

Prince of Wales (Midpul): Body Marks, 1999

No Boundaries

A Discussion with Henry Skerritt – Art Historian, Curator – at the Pérez Art Museum Miami

By Elman + Perez-Trujillo

No Boundaries: Aboriginal Australian Contemporary Abstract Painting at the Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM) brings together the work of nine Aboriginal Australian artists: Paddy Bedford, Janangoo Butcher Cherel, Tommy Mitchell, Ngarra, Boxer Milner Tjampitjin, Warlimpirnga Tjapaltjarri, Tjumbo Tjapanangvka, Billy Joongoorra Thomas, and Prince of Wales (Midpul). Each of these men is a leader within their community and while they began painting late in life, their works explore complex and innovative modes of abstraction. This exhibition highlights the distinctive vocabularies and modes of gestural expression that define each of these artist’s paintings and works on paper. Relating to cultural systems, religious beliefs, and social structures, these intricate works are at once distinctly grounded in the context of Aboriginal life and profoundly resonant with abstract painting of the 20th and 21st centuries. No Boundaries will tour the US extensively, and alongside its accompanying publication (edited by Henry F. Skerritt), it is a vital addition to the scholarship and discourse on contemporary Aboriginal painting. The exhibition is drawn from the collection of Debra and Dennis Scholl, and will be displayed at PAMM from September 17, 2015 to January 3, 2016. (<http://www.pamm.org/exhibitions/no-boundaries-aboriginal-australian-contemporary-abstract-painting-0>)

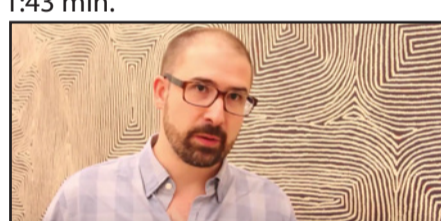
Henry Skerritt is an art historian, curator, and songwriter hailing from Perth in Western Australia. Skerritt is currently a doctoral candidate in the History of Art and Architecture at the University of Pittsburgh. In 2015, he edited the book No Boundaries: Aboriginal Australian Contemporary Abstract Painting (Prestel Publishing and Nevada Museum of Art), which accompanies the exhibition by the same name.

Skerritt has written extensively on Aboriginal art and culture, including contributions to the publications *Everywhen: The Eternal Present in Indigenous Art in Australia* (Harvard Art Museums, 2016); *Double Desire: Transculturation and Indigenous Contemporary Art* (Cambridge Scholars Press, 2014); *Crossing Cultures: The Owen and Wagner Collection of Contemporary Aboriginal Australian Art* (Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, 2012); and *Menagerie: Contemporary Indigenous Sculpture* (Object: Australian Centre for Contemporary Craft and Design, 2009). Skerritt’s writings have also appeared in numerous journals and magazines, including *Artlink*, *Art Monthly Australia*, *Art Guide Australia*, *Meanjin*, and *Artist Profile*. In 2011, Skerritt curated the exhibition *Experimental Gentlemen* at the Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne.

The videos below are organized by topic and run between 20 seconds and 3 minutes. Tap on any video. You must be connected to the Internet to view the videos.

INTRODUCTION:

1:43 min.



INSPIRATIONAL INSIGHT:

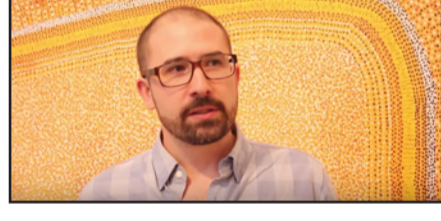
1:17 min.



To what extent did your community in Perth value Aboriginal art when you were growing up?

INSPIRATIONAL INSIGHT:

1:01 min.



What was your first awareness of Aboriginal art?

TALK WITH MANY ARTISTS:

2:13 min.



How did your relationship with Aboriginal artists and their communities evolve?

SEIZE THE MOMENT:

2:04 min.



How did you connect with Dennis Scholl and the “No Boundaries” exhibition?

CREATIVE FLEXIBILITY:

2:16 min.



How have the Aboriginal artists managed to make contemporary artworks, yet retain the spirit and power of their ancestors?

CREATE A UNIQUE PERSONAL IDENTITY:

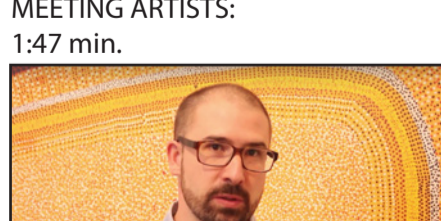
1:09 min.



How have the art materials used by Aboriginal artists evolved?

MEETING ARTISTS:

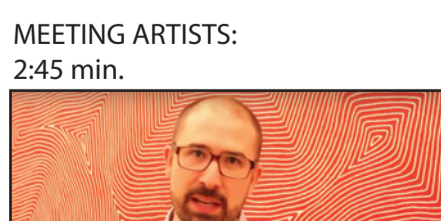
1:47 min.



What did Janangoo Butcher Cherel do before he became an artist?

MEETING ARTISTS:

2:45 min.



Tell us about the artist Warlimpirnga Tjapaltjarri.