



NAMATJIRA PROJECT COMING TO ABC TV

Big hART is delighted to announce that our acclaimed film *Namatjira Project*, the documentary which changed history, will be coming to Australian television screens in July, screening on the **ABC on 8th July** and then available online on iView.

Namatjira Project was part of an 8 year fight for justice by Big hART alongside the Namatjira family, which saw copyright to Albert Namatjira's works finally returned in October 2017, an historic moment for all Australians which made international headlines.

Directed by Sera Davies, produced by Sophia Marinos, starring Trevor Jamieson, and distributed by **Umbrella Entertainment**, the documentary had its world premiere at Melbourne International Film Festival, touring festivals nationally and to cinemas around the country. It was at the end of the cinema screenings, with increased media and public pressure, and the assistance of law firm **Arnold Bloch Leibler** and **Dick Smith** working alongside Big hART and the Namatjira family which finally restored copyright back to the family. Copyright now belongs with the Namatjira family and is overseen by the Namatjira Legacy Trust.

Namatjira Project tells the extraordinary first-hand account of the international battle to reclaim the artwork and heritage of one of Australia's most important Indigenous figures: Albert Namatjira. The founder of the Indigenous art movement, Albert Namatjira was an international icon and the first Indigenous person to be granted Australian citizenship. But Namatjira was never fully accepted by white Australia, and after being wrongfully imprisoned in 1959, he soon died, despondent and broken. Then, in 1983, the Australian Government sold the rights to his work to a white art dealer – despite Namatjira having left his art to his wife and children.

Made with the Namatjira family this captivating film by Big hART follows the family's quest for justice, from Aranda country to Buckingham Palace, as they fight to have Namatjira's legacy returned to its rightful home. Exhibitions are mounted to raise the profile of the Namatjira legacy, and a theatre production about Albert's life and the family's plight written and directed by Scott Rankin tours Australia and is invited to London. The family uses this opportunity to generate international pressure - Queen Elizabeth invites the Namatjiras to Buckingham Palace, and UK media pick up the story of this famous family's struggle. In Australia, it is only years later, after decades of injustice that the Namatjira's story finally gets cut through. Sadly, Senior Namatjira Artist, Cultural Leader and Executive Producer of the film Kumantjai L Namatjira, who also appears in the film, passed away just days after the copyright decision.

Since copyright was won last year, the interest in Albert Namatjira's work and the film continues to grow nationally and internationally. The film premiered recently in London, Paris and New York and ATOM has developed a study guide to accompany the film for teachers and students (available at www.namatjiratrust.org).

Big hART is Australia's leading campaigning arts organisation, working to make art, build community and drive change. Working in over 50 communities for 25 years Big hART has won over 45 awards.

Praise for Namatjira Project:

Profoundly moving, what makes the film so powerful is the sense of collaboration and generosity. SMH

This film is a reminder of how far we have come and how far we have to go. The Australian

Bold and unconventional... it could very well be the ignition source that lights a fire of discussion around one of this country's most important artists, and what his life and death have to say about the fraught relationship between white and Indigenous Australia. Filmink

Namatjira Project will screen on ABC TV in Naidoc Week, on **Sunday 8th July at 9:30pm** and will be available on iView for 1 month online.



All Media Enquiries to Bettina Richter, Big hART Media and Communications Manager
E: bettina@bighart.org M: 0414 441 860
W: bighart.org

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