

media release

Friday, 26 February 2016

***Country* comes to Mosman Art Gallery**

The inspirational artwork *Country* by award winning artist Warwick Keen has been installed in Mosman Art Gallery's forecourt as part of a stunning new Sculpture Garden. *Country* was developed as part of the *Bungaree: the First Australian* exhibition in 2012, and was included in *Bungaree's Farm* exhibition in 2015. *Bungaree's Farm* was the recipient of the Museums and Galleries Australia National Award in 2015.

***Country* has been inspired by the dendroglyphs or carved trees that were part of the traditional art and culture of the Aboriginal people of New South Wales. Dendroglyphs were most commonly used to signify important places such as initiation or burial sites. While most commonly taking on geometric forms, dendroglyphs sometimes featured the carved shapes of animals and people.**

Keen has taken his inspiration from this traditional practice of carving trees and from his own heritage, always being mindful of the sensitivities associated with traditional designs and their uses. Encouraged and guided by noted Aboriginal curator, Djon Mundine, the artist has created a series of contemporary works that are reflective of, but distinct from, traditional images and practices. The works are inspired by sacred practices, but are not sacred objects in their own right, and are able to be displayed openly in public.

Warwick Keen was born in Newcastle, New South Wales, and belongs to the Gomeroi (Gamilaraay) language group. He has practised and taught art for 40 years.

Warwick uses a wide range of mediums in his art practice, including wood-carving, drawing, painting, construction, photography and digital manipulation. He has also been involved in numerous community-based art programs and projects. Warwick creates both digital and mainstream Indigenous imagery and likes to experiment and explore with a range of different mediums to express his different 'stories'.

Meanwhile, Mosman Art Gallery is thrilled to announce CREATE! - the campaign to support Mosman Art Gallery, and is appealing for members of the public to support 'Country'.

The Gallery is seeking 24 individual supporters to sponsor the 24 Aboriginal carved trees at a cost of \$2,000 each (all donations are tax deductible and supporters will be listed on a plaque).

The funds will be matched dollar for dollar under the Federal Government's Plus 1 program run by Creative Partnerships Australia. All funds raised will support Gallery exhibitions and its programs.



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