

MEDIA RELEASE  
Thursday 27 August 2020



## HETTI PERKINS APPOINTED CURATOR OF 4<sup>th</sup> NATIONAL INDIGENOUS ART TRIENNIAL

Leading curator Hetti Perkins, an Arrernte and Kalkadoon woman from Central Australia, has been appointed curator of the National Gallery of Australia's 4<sup>th</sup> National Indigenous Art Triennial, which will open in late 2021.

Director of the National Gallery of Australia Nick Mitzevich said he was delighted Ms Perkins was joining the gallery to help lead its mission to tell an inclusive story of Australia through the presentation of art from multiple points of view.

"The National Gallery is the custodian of the largest collection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art in the world – we feel privileged to have Ms Perkins join us to help share the diverse voices and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and communities with all Australians and with growing audiences across the globe," he said.

"As the first large scale recurring exhibition dedicated to contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and artists in Australia, the National Indigenous Art Triennial is an integral part of our artistic program. We are delighted to have one of the nation's most respected curators and cultural voices at the helm of one of Australia's most important exhibitions."

The first iteration of the Triennial, *Culture Warriors*, opened in 2007 to coincide with two significant anniversaries: the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1967 Referendum whereby non-Indigenous Australians voted overwhelmingly to count Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the census for the first time as citizens; and the 50th anniversary of NAIDOC (National Aboriginal and Islander Day

Observance Committee). *Culture Warriors*, now recognised as a landmark exhibition in the history of Australian art, along with subsequent Triennial exhibitions, *unDisclosed* in 2012 and *Defying Empire* in 2017, has consolidated a First Nations-led and centred major national survey exhibition within the Australian cultural landscape.

“The opportunity to work on Ngunnawal and Ngambri lands with the National Gallery of Australia team and our national collection is very exciting, especially under the directorship of Nick Mitzevich and Assistant Director Bruce Johnson-McLean. Johnson-McLean’s appointment and the support for the 4<sup>th</sup> National Indigenous Art Triennial is an excellent barometer of the National Gallery of Australia’s commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, reflected in all areas of the Gallery’s operations,” said Ms Perkins.

“I am immensely grateful to be able to work with and build on the achievements of the Gallery’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in writing the next chapter of our National Gallery’s story.”

Over a 30-year national and international career in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander visual arts, Ms Perkins has been recognised and respected for her commitment to the curation, collection development and scholarship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, as well as a focus on the mentorship and advancement of artists. In 1997, Ms Perkins co-curated Australia’s pavilion at the Venice Biennale with Brenda L Croft, featuring the works of Emily Kame Kngwarreye, Yvonne Koolmatrie and Judy Watson. She was also an Agent for dOCUMENTA (13), curated by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev in 2012.

Ms Perkins began her career at the Sydney gallery of Aboriginal Arts Australia before joining the Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Cooperative as a curator. Over 14 years at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, as Senior Curator of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art, she expanded the collection, curated several major exhibitions, edited significant publications, and wrote and lectured extensively.

Over a multi-faceted career, Ms Perkins wrote and presented 'art + soul', two three-part documentary series, for ABC TV, and co-produced four series of 'Colour Theory' for SBS/NITV. She co-curated, with Brenda L Croft, the Australian Indigenous Art Commission for the new Musée du Quai Branly in Paris in 2006. In 2017, Ms Perkins won the International Council of Museums Australia award for outstanding individual achievement. She was recognised for her commitment to a national and international profile for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, particularly her ability to seek innovative ways to make Indigenous work public in Australia and internationally.

The National Indigenous Art Triennial is made possible through the continued generosity of the National Gallery of Australia’s Indigenous Art Partner Wesfarmers Arts and key philanthropic supporters.

For further information visit [www.nga.gov.au](http://www.nga.gov.au)

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Images available for download [HERE](#)

Image: Hetti Perkins, Arrernte and Kalkadoon peoples, in front of Tony Albert, Girramay/Yidinji/Kuku-Yalanji peoples, *hopeless ROMANTIC*, 2008