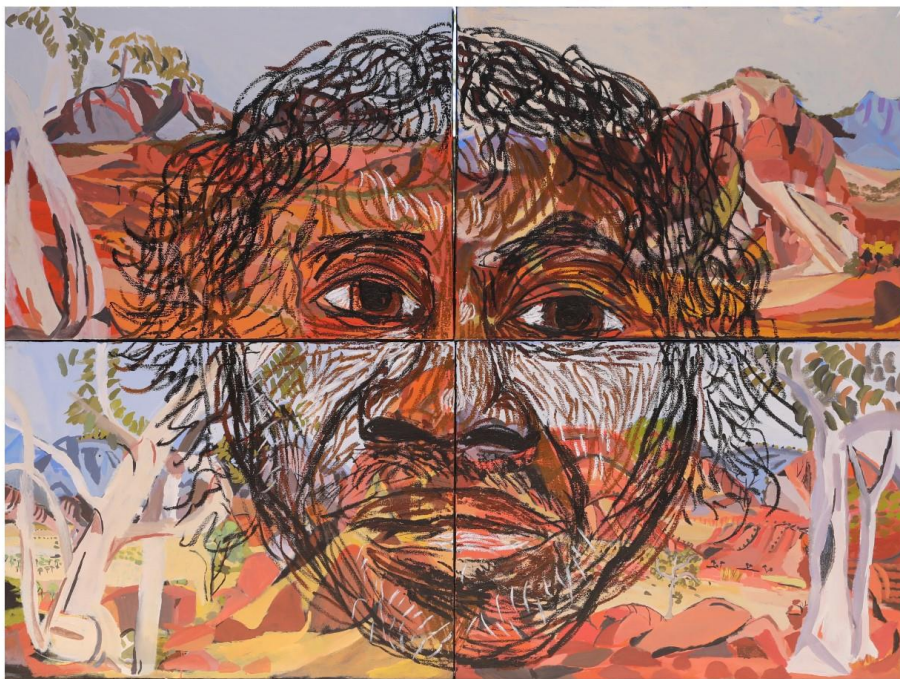


YAVUZ GALLERY

Media release
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YAVUZ GALLERY TO PRESENT *DESERT SONGS* BY LEADING INDIGENOUS ARTIST VINCENT NAMATJIRA OAM



Credit: VINCENT NAMATJIRA Self-portrait, 2022, Oil stick and acrylic on linen, 182 x 244 cm

Sydney, Australia: Yavuz Gallery, one of the leading contemporary art galleries in the Asia Pacific, today announced the premiere of a major debut exhibition **Desert Songs** by Western Aranda artist **Vincent Namatjira OAM**. Presented from **5-28 October 2023** at **Yavuz Gallery** in Surry Hills, Sydney, the exhibition will coincide with a forthcoming monograph published by Thames and Hudson and major survey, *Australia in colour*, presented at the Art Gallery of South Australia in 2023 and the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, in 2024.

Founder and Director of Yavuz Gallery, Can Yavuz said: “Yavuz Gallery is tremendously proud to present *Desert Songs*, a seminal body of work by one of Australia’s most prominent artists. This exhibition tells the stories of his community and all that they have endured, celebrating icons of Aboriginal music and deploying his signature wit to bring other familiar faces onto his Country.”

Featuring thirteen new paintings, the exhibition tackles the rich themes and concepts of leadership, power and legacy. A show for these times, **Desert Songs** provides a platform for Namatjira to explore his own deeply personal histories through portraits of well-known figures that have shaped his life through art, music, and politics. Through these bold and unapologetically political paintings, Namatjira explores what it means to be Indigenous in Australia, or the world.

The Yavuz Gallery presentation will include celebrated works from Namatjira including *Vincent and Vincent*, *Charles on Country* and *Desert Songs (Albert Namatjira)*.

A subversive portraitist, Namatjira uses wit and heart to interrogate the complex colonial narratives implicit in Australia's relationship with the Empire from a contemporary Aboriginal perspective. Born in Alice Springs, Northern Territory, and now based in Indulkana on Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands, South Australia, Namatjira is an acute observer of national and international politics.

"I started painting portraits because I'm interested in people and power, wealth and politics. For me, portraiture is a way of putting myself in someone else's shoes as well as to share with the viewer what it might be like to be in my shoes. I use portraiture to look at my identity and my family history," said artist Vincent Namatjira.

"I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to utilise cheeky humour side-by-side with gut wrenchingly hard stories. *Desert Songs* is inspired by these stories." said **Vincent Namatjira**.

"I don't want to dismiss this element of what I refer to as 'Guerrilla' humour, which is a tactic used in Blackfella art to make Whitefella's laugh at themselves. Let's be honest, as Aboriginal men we have much more luck in interrogating White nuances through a joke than by pointing the finger. This is one of Vincent's greatest attributes." (p.171, **Tony Albert** on Vincent, from **Vincent Namatjira by Vincent Namatjira**, published by **Thames & Hudson** Australia, AUD\$90.00, available 31 October 2023.)

"Painting after painting, he places himself in a history that has been brutal to his Western Aranda people." (p.241, **Ben Quilty** on Vincent from **Vincent Namatjira by Vincent Namatjira**, published by **Thames & Hudson** Australia, AUD\$90.00, available 31 October 2023)

Yavuz Gallery will also present an artist talk featuring Vincent Namatjira in conversation with Executive Director of Artspace, Alexie Glass-Kantor, on **Saturday, 7 October at 2pm**.

ENDS

EXHIBITION DETAILS

Desert Songs

Yavuz Gallery

5 - 28 October 2023

MEDIA CONTACTS

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About Vincent Namatjira

Namatjira's practice has gained significant recognition in Australia and overseas. In 2020, Namatjira was awarded the *Medal of the Order of Australia* (OAM) in honour of his contribution to Indigenous visual arts. In the same year, he was the first Indigenous Australian artist to win the prestigious *Archibald Prize*. Namatjira was also the winner of the 2019 *Ramsay Art Prize*, Australia's most generous prize for artists under 40. In 2021, Namatjira was invited to produce the site-specific *Circular Quay Foyer Wall Commission for the Museum of Contemporary Art*, Australia. In 2022, Namatjira received a *Sidney Myer Creative Fellowship* in recognition of outstanding talent and exceptional professional courage. Namatjira has been curated into major exhibitions internationally, including **UN/LEARNING AUSTRALIA, Seoul Museum of Art, South Korea** (2022) and the **9th Asia Pacific Triennial, Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane** (2018–19); **Tarnanthi Festival, Art Gallery of South Australia** (2017 & 2018); the **TarraWarra Biennial, TarraWarra Museum of Art** (2016); and **Indigenous Australia: Enduring Civilisation, the British Museum, London** (2015). Namatjira's work is held in significant collections including the **British Museum, National Gallery of Victoria, Art Gallery of New South Wales** and **Art Gallery of South Australia**.

About Yavuz

Established in Singapore (2010) and Sydney (2019), Yavuz Gallery is dedicated to the promotion of intercultural dialogue through contemporary art. The Gallery represents a diverse group of established and emerging artists from around the world, celebrating a strong curatorial program driven by the social significance of artworks that challenge the issues of our times.

Yavuz Gallery is one of the leading contemporary galleries in the Asia-Pacific region supported by an ambitious exhibition and international art fair program committed to providing artists with a global platform. Recent shows have included Abdul Abdullah's *Magical Thinking* (Sydney) and Nicholas Ong's *Radio Silence* (Singapore).