

Carat brings together a powerhouse of media partners and talent to launch their virtual one-day festival, COUCH-ELLA 2020

On Thursday (14th May), Carat Australia, together with Dentsu's brand experience & entertainment agency, MKTG, will surprise and delight a group of 1,500+ people. This day, overflowing with a myriad of entertainment, will launch the inaugural virtual one-day festival, Carat COUCH-ELLA 2020.

The invitation-only event has been sent to clients, media partners, Carat/Dentsu staff and journalists with the offer to join in on a day that is sure to be bursting with inspirational content and providing much relief within this new normal.

Sue Squillace, CEO of Carat Australia said: "We felt it was very important to enjoy some time together with a shared interest and passion for the industry we are in and to engage with our clients, staff and our media partners in a fun, unique and exciting way.

"It's so important to remain connected, stay positive and upbeat about our industry, and the opportunities media provides businesses to connect with audiences and drive the economy. This will be a united industry on show," Squillace added.

The festival begins at 9am, running until 6pm and will navigate through entertainment segments such as comedy, fitness, mental health, DIY, cooking, singing, among others.

The Today Show's Entertainment Reporter, Brooke Boney, will be there to introduce several of the segments, whilst musician and entertainer, Hugo Bladel, will be the festival's MC, connecting the dots between segments and making sure energy levels are up.

There will be a range of topics to keep viewers engaged throughout the day. From a financial fitness program, to some old school exercise. There will be sporting heroes, celebrity chefs and even renovation experts providing advice. Added to this will be meditation, dance classes and music artists to keep the entertainment flowing. Rounding out the day will be tips for staying mentally fit in isolation, as well as some very exciting music acts to give the day a true festival vibe.

As well as the above guests will gain access to an author sharing his debut book, the international debut of a song from Australia's hottest drag queen and entertainer, plus some special guests from LA.

Special thanks to all the partners that have made Carat COUCH-ELLA 2020 possible:

Network Nine, Network Ten, Network Seven, Nova Entertainment, Daily Mail Australia, ARN, oOH Media and Junkee, QMS, News Corp, Foxtel Media, and Verizon Media.

Mark Fairhurst, QMS Chief Customer Officer: "The media landscape has been through a lot over the past few months and has forced us all to pivot and re-think how we all do business.

QMS Media and QMS Sport are big believers in being Stronger Together, so with Carat's one day virtual festival we saw a tremendous opportunity to

help Carat's staff and clients come together and take some time to stop, reflect and connect with each other.

Together with Olympian Cate Campbell, we are excited to give the team at Carat a real insight into adapting to life with restrictions, how to handle adversity, as well as the secrets of how to keep focused on goals and staying motivated for when we can be back in the great outdoors, playing sport and getting ready to cheer on the Australian athletes in what will be a highly anticipated Olympics return. “

Liana Dubois, Nine's Director of Powered: “We couldn't be more excited to participate in Carat COUCH-ELLA 2020. I have been so impressed with how Carat has pivoted this event for the current environment in a fun and engaging way. Throughout the day we'll be showcasing the breadth of Nine's H2 entertainment offering and useful segments from both Ninja Warrior and The Block.”

Luke Minto, NOVA Entertainment's Sydney Commercial Director and Market Lead: “The team at NOVA are delighted to provide a premium experience for the festival.

Nova's Red Room Sundowner Session will be a unique experience that takes the respected Nova's Red Room brand to a new digital platform, offering the audience a special opportunity to connect with revered artists via live stream.

Hosted by Nova's Ryan 'Fitzy' Fitzgerald, international DJ and producer Regard will perform exclusively for guests of Carat COUCH-ELLA 2020, along with a performance by a surprise artist.”

Georgi Pell, With Her In Mind Network (News Corp) General Manager: “As a lifestyle publishing group, the physical and mental health of our clients and partners is paramount. We feel a strong sense of responsibility to step up and help them navigate the uncertainties of today with practical solutions from Kidspot and body+soul to help optimise their health at home.

We're so happy to be part of Carat's great initiative.”

Rachel Page, National Sales Director, Verizon Media: “Verizon Media and Yahoo Finance are thrilled to be involved in Carat COUCH-ELLA 2020. Yahoo Finance has experienced strong audience growth during this period as people's financial situation changes, so our editorial team are well placed to share their insights on how to make your money work harder at the digital festival. Uniting to provide the Carat community with some light entertainment, helpful content and connection will be a wonderful relief after many weeks of challenge for our industry.”

Michael Stanford, Head of 10 Imagine, National Creative Director: "This is a brilliant initiative from Carat. We hope everyone learns, connects and enjoys the experience, and thrilled we could offer some heart pumping and heart skipping tips!"

Pete Whitehead, ARN Chief Commercial Officer: “ARN are excited to bring a little light entertainment to Carat, their staff, clients and media friends at such an innovative event. Christian O'Connell, UK broadcast legend turned Australian radio star and Amanda Keller, one of this country's most loved personalities, will be giving Carat COUCH-ELLA 2020 audiences a sneak peek into Christian's upcoming podcast series. Christian and Amanda will absolutely entertain and bring their unique brand of story-telling and humour alive, in this live to-air interview.”

Peter Holder, Managing Director, Daily Mail Australia: “This incredible initiative from Carat is a true testament to our industry's community spirit. While this is undoubtedly a challenging time for agencies, publishers and clients, our industry is based on ingenuity, collaboration and ultimately a sense of

family – which is what Carat COUCH-ELLA 2020 represents. We will chat with the coverage queen Roxy Jacenko and career chameleon Tim "Rosso" Ross to peel back the curtain on what it really takes to grab the attention of the press and how this time has impacted them personally. We have always aimed to both inform and entertain our community of readers which is the same energy we will bring to the festival."

Toby Dewar, Head of Client Engagement at Foxtel Media: "Foxtel are delighted to be a part of Carat COUCH-ELLA 2020 - a great way for us all to enjoy some light-hearted entertainment. We are proud to bring along 'fun lovin' Foxtel talent Jason Dundas (The Watchlist), dialling in live from LA and talking all things celebrity and Matty Johns (Fox Sports), giving us the inside scoop on the long-awaited return of the NRL!

Initiatives like this help us all stay connected, and it's an extremely rare opportunity to have all media partners working alongside each other for one common cause. We can't wait."

Nathan Shakespeare, Junkee Media Sales Director: "It's a pleasure to have the opportunity to entertain and brighten a day for our industry, by partnering with Carat to bring drag superstar Courtney Act to Carat COUCH-ELLA 2020.

Now, more than ever, we're all craving human contact, a shared experience, and - most importantly - a laugh. Courtney Act will deliver this in spades, as she takes us behind the makeup for a candid live Q&A, and premieres some amazing new material she's been developing in isolation. Iso has been a time of learning for many, and this act will be full of things you weren't expecting to learn. We've all tuned into many a stream over the past weeks, but I have no doubt that this will be the best one yet."

Kurt Burnette, Chief Revenue Officer, Seven West Media: "We are pumped to be part of Carat COUCH-ELLA 2020. It's a fantastic way to bring people together in this strange time and hopefully having Manu cook "the perfect steak" will inspire some budding chefs out there. I only wish Manu would be able to home deliver his finished product!"

Contacts

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