

Submission to the Senate Inquiry into Australia's Indigenous visual arts and craft sector

I would like to make a submission to the inquiry.

My name is Lotte Ghielen. I have a BA in Development Studies and an MA in Cultural Anthropology from the Radboud University Nijmegen in The Netherlands. For the requirements of my MA degree, I conducted three months of research into the Aboriginal arts and crafts industry in the Northern Territory in January-April 2006. In August 2006 I completed my MA thesis, entitled "*A piece of our soul*": *How producers, intermediaries and consumers understand the authenticity of Aboriginal art at Woolaning and Darwin (Northern Territory, Australia)*. In this thesis I focus on the commodification of Aboriginal art in relation to the views that artists, intermediaries and consumers have on the authenticity of the art.

In contrast to what Bowden (2001) and Coleman (2001, 2005) argue with regard to the authenticity of Aboriginal art, I found that for producers, intermediaries and consumers alike, Indigenous art has to be produced by an Indigenous person to be considered authentic.

I believe this finding is relevant to two of the terms of reference, namely e) the development of "strategies and mechanisms" "to deal with unscrupulous or unethical conduct," and g) "future opportunities for further growth of Australia's Indigenous visual arts and craft sector, including through further developing international markets."

References

- Bowden, R. (2001). What is 'authentic' Aboriginal art? *Pacific Arts*, no. 23-24, