



September 05, 2017

Dear Friends,

Here's the latest Kimberley art news from Broome - Enjoy!

The DRS team



*Image: Visitors viewing artwork 'Dayiwul Ngarrangkarni' 2008 by Lena Nyadbi from the State Art Collection, Art Gallery of Western Australia, in the *Outside: Matters of the heart in Indigenous art* exhibition. Photo by Anthony Tran.*

AGWA's new Six Seasons Gallery exclusively exhibiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art

AGWA's new Six Seasons Gallery which officially opened on the 29th July is a space dedicated to the display and interpretation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art from the State Art Collection. It is named after the Noongar six seasons to reflect the uniqueness of place and to acknowledge the original peoples – the Whadjuk people – of what is now called Perth.

There are nearly 3,000 Indigenous works of art from across Australia held at the Gallery and each one of these works offers insights, small and large, into Indigenous art, life, culture and experience.

The first display is *Outside: Matters of the heart in Indigenous art*. The exhibition, curated by Carly Lane features a variety of styles and subjects that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists are

celebrated for. *Outside* includes works of art that portray the beauty and importance of the land and environment to Aboriginal people, and touches on some of the practices and rituals that connect people to Country – a word Aboriginal people use to describe the lands and places in Australia they have traditional ties to. The exhibition also alerts us to the history and experiences of being an outsider in white Australian society. In doing this, the exhibition reminds us that “outside” can be both a physical and social location that people inhabit.

Outside includes works by Kimberley artists Queenie McKenzie, Lena Nyadbi, Mervyn Street and Ben Ward alongside artists Shane Pickett, Lance (Tjyllyungoo) Chadd, Danie Mellor, Brenda L. Croft, Angelina George and Lin Onus, who, together, bring the idea of “outside” inside for all of us to see.

Outside: Matters of the heart in Indigenous art is free and on until August 2018.



Image credit: (L to R) Map of participating art centres at DAAF 2017. Aerial view of the art fair. Photo by Murray Hilton. Claire Summers, DAAFF Executive Director. Photo Courtesy of Claire Summers.

DAAF 2017 Q&A with Executive Director, Claire Summers

The annual Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair (DAAF) was recently on again during 11-13th August. With a reputation for cultural integrity, providing platforms for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and for generally showcasing the latest and greatest in the Aboriginal art industry, DAAF is arguably the country’s most popularly anticipated Aboriginal Art Fair by artists and visitors alike. Desert River Sea sat down with Claire Summers, Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair Foundation Executive Director, for a behind the scenes chat:

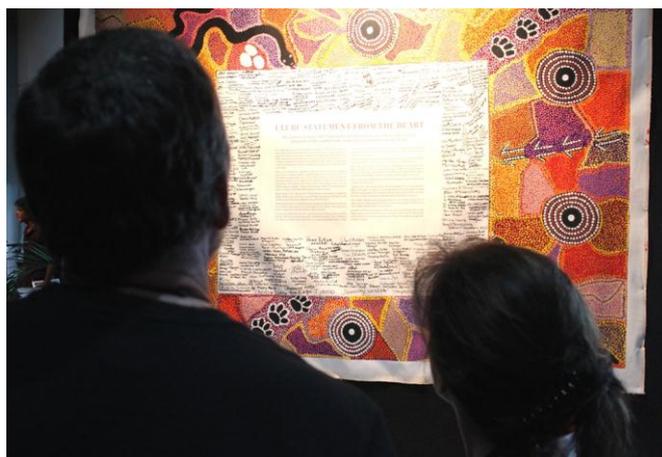
DRS: Firstly, congratulations to you and the DAAFF team for another fantastic event this year! DAAF is internationally respected as one of the most prestigious national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art fairs, I’ve heard it’s even been referred to as the “Art Basel of Australian Indigenous art”, what do you think sets DAAF apart from other art fairs?

CS: Thank you so much Geri! We are proud of DAAF, and the exciting new repertoire of events that our Foundation is presenting. What sets us apart from other art fairs is that we provide a genuine opportunity for arts industry buyers and art and design aficionados, to purchase art directly from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned and incorporated Art Centres. It is unique in that the public have a genuine opportunity

to connect directly with artists and art workers on a personal level, whether it be at an exhibition booth, an artist workshop, a dance performance, or even on the catwalk! DAAF also celebrates the National Indigenous Music Awards and the Garma Festival which are also held over the same week. Together, these prestigious events mark the most significant national festival of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts in the world.

