



ARTISTS

Vernon Ah Kee
Tony Albert
Jeffa Aniba-Waia
Richard Bell
Joanne Nalingu Currie
Emily Ngarnal Evans
Mirdidingkingathi Juwarnda Sally Gabori
Samantha Hobson
Gordon Hookey
Ricardo Idagi
Arone Meeks
Roy McIvor
Lisa Michl Ko-Manggen
Billy Missi
George Nona
Zane Saunders
Ian Waldron
Judy Watson

EXHIBITION

INTRODUCTION

We have adopted a jigsaw metaphor to underlie our philosophical approach to CIAF as a multi-faceted event. Both within CIAF itself and in associated venues throughout Cairns, we have aimed for a substantial taste of the breadth of art made by Indigenous artists in and from Queensland. I have selected an exhibition that must be seen as part of this jigsaw.

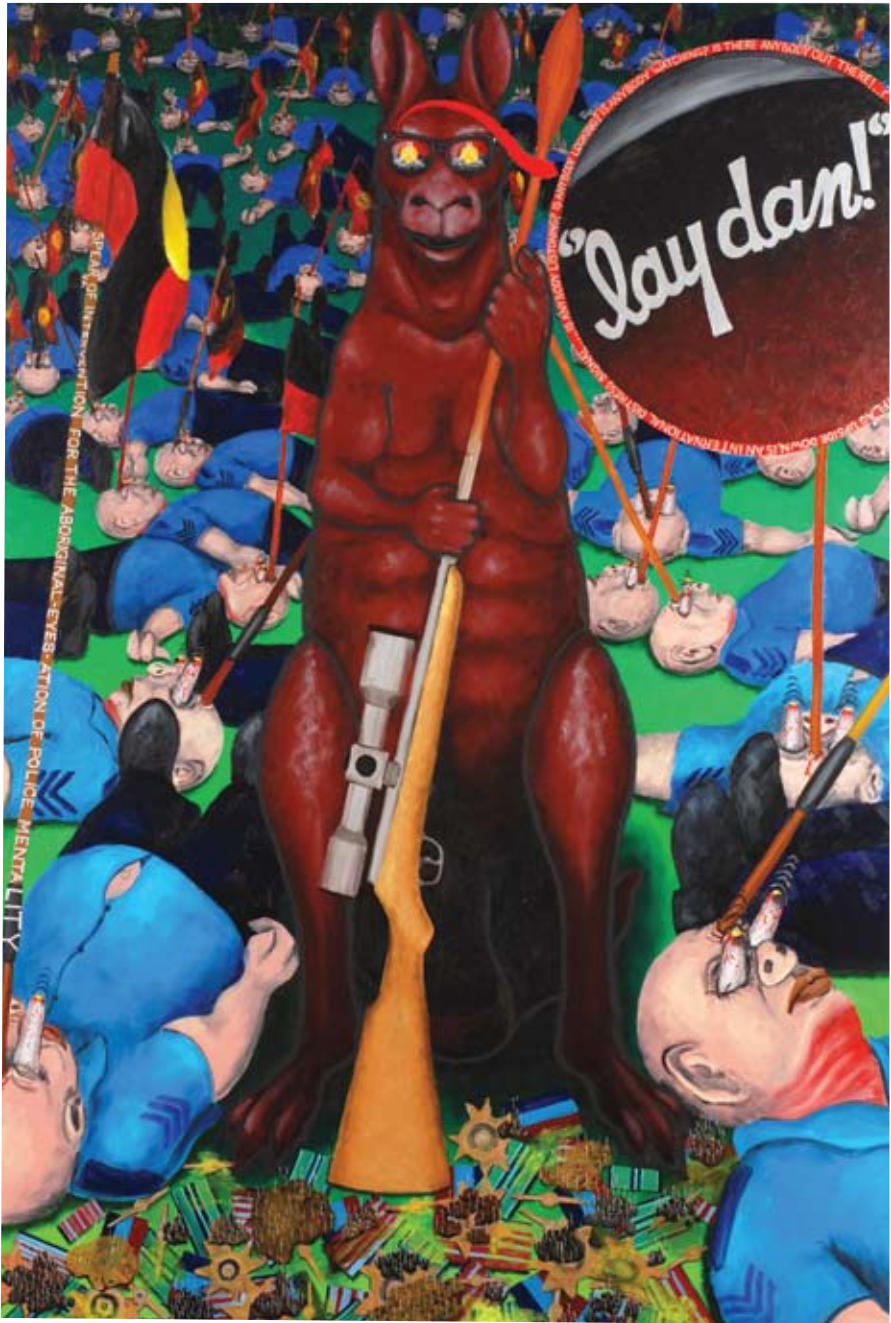
The two main stimuli for the Exhibition had to do with absence. In the second half of 2008 it seemed that the travails of the world economy could jeopardise CIAF to a degree that we could not confidently predict. It was easy to imagine a scenario whereby many galleries would not be able to commercially justify their participation. We felt that if the worst case scenarios came to pass, then a selling exhibition would still meet some of the Art Fair's aims.

