

ACU Art Collection: First impressions

April 2021

First impressions: Indigenous works from the ACU Art Collection

The Australian Catholic University is delighted to announce the publication of *First impressions: Indigenous works from the ACU Art Collection*. Highlights from the university collection are here elucidated by 33 Indigenous and non-Indigenous authors from various academic, visual arts and ACU backgrounds, each bringing their knowledge, experience and cultural perspective to bear. This richly illustrated publication presents remarkable works of art by established and emerging First Nations artists, spanning traditional bark and dot paintings as well as contemporary works in diverse media, such as acrylic, print, photographic, fibre and glass. The artists represented include Shirley Purdie, Kunmanara (Ngupulya) Pumani, Vicki West, Daniel Boyd, Marlene Gilson, Michael Riley, Megan Cope, Angelina Pwerle and Jennifer Kemarre Martiniello.

It is anticipated that *First impressions* will make an essential contribution to the appreciation of Indigenous art, while also building awareness of the diverse nature of the ACU Art Collection. Discussing the university's vital role in acknowledging and maintaining the value of this great cultural tradition, former ACU vice-chancellor and president Professor Greg Craven notes:

Just as ACU has strongly supported the insertion of an Indigenous voice in the Australian Constitution, it has the joyful responsibility to celebrate Indigenous art through collecting and displaying it. This is the responsibility of a true Australian universitas, and profoundly the responsibility of one that is Catholic.

ACU art curator Caroline Field adds:

Key to the ACU Art Collection is a continuing representation of long-standing forms of Indigenous art by established artists, but equally critical is building the representation of works by artists whose practice might be considered non-traditional. The exciting expansion of Indigenous aesthetics underscores art's presence as a relevant and engaging form of cultural identity.

Contributors to *First impressions* include Marcia Langton AO, Aunty Doseena Fergie OAM, Jacqueline Healy, Beverly Knight, Linc Yow Yeh, Djon Mundine OAM, Hannah Presley, Henry Skerritt, Margie West AM, Russell Milledge, Erica Izett, Gail Harradine, Caroline Field, Louise Hamby, John McPhee and Victor Griss. Each text focuses on a single work of art and invites the reader to look more closely and gain a deeper understanding.

Published by Australian Catholic University (ACU), 2020, pp. 100, 60 colour illustrations.

Cover image: Karen Mills, *Untitled*, 2019, pigment and synthetic polymer paint on canvas, acquired 2019

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ISBN: 978-1-922097-93-4

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