



For immediate release – Tuesday 9 February 2010

**Adelaide Festival Centre in association with  
Adelaide Festival presents  
*WATA (Wind): Photographs, paintings, maps, stories, film  
and performance***

Photographs, paintings, maps, film and stories document the ancestral importance of the **WATA (Wind)** to the people of Ngukurr, South East Arnhem Land in the upcoming visual art exhibition in the Artspace Gallery (upstairs in the Dunstan Playhouse) from **13 February – 21 March 2010**.

Traditionally, WATA has travelled from Marra country on the coast of the Gulf across the Roper River and on into Arnhem Land. In Saltwater Country a whirlwind is called *Walalu* and the people of Ngukurr find connection through ceremony that brings together all 8 language groups of the region.

Exhibition Curator Simon Normand has lived with the Ngukurr community and travelled with Elders and the songmen by foot through country around the Roper region, regularly returning to visit the people and the country he has felt a powerful connection with since first visiting in 1996.

*“With the Marra and Warndarrang women in Saltwater Country I would be immersed in incomprehensible songs of the Whirlwind (Walalu), Catfish and the Mermaids,”* said Simon.

*“Travelling through “Freshwater Country,” I would see a rippling waterhole; they would see a serpent place – a burnt patch of ground, a goanna path. Their country was illustrated to me unlike any maps could ever show and their songs were intimate internal ‘visual diaries,’ perhaps the oldest continuing songs that have ever been sung. I began to see Australia at once as an illuminated manuscript, and a vanishing symphony.”*

Don't miss the exclusive opening event on **Wednesday 3 March at 7:30pm** at the Artspace Gallery, which will be opened by Djon Mundine OAM, a prominent Indigenous Curator who has a long association with Arnhem Land. There will also be a performance of the traditional ceremony (“Bunggul”) by the South East Arnhem Land people, led by the Wagilak Songmen who are a highlight of the Adelaide Festival program.

The ceremony has not previously been seen in South Australia and this exhibition will also be the first time that the paintings, maps and film footage are shown in this state. Works are on display by both Simon Normand and by artists and Songmen from Ngukurr, South East Arnhem Land, with several brand-new works also on display. Many works are for sale, as well as Simon's books *Stonecountry to Saltwater* and *Marranbala Country 2009*.

The Adelaide Festival Centre gratefully acknowledges the support of Arts SA through project funding for its Indigenous Cultures Program.

**What:** *WATA (Wind): Photographs, paintings, maps, stories, film and performance*

presented by Adelaide Festival Centre's Visual Art program in association with Adelaide Festival

**When:** 13 February – 21 March 2010 **(Opening event 3 March, 7:30pm)**

**Venue:** Artspace Gallery, Adelaide Festival Centre (Access via Festival Drive, or Dunstan Playhouse Foyer)

Disability access via Festival Bridge from North Terrace, or Adelaide Festival Centre Amphitheatre ramp

**Hours:** 12noon - 5pm Wednesday – Saturday, 10am – 4pm Sunday

**Cost:** FREE entry

For further information check out: [www.adelaidefestivalcentre.com.au](http://www.adelaidefestivalcentre.com.au)

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