DRS: For those who didn't attend, give us a wrap up of this year's event 'in a nutshell'?

CS: For this the 11th DAAF, the Foundation was delighted that the Director of the National Gallery of Australia, Mr Gerard Vaughan, officially opened the event at our VIP Opening Ceremony, along with an insightful Larrakia Welcome to Country from Dorrie-Anne Raymond, and a spectacular traditional dance performance from One Mob Different Country. In addition to the visual spectacular of the participating Art Centres' exhibition booths, we presented an incredible public program; visitors partook in twelve artist workshops, four traditional dance performances, and a children's activity station which included a screening of the popular cartoon 'Little J and Big Cuz', starring Deborah Mailman and Miranda Tapsell. A stunning display of the skirts from Iltja Ntjarra Many Hands Art Centre (that was part of the 2016 'Parrtjima - A Festival in Light' in Alice Springs) lit up the exhibition halls. DAAFF was honoured to exhibit the 'Uluru Statement – From the Heart' and invited visitors, artists and arts workers alike to show their support. In response to popular demand, the 2017 DAAF included a fashion show and panel discussion which discussed the 1967 Referendum, and how art has played a role in Indigenous politics. DAAFF was also proud to present the Northern Territory launch of 'Namatjira Project' in partnership with BIGhART at a film gala evening and it was an honour to host a discussion after the film with Lenie and Kevin Namatjira, the grandchildren of Albert Namatjira.



Uluru Statement from the Heart at DAAF 2017. Photo by Dylan Buckee

DRS: I understand you've been involved since the very first Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair back in 2007. How did DAAF first come about?

CS: You are quite right Geri! I have been with the fair since day dot when Maningrida Arts & Culture, in Arnhem Land, managed the event's first two years. The idea of the DAAF event was originally conceived by the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory's Foundation Board. It was designed to complement the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards (Telstra NATSIAA) to bridge the tyranny of distance, and connect the Indigenous art industry with artists and arts workers who live in some of the most remote regions of the country.

DRS: And in 2012, the Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair Foundation Limited was officially established. What's the significance of this?

CS: On the 2nd March 2012, the Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair Foundation Limited was officially established, meaning that the Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair was owned and operated by a membership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Centres. The mission of the Foundation is to encourage the production of Aboriginal arts and assist with its promotion in an ethical business environment. It is committed to professional development opportunities for artists and arts workers, and to continually contribute to the cultural aspirations of the Art Centres.

DRS: A great aspect of DAAF is the way it encourages and supports the promotion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, cultivating it in an ethical (and fun!) environment. The fair certainly seems to be a pretty successful model and going from strength to strength, last year DAAF saw over 10,000 visitors through the doors – how did the 2017 event compare in terms of audience attendance?

CS: DAAFF's events help visitors, artists, arts workers and buyers to truly connect and learn from each other. By using vibrant and exciting art forms as a conduit, these innovative platforms are where both ancient and contemporary stories can be exchanged, and shared with the world. This year DAAF saw almost 11,000 people attend its five events which is a record number of visitors! What we are noticing is that people are returning year after year, knowing that we consistently offer something different, whether it be a new event, emerging artists, an installation, and even after 11 years, a new participating Art Centre! The DAAF Foundation also realises its responsibility to draw new audiences to the event each year, which is why we offer such an amazing and interactive public program – so that visitors who are new to Indigenous art can truly engage and connect with artists and arts workers.

DRS: The stats are impressive, according to your website, DAAF has generated more than \$7.5million in sales for Art Centres over the past 5 years. How much of the profit goes back to the Art Centres?

CS: This in one of the statistics that we are most proud of: 100% of sales go back to the Art Centres' communities. The DAAF Foundation does not take any commission on the sales made at our event. In 2016, approximately \$2.038 million was generated by DAAF for the sector. We are expecting the 2017 sales figures to reach more than \$2.5 million!

It was a fantastic year for Art Centre sales, and this can be attributed to a growing number of major Australian and international galleries and private collectors who attend the event.

DRS: Seven Kimberley Art Centres were at the fair this year, however, it is truly a national fair, how many Art Centres from around Australia were represented at the 2017 fair in total?

