The world is not a foreign land

An Ian Potter Museum of Art and NETS Victoria touring exhibition, curated by Quentin Sprague

The world is not a foreign land will open to the public at Flinders University City Gallery on 26 September 2015. It is presented in Adelaide by Flinders University Art Museum (FUAM) as part of South Australia’s inaugural Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art - TARNANTHI.

Comprising work by Timothy Cook, Djambawa Marawili, Ngarra, Rusty Peters, Freda Warlapinni and Nyapanyapa Yunupingu, The world is not a foreign land crosses three geographically and culturally distinct regions— the Tiwi Islands, the Kimberley, and North-eastern Arnhem Land. Each artist presents different and sometimes striking perspectives on what constitutes Indigenous contemporary art. Shown together their work also reveals a series of productive and meaningful relationships; a network of connections that asks audiences to reconsider how certain objects and, by extension, certain practices, might relate beyond the confines of existing categories.

Exhibition curator Quentin Sprague, who travelled widely while researching the exhibition, says, “This exhibition brings together a group of artists whose work highlights new ways of thinking in-between the different regions, cultural groups or art histories within which each artist lives and works. In this sense, it’s about highlighting new relationships—whether formal, material, or poetic— which activate areas of overlap, resonance and even contradiction.”

Artists in the exhibition employ a number of approaches that illuminate the vibrancy and diversity of current practice including small scale fibre-tipped pen drawings, large format acrylic painting on canvas and barks executed in natural pigment.

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue that includes essays by Indigenous curator Stephen Gilchrist, and Ian McLean, Research Professor of Contemporary Art at the University of Wollongong, New South Wales.

In the lead up to its launch FUAM Director Fiona Salmon, states, “The world is not a foreign land is a highly anticipated project. The exhibition and its catalogue make for a powerful, scholarly and timely contribution to current thinking on Indigenous art – to how it is we might approach its production, circulation and reception within the broader discourses of contemporary art practice.”

The world is not a foreign land will be on display at Flinders University City Gallery from 26 September – 29 November 2015.

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