
NGV NEWS

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National
Gallery of
Victoria

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NGV Collection Focus *Visual Music: Masters of Light and Colour*
NGV International | Opens 10 August 2013 | FREE



Opening 10 August, *Visual Music: Masters of Light and Colour* is a captivating new contemporary exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria that explores the work of eight senior Indigenous women who only emerged as artists from the 1990s onwards.

This arresting display of work from the NGV's permanent collection juxtaposes eleven audacious paintings by eight singular artists whose paintings have been informed by their profound knowledge and cultural memory of Country and its sanctity.

The combination of unexpected colours, gestural markings and spontaneous textures runs counter to the stylistic tendency evident in many parts of Indigenous Australia towards subdued tonality and finely nuanced abstraction.

Judith Ryan, Senior Curator of Indigenous Art, NGV said that Emily Kam Ngwarrray was a ground-breaking artist whose rise to prominence catalysed the emergence of these Indigenous women as great contemporary artists.

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NGV NEWS

“Her practice was revolutionary in that she did not approach her work as any kind of map making, diagram or landscape. It was neither notation nor narrative but visual music of mass appeal,” said Ms Ryan.

Intriguingly these leading practitioners of contemporary art have simultaneously come to the fore in two distinct cultural and geographical regions of Indigenous Australia: the vast Western Deserts and a tiny island in the Gulf of Carpentaria, Queensland.

“Artists such as Wakartu Cory Surprise, Pulpurru Davies, Alkawari Dawson, Lorna Napurrurla Fencer, Pukarlyi Milly Kelly and Wingu Tingima from the Western Desert and Sally Gabori and Paula Paul from Bentick Island decisively engage with the physicality of paint and the fearlessness of colour, unfettered by precedent or external preconceptions of art,” said Ms Ryan.

To complement the 2013 Melbourne Winter Masterpieces exhibition *Monet’s Garden: The Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris* Judith Ryan will take part in a free In Conversation with International Art Curator, Sophie Matthiesson, on Thursday 5 September.

Maestros of Colour and Light – Monet & Indigenous artists will draw comparisons between the Indigenous artists featured in *Visual Music* and the father of French Impressionism, Claude Monet, as artists who were radical risk takers that defied expectations of landscape paintings.

A curator floor talk also accompanies *Visual Music: Masters of Light and Colour*, see ngv.vic.gov.au for details.

NGV Collection Focus *Visual Music: Masters of Light and Colour* will be on display from 10 August to mid-October at NGV International. Open Wed-Mon, 10am–5pm. Entry is free.

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Image caption:

Kuruwarringathi Bijarrb Paula Paul

Kaiadilt born 1937

My country 2009

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

198.1 x 305.2 cm

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased, NGV Supporters of Indigenous Art, 2009 (2009.578)

© courtesy of Kuruwarringathi Bijarrb Paula Paul, Mornington Island Art,

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