CS: Every year there is overwhelming interest from Art Centres, with participation figures limited only by the Foundation's financial capacity to provide a venue to accommodate enough exhibition booths! To think that our event started in 2007 hosting 16 Art Centres. It is truly a national event now, representing 67 Art Centres from right across Australia!

DRS: And via those Art Centres, how many artists would you realistically estimate are given a platform to present their art at the fair?

CS: Our Art Centre survey suggests that over 2,000 artists are represented at the fair each year. DAAF is well known for showcasing quality art and design. The Fair showcases the work of emerging and established artists, and provides a space for visitors to meet them and learn from the variety of different cultural groups across Australia.

DRS: With that many artists represented from so many places around the country it goes without saying that the diversity of art on offer at the DAAF is pretty remarkable. How do the Art Centres use the opportunity to showcase their artists at DAAF?

CS: The quality and diversity of art that is brought to DAAF each year is really what makes the event so breathtaking. There is a range of styles, mediums and products available including: paintings on canvas, bark paintings, works on paper including limited edition prints, sculpture, didgeridoos, fibre art, cultural regalia, homewares and with the rise of Indigenous textile design, fashions also feature at the event. Along with presenting the very best from their Art Centres, DAAF has become a key platform to launch the work of new and emerging artists with Art Centres presenting new mediums and promoting new initiatives at the event.

DRS: Yes, there's definitely always a sense of excitement over what's new, particularly on the opening day when serious collectors literally clamour to be first through the doors.

CS: (Laughs) The anticipation of the buyers is always what gives the event such a high energy and buzz – that and the nervous anticipation of the Art Centres who have worked for months in preparation, and traveled huge distances to attend the fair! The Art Centres have certainly learnt that it is important to provide audiences with new and

exciting works by both senior and emerging artists. For many serious buyers, DAAF provides a fantastic way to connect with over 60 Art Centres in the one space – no wonder why people flood through the doors!

DRS: DAAF is already well renowned for the diversity and quality of art on show, however, there's an extensive public programme that audiences have also come to expect and enjoy about the fair which seems to be getting bigger each year – why do you think introducing new activities to the program is so important?

CS: Our foundation exists to provide vibrant and exciting promotion platforms for our Art Centre members. When we are asked why new events and activities are introduced to the program, the answer is always a simple one: to ensure that all people have an opportunity to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, their communities, and their culture. Whether it be visual art, textile and fashion design, public discourses, film, dance or music – these universal tools of communication ensure that everyone can interpret the message of reconciliation. The arts create a middle ground – a fundamental standpoint where we can say “we understand each other”. DAAFF hopes that its remarkable art fair continues to help audiences, art centre artists and staff, buyers and collectors, curators and industry stakeholder unite and truly engage with each other.



DAAF 2017, Bula'bula Arts artist workshop. Photo by Dylan Buckee

DRS: I noticed a fair few curators from Australia's leading cultural institutions working alongside Art Centres this year; I hear that DAAF piloted an Indigenous Curators program? How did that come about and what was the outcome?

CS: For the first time, the DAAF Foundation ran a program called 'From Dirt Roads to Gallery Walls' which involved over 20 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander curators from Australia's key public institutions. They traveled to Darwin, bringing with them their expertise and creativity to pass on to each other and the Art Centres. The program provided a platform for discussions, around the future direction of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and how it is exhibited. The program allowed a two-way

learning process whereby artists, arts workers and Art Centre managers were able to share stories about their art work, life in remote Indigenous communities, and the challenges that are faced on a day to day basis. This was such an incredible artistic and cultural exchange! Powerful connections and networks were discovered and celebrated between Art Centres (arts workers, artists and staff), and Australia's senior and emerging Indigenous curators, as they worked together to curate the fair's exhibition booths. The initiative was made possible by the Tim Fairfax Family Foundation, with additional support from the Australia Council for the Arts to host an Indigenous Curators Symposium.

DRS: What were the stand out workshops, demonstrations and cultural performances this year?

CS: Once again, artists from 12 different Art Centres presented incredible artist workshops. The workshop area was constantly crammed with both adults and children. It became a meeting place, where artistic techniques were shared along with personal and spiritual stories. The weaving with fibre and clay workshop by Kaiela Arts from Shepparton, Victoria was a crowd favourite! This was Kaiela Arts first DAAF experience, and it was truly inspiration to see how their artists were connecting with audiences through their workshop.

