

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 24 August 2020



AGSA announces the Tarnanthi 2020 program

The Art Gallery of South Australia today announces the exhibition *Open Hands* for this year's Tarnanthi, AGSA's annual celebration of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art. *Open Hands* will be held from 16 October until 31 January 2021 at the Art Gallery of South Australia. AGSA also announces that in 2020, the Tarnanthi Art Fair will be held from 4 - 6 December.

Open Hands highlights how the creativity of First Nations women artists forms a vital cultural link in sharing knowledge across generations. Through the act of making, artists channel deep connections to Country and culture.

Tarnanthi's creative vision is led by Barkandji artist and curator Nici Cumpston, who has recently been recognised with an OAM for her leadership in presenting Aboriginal art.

Cumpston OAM says, '*Open Hands*, celebrates the ongoing and often unseen work that women in communities do to maintain culture. Keeping these stories alive and sharing knowledge is deeply embedded within everyday life across Australia.'

For this year's Tarnanthi, artists have expressed themselves in a variety of media, including painting, works on paper, photography, moving image, sound installation, weaving, ceramics and sculpture. The thread that binds these works together from across the continent is the role of art. The stories they share are as rich and diverse as their practices.

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The next wave of work from artists in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) lands of South Australia focuses on bold new ways forward with drawing – an important art form that is embedded in teaching culture. The resulting works etch stories into wood, photography and works on paper.

Also from the heart of Central Australia are the vibrant paintings of life in Mparntwe (Alice Springs) that have been transformed into animations by artists from Tangentyere Art Centre and Yarrenyty Arltere Artists.

Meanwhile, Lena Yarinkura and her daughter Yolanda Rostron, from Central Arnhem Land, have made an installation of expertly woven sculptures from natural materials found on their homelands. Their work shares the stories associated with *Ngalbenbe*, the Sun Story, and relies on the ingenuity of the human hand to bring stories to life.

From the hands of Naomi Hobson in far north Queensland comes *Adolescent Wonderland*, a series of evocative photographic portraits of young people in her community of Coen, which tell the stories of life in this small town.

Also, among the 87 artists in Tarnanthi 2020 are mother-daughter duo Sonja Carmichael and Elisa-Jane Carmichael, from Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island). Together, they have created delicate woven objects deeply embedded in culture. These objects reappear as ghostly images within large scale textiles using the cyanotype alternative photographic technique.

The annual Tarnanthi Art Fair, designed as a COVID-safe event for 2020, will be held in early December. This year's Art Fair will feature a curated display of works for sale, carefully selected by art centres.

AGSA Director Rhana Devenport ONZM says, 'Creating art is a vital source of income that supports economic empowerment and cultural resilience in remote communities. Through the Tarnanthi Art Fair, buyers are guaranteed that every dollar from sales goes directly back to artists and their communities.'

Tarnanthi will also have its first international offering in 2020, in a collaboration with the APY Art Centre Collective. Presenting new works by thirty-four artists from the APY Lands, the exhibition will occupy an entire floor of the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Rennes, Brittany.

Laura Tyler, Olympic Dam Asset President, BHP says, 'Every year, our relationship with Tarnanthi becomes deeper and more meaningful as we see first-hand the extraordinary example and transformative power of art to drive sustainable social, cultural and economic outcomes for communities.'

Tarnanthi is presented by AGSA with Principal Partner BHP and support from the Government of South Australia.

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Image caption: detail: Elisa Jane Carmichael, Ngugi / Quandamooka people, South East Queensland, born 1987, Brisbane, Sonja Carmichael, Ngugi / Quandamooka people, South East Queensland, born 1958, Brisbane, *Wagari djagun (carry country)*, 2020, Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island), Queensland, cyanotype on cotton; Courtesy the artists and Onespace Gallery, photo: Grant Hancock

About Tarnanthi

An AGSA flagship project, Tarnanthi is an annual cultural celebration that alternates in format between a state-wide festival in one year and a major focus exhibition the following year. *Open Hands* delivers the quality of content and depth of substance that have been the hallmark of Tarnanthi's earlier focus exhibitions, such as *John Mawurndjul: I am the old and the new* in 2018 and *Riverland: Yvonne Koolmatrie* in 2015.

The word 'Tarnanthi' (pronounced tar-nan-dee) comes from the language of the Kaurna people, the traditional owners of the Adelaide Plains. It means to come forth or appear – like the sun and the first emergence of light. Tarnanthi presents the forefront of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art from across the country and provides an energised platform for artists to share important stories as new light is shed on their practice.

Tarnanthi at a glance 2015 - 2019

- **1.3 million** people have attended Tarnanthi exhibitions and events
 - **Nearly 4,000** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists have been supported to create and exhibit their works of art
 - **20,000** people have attended the Tarnanthi Art Fair
 - **\$3.4 million** in art sales has been generated through the Tarnanthi Art Fair, with all money going directly to artists and art centres
 - **Nearly 23,000** students and teachers have attended Tarnanthi exhibitions at AGSA, fostering generational change towards cultural understanding and reconciliation
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MEDIA CONTACT: Lindsay Ferris | 0405 046 116 | ferris.lindsay@artgallery.sa.gov.au

IMAGES: https://files.artgallery.sa.gov.au/ftp/marketing/MEDIA/Tarnanthi/Tarnanthi_2020_Open_Hands.zip

SOCIAL MEDIA: @agsa.adelaide @tarnanthi #tarnanthi

EXHIBITION SEASON: 16 October 2020 – 31 January 2021

www.agsa.sa.gov.au/whats-on/tarnanthi/tarnanthi-2020/