

“The colours hold the Power of the Land.”

Micky Dorrng, (c 1940-2006)

It is a great pleasure and privilege to introduce this collection of Indigenous Australian art on behalf of La Fontaine gallery. Having first become a collector of Aboriginal art several years after encountering it in Western Australia, the gallery founder, Patricia Lafontaine, has followed and deepened her love of and commitment to Indigenous art and its promotion in London.

This exhibition brings together a group of highly regarded artists - senior men and women - whose understanding and use of colour is both bedazzling and humbling. For Western audiences used to expecting the novel and new in a rapidly changing art world the richness of how pigment is used by Indigenous artists is astonishing for its sheer bravura. There is nothing quite like it. No Pollock or Rothko holds the same resonance and power as the best Aboriginal art does. This is because the power of line and colour comes from a different source: the ancestral, religious, ritual knowledge of the land itself.

The bold, stark, inscrutable lines of colour in Ronnie Tjampitjinpa's etchings or the mysterious, red square heart pulsing out of Rammey Ramsey's *Warlawoon Country* – these shapes and colours and their visual hold over us come from a lifetime of ritual body painting: of being a legal custodian of Country and Law. These are marks from men and women of high prestige, status, knowledge and power – power, we, as outsiders, are only just beginning to understand.

Arjmand Aziz

(Lecturer, Curator and Art Consultant)

©

"Members of the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are respectfully advised that a number of artists mentioned in writing have passed away."