DRS: Last year DAAFF presented its inaugural fashion show: 'From Country to Couture', which showcased the textile talents of twelve Indigenous art making communities and was a huge success. Due to popular demand the fashion show was held again this year, and if social media is anything to go by it was another triumph! Tell us about it?

CS: The 'From Country to Couture – DAAFF 2017 Fashion Show' was a sell-out event, involving textile and jewellery designs from 14 different Art Centres including Marnin Studio from Fitzroy Crossing! The hype and excitement about our fashion show was incredible this year and we were absolutely thrilled that it was a sellout event. Next year, we are planning to have two shows! It was a pleasure to work with, and present the collections of 14 Art Centres on this project. The show was quite spectacular, and we loved having the charismatic and renowned Indigenous hip hop DJ, 'Jimblah' provide the soundtrack to the evening. The models were just stunning and worked incredibly hard, some of them had even flown from Perth, Sydney and Cairns to participate! The wonderful Grace Lillian Lee did a beautiful job as the Creative Director of the show. Of note was the finale of the show, where she integrated the collections with traditional adornment, as well as wearable art, and captured the essence of our message – marrying high end fashion with contemporary fine art. The 'Sista Gals Inc' who were supported by Tiwi Designs, stole the show, as they joined the models walking down the catwalk. It was so moving to see the gals walking proud in the collection they had created – there wasn't a dry eye in the house. What particularly moved me this year was the sense of empowerment that fashion is giving artists. In preparation for the fashion show, Marnin Studio sent me through photos of their stunning collaboration with the

Melbourne fashion boutique 'The Ark'. I remember opening the email, quietly beholding each image, and then sitting back in my chair thinking: "This is why we do this... This is why we must continue creating opportunities for Indigenous artists to be inspired by their Country, embrace their artistry and find new ways to express and share it."



Image: Marnin Studio & The Ark Collection, Model Adele Cranbell. Photo by David Hannah

(Click [here](#) for a video clip of the Kimberley's Marnin Studio collection at the DAAF fashion show 'From Country to Couture'.)

DRS: I hear it was quite the feeding frenzy sales-wise after the show when the garments were made available to the public!

CS: It sure was! The audience bee lined for the catwalk where each collection was presented after the event for sales opportunities. It was wonderful to see such a positive response to the show.

DRS: 2017 marks the 50th anniversary of the 1967 Referendum (granting Indigenous peoples the right to be counted as Australians for the first time) and the 25th anniversary of the 1992 Mabo High Court judgment. DAAF acknowledged these two significant anniversaries by holding a panel discussion with the topic 'What impact have these two defining moments had, on contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art?' Tell us about it?

CS: With panelists including Franchesca Cubillo (DAAFF Chair and the Senior Curator of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art for the National Gallery of Australia) as moderator, Gail Mabo (a dancer, actor and visual artist, and the 3rd daughter of celebrated land rights activist Eddie Mabo), Djon Mundine OAM (member of the Bandjalung people of northern New South Wales, a celebrated curator, writer, artist and activist) and anthropologist and geographer Marcia Langton AM, the discussion was always expected to be intense and thought provoking. The panel discussion certainly offered an insight into how art has played a role in shaping Australia's

Indigenous political history. I must say that it left us with the sombre thought that so very little has changed since these landmark decisions were made.



DAAF 2017 Panel Discussion. Photo by Dylan Buckee

DRS: And you also brought back the film festival which you launched last year during the DAAF ten year anniversary?

CS: Absolutely! We presented ‘Namatjira Project’ at the 2017 DAAFF Film Gala in partnership with Darwin’s Deckchair Cinema and BIGhART. A panel discussion with Lenie and Kevin Namatjira, the grandchildren of Albert Namatjira, followed the film and audiences also enjoyed and participated in a watercolour artist workshop with three generations of the Namatjira Family!

DRS: What have you been told is the highlight of the three day event from an artist or Art Centre perspective?

CS: When we ask artists and art workers what their highlight it is at the fair, that answer is always the same – “I just loved meeting other Art Centres!” The networking process that happens at DAAF can often be one of the most overlooked outcomes. Artists and art workers love meeting people from different communities, seeing different mediums of art, and learn about how it is made. It such a powerful and inspirational exchange!