However, any art fair only represents those artists whose galleries attend, and even then perhaps only a couple of that gallery's stable of artists would be on show. Many galleries don't do art fairs at all. So an exhibition was also a very positive way of improving on this structural shortcoming in the conventional art fair model by providing a showcase for artists who would otherwise not be seen.

I have mostly selected artists who are not visible elsewhere in CIAF. The exceptions reflect early commitments when the space was larger; where particularities of the work, such as its scale, were a consideration; or where the work was created through the State Government's Backing Indigenous Arts program.

I must also acknowledge the much appreciated advice I have received from Avril Quail, Principal Project Officer of the Queensland Indigenous Arts Marketing & Export Agency; Bruce McLean, Associate Curator, Indigenous Australian Art, Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art and Beverly Knight, Director of Alcaston Gallery. I have also been very blessed in having the presence of Semah Hodges in a Curatorial Assistant capacity. They have given me frank appraisals and contributed to the best aspects of the Exhibition. The presentation is largely due to the meticulous oversight of Chris Stannard at Tanks Arts Centre and his team. Thanks are also due to Michael O'Sullivan at the Queensland Art Gallery for early assistance with the designs.

Michael Snelling
Director



GORDON HOOKEY *Spears of Intervention* 2009.
Oil on canvas 300 cm x 200 cm.



KOKN



TAKAL

DJAB

KOVARRA

ALGEDA

Semah Hodges

Cairns Indigenous Art Fair brings together a selective exhibition to showcase some of the most intriguing Queensland Indigenous artists currently practising. The Exhibition is intended to give an insight into something previously hidden: the diversity of Queensland's Indigenous talent, *algeda* now. *Algeda* is a word from the creole language of the Torres Strait people deriving from the English language, simply meaning 'all together'.

Queensland Indigenous artists have come to the foreground of Australia's contemporary art, and this Art Fair and Exhibition is a great opportunity to place together some of the most innovative and groundbreaking artists of our time.



Left:
IAN WALDRON *Yuarr (Bloodwood Tree)* (detail) 2009.
Acrylic on canvas 120 cm x 170 cm.

Right:
EMILY NGARNAL EVANS *Balibal – Spotted Stingray*
2007. Synthetic polymer paint on linen 101 cm x 101 cm.

It is a significant historical moment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists from Queensland as it will be the first time most of these artists will have exhibited together in the North. It is also an opportunity for the broader local community to share this abundance of culture with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in a wider context of dance and music.

The Exhibition is selective: the artists had to be of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background and of Queensland origin, and the scope of the works had to be a good representation from across Queensland. The state was divided loosely into four areas: the Torres Strait, Cape York, Cairns and its surrounds, and the rest of Queensland. The natural limitations of exhibition space and the three-day exhibition time frame precluded many works, such as complex installations or film and video works. Artists who were not represented elsewhere in the Art Fair and the other satellite venues were prioritised.



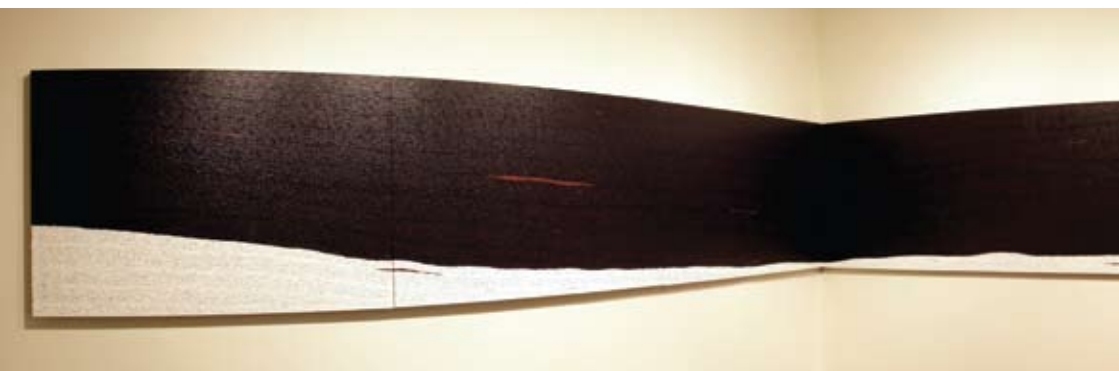
TONY ALBERT studio 2009.
Photograph Michael Shelling.

RICHARD BELL *Kick Somebody Else* 2008.
Acrylic on canvas 240 cm x 180 cm.





MIRDIDINGKINGATHI JUWARNDA SALLY GABORI *My Country* 2008.
Synthetic polymer paint on linen 193 cm x 300 cm.



JOANNE NALINGU CURRIE *Dark River Line* 2009. Acrylic on canvas, nine panels each 100 cm x 153 cm (100 cm x 1375 cm). Installation views (Museum of Brisbane). Photograph Carl Warner.

The Cairns Indigenous Art Fair Exhibition delivers a diversity of media and ideas, a geography from the tip of the Torres Strait to the south-east corner of Queensland, an aesthetic range from the traditional to the urban contemporary and an unsurpassed vibrancy of culture.

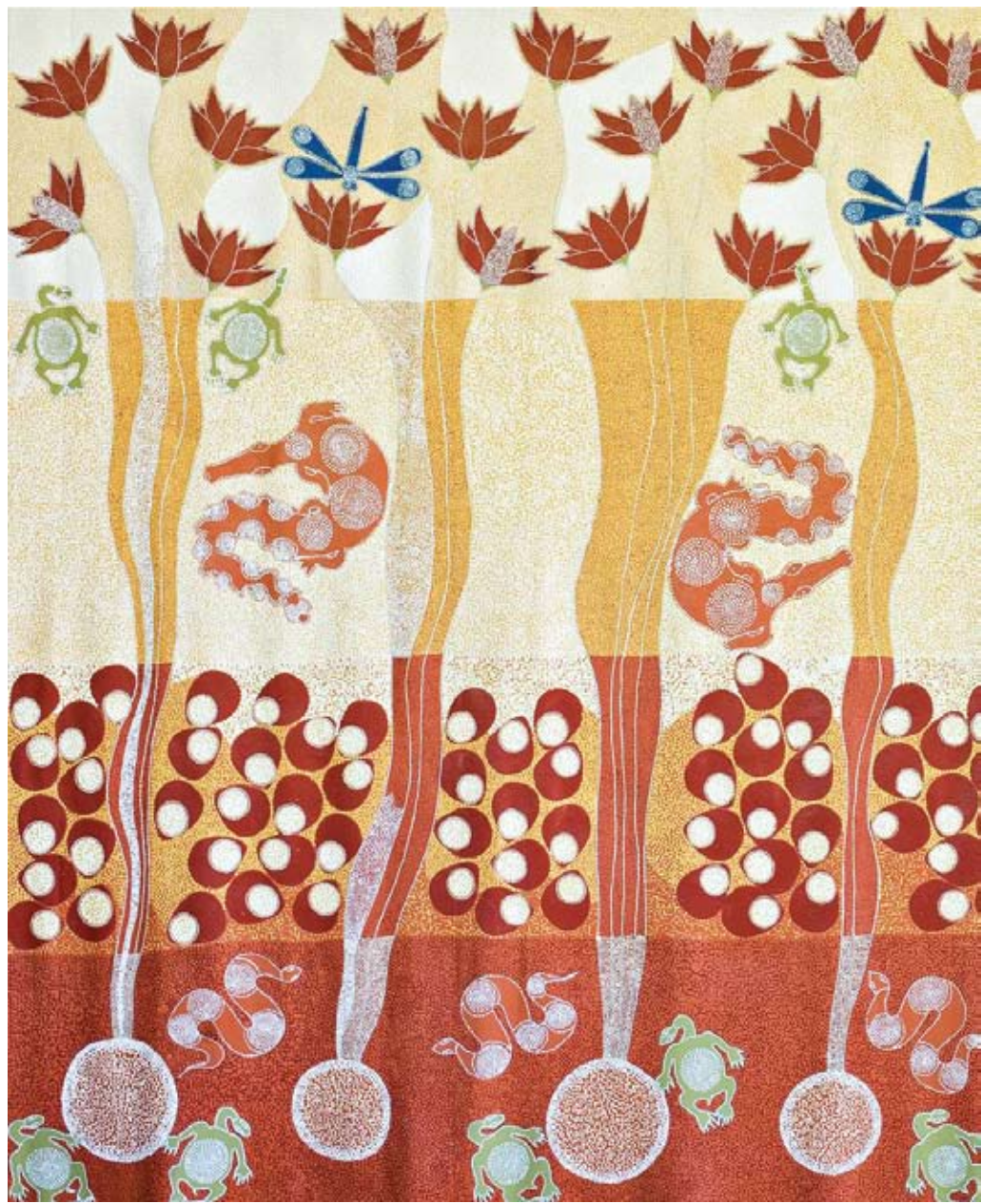
It features acrylic on canvas, works on paper, installation and new media works. The art works differ in their intent, and the individual inspiration encompasses politics, country, food, dance, colour and language. These works capture a turning point for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art toward the future.

The art as a whole is a focal point for the passing on of knowledge that has not been seen in such an event before. Thus the Cairns and wider community will now have an opportunity to appreciate the talent and accomplishment of artists in their own backyard and understand authentic values, not merely the material value marked on a price tag.

Semah Hodges is the curator of the Banggu Minjaany Art Gallery at Tropical North Queensland TAFE, Cairns. She is an Aboriginal (Kaanju Language Group, Cape York) and Torres Strait Islander woman who has worked at the Queensland Art Gallery and is currently completing a Bachelor of Creative Industries at James Cook University.

¹ A Sayers, *Oxford History of Art: Australian Art*, Oxford University Press, 2001.







LISA MICHL KO-MANGGEN *Waterloo on Kokoberriin country* | 2009.
Acrylic on canvas 284 cm x 300 cm.



JUDY WATSON *Bronze spoon, tassel, women's neckbands* 2008.
Pigment, watercolour pencil, acrylic on canvas, 212 cm x 149 cm.



GEORGE NOMA Dhaeri 2009
Seeds, shells, feathers, bees wax, bone and plant fibres, 60 cm x 60 cm.



