



FONDATION OPALE

- ≡ Cultural foundation
- ≡ Exhibition

PRESS RELEASE

Fondation Opale presents its new exhibition FUGITIVE PRESENT

From June 12th to November 6th, 2022, Fondation Opale in Lens/Crans-Montana brings together, for the first time, two different types of artworks: contemporary photographs from Australian urban centres and traditional *wamulu* ground paintings.

FUGITIVE PRESENT puts on display the artistic diversity of Australia's first peoples by combining an ancient art form with a more recent medium. Originally created on the soil during ceremonies, the artworks made from *wamulu*, a yellow flower from Australia's Central Desert, were made permanent using a binder on panels in order to be displayed to the general public. Alongside these ground paintings, some fifty photographs explore sensitive topics from Australian colonial history. FUGITIVE PRESENT brings together two very different mediums, both aiming at rendering visible the immaterial, at fixing the ephemeral, even if for a brief moment in time.

CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY AND ENGAGED ART

Created between the 1990s and today, the photographic series by Michael Riley, Tracey Moffatt, Tony Albert and Robert Fielding denounce the still-painful consequences of the European invasion and dispossession of Aboriginal peoples. Michael Riley's *Cloud* and *Sacrifice* series, as well as his film *Empire* tell about the complex effects of the introduction of Christianity, while Tracey Moffatt's and Tony Albert's pictures point the finger at the stereotypical portrayals of Aboriginal peoples and the multiple forms of racism to which they are subjected. As a son of a child from the stolen generations, Robert Fielding highlights the clash between Western and Aboriginal cultures with his series *Objects of Origin*.

TRADITIONAL WAMULU PAINTINGS

Made from a yellow flower that grows abundantly in the Alice Springs region as their primary material, these ground mosaics have ceremonial purposes and disappear once the ritual is over. They have been made permanent on the occasion of an exceptional artistic project that took shape in the Central Desert between 2002 and 2005. The themes of the artworks relate to the main Dreamings from the desert regions, such as Fire, Water and Emu. These *wamulu* ground paintings are the result of a performance or a community event. The pictures are sung alive as much as they are composed with matter, emphasising the continuance of the link with ancestral creation. FUGITIVE PRESENT brings together the collaborative productions of Ted Egan Jangala, Dinny Nolan Tjampitjinpa, Johnny Possum Japaljarri and Albie Morris Jampijinpa.

THE EXHIBITION

Exhibition FUGITIVE PRESENT, from June 12th to November 6th, 2022; curator: Georges Petitjean, Fondation Opale's head curator.

Alongside FUGITIVE PRESENT, the art gallery in Lens will present two Special Focus shows. The first is an exhibition marking the 50th anniversary of the birth of the Western Desert contemporary Aboriginal art movement in Papunya (from June 12th). The second stages the photographic perspective of Swiss-Guinean artist Namsa Leuba, who challenges the Western perception of the African continent's cultures (from August 4th).

Art gallery open from Wednesday to Sunday, 10 am to 6 pm. L'Opale restaurant open from Wednesday to Saturday, 9.30 am to 11 pm, Sunday from 9.30 am to 7 pm.

FONDATION OPALE

Established in December 2018, Fondation Opale is the sole contemporary art centre dedicated to promoting Aboriginal art in Europe. It fosters dialogue between cultures and peoples through art. The foundation is based on the Collection Bérengère Primat which counts more than 1,300 works by nearly 350 artists, constituting one of the most important collections of contemporary Aboriginal artists in private ownership.

CONTACTS

International

Claudine Colin Communication

Christine Cuny

christine@claudinecolin.com

+33 1 42 72 60 01

Switzerland (French-speaking)

Fondation Opale, communication

Vanessa Pannatier

vp@fondationopale.ch

+41 27 483 46 16

Switzerland (German-speaking)

gasserhuber GmbH

Kilian Gasser

kg@kiliangasser.ch

+41 79 443 55 21