DRS: From the perspective of DAAFF’s Executive Director, what is your favourite part of the fair?

CS: My favourite part of the fair is the moment when all the artists, art workers, managers, staff, and this year, the curators, congregate together for a light breakfast and briefing before the bump-in commences. There is always a quiet murmur and an air of nervous excitement. For me, this moment culminates an entire year of work, and it is where I look across the Darwin Convention Centre foyer at everyone’s smiling faces, and feel a huge sense of community and common purpose. DAAFF Chair, Franchesca Cubillo, said it perfectly this year: “We are a family”.

DRS: Some people may not know that the work at DAAFF continues after the fair, you recently did a road trip through the Kimberley and stopped in at a few Art Centres on the way – tell us about that?

CS: Both Mandy Tripcony (DAAFF Arts Administrator) and I spent three incredible days traveling through the Kimberley and visiting eight Art Centres! So much of our time is spent behind a computer screen that I feel it is imperative to visit Art Centres whenever it is possible. This allows us to stay connected, and have a deeper understanding about each individual Art Centre's needs, struggles, and aspirations! DAAFF is constantly listening to its Art Centre members to ensure that it is they who shape the innovative ways that DAAFF reaches out to audiences.

DRS: Thanks for chatting with DRS Claire, enjoy a well-earned break before planning for the 2018 DAAF begins! We're all already looking forward to it J

CS: Thank you Geri – it's always a pleasure!

For more information about the recent fair and the Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair Foundation check them out on social media or visit: www.darwinaboriginalartfair.com.au



*Image credits: (L to R) Kimberley artists; Mervyn Street, Nada Rawlins, Tommy May & Illiam Nargoodah
© Mangkaja Arts Resource Agency*

Feature Artworks - NATSIAA 2017

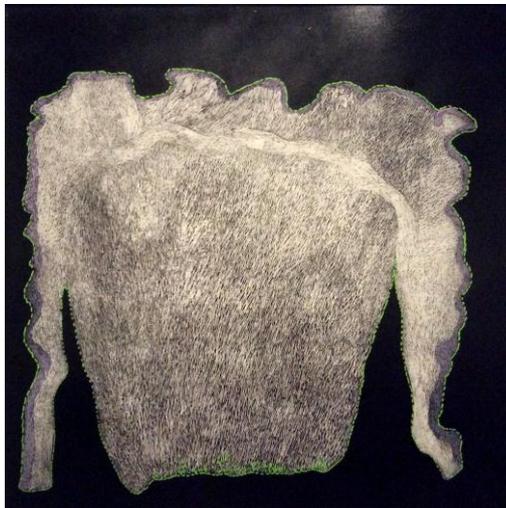
This edition we feature artworks by the four Kimberley artists who were selected as finalists in this year's annual Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards (NATSIAA) which opened on the 11th August held at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory in Darwin.

All four Kimberley artists; Nada Rawlins, Tommy May, Mervyn Street and Illiam Nargoodah are represented by Mangkaja Arts in Fitzroy Crossing and include Mangkaja's youngest artist standing alongside their most senior artists, collectively representing the four language groups of the Fitzroy Valley.



Nada Rawlins, *Yimirri*, Synthetic polymer paint on poly-carbonate 61.5 x 121.5 cm
© Mangkaja Arts Resource Agency

‘This *jila ngapa* (living spring) is right in the middle of a *warla* (lake), when we come from a far off *jilji* (sandhill) side, we can see that water rise up. We sing out to that snake Oooiii, ‘Don’t be angry, we are from this Country, send *ngapa* (water) this way.’ Nada Rawlins



Tommy May, *Jitirr*, Acrylic pen and enamel paint on metal 91.5 x 91.5 cm
© Mangkaja Arts Resource Agency

‘This artwork is of Jitirr, a large rocky hill east of Kaningarra in the Great Sandy Desert. It’s not a spring but collects good water from rainfall.’ Tommy May



Illiam Nargoodah, *Cheese knife, gutts'em out knife and rib-cracker*, Found objects – wood, metal, bone, hose (3 pieces) 17.5 x 2 x 2 cm, 24 x 6 x 1 cm, 4 x 4 x 51 cm © Mangkaja Arts Resource Agency

Illiam makes these knives from found objects and recovered artefacts from the station history of his community. They are augmented into beautiful yet practical works of art.



