

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**WEDNESDAY 3 OCTOBER**

**THE NGA COMMEMORATES 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE ABORIGINAL MEMORIAL**

Thirty years after the installation of *The Aboriginal Memorial* (1987-1988), the National Gallery of Australia reflects on this powerful work of art that commemorates all Indigenous people who died defending their land since 1788.

Conceived by Djon Mundine in collaboration with Ramingining artists of central Arnhem Land, and commissioned by the NGA's inaugural director James Mollison AO, *The Aboriginal Memorial* has been permanently displayed since 1988.

Made of 200 hollow log coffins from central Arnhem Land the Memorial installation imitates the course of the Glyde River, with the poles placed to reflect a map of the artists' clan lands along the river and its tributaries.

'Since 1788, hundreds of thousands of Aboriginal people have died at the hands of white invaders,' said Djon Mundine OAM, conceptual producer. 'It is for these unnamed, unrecognised, peaceful, normal, average Aboriginal victims – men, women and children – and not just warriors, that this memorial was created.'

'This work represents one of the most important Indigenous art commissions and reminds us of our role to acknowledge, examine, embrace and share the stories of First Nations peoples,' said Nick Mitzevich, NGA Director.

Djon Mundine OAM will be in conversation with NGA Director Nick Mitzevich at 6pm on 11 October followed by a two-day symposium on 12-13 October. Senior Ramingining artists, Roy Burrnyila and Bobby Bununggurr, will travel to Canberra for a performance at *The Aboriginal Memorial* ahead of the Lecture and host a round table at the symposium.

The NGA Lecture and Symposium is supported by the NGA's Indigenous Art Partner, Wesfarmers Arts. Tickets are available from <https://nga.gov.au/symposia/memorialpoles/default.cfm>.

## **NGA Annual Lecture**

**Djon Mundine OAM in conversation with NGA Director, Nick Mitzevich**

**11 October 2018, 6pm**

***The Aboriginal Memorial* then James O Fairfax Theatre**

**National Gallery of Australia, Canberra**

**\$20, \$15 NGA Members/concession**

On the 30th anniversary of *The Aboriginal Memorial* (1987-1988), join Djon Mundine OAM and the Director of the National Gallery of Australia, Nick Mitzevich, in conversation for the NGA's Annual Lecture.

Senior Ramingining artists, Roy Burrnyila and Bobby Bununggurr, will precede the NGA Annual Lecture with a performance at *The Aboriginal Memorial*.

## ***The Aboriginal Memorial* 30th Anniversary Symposium**

**12 and 13 October 2018**

**10am-5pm daily**

**National Gallery of Australia, Canberra**

**\$135, \$110 NGA Members/concession**

***In association The Power Institute, University of Sydney, School of Culture and Communication, University of Melbourne, Centre for Art History and Art Theory, Australian National University and and Bula'bula Arts Aboriginal Corporation.***

This two-day symposium examines the ongoing significance of *The Aboriginal Memorial* (1987-1988) and its context within contemporary art, Yolngu culture and creative practices, as well as relation to recent memorials from across Australia and internationally.

Gathering a generation of scholars, artists, and curators this event will present fresh, challenging research and new perspectives on *The Aboriginal Memorial* and contemporary art's engagements with trauma and colonial conflicts.

Continuing to examine the legacy of *The Aboriginal Memorial*, the immersive two-day symposium features scholars, artists and curators gathered from across Australia and internationally. Dr Fiona Foley, Canadian Professor David Garneau, and Stephen Gilchrist are amongst the speakers. From Garneau's theory of memorial as social medicine to Gilchrist's 'eulogies in ochre' the symposium tackles diverse topics.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA:**

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## **MEDIA ENQUIRIES**

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