

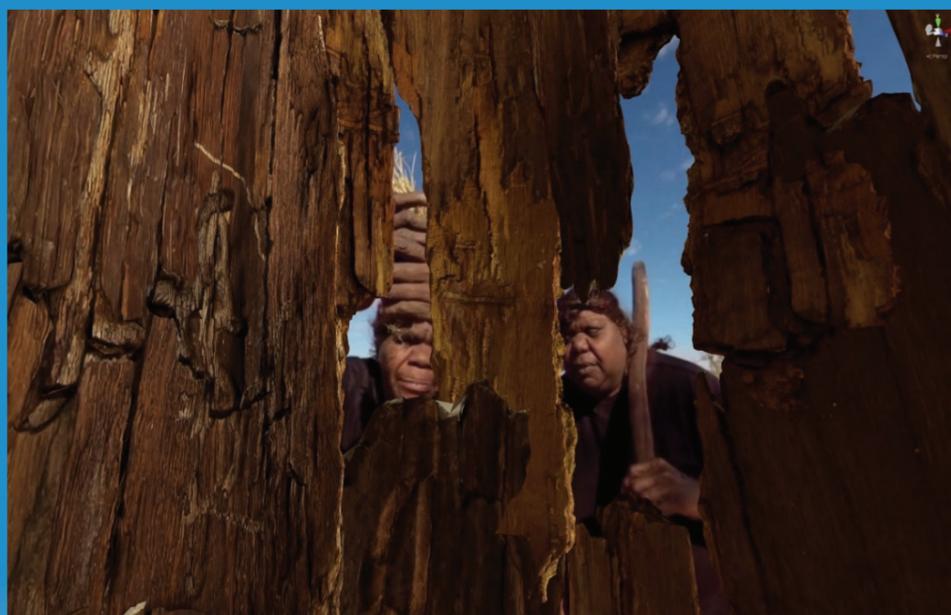
Wau-mananyi the Song On the Wind

The project explores mental health and healing from an Aboriginal perspective. Created by the acclaimed *Uti Kulintjaku*, formed from the Ngangkari traditional healers and artists of the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Women's Council, the collective addresses community issues of mental health from both Aboriginal and Western perspectives.

Working with UNSW *felt Experience and Empathy Lab (feel)*, the team have created a virtual reality work, sharing their healing practices through creative visualisation. *Wau-mananyi: The Song on the Wind* is an Anangu-led response to the experiences of constraint, entrapment and depression through the traditional story of *The Man in the Log*:

A good man, a husband and provider, goes hunting one day and chases an animal into a hollow log, where he becomes hopelessly stuck. While wailing and singing, he manages to hobble back to his two wives, who are baffled by the sound coming from the advancing log. When they realise their husband is inside, they fling themselves about in grief and try to free him. Failing this, they squeeze water-soaked grass through a small opening so he can drink, and then lead and carry him in search of a ngangkari powerful enough to set him free. After much difficulty and the efforts of several ngangkari, the log is cracked to reveal the shrunken, emaciated body of the husband. With the care of his wives and the advice of the healers, he is slowly restored.

The virtual reality experience asks *what is it really like to be physically and mentally trapped in a space that you can't escape from?* In this case you can see through holes in the log and you can see people you love and people in your community, but you can no longer connect with them. A profound metaphor for incarceration, separation, addiction and that sense of powerlessness that many people in aboriginal communities experience.



Wives: Rene Wanuny Kulitja, Pantjiti Imitjala Lewis
 Husband, Singer: David Miller
 Skinny Man: Johnny Jingo
 Ngangkari: Roy Yaltjank, David Miller
 Ngangkari community: Pantjiti Unkari McKenzie, Naomi Kantjurinyi, Ilawanti Ungkutjuru Ken, Nyunmiti Burton, Margaret Smith, Theresa Nipper, Tjulapi Alison Carroll, Niningka Lewis.

Production Design: Uti Kulintjaku
 Storyboards/Title Art: Rene Kulitja
 Producers: Jill Bennett, Angela Lynch, Lisa Stefanoff
 Art Director & Production Design (Digital): Volker Kuchelmeister
 Sound Recordist & Audio Design: Leah Barclay
 Interpreters: Kathy Tozer, Beth Sometimes, Patrick Hookey
 Assistant Producer: Bec Dean
 Photographer: Rhett Hammerton
 VR Deployment: Xueqing Lu

A co-production of: Uti Kulintjaku, Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Women's Council (Aboriginal Corporation), FEEL - Felt Experience and Empathy Lab (UNSW Art & Design)

Special thanks: Mamie Butler (Chair, NPYWC), NPYWC Directors, Wanatjura Lewis (Uti Kulintjaku), Nyurapaya Kaika-Burton (Uti Kulintjaku), Kulpitjata, Emma Trenorden (Uti Kulintjaku), Martin Toraille (NPYWC Men's Program), Felix Meyer (NPYWC Youth Team), Carolin 'Sofie' Müller, Luis Dominguez (UNSW Literoom), Melissa Neidorf (UNSW NIEA), Tanja Farman (UNSW/The Big Anxiety), Tammy Brennan (UNSW/The Big Anxiety), John McGhee (UNSW Art & Design), Benjamin Bailey (UNSW Art & Design).

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The UNSW felt Experience Empathy Lab (FEEL) brings together psychologists and arts researchers utilising immersive visualisation technology to advance the study of subjective experience. With the larger social goal of transforming our capacity to understand stigmatised and devalued populations, and of effectively remediating the effects of stigmatisation and prejudice, it generates insight into first-person perspectives and the dynamic connections that promote societal empathy.

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