

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 28th January 2020



Critically acclaimed festival Tarnanthi breaks records

"Tarnanthi maps diverse Indigenous art practice across the continent and blurs the lines between urban and remote, traditional and contemporary." **ABC Radio National**

Adelaide, Australia: Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art closed on Monday 27 January following months of widely celebrated exhibitions as well as events and activities across the state and at the Art Gallery of South Australia. The 2019 festival, which launched on 17 October and ran for more than 100 days, attracted a record-breaking 561,927 people across the state to exhibitions as part of the festival – a 40% increase in attendances from the 2017 festival.

Internationally acclaimed and recognised as the largest festival of its kind in the world, this year's Tarnanthi festival featured more than 1,200 artists, with works on display at AGSA and 38 partner venues, showcasing the diversity and ingenuity of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artistic practice.

Tarnanthi Artistic Director Nici Cumpston says, *'It is an honour to present Tarnanthi, providing an opportunity for artists from across the country to develop bold new work. Tarnanthi is a genuine and authentic chance to exchange, share and learn from one another.'*

Tarnanthi also encompassed its annual Tarnanthi Art Fair, artist talks, performances and events. The Tarnanthi Art Fair showcased artists from 45 art centres from across the country and attracted more than 6,500 art enthusiasts. Breaking all previous records, the Art Fair had a 108% increase in attendances since 2017 and generated more than \$1.2 million in art sales, all of which go directly to the artists and art centres.

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Rhana Devenport ONZM, Director AGSA says, *'Tarnanthi is changing the way that people understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, in this state and across Australia, and its effect is profound. The creativity and vision of First Nations artists showcased in Tarnanthi presents Aboriginal views in a truly dynamic and engaging way. It helps us to see and understand better who we are as a nation.'*

Laura Tyler, Asset President, Olympic Dam, BHP says, *'BHP is honoured to be the longstanding principal partner of Tarnanthi with the Art Gallery of South Australia. Tarnanthi embodies BHP's commitment to cultural sustainability and economic empowerment and provides a direct and lasting benefit to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people around the country. We are immensely proud of this ongoing and meaningful relationship, including the Art Fair, which since its inception in 2015 has generated close to \$3.5 million in sales, with all profits going directly to artists and art centres. Surely there can be no better example of the power of art to drive sustainable social, cultural and economic outcomes for communities.'*

Tarnanthi will return in October 2020 with a focus exhibition, highlighting senior women artists whose work includes passing on vital cultural knowledge to young women as future leaders of their communities.

For the first time, Tarnanthi will have an international presentation in 2020 with a major touring exhibition in France of works by Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) artists. Initiated by senior men from the APY Lands, *Kulata Tjuta* is at once a contemporary art project and a cultural maintenance initiative. Meaning many spears, *Kulata Tjuta* is made up of 550 *kulata* (spears) suspended in an explosive formation that hovers above a circular installation of hand-carved *piti* (wooden bowls) made by Anangu women. Presented as part of Tarnanthi in 2017, this iteration of *Kulata Tjuta* is now an important work in AGSA's collection. The exhibition, supported by the Government of South Australia, is presented in partnership with the APY Collective and will occupy an entire floor of the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Rennes, to coincide with Tarnanthi 2020 in Adelaide.

Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art is presented AGSA in partnership with BHP and with support from the Government of South Australia.

Tarnanthi 2020 | 16 October 2020 – 31 January 2021

Tarnanthi Art Fair 2020 | 16 – 18 October 2020

Tarnanthi 2020 on tour | 23 October 2020 – 31 January 2021, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rennes, Brittany, France

MEDIA PORTAL <https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/about/media/tarnanthi-2019-media-portal/>

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Tarnanthi 2015 - 2019 at a glance

- 3,827 artists have exhibited their work at AGSA and partner venues as part of Tarnanthi
- 1.330 989 people have attended Tarnanthi exhibitions and events since 2015
- \$62.97 million of economic expenditure has been generated
- 20,000+ people visited the Tarnanthi Art Fair, generating close to \$3.5 million in sales
- 1,500+ artists from across Australia have been represented at the Tarnanthi Art Fair

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"Tarnanthi continues to bring people together in a spirit of mutual respect, shared understanding and most of all, the pleasure of seeing such skilfully and thoughtfully made art." - The Advertiser

"A deeply thoughtful and provocative collection of works. Like all great exhibitions, it's an invitation to broaden your perspective." - **Broadsheet**

Tiwi artists performing, Tarnanthi 2019, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide; photo: Ben Searcy.
