

DIDGERI AIR ART TOURS & PALYA ART NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2002

Greetings and well wishes to you all for the New Year. Please excuse me not adding a personal note but I'm about to leave for the US - or have gone already. I'll be back, via England, on February 21st and will remain contactable by e-mail, (here's hoping I don't have to do any piloting!).

2001 art tours started with a flight across the Gibson and Tanami Deserts at the tail end of the long, big wet. Kiwirrkurra got flooded out. Swollen rivers cut off communities such as Balgo and Lajamanu and some roads in Kimberley were shut until May. Later in the year fires spread across Arnhem Land, Kimberley and the Deserts. Along the northern mangrove swamps sea breezes eased the smoke for us to see the white shores still wet and pristine. In October I flew DMG south again to keep her out of the Northern wet season. By then Lake Eyre had all but dried up.

In March the touring show 'A Thousand Journeys' was exhibited at the Flinders University Art Museum's City Gallery in Adelaide. Through the interest and support of Gail Greenwood, Director of FUAM, 'ATJ' remains at the University for research and further exhibitions.

Palya Art enjoyed its Sydney opening in June at Nicholas Venet's Salon. This happy venue, for those who haven't called in yet, is at 160A New South Head Road, Edgecliff. The Salon is ideal for gatherings, discussing the art, the tours and viewing artworks.

Peter and Lindi Huntsman warmly opened the doors of 'The Barn' in Kew, Victoria, once again in October. It was delightful to see so many people considering the short time I was in Melbourne. People came to exchange ideas, plan trips, reminisce, view artworks and generally enjoy getting together, often in Lindi's 'Peace Rose' garden.

In November the exhibition 'Beyond Wings' was opened by Senator Robert Hill at Flinders University Art Museum. 'Beyond Wings' is a selling exhibition of works selected whilst visiting the art centres during the year. The exhibition runs to 2nd February 2002.

At our 'launching pad' here in Darwin, Karen Mills, NT artist and arts manager, is assisting Palya Art as Collections Manager. Karen's address is karen.palya@didgeri.com.au. If you wish, Karen can show you images of available artworks by e-mail. A new web site for Palya Art is scheduled to be completed early in the year.

2002 is set to be another full season with art tours and talks. Didgeri will start flying to art centres in April. During 2002 we will be visiting communities across Arnhem Land, the Roper River area, Tiwi Islands, Kimberley, and Central and Western Deserts. Please see the itineraries on the next page.

I look forward to seeing many of you again this year, hopefully on tour. But if you would like to make a day and time to meet in Sydney or Melbourne, I will be in Sydney in May at Nicholas' Salon Gallery, and at 'The Barn' in Melbourne in October. Palya Art will be exhibiting recent paintings and sculptures from the communities then too.

I'd like to take this opportunity of thanking all of you who have given support in 2001, and in previous years. So many of you: artists, art centres, people in the communities. All of you who have flown with 'Didgeri' and, or, bought paintings from Palya Art. The back and fore-ground supporters who continue to spread the word about meeting the artists and seeing their country. Thanks too to the team working with 'DAAT' and 'Palya' - Nicholas, Lindi, Gail, and the indefatigable Ian Bolt. Also Robert Courtenay, Kath Chambers, Karen Mills, David Head, Mandy Rutherford, Win Reed, Lindsay Passmore, Phillip Reichstein, Ollie De Castro and Jules O'Shea. And a special thanks to Senator Robert Hill, for his encouragement and support when Cultural Heritage Minister, for flying to indigenous people's country across NW Australia with us, meeting and listening to cultural custodians and artists.

Helen Read