

## CAMD Case Study – INDIGENOUS CULTURES: *Menagerie: Contemporary*

### *Indigenous Sculpture*

Australian Museum and Object: Australian Centre for Craft and Design

*Contemporary Indigenous Culture*



*Menagerie: Contemporary Indigenous Sculpture* is a unique exhibition that exposes the richness and breadth of contemporary Indigenous sculpture in Australia. It includes both well-known and emerging artists, who have produced outstanding sculptural works depicting a variety of animals. Through these works the artists share with us their cultural knowledge, expressions of identity and connections to country.

*Menagerie* has been developed through an unusual and mutually rewarding collaboration between the Australian Museum and Object: Australian Centre for Craft and Design. The combined strengths of the two organisations have resulted in a project that neither organisation could have produced alone. Thirty-three artists, representing every State and

Territory, have produced 52 extraordinary works: a snapshot of Indigenous perspectives on animals at a single point in time and a survey that can never be replicated.

*Menagerie* was exhibited at the Australian Museum until November 2009 and then toured nationally until 2012. Amongst the venues visited were Melbourne Museum; Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery, Launceston; Tandanya: National Aboriginal Cultural Institute, Adelaide; Western Australian Museum, Perth; Araluen Arts Centre, Alice Springs; Cairns Regional Art Gallery; Queensland Museum; Wagga Regional Art Gallery and the Western Plains Cultural Centre, Dubbo. Over 200,000 people saw the exhibition during its two-and-a-half-year tour.

The collection demonstrates beautifully the vibrancy of Indigenous cultures and the constant discovery of new languages to tell stories about the land and our human connection to it. *Menagerie* represents both ancient dreaming stories and new stories, with the artists using a mixture of traditional and contemporary materials and techniques in their works. *Menagerie* is so important that the Australian Museum recently raised funds to purchase the entire collection. The collection of 68 contemporary sculptures will be exhibited at the Museum from 22 December 2012 – 2 March 2014.

<http://www.object.com.au/menagerie/welcome.html>

Work shown: Craig Koomeeta, *Neetan (Camp Dog)*, 2008

<http://camd.org.au/files/2012/06/Menagerie-Contemporary-Indigenous-Sculpture-Australian-Museum1.pdf>