



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
Thursday 30 November, 2023

## **Dr Ali Gumillya Baker appointed to the Art Gallery Board**

The Art Gallery of South Australia today announced the appointment of First Nations artist and academic Dr Ali Gumillya Baker to the Art Gallery Board effective Thursday 30 November, 2023.

AGSA Chair, Sandy Verschoor said she was delighted to welcome Dr Baker to the Art Gallery Board and looks forward to her contributions to the strategic direction and governance of AGSA.

'Dr Baker brings a unique balance of artistic experience and cultural knowledge to AGSA through her experiences as a visual artist, an outstanding academic alongside her lived experience as a First Nations Mirning woman who has grown up on Kurna country. She is an exceptional leader with strong community credentials', Ms Verschoor said.

'Importantly, she is deeply committed to supporting the arts in Australia, understands the business environment the Gallery operates in, and shares our passion for the artistic output of AGSA, as well as being committed to the gallery's vision and future.'

Rhana Devenport ONZM, AGSA Director says, 'We are excited to welcome Dr Baker to the Board as a passionate leader and advocate for the role of art in cultural identity. Her exceptional experience and reputation will be greatly valued we continue to deliver AGSA's ambitious vision to offer transformative experiences for our diverse audiences, and amplify the voices of artists.'

AGSA's 2024 program of exceptional exhibitions and programs, will contribute powerfully and positively to creative engagement, cultural cohesion and wellbeing in the state.

Minister for the Arts Andrea Michael MP said 'Congratulations to Dr Baker on her appointment to the Art Gallery Board. She brings a wealth of experience and an important perspective as both an artist and a First Nations Mirning woman. I look forward to working with her and the rest of the AGSA board for a successful 2024 and beyond.'

Of her appointment Dr Baker says, 'I am humbled and honoured to have the opportunity to amplify the voices of artists and I am excited to work with the Board to further implement strategies at AGSA that promote the inclusion of First Nations perspectives'.

'AGSA's Tarnanthi is an exceptional platform for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists from across the country to share important stories through artistic excellence, illuminating the diversity and depth of art and culture in communities nationwide. I look forward to working with the Board to further enhancing Tarnanthi's and the Gallery's reputation both here and abroad'.

**Dr Ali Gumillya Baker** is Mirning woman from the Nullarbor on the West Coast of South Australia who lives on Kurna land. She is an Associate Professor in the College of Humanities Arts and Social Sciences in Indigenous and Australian Studies at Flinders University and a multi-disciplinary artist. Awarded her PhD in Cultural Studies and Creative



Arts in 2018, her research interests are in colonial archives, memory and the intergenerational transmission of knowledge.

Baker's work at Flinders University includes an award-winning object-based learning methodology with her most recent presentation at The University Museums and Collections Conference (UMAC 2023) where she delivered the key notes reflecting the conference's theme, 'Truth telling in a post-truth era. Baker has also been a member of the Adelaide City Council Public Art Roundtable, Artlink Board and South Australian Living Artists Advisory Committee.

Baker is also a member of the Unbound Collective which was formed in 2014 with colleagues Faye Rosas Blanch, Natalie Harkin and Simone Ulalka Tur. Through her work as an independent artist and as part of the Unbound Collective, which has been presented at major Australian institutions and included in The National (2019) and Biennale of Sydney (2020), her practice interrogates and speaks back to the colonial archive.

Baker's engagement with AGSA encompasses her inclusion in the 2012 exhibition *SA Illustrated* with her *Bow Down to the Sovereign Goddess* series, a series of photographs offering a contemporary retort to the colonial representations of Aboriginal women (some of which were on display in the nearby *South Australia Illustrated* exhibition). Baker has also participated in Tarnanthi as an exhibiting artist and panellist. She is represented in the collection by one large photograph titled *Sovereign Fleet Red*, from 2013.

With extensive governance experience and a significant career as both a First Nations artist and academic, Baker has unrivalled knowledge of the South Australian visual arts ecology.

### **About AGSA**

Established in 1881, the Art Gallery of South Australia (AGSA) forms part of a boulevard of historic cultural institutions that line North Terrace, Adelaide. It stands on the lands of the Kaurna people, in a traditional camping and meeting area known as Tarntanya ('red kangaroo place').

In 1939 AGSA became the first state gallery to acquire a work by an Aboriginal artist, then from the mid-1950s we carefully began to develop a significant collection of art by the nation's First Peoples. Since 2015 AGSA has presented [Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art](#).

AGSA has also long fostered contemporary art through its three flagship programs. Since 1990 AGSA has staged the [Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art](#), the nation's longest-running survey of Australian contemporary art. Since 2018, the [Ramsay Art Prize](#), a \$100,000 acquisitive art prize that supports contemporary Australian artists under 40.

AGSA's collection spanning two millennia and a breadth of art forms, encompasses 47,000 works of art and is the third largest public collection in the country.

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