



CENTER FOR ART+ENVIRONMENT at the Nevada Museum of Art

## **Arnhembrand: Living on Healthy Country Collection CAE1713**

### **Introduction/Abstract**

*Arnhembrand* was a multi-disciplinary and participatory Australian Aboriginal art project created by artist Mandy Martin and conservationist Guy Fitzhardinge designed to take the contemporary stories from two remote communities of Australia's Northern Territory to the world. Materials include finished artworks, research materials, exhibition ephemera, and slides.

### **Biographical Note: Mandy (Amanda) Martin**

Mandy Martin was born in Adelaide in 1952, and completed a Diploma of Fine Art at the South Australian School of Art in 1975. She has had solo exhibitions in Brisbane, Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne, at the Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane; Newcastle Regional Art Gallery, NSW; the Drill Hall at the Australian National University, Canberra and internationally at the Austral Gallery, St Louis in the United States. Her work has been included in group exhibitions at the National Gallery of Australia, the National Gallery of Victoria, Art Gallery of New South Wales, and the Guggenheim Museum in New York. Martin was awarded the John McCaughey Prize by the National Gallery of Victoria in 1983, the Hugh Williamson Art Prize by the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery in 1985, and the Alice Prize in 1990. She was awarded fellowships from the Arts ACT Creative Arts in 2001 and the Land and Water Community in 2002. Martin has lectured at the Canberra School of Art at the Australian National University since 1978, where she serves as an adjunct professor. Her work is held by the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth; Artbank, Sydney; Parliament House, Canberra; the Australian War Memorial, Canberra; several regional and university collections and internationally by the Guggenheim Museum, New York. Along with her husband Guy Fitzhardinge, she has run several art-and-science projects in the field, including ones at the Cadia Gold Mine in New South Wales, in the Desert Channel country of Queensland, and the Paruku Project in Western Australia.

### **Biographical Note: Guy Fitzhardinge**

Dr. Guy Fitzhardinge is a pastoralist (rancher) who manages several properties in New South Wales and Queensland. He has been involved in various projects to develop sustainable ranching techniques and to improve the ecology of the semiarid regions while simultaneously nurturing sustainable rural communities. Since its inception, he has participated in the Australian Landcare movement, a program to develop more sustainable land management practices. Fitzhardinge has also served on the board of Bush Heritage Australia, a conservation organization that grew during his tenure from a staff of nine and about seven small properties to a staff of nearly 70 and 34 properties totaling almost two million hectares. He is chairman of a trust set up by the PEW Environmental Trust and The Nature Conservancy to fund land-management work by a number of indigenous communities in remote Arnhem Land in far northern Australia. He is also a governor of World Wildlife Fund Australia. In addition to these conservation activities, Fitzhardinge has also played major roles in the red meat/beef industry in Australia. He is currently the chairman of the Beef Genetics Cooperative Research Centre, an organization with 17 partners that works with the USDA, several U.S. universities, and various Canadian institutions to carry out all the genetic research for the beef industry in Australia. His Ph.D. dissertation done at Australian National University examined the role of landscape art in the development of environmental values among pastoralists in New South Wales.

### **Scope and Content**

*Arnhembrand* was an Australian Aboriginal art project created by artist Mandy Martin and conservationist Guy Fitzhardinge in response to requests from two communities in the remote reaches of the Northern Territory adjacent to the world-renowned Kakadu National Park. *Arnhembrand* was a multi-discipline and participatory project designed to take the contemporary stories from these two communities to the world. The project was modeled after the highly successful Paraku work at Lake Gregory, and many of the participants in that earlier projects worked on *Arnhembrand*. The project was wholly funded by Australian corporate and individual donors. Fieldwork was conducted over two years and included the participation of Henry Skerritt and Bill Fox. Art production at both sites is among the most conservative made by Aboriginal Australians, and is strongly centered on bark paintings and ceremonial poles that promulgate traditional knowledge. *Arnhembrand* helped local artists use contemporary acrylics on canvas to tell stories about issues such as invasive feral pigs rubbing up against and erasing ancient rock art. Following the two years of fieldwork, another year was spent collecting and exhibiting the work in Australia. Materials include finished artworks, research materials, exhibition ephemera, and slides.

**This archive is currently in process.**