Alaiku. Born 1986, Redcliffe, Queensland. Lives and works between Brisbane, Australia and Papua New Guinea. Recent solo exhibitions include *Yuriyal Bridgeman: yubilong(mi)bilongyu*, Griffith University Art Museum, Brisbane (2024); *Arriving Slowly,* Ipswich Art Gallery, Ipswich (2024); and *Uma,* Cassandra Bird Gallery, Sydney (2024). Selected group exhibitions include *11th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art*, QAGOMA (2024); *Ramsay Art Prize,* Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide (2023); and *NIRIN: 22nd Sydney Biennale*, Cockatoo Island and MCA, Sydney (2020).