Mervyn Street, *Bullock drive*, Digital sand box animation © Mangkaja Arts Resource Agency

Mervyn spent many years as a stockman, driving the old long horn cattle from the Fitzroy Valley, west to Derby or Broome, or east to the Northern Territory. Mervyn remembers these times fondly. Not only did the stockmen get to know their forebear's Country intimately, they also travelled many miles beyond. Mervyn has been drawing since he was a boy. In this animation, he has recreated the atmosphere of the droving days.

For more information about these or other works from Mangkaja Arts contact (08) 9191 5833 www.mangkaja.com

Images and artwork text courtesy of Mangkaja Arts Resource Agency and the Museum and Gallery of the Northern Territory



Image credits: (L to R) KALACC Festival poster and Lombadina community from the air. Image courtesy of KALACC

Upcoming Jalalay KALACC Festival 2017

Every two to three years the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre (KALACC) hosts a major regional festival attracting up to 3000 people over five days. The KALACC Festival is the most significant Aboriginal festival of culture in the Kimberley, attended by representatives of numerous Aboriginal communities from the region bringing together people from all over the Kimberley. The event celebrates the Kimberley's cultural heritage, culture and languages and is classed among some of the largest festivals dedicated to promoting traditional Aboriginal culture in Australia. The KALACC Festival hosts three annual general gatherings of Kimberley Aboriginal organisations; the

Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre, the Kimberley Land Council and the Kimberley Language Centre.

This year the Lombadina Aboriginal Corporation invites everyone to Bard country 19-21 September for *Jalalay* Festival at Lombadina Community. Located at the top of the Dampier Peninsular, Lombadina is north of Broome (access is via a two hour drive from Broome). The name *Jalalay* represents the “warming up season” between August and October, *Jalalay* is also the time when *Minimb* “the humpback whale” returns to the warm waters off the Bard coast to birth and nurture their calves before the journey to the Antarctic.

During the KALACC festival the elders call their people to one place to listen and learn the stories, songs and dances that connect them to the land, making people feel strong and proud. The festival provides an opportunity for youth participation in day-time workshops and corroboree performance as well as the opportunity to listen and learn from Aboriginal elders, key representatives and respected researchers via public forums on political, social and cultural issues affecting Aboriginal people.

This year there will be an emphasis on the Indigenous art and collections sector, both AIATSIS and the WA Museum will be represented and in the afternoon of Tuesday 19th September there will be a panel discussion focused on the subject ‘the Cultural Economy, with a focus on Indigenous Art Centres’ including dialogue around the trends, issues and challenges in the visual art sector, cultural and social enterprises. Participants will include representatives from the Australia Council, WA Department of Culture and the Arts, and Kimberley art centre’s Mangkaja Arts Resource Agency and Mowanjum Aboriginal Art and Culture Centre.

The artwork used on this year’s Festival poster is by Lombadina Art and Crafts Centre artist, Garry Sibosado.



Garry Sibosado, *Minimb (Humpback whale)* 2015, Print, 39.5cm x 31cm

Information courtesy of KALACC

For more details go to the KALACC website: <http://www.kalacc.org.au/home> or contact the KALACC Festival and Cultural Events Coordinator, Wayne Barker

P: (08) 9191 5317 E: festival@kalacc.org.au

Mangkaja Arts recruiting: Studio Coordinator

Studio Coordinator

Fitzroy Crossing, Western Australia

2 year contract, 10 month per year position

Salary package range \$70,500 - \$79,300 pro rata

Mangkaja Arts is a renowned Aboriginal owned and governed Art Centre located in Fitzroy Crossing, West Kimberley, WA. We seek an exceptional and qualified Studio Coordinator to support the ongoing success and development of artists from the five language groups in the Fitzroy Valley region. The Studio Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the artistic development and exhibition programs and also to assist in the delivery of our cultural program. The role is ideally suited to an experienced arts practitioner/teacher, with knowledge and experience of the Aboriginal arts industry and seeking a dynamic and challenging role in remote Western Australia. The role requires some gallery and sales experience and/or curatorial expertise.

For more information on Mangkaja Arts please refer to

www.mangkaja.com

For a full position description and selection criteria, please email manager@mangkaja.com or download link to documents on our website

www.mangkaja.com

Applications close 13th November 2017

Start Date is flexible with an expected start in Feb 2018



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