



## Media Release

Embassy of Australia  
Office of Cultural Affairs  
Washington DC

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### *Circles in the Sand: Aboriginal Art from Central Australia in the Kluge-Ruhe Collection*

The Embassy of Australia is proud to welcome thirty outstanding Aboriginal paintings from the Kluge-Ruhe collection at the University of Virginia.

A never before exhibited major painting – more than 22 feet long and 10 feet tall by a collaborative group of artists is the centrepiece of the display. Twenty-nine other extraordinary works of art, by more than 20 leading, contemporary Aboriginal artists from three key art centres; Balgo, Papunya and Yuendumu make up the exhibition.

“Circles in the Sand features work made over a period of almost 40 years – it showcases the extraordinary diversity and power of Aboriginal art,” Ambassador Kim Beazley said.

“While these paintings are unmistakably Indigenous Australian art – they have a transcendent quality - they speak across cultures.

“A profusion of local and individual styles are evident in the exhibition. Each artwork embodies knowledge and a relationship to land that reflects thousands of years of culture,” said Ambassador Beazley.

Historically, most aboriginal art was painted on the body, or drawn in the sand; in recent years, such ephemeral images have inspired the permanent art forms, specifically acrylic paintings on board and canvas, on display in the *Circles in the Sand* exhibit.

The Embassy of Australia is very grateful to Dr. Margo Smith Director and Curator of the Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection and her team for developing this exhibition.

**Public Information:** The Embassy of Australia is located in downtown Washington, at 1601 Massachusetts Avenue, NW. The *Circles in the Sand* exhibition is open to the public from 11:00am to 2:00pm, Monday through Friday. Admission to the art gallery is free of charge, and Photo-ID is required to enter the Embassy. For information on group or private visits, please call (202) 797-3383.

**Information on the Kluge-Rhue Collection at the University of Virginia:** The Kluge-Ruhe Collection came into being in 1997 through a gift by American businessman John W. Kluge. Containing more than 1,700 objects, including paintings, sculpture and artefacts, the collection is among the world’s top collections of Aboriginal art and is housed in the only museum in the United States dedicated to the exhibition and study of Australian Aboriginal art. For more information, please visit <http://www.virginia.edu/kluge-ruhe>.