

Selling Yarns 3: weaving the nation's story

Venue: National Museum of Australia, Canberra

When: 28 February - 3 March, 2013

Selling Yarns 3: Weaving the nation's story was a four-day event that presented a conference, a market day, workshops, an exhibition and associated activities program, and launched the inaugural Indigenous Art Film program. As the premier national forum for Indigenous textile and fibre in the country it was supported by the Centenary of Canberra, drawing people to the nation's capital from across the country.



Thirty Indigenous communities and art centres and 134 artists from every state and territory in Australia converged on Canberra to participate in *Selling Yarns 3: Weaving the nation's story*. There was also great participation from government departments and agencies (federal and state), significant cultural institutions and educational institutions, networks and arts organisations.

Indigenous artists and elders, and art administrators, came together and participated as speakers, workshop facilitators and market stall holders to share their stories, exchange their knowledge and skills, and to trade. They opened their hearts to each other and to other conference delegates and visitors. As Tim Growcott so eloquently stated post conference,

“An authentic spirit of reconciliation coursed strongly throughout the four days, with so many stories and examples of practical collaborations and life-changing projects. The conference was a recognition of the important and sensitive work being accomplished by like-minded creators, forging links with the living past and forming models for healing into the future.”



The project was a huge success, inspiring artists and creating strategic alliances between Indigenous communities across Australia. There has been significant cross cultural engagement and inspiration with international Indigenous artists and culture which paves the way for lasting relationships with opportunities to develop further collaborations and joint projects. Establishing dialogue and sharing cross-cultural exchanges with international artists, curators and researchers has placed Australian Indigenous textile practice within the broader international arena.

Social and environmental connectivity was explored further through the inaugural Indigenous Art Film Program which showcased 14 Indigenous films providing insights into Indigenous fibre art and its makers. The inaugural film program showcased a variety of genres including documentaries, animation, and experimental video, covering four countries Australia, New Zealand, East Timor and USA. The films provided insights into Indigenous fibre art and its makers and set in scene some of the artistic practices discussed and demonstrated

during the four-day event.

The associated activities highlighted a number of exhibitions, talks and demonstrations and included the exhibition *Women with Clever Hands* and floor talk by Curator, Dr Louise Hamby and co-Curator, Lucy Wanapuyngu, demonstration of fibre techniques by women from Gapuwiyak (Lake Evella) in Arnhem Land.

The series of creative workshops were available for the delegates and the general public and covered traditional and contemporary techniques and artistic professional development in fibre and textile practice.

The market attracted Indigenous artists from across Australia who sold their work with all proceeds going directly to them. The market day was complemented by a series of free demonstrations.

Selling Yarns 3 was an unprecedented success, a sell-out for all events almost as soon as registrations opened. There has already been significant support for a Selling Yarns 4 in 2017, however gaining funding to support the Selling Yarns events has been difficult and continues to be a greater challenge each year it is presented.



The Selling Yarns 2: Innovation for sustainability conference was developed by:

- [The Australian National University Research School of Humanities and the Arts](#)
- [Craft ACT: Craft and Design Centre](#)
- [National Museum of Australia](#)

Advisory Committee

- **Avi Amesbury** – Executive Director, Craft ACT: Craft and Design Centre
- **Dr Louise Hamby** – Adjunct Fellow, Digital Humanities Hub, Research School of Humanities and the Arts, The Australian National University
- **Dr Christiane Keller** – Visiting Academic, Australian National University School of Archaeology and Anthropology
- **Valerie Kirk** – Head of Textiles, ANU School of Art, The Australian National University
- **Mary-Lou Nugent** – Travelling Exhibitions, National Gallery of Australia
- **Jilda Simpson** – Yuwaalaraay woman, Doctorate candidate, Australian National University Research School of Humanities



Selling Yarns 3 is a Centenary of Canberra project, proudly supported by the ACT Government and the Australian Government.