

Media Release

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Black Art White Walls The Adrian & Anne Newstead Indigenous Art Collection

Wagga Wagga Art Gallery is delighted to welcome a unique survey of the true richness and diversity of Indigenous art in Australia: **Black Art White Walls**. This extraordinary exhibition draws upon the extensive personal collection of Indigenous art built up by Adrian and Anne Newstead while working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists over the past thirty years.

Adrian Newstead is a dealer, writer, consultant and activist who owns the longest established Aboriginal art gallery in Australia; and Adrian and Anne began their involvement with the creation and the subsequent bloom and boom of the Aboriginal art market as early as 1980. Their art collection is an intimate one, built through personal relationships, serendipity, and a keen sense of historical and cultural importance. As such, this collection stands distinctly apart from those of more casual collectors; it is a platform by which a different narrative can be told, one in which art is an expression of relationships, culture, spirituality, the land and kinship.

The Newstead collection comprises more than a thousand works, including paintings on canvas and bark, artefacts, prints, posters and sculptures. It represents a linear history of Aboriginal art and craft from the establishment of the earliest art centres, into the mainstreaming of Aboriginal art and its national and international acceptance as a dynamic contemporary art movement.

Among the seventy works selected from the collection for the **Black Art White Walls** exhibition, regional stylistic differences alongside time, depth and historical insight all play their part. There are early works by artists who went on to become masters of the movement, and key works presaging several acclaimed artists' most popular and productive periods and styles. The exhibition is accompanied and enhanced by the Adrian Newstead's recently published memoir, *The Dealer is the Devil: An Insider's History of the Aboriginal Art Trade*.

During Adrian and Anne's thirty year involvement, black art has moved inexorably onto white walls, subtly affecting the many millions of people who have come to live with and love it. Many would say that the Aboriginal art movement has been the single most effective vehicle in advancing empathy, understanding and reconciliation between black and white Australia. Viewing this beautiful show and reading the meanings of the works, and the circumstances under which they were collected, reveals the story of a journey deep into the culture of Australia's oldest inhabitants.

Black Art White Walls: The Adrian & Anne Newstead Indigenous Art Collection is open to the public at Wagga Wagga Art Gallery from Saturday 12 April until Sunday 8 June, 2014.