

26/01/2004

Indigenous Aussie art display

Barbara Foong

AUSTRALIAN High Commission held an exhibition on Australian indigenous art entitled Kiripuranji at its premises in Kuala Lumpur recently.

The exhibition was launched by Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir who wore a beautiful batik piece.

She joked: "I believe Malaysian batik designs have similarities to the art from Tiwi islands, Australia. We hope Malaysian batik designs will be displayed in similar fashion in Australia in future.

"This exhibition is a softer and diplomatic approach to appreciate contemporary art from both countries. The art is pretty to look at and creates good feelings."

Also present at the launch were Australian High Commissioner James Wise, National Art director-general Wairah Marzuki and exhibition curator Jackie Dunn.

Kiripuranji (a Tiwi word meaning clever with our hands) was a display of Tiwi art including work on canvas, paper, ceremonial spears, bark baskets and vibrant textiles.

It builds on the international reputation already enjoyed by the Tiwi islands for their carved and painted ceremonial poles.

The Tiwi Islands, Bathurst and Melville, are located 100 km north of Darwin, separated from the mainland by the Dundas Strait.

Tiwi is the main tribal group in these islands.

Creative designs have long been important to the Tiwi ceremonial objects, songs and dances.

Much of Tiwi contemporary art is derived from body painting or jilmara.

All Tiwi artists featured at the exhibition have distinctive individual styles. Some use traditional methods of employing a wooden comb to apply dots on their canvas, paper or sculpture.

Kiripuranji is curated by Artbank, assisted by members of the Tiwi Art Network, Jilamara Arts and Craft Association, Munupi Arts and Crafts Association and Tiwi Design Aboriginal Corporation.

For details, visit www.tiwiart.com