Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE1139

Pizzi, Gabrielle

(1940 - 2004)

Born	19400101, Sydney New South Wales Australia
Died	20041205, Melbourne Victoria Australia
Occupation	Art Collector, Gallery Owner

Summary

Gabrielle Pizzi, fanatical Collingwood Football Club supporter and granddaughter of the colourful Melbourne, Australia, identity John Wren, was one of the driving forces behind the acceptance of indigenous art in the wider community. In the early 1980s, Pizzi argued that Aboriginal art should not be trivialised as ‘tribal’ or ‘primitive’ but, instead, should be regarded as an integral part of the modern movement. She made it her life’s mission to have Aboriginal art accepted as powerful contemporary art, bringing the dynamic works of artists including Ronnie Tjampitjinpa, Mick Namarari Tjapaltjarri and Emily Kam Kngwarray to world audiences by organising exhibitions in such unlikely places as Bangalore, Kiev and Jerusalem.

Pizzi began exhibiting Aboriginal art in Melbourne in the early 1980s, when there was still resistance to accepting it as a valid form of contemporary art. In 1987, she opened the Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi on Flinders Lane with an exhibition of cutting-edge Western Desert art. Unlike some later, exploitative dealers who capitalised on the boom she helped to create, Pizzi was known for her integrity. She always worked with art advisers from community art centres, ensuring that artists were paid correctly and new artists supported.

Published resources

Journal Article
Why Gabrielle Pizzi has changed her mind about Aboriginal art / Gabrielle Pizzi tells Simeon Kronenberg, Pizzi, Gabrielle with Simeon Kronenberg, 1995

The work is the statement : an interview with Gabrielle Pizzi, Benjamin, Roger, 1992

Booklet
Mythology & reality : contemporary Aboriginal desert art from the Gabrielle Pizzi collection, Heide Museum of Modern Art, 2003

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

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