



Field of Light



Australia's 'Red Centre' has been transformed with the arrival of Bruce Munro's *Field of Light*. Planted in the foreground of Uluru and comprising some 50,000 solar lights atop slender stems, the monumental installation creates a visual impression of a field of glowing buds which sway in the evening breeze as the sun sets over Australia's spiritual heartland.

Illuminating the outback every night, *Field of Light* covers an area greater than four football fields on land owned by Ayers Rock Resort, part of Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia. The installation is positioned about 18 kilometres from the north side of Uluru. Longitude 131° is delighted to be an event partner in *Field of Light* and to share this magical experience for our guests with exclusive access.

About Bruce Munro

British artist Bruce Munro is best known for producing large immersive light-based installations, which often employ a massing of components by the thousands. An artistic diarist, he has spent over 30 years collecting and recording ideas and images in his sketchbooks, which he returns to over time as source material. Language, literature, science, and music have also greatly influenced his work. Frequently, Bruce's subject matter is his own experience of fleeting moments of rapport with the world and existence in its largest sense of being part of life's essential pattern. His reoccurring motif is the use of light on an environmental scale in order to create an emotional response for the viewer.

Born in London in 1959, he completed a B.A. in Fine Arts at Bristol in 1982. Shortly after he moved to Sydney where he worked in design and lighting, inspired by Australia's natural light and landscape. Returning to England in 1992, he settled in Wiltshire, where together with his wife, Serena, raised four children. His work has been shown at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London; Waddesdon Manor, the Rothschild Collection, Buckinghamshire; and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. It is held in museum collections internationally including the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. brucemunro.co.uk

Artist's statement

The idea for *Field of Light* first landed in my sketch book in January 1992. I had been living in Australia for eight years, and my fiancée (now wife) Serena and I embarked on a camping farewell tour of Australia prior to our return to England. While camping at Uluru, the Red Centre seemed to radiate ideas like heat, and I dreamed of an artwork that would bloom at night, like dormant desert seeds responding to rain.

It was an idea that stubbornly stayed lodged in my mind over the succeeding years, but I didn't have any opportunity to make a large version until 2004, in the field behind my house in rural Wiltshire. We left it up for a year to test it, and people began popping up at odd times to visit it, and that's when I began to notice that the gentle movement of the lights, not shimmering but almost breathing, created a response. The installation seems to inspire many thoughts and ideas; it brings people together and most importantly makes people smile, a worthy epitaph for a moment of inspiration in life's journey.



Between 2004 and now, I have had the good fortune to be asked to recreate the *Field of Light* in many forms. For each iteration, the piece begins at its original starting point, for the landscape it inhabits defines the work. Each version of the *Field of Light* is an organic piece that over time has stretched across fields, along city parks and through forested land, in urban squares, on building roofs and over rocky buttes.

In May 2015, I paid my third visit to Uluru, with the joyous task to finally have the honour and privilege of creating an iteration of this artwork for the place that inspired it. A work conceived in the red desert returns to its birthplace springing from the dry ground. The spiritual majesty of the sacred rock was ever present and I found myself sighing with relief when I realised that my artistic attempt to pay homage to this special place was not just some whimsical folly, but a small gift to a large presence. As I set foot again in the landscape I knew that this *Field of Light* needed a form that symbolised and manifested the evolution of thoughts and ideas over the intervening years.

The *Field of Light* at Uluru represents the convergence of the land and culture and my own re-learning. This iteration is inspired by culture in its structure and form; a graphic description of all the thoughts and ideas of my own journey. The concept of time is important as Uluru is inextricably linked to a significant past, present and future. The natural pathways created by the artwork will draw viewers into the installation: my past, our present, Uluru's timeless future.

Each iteration of *Field of Light* has led to a reaction. I have learnt that the work has allowed the viewer to lose themselves within it, that it has inspired, led to love, healed sadness, that it has made people think. Of course I had not imagined nor planned for such responses but it speaks of the feeling of 'forever and always' truth that ephemeral experience sometimes creates, a sense connection and shared experience. All of us want to connect with the sense of being part of something larger than our single lives. This connection is no more important anywhere than at Uluru, an area sculpted by landscape and culture and shared memory.

Anangu blessing

Field of Light has the blessing of the local Anangu people, who named it Tili Wiru Tjuta Nyakutjaku, in local Pitjantjatjara - or 'Looking at lots of beautiful lights'.

Artwork statistics

This is the largest iteration of Bruce Munro's *Field of Light* to date comprising **50,000 stems**.

The installation covers an area of over **49,000 square metres** and is a circular formation of 250 metres in diameter (or the size of four premier league football pitches). The artwork is made up of **300,000 component parts**.

Over 380 kilometres (236 miles) of optical fibre is used in the installation, if this was laid out in a straight line this is equivalent to the distance from Sydney to Wagga Wagga or from Los Angeles to Las Vegas. The fibre is reusable and will be recycled for use in other installations.

The exhibition was created in the UK over a period of **five months** including finalising the design, ordering of materials and pre-construction.

The installation took over **2,800 hours** to design and build in the UK and a further **3,900 hours** to recreate on site.

This is Bruce's first **solar-powered** installation. 36 portable solar panels are installed to interface with the 144 projectors used in the installation.

Six UK based art technicians, four AUS/US based art handlers and up to 15 volunteers were involved in the installation over a period of **five weeks**.

The distance between the Bruce Munro Studio and Uluru is **19,000 kilometres** (11,800 miles). This is the farthest a piece of Bruce's artwork has travelled to an exhibition.