

I would like to acknowledge that we are on Kurna land. Welcome to the premier Mike Rann, Ron Radford director of the South Australia art gallery, SALA committee and distinguish guest. It is a real honor to be asked to speak on the SALA festival for 2003. I look through the program book, it is full of information and very easy to follow.

SALA is very inclusive , not only to most people, but to everyone, including indigenous artist. It's great to see SALA has shown interest in our youth around the state.

It will be much easier to find your way around all the galleries, special events, walking art, moving images and workshops.

What a feast!

Painting is a wonderful, important way of expressing ones feelings. And convey that to others. This includes of course other arts, such as dance, music, acting etc...

Growing up we had many elders teaching us weaving, painting, dance and stories. Sitting around a circle or open fire. Passing on sacred knowledge.

It's sad that this is slowly disappearing, because our elders are not living as long as the rest of the community.

But it is great to see the younger ones becoming more interested in doing things themselves, experimenting with new ideas, getting involved with the opportunities available to them now.

But having said that, it's not enough to have the talent.

These talents need all the help they can get from government and corporate buddies, and anyone interested in helping them budding artist.

Especially in the bush where opportunities are very limited. And help them become self-sufficient.

I would like to point out those indigenous arts is more than just dot paintings. We are interested in other mediums as well. This gallery has become a wonderful Dreaming, resting-place for me. I wish I had discovered this before. I always thought a place like this was only for the well to do. How wrong was I!

Now I come here as often as I can. Here I can travel back and forth in time. Travelling in time comes naturally to you, once you've become involved in art, heritage and culture.

The new mixes with old and vise versa. This festival is very important to all participants and the many visitors. It also gives the indigenous artist a chance to show their talents. Chances they other wise seldom have. Their unique style can only add to the art world as a whole.

Many people ask me 'why does aboriginal art always involve dots?' The answer given. That I don't know.

What I do know is that the Australian bush, insects, lizards and many creatures wear dots. And maybe that's the origin of dots. Nature provides the material, such as the ochre's and chewed up twigs. And I myself try to get the same effect on my silk paintings.

By the way, our ancestors used feathers to create beautiful flowers and used them for ceremonial purposes.

The SALA committee has worked tirelessly to put together a great festival. And I wish them all the success they so richly deserve.

I would like to thank Ron Radford, Jane Hilton, Christopher M (?) and other's who have been there from the beginning. Encouraging me. My late blooming career.

Finally I would like to thank my husband Arts (?) and family for the last 38 years. Letting me always do my own thing whether they agreed or not. Arrt has always said to me "you can never grow under another tree"

Thank you for coming!
And I hope you enjoy SALA week.

Thank you very much.

Muriel Van Der Byl