

Major exhibition of First Nations Australian Art to travel to Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland



Daniel Walbidi Mangala/Yulparija peoples, *Wiripa* 2011, synthetic polymer paint on linen, the Wesfarmers Collection of Australian Art, Boorloo/Perth, © Daniel Walbidi/ Copyright Agency, 2022

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki will present a significant exhibition of over 150 works by First Nations Australian artists from Saturday 29 July.

Ever Present: First Peoples Art of Australia surveys works by over 160 artists from 1890 to today. Drawn from the collections of the National Gallery of Australia and The Wesfarmers Collection of Australian Art, the artworks bridge time and place and are interconnected through story and experience.

Auckland Art Gallery Director Kirsten Lacy says, '*Ever Present: First Peoples Art of Australia* is the largest overview of art by First Nations Australian artists to be presented in Aotearoa. The exhibition highlights

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the diverse peoples and artistic practices across Australia, drawing to the fore enduring connection to country spanning a time immemorial.'

Ever Present is a celebration of First Nations Australian art exploring the interlinking themes of Ancestors, Community, Culture, Colonisation, and Identity. Knowledge systems are passed down through oral histories, dancing, stories and songlines or songspirals that traverse diverse lands, coming together to evoke Ancestral creation stories known by some Communities as the Dreaming or Tjukurrpa. Art is also used as a tool of resistance. Artists utilise wit and juxtaposition to encourage conversation about critical issues of the past and present. The artworks included in *Ever Present* address Australia's complex histories and challenge stereotypes about First Nations people.

Lacy says, 'We're excited to give our visitors the opportunity to engage and connect with the incredible art and cultures of First Nations Peoples of Australia free of charge with thanks to Wesfarmers Arts. This exhibition comes at a historic time for Australia with the 2023 Australian Indigenous Voice referendum seeking to create national legislative change in support of consultative processes impacting First Nation communities. We are proud to be collaborating with the National Gallery of Australia on this extensive project.'

The National Gallery of Australia's Curator of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art, Tina Baum, Gulumirrgin (Larrakia)/Wardaman/Karajarri peoples, says 'The National Gallery is the custodian to the largest collection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art in the world and through partnering with overseas galleries to present touring exhibitions like *Ever Present*, we elevate First Nations voices on a global stage. We cannot wait to share this exhibition with the people of Aotearoa.'

'To fully understand the richness, diversity and depth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and culture would take many generations and many lifetimes – but to appreciate it only takes a moment,' continued Baum.

Auckland Art Gallery will complement the exhibition with a lively programme of activities and events including celebrations on the exhibition's opening weekend, panel discussions and performances which will continue until closing day.

Senior Curator Māori Art, Nathan Pōhio says, 'It is a great honour to exhibit *Ever Present* at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki. This exhibition is a special opportunity for meaningful cultural exchanges between the presenting artists, Māori, Pasifika, and all the people of Aotearoa through art, performance, and conversation.'

The exhibition includes some of the most influential First Nations Australian artists including Brook Andrew, Richard Bell, Bindi Cole, Karla Dickens, Jonathan Jones, Mabel Juli, Vernon Ah Kee, Kunmanara Ray Ken, Emily Kam Kngwarray, Yvonne Koolmatrie, Alex Mingelmanganu, Archie Moore, Albert Namatjira, Dorothy Napangardi, Christopher Pease, r e a, Yhonnie Scarce, Damien Shen, Christian Thompson and Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri.

Ever Present: First Peoples Art of Australia is presented by the National Gallery of Australia and Wesfarmers Arts in partnership with Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki and supported by the Australian Government. The exhibition is proudly supported by AUT and Auckland Art Gallery Foundation.

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Exhibition detail:

Ever Present: First Peoples Art of Australia

When:

Saturday 29 July – Sunday 29 October 2023

10am–5pm daily

Where:

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
Cnr Kitchener and Wellesley Streets
Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland,
Aotearoa New Zealand

Admission:

FREE

**For more information, high-res images and
interview requests contact:**

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