



## MEDIA RELEASE

### Prominent Art Curator Heads to Washington DC

One of the Territory's leading art experts is set to fly to Washington DC later this month after being invited to give the opening lecture for a new international exhibition, featuring some of Australia's best Indigenous female artists.

Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory Indigenous Senior Curator of Aboriginal Art and Material Culture, Franchesca Cubillo, said she was honoured by the invitation to speak at the opening of *Dreaming Their Way: Australian Aboriginal Women Painters*, at Washington DC's National Museum of Women in the Arts.

The exhibition, curated by Britta Konau, Associate Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art NMWA and Margo Smith, Curator & Director, The Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection, contains approximately 80 works by 33 Indigenous female artists, with a large number of these artists coming from either central Australia or Arnhem Land.

*Dreaming Their Way: Australian Aboriginal Women Painters* is set to be exhibited from 30 June 2006 to 24 September 2006.

"There have been other, major Indigenous art exhibitions overseas but this will be the first major exhibition that focuses entirely on works by prominent Australian female Indigenous artists," Ms Cubillo said.

"This exhibition and the celebration of these artist's work at an international level, is a positive outcome and substantiates the importance of on-going financial support from the Australian and Northern Territory governments for Indigenous community art centres and individual artists.

"I hope to convey to the American audience an understanding of who these artists are and where they come from.

"This exhibition recognises some of the exquisite art that has been produced by Indigenous women between 1990 and 2005, and draws upon works held in Australian and American private collections and state institutions, with most works either bark paintings or acrylic works on canvas from the Northern Territory."

One of the American state institutions from which some artworks have been sourced include the Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection at the University of Virginia, where Ms Cubillo is scheduled to also present a guest lecture. The Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection is the largest collection of Indigenous art outside Australia.

Ms Cubillo is also scheduled to attend a VIP dinner hosted by the Australian Embassy in Washington as one of her other formal engagements.

This month's trip to Washington DC is Ms Cubillo's third to the American capital, a destination that holds fond memories.

"What I love about Washington is there are so many museums and art galleries to visit," Ms Cubillo said.

“My most recent visit to Washington was in 2004 as part of a study grant to attend the opening of the National Museum of the American Indian.

“A unique aspect of this museum is that it was developed by key American Indian communities across the United States of America.

“Therefore, what you experience when you visit the museum is Indigenous people telling their stories and history via historic and contemporary objects, photographs, film and live performances and workshops.

“I am looking forward to meeting with the American Indian Curators again and discussing with them their various community access programs and the training opportunities they provide for their own Indigenous communities.

“Hopefully this will give me some extra ideas for potential development and implementation back here at MAGNT.”

Before returning to work in the Territory where Ms Cubillo is from, she worked as Director at Tandanya, National Aboriginal Cultural Institute in Adelaide and before that as Director and Senior Curator of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program at the National Museum of Australia in Canberra.

Ms Cubillo also held the position of Curator, Aboriginal Collection, at the South Australian Museum for eight years.

She recently chaired the pre-selection panel for this year's *23<sup>rd</sup> Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award* which will be opened to the public at MAGNT on August 11.

Her travel and accommodation has been made possible by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the National Museum of Women in the Arts and the Australian Embassy in Washington DC.

Ends

**Media Note – For more information contact Franchesca Cubillo on 8999 8228**

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