

## **Tutti Artist Jackie Saunders' work acquired by the Art Gallery of South Australia**

In a first for both the artist and Tutti Arts as an organisation, talented disabled artist and proud Wirangu and Ngarrindjeri woman Jackie Saunders' work *Desert Sundown (Alice Springs)* has been acquired by the Art Gallery of South Australia.

Saunders is a contemporary Wirangu and Ngarrindjeri artist working on Kaurna land at the Tutti Arts studios. Saunders' work explores her interest in colour and pattern, drawing on her strong sense of family and culture and reflecting her connections to both the human and natural world.

*Desert Sundown (Alice Springs)* featured in *Land, Light and Water*, Jackie's recent solo exhibition presented in partnership with The Hospital Research Foundation Group – Creative Health at the Royal Adelaide Hospital for Tarnanthi Festival 2023. Tarnanthi is Art Gallery of South Australia's festival of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and is acclaimed as Australia's leading First Nations art festival.



*Above: Jackie Saunders and Nici Cumpston (AGSA) stand in front of Jackie's work *Desert Sundown (Alice Springs)*.*

## Media Release

Saunders says, “I feel very proud. When I see my work on the wall it gives me a sense of pride.”

The work was inspired by a recent trip Saunders took to Alice Springs.

“I went with my friend and we visited one of the art centres. We also went to visit some of the nature around there which really inspired me to paint new works. The colours I used in the painting *Desert Sundown (Alice Springs)* were inspired by a photo I took up there,” says Saunders.

Tutti Arts Executive Director Linda Williams says, “What an incredible achievement this is for Jackie! It’s clear that a career as an artist is totally possible for learning disabled and neurodivergent artists like Jackie. It is so important for the work of disabled artists to be included at the centre of arts and culture, including in major institutions such as AGSA.”

Tarnanthi’s Artistic Director, Barkandji curator Nici Cumpston OAM, says, “Tarnanthi fosters opportunities for First Nations artists at all stages of their careers, opening up new pathways for creative talents. AGSA is thrilled to have acquired Jackie’s works for the collection, a milestone moment in her career. Her visual arts practice is the culmination of her relentless pursuit of both catharsis and mindfulness, and her reconnection with family and culture. The work is bold, vibrant and dynamic much like Jackie herself.”

Jackie Saunders is a Wirangu and Ngarrindjeri artist working on Kaurna land at Tutti Arts. Saunders began her arts practice at Tutti in 2007 and is also an accomplished performer and former member of disabled pop group The Sisters of Invention. Saunders’ visual arts career highlights include winning the 2020 Dawn Slade-Faull Award, her debut solo exhibition *Salt & Sand*, an exhibition at the South Australian Museum in partnership with South Australian artist Laura Wills, and twice being featured in Tarnanthi Festival in 2021 and 2023.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

#### About Tutti Arts

Tutti Arts is a South Australian multi-arts organisation that supports over 230 learning disabled and neurodivergent South Australian artists across three sites at Brighton, Port Adelaide and the Barossa Valley. Tutti delivers a suite of studio programs in dance, visual arts, music, screen, choirs, theatre, arts and technology. Tutti produces and presents outstanding artistic and cultural products made by learning disabled and neurodivergent people. Tutti’s work showcases unique ways of thinking and diverse ways of being.

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### A note about disability language

Language is constantly changing. When talking about disability, some people use person-first language. For example, “a person with disability”. Tutti Arts chooses to use identity language. For example, “disabled person”. This is in line with the Social Model of Disability which Tutti Arts follows. The Social Model of Disability was developed by disabled people and says that disability is not related to individuals but rather to the barriers created by society.

Contact for more information, interview and/or photo requests:

Emily Galdes

Phone: 0498 021 975

Email: [emily.galdes@tutti.org.au](mailto:emily.galdes@tutti.org.au)