

# Case study

Cairns Indigenous Art Fair celebrates contemporary and traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and culture

**For nearly a decade the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair (CIAF) has celebrated Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures by showcasing exceptional contemporary and traditional visual and performing arts.**

## What

CIAF was established in 2009 to showcase the work of Queensland Indigenous artists and to provide an authentic and memorable experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

CIAF provides an ethical market place for the sale and purchase of Queensland Indigenous art. It attracts around 45 000 visitors each year and is a source of quality art work for curators and collectors.

Since 2010, Regional Excellence in Arts and Cultural Hub (REACH) has hosted CIAF's Children's Corner providing a creative space for children to learn alongside local Indigenous artists.

The CIAF Fashion Performance was introduced in 2013 to showcase wearable art and design.

CIAF co-presented inaugural Indigenous theatre productions *My Name is Jimi* with Queensland Theatre in 2017 and *Bukal* with JUTE in 2018.

CIAF also includes Annual Art Awards, and satellite events and exhibitions at local venues.

## When and where

An annual art fair held in July at various locations in Cairns, Queensland.

15–17 July 2016, 14–16 July 2017, and 13–15 July 2018.



Photo courtesy Cairns Indigenous Art Fair 2018

## Arts Queensland investment

- Arts Queensland provides \$600,000 annually (2015 to 2018) through Backing Indigenous Arts (BIA) initiative.
- Arts Queensland provided \$10,670 in 2017–18 through BIA Capacity Building (Governance Wave #2).
- The Queensland Government, through the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, provided \$15,000 for Premier's Award for Excellence (2017 and 2018).

## Key stats



## Outcomes

- There was a 17 per cent increase in artwork sales from \$589 000 in 2017 to \$665 000 in 2018, which was returned to the artists and art centres.
- CIAF 2018 total sales of art, ticketed events, and other associated exhibitions in Cairns reached \$885 000 with many commissions and future exhibitions as further outcomes.
- CIAF 2018 displayed the work of artists from 14 art centres, 6 local galleries and 2 commercial galleries, representing key Queensland Indigenous artists, including Mavis Ngallametta from Aurukun.
- CIAF 2018 visitation to satellite events rose with Cairns' cultural venues and galleries increasing attendance by 115 per cent compared to 2017.
- The CIAF Art Award was introduced in 2017 to support the professional development of Queensland Indigenous artists exhibiting in the Art Fair. The awards were extended in 2018 to include a photography category.
- Many esteemed institutions have made purchases from CIAF, including Auckland Art Gallery, Australian National Maritime Museum, Biennale of Australian Art, Harvard University Art Museum, Museum of Modern Art and Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection of the University of Virginia, National Gallery of Australia, National Gallery of Canada, Queensland Art Gallery, Queensland Museum, and the University of Washington.

Photos courtesy Cairns Indigenous Art Fair 2018.



## Reflections and learnings

To meet the market of the major collectors and curators who attend each year, CIAF need to work more closely with CIAF artists to further develop their practice. By providing guidance in how to develop new mediums and skills, CIAF can help ensure artists are achieving success and ultimately financial freedom.

## Reviews and feedback

*"The CIAF staff were terrific — make sure they all come back in 2019 please! Everything we needed was available so just do the same again"*

Art Centre Manager 2018

*"I think the whole event works very well. No changes needed, the format is great and as time goes on the centre is adjusting to new changes that have been very beneficial to meeting the requirements of high end exhibiting"*

Art Centre Manager 2018

*'My highlight is always the opportunity to network with artists, art centres, gallerists, collectors and curators was fantastic. The art — always the art — seeing new innovative work which is of a very high standard'. Collector 2018*

## What next?

CIAF will celebrate its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019.

The CIAF Art Awards will continue to promote artists and art centres and support them to develop their practise.

CIAF will continue to build on its profile as Australia's leading Indigenous Art Fair.

## Find out more

[www.ciaf.com.au](http://www.ciaf.com.au)

Photos courtesy Cairns Indigenous Art Fair 2018.

