



# Buoyed up

The ship comes in for a popular Canberra attraction, thanks to an artistic project team and marine paint.

When Jacinta Fintan was out on the water in one of Lake Burley Griffin's iconic paddleboats as a child, she never could have imagined that she would be involved in transforming the look of those same vessels decades later. Until recently, the age of the nearly 40-year-old paddleboats had been starting to show despite concerted efforts to maintain and conserve them. But last year, while Jacinta was producing SURFACE Festival (an annual large-scale street art festival that has seen 35 different artists take to 31 walls in the Canberra region), a unique opportunity arose.

"SURFACE Festival was sponsored by the Australian Capital Territory Government and one of our festival partners was the National Capital Authority (NCA)," explains Jacinta. "Some of our SURFACE Festival artists painted two of the NCA's pedestrian underpasses at the National Triangle as part of the programming, and during our discussions, the NCA raised the idea of organising street artists to repaint the Lake Burley Griffin paddleboats."

Over the course of three months, the attraction's 14 paddleboats were brought back to life – with the first 12 designs each representing iconic cultural institutions in the National Triangle, including the National Museum of Australia, the National Library of Australia, the National Film & Sound Archive, the National Archives of Australia, Visit Canberra, Questacon, the Museum



of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House, the Royal Australian Mint, the Australian Parliament House and the National Capital Authority. "The final two boats featured designs created by local Indigenous artists Paul Girrawah House and Richie Allan. Paul's artwork draws from the work he does with tree carvings, and there are examples of his work at the Australian National University and Parliament House. And Richie is great at sharing Ngannawal culture and stories through his designs," says Jacinta.

"As an arts producer and project manager, the paddleboats have been a unique and exciting project for me. They have a really special place in many people's hearts, thrilling new visitors with their retro shapes and evoking childhood memories for others. I have memories of paddling on them as a kid in Canberra when I would visit my grandmother," she adds.

Jacinta says each cultural institution provided their own unique digital design which was then translated onto a paddleboat by a creative team led by Sydney artist Kailin Hegel. The majority of the boats were meticulously hand-painted using Resene Uracryl 403, a urethane-acrylic gloss finish, over basecoats of marine paint and primer from Altex Coatings. Altex Coatings ([www.altexcoatings.com](http://www.altexcoatings.com)) is part of the Resene

left and below: The freshly repainted paddleboats are out on the water again at Lake Burley Griffin in Canberra. 12 of the boats represent iconic cultural institutions in the National Triangle and two display culturally significant designs by Indigenous artists. After careful cleaning, prepping and priming, basecoats of marine paint from Altex Coatings were applied before the final designs were hand-painted in Resene Uracryl 403.

-  Resene White
-  Resene Happy
-  Resene Big Bang
-  Resene Sorbus
-  Resene Deco
-  Resene Serenity
-  Resene Half Grey Chateau
-  Resene Wind Talker



Group and supplies a wide range of high-performance protective, fireproofing, flooring and marine paints and coatings – so the team was confident that they had the right products to get the job done from start to finish.

“The team at Syrus Works undertook the initial prep work on the boats, which included removal of the rubber bumper bars, sanding, cleaning and priming. They also assisted with the handling of the boats – each weighs over 100 kilograms – which needed to be rotated in and out of the warehouse during painting. They were fantastic to work with.

“Once the primer was on, it was over to Kailin to begin undercoating. The paint pigments were beautiful, and the boat colours absolutely ‘pop’ on Lake Burley Griffin. Our creative design production artist, Paul Shanta, worked very closely with the NCA and some of their clients to ensure the colours were spot on. Local artist Sophie Maguire – or Flinkbag, as she’s known as a street artist – also joined the team when it became apparent that we needed extra help.”

Jacinta says she’s worked with Resene on a number of public art commissions and mural festivals, so it was natural to contact them for advice on how best to prep and repaint the paddleboats. “The depth of colour that Resene products provide is next level, which is so important for outdoor murals in built-up urban environments. I’d heard that Resene had a marine product line and knew that they were the right brand for the job. The Resene ColorShop staff were exceptionally

helpful during the process, and the team at Altex Coatings was incredible. Our artists hadn’t worked with these engineered coatings before and they were able to work closely with us to provide answers to our many questions so that we were able to really push the parameters of how the paint can be used. They helped us with everything, right down to the right measuring cups for the two-pack paint and our many questions around drying times.

“One of the key lessons that we learnt was that Canberra’s temperature fluctuations in September really impact drying times. We had a cold spell with unusually cold nights that slowed down drying times, which we hadn’t expected. Our artists adapted to the product on the fly, which is a testament to the depth and strength of their brush skills.”

With the boats back in the water again, Jacinta says the team is really happy with how the finished artwork turned out. “Everyone involved in this project – from the guys moving the boats to the paint suppliers to the artists – were absolutely critical to its success. While the paddleboats had been conserved, they were in a humble state when we received them. They were never designed to accommodate complicated paintwork, particularly with the non-slip fibreglass treads built into the floor sections that we had to work around. However, the paddleboats are so bright and colourful now, and they make people smile. From the looks of social media, the makeovers are getting a lot of love.”










“We have received such positive feedback from customers and the general public walking past,” says Amy Weatherby, Manager at Capital Paddle, the private operator that runs the historic paddleboats. “We constantly overhear, ‘oh, look at that one’ and ‘which one is your favourite?’ We also enjoy seeing Canberra’s cultural institutions represented in a way that they imagined and designed that is both a benefit to us as a small business and gives them the recognition within the community.”

Those who have their eye on taking a specific boat out for a spin are in luck, as Amy says that visitors who come down for a paddle get to pick which one they want to captain. “Each boat has its own characteristics and story behind the design, and there doesn’t seem to be one that is favoured more than any other.”

As for Jacinta’s favourite? She says, “the rainbow Questacon boat, without a doubt. All the colours, all the love.” **BW**

For hours, rates and to make a plan for a paddle, visit [www.capitalpaddle.com.au](http://www.capitalpaddle.com.au). For more on SURFACE Festival, turn to page 51 or visit [www.surfacefestival.com.au](http://www.surfacefestival.com.au).

**artistic painters** Kailin Hegel, Flinkbag (Sophie Maguire)  
**creative design production artist** Paul Shanta  
**painting assistant** Dai Cameron  
**production** Jacinta Fintan  
**preparation and priming** Syrus Works ACT  
**images** Michael Gardiner

	Resene Seagull
	Resene Malibu
	Resene Fountain Blue
	Resene Tomorrow
	Resene Curious Blue
	Resene Point Break
	Resene Captain Cook
	Resene Double Resolution Blue
	Resene Daisy Bush
	Resene Hip Hop
	Resene All Black

**left, centre and right:**

Artists Kailin Hegel and Flinkbag (Sophie Maguire) hand-painted the new designs for the paddleboats using Resene Uracryl 403. The vibrant repaints feature Resene Gorse, Resene Smitten, Resene Tomorrow, Resene Hip Hop, Resene Fountain Blue, Resene Malibu, Resene Captain Cook, Resene Sorbus, Resene Daisy Bush, Resene Seagull, Resene Deco, Resene Wind Talker, Resene Outrageous, Resene Happy, Resene Apple, Resene Curious Blue, Resene Point Break, Resene Big Bang, Resene Double Resolution Blue, Resene Serenity, Resene Carissima, Resene Half Grey Chateau, Resene All Black and Resene White.

