

Landmark exhibition showcases indigenous Australian art



Ruby Reid, 'Papa Maru Ka Marwurn', raffia, wool and minarri grass

COLOUR & COUNTRY: *Celebrating Indigenous Australia*

Presented by Aratong Galleries and the
Australian High Commission, Singapore

29 June – 28 August 2009

9.00am-4.30pm

Atrium Gallery, Australian High Commission
25 Napier Road, Singapore

Colour & Country is a specially-curated exhibition presented by Aratong Galleries and the Australian High Commission in Singapore to mark NAIDOC Week 2009.

This landmark show, featuring sculptures by Tjanpi Desert Weavers and paintings by Kayili Artists, is open free of charge to all members of the public from Monday 29 June 2009.

"As Australia continues to grow and prosper, it is increasingly important to remember the achievements and trials of the first Australians. Named after the acronym for the National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee, NAIDOC Week is now celebrated across the nation and across the world," says Australian High Commissioner to Singapore HE Doug Chester.

Curator and Aratong Gallery Director, Ms Fiona Argyle travelled deep into Australia's Gibson Desert to find art and sculpture for *Colour & Country* that was reflective of Australia's magnificent heritage.

"I was inspired by the design of the Australian High Commission's atrium and looked for artworks that would represent what is best about Australia: a fusion of modernity and tradition," says Argyle, who has held a passion for Aboriginal art for more than a decade.

"The artwork in the *Colour & Country* exhibition is awe-inspiring. It features work from first-time young Aboriginal artists to renowned living treasures; some of whom have work in every national art gallery in Australia and in major institutions in France, Germany, Holland and the USA," says Argyle.

Aratong Galleries is one of only a few leading galleries introducing contemporary Australian artwork to Southeast Asia. *Colour & Country* is Aratong's third major exhibition. Tours are available by appointment.

Colour & Country is proudly supported by AustCham Singapore, Hudson Global Resources, Steel Storage and The Standard Chartered Private Bank.

For media enquiries please contact:

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Please note: Photo ID is required for entry to the Australian High Commission. Visitors are required to pass through airport-style security screening. No cameras or camera phone permitted without prior approval.

About Aratong Galleries

Aratong Galleries is a contemporary art gallery based in Singapore. 'Aratong' means 'by the water' and is from a language spoken by Aboriginal people living on the banks of the Murray River in Southern Australia.

Aratong Galleries promotes work by collectible and emerging Australian artists. The gallery showcases a diverse range of media including sculpture, paintings, photography and installation. Aratong Galleries operates as a pop up space in Singapore, allowing art enthusiasts to experience art in a variety of diverse settings. www.aratonggalleries.com

About the Australian High Commission, Singapore

The Australian High Commission is the official representative of the Australian Government in Singapore. It provides a range of services to the general public, including consular, passport, visa and immigration, citizenship and cultural relations services. It also acts on behalf of various Australian Government authorities by representing Australia's interests to local, regional and multilateral government and business organisations in Singapore.

Its active cultural relations program supports the promotion of Australia's creative talent and creative industries in Singapore and nurtures partnerships and collaborations between Singaporean and Australian artists and arts institutions. www.australia.org.sg

About Kayili Artists

Kayili Artists are recognised internationally for their high quality works on canvas. Artists featured in this exhibition include Fred Ward, Nancy Carnegie and Jackie Kurltjunyintja Giles.

Every painting made in Patjarr depicts the artists' association with and knowledge of Tjukurrpa, informing about the creation and management of their homelands to the north, south, west and east of Patjarr.

To be in, or near to, their country and sites of significance, is what defines the people of Patjarr as people and gives them grounding in a world of change. They are experts in all areas of their country, its creation, its resources, its condition and its history, both recent and past, and they live proudly in the middle of their expertise, their country and inspiration.

About Tjanpi Desert Weavers

Tjanpi Desert Weavers is the dynamic arts and culture enterprise of the Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjanjatjara, Yankunyatjara (NPY) Women's Council. NPY Women's Council is a resource, advocacy and support organisation for Anangu women living on homelands and communities across a vast, remote, semi-arid region of central Australia. The Council is Anangu owned and governed and has been operating since 1980. Its mission is to improve the lives of families living on the NPY Lands.

About NAIDOC Week

Each year, in the first week of July, Australia marks NAIDOC Week with celebrations held across the nation and across the world. NAIDOC Week celebrates the history, culture and achievements of Australia's indigenous Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and is celebrated by Australians from all walks of life. The week is a great opportunity for all Australians to participate in a range of activities and to support their local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

NAIDOC originally stood for 'National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee'. This committee was once responsible for organising national activities during NAIDOC Week and its acronym has since become the name of the week itself.