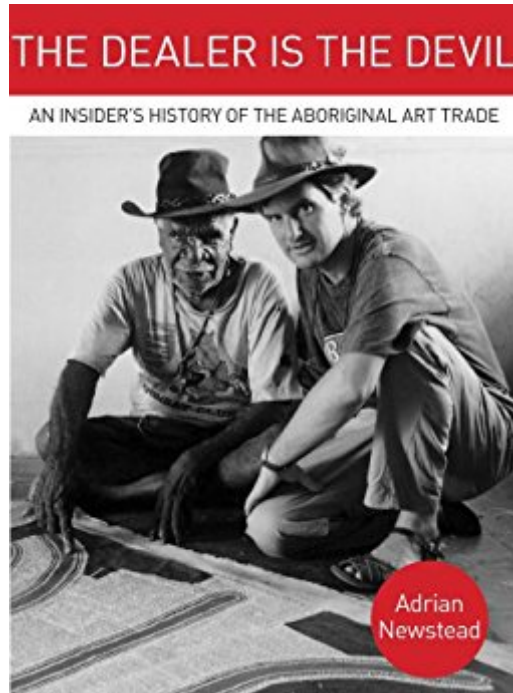




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The Dealer Is The Devil: An Insiders History Of The Aboriginal Art Trade



Synopsis

Adrian Newstead's explosive memoir lifts the lid on what Robert Hughes once described as "the last great art movement of the 20th century." After thirty years sitting round campfires with Aboriginal artists all over Australia, Newstead has produced the definitive expose of "the first great art movement of the 21st century." From remote indigenous communities with their dispossessed populations of tribal elders and troubled youth, to the gleaming white box galleries, high powered auction houses, and formidable art institutions of major cities all over the world. Newstead combines personal anecdotes with an insider's grasp of the international art market. With vivid portraits of artists, dealers and scamsters, the book races from pre-contact and colonial days to the heady celebrations of the Sydney Olympics and the devastating impact of the global financial crisis. Newstead's humour, love and respect for his subjects produces a story that reads at times like a thriller and also a lament for a lost world. WBN reviewers gave five stars to *The Dealer is the Devil*, Adrian Newstead's "personal and encyclopaedic examination of the Indigenous art industry."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A wonderful and very detailed book that not only explains the genesis and development of the indigenous art market. It is also full of fascinating ethnographic detail and explains how painting, batik design and printing, wood carving, pottery, photography and art installations are used to record every aspect of the incredibly rich Aboriginal culture which developed over 40 to 60,000 years of virtual isolation from the rest of the world. Art above all has given the First Australians a means of establishing their identity all over the world, giving those that have survived the confidence to assert their rights as equals to their white colonizers.

Excellent overview of the last great art movement with first hand accounts of the artists, their history and a highly informed analysis of the work itself and it's trajectory in the marketplace. Very interesting.

This is an excellent history of the recent development of modern Australian indigenous art. Newstead covers this story from three angles. First, he tells of the development of the art form itself. He traces the flow of ideas back thousands of years, but emphasises the evolution of indigenous art since the arrival of the first fleet. The second angle is the story of how indigenous art has become a successful global business. The third angle is Newstead's personal history in this - the lens through which he tells the other two stories. It's this personal approach that makes this book so worthwhile. Newstead is an engaging author, and his stories bring the tale alive. One consequence of this is that this history is not as "objective" as the more academic treatments of the topic. A second outcome of this approach is that he has clear views about the many controversies that have arisen within this art market over the past thirty years. He addresses issues such as attribution when painting is done communally, the social role of this art in Australia and abroad, and the turf battles between the official art centres and independent dealers. Those that disagree with these views, or were on other sides in these fights may not like this book as much as I did. I think that this book will be most useful for people that already know a bit about modern Australian indigenous art. It doesn't have as many photos of the works being discussed as many other books do, which makes it less useful as an introduction. Newstead has also put together an excellent supporting website called The Australian Indigenous Art Market Top 100 - this has biographies of 200 artists, a discussion of their style and examples of their work, and auction results for those that have had work sold in the secondary market. This fills in some of the gaps in the book. If you're interested in the development of this art market, this is a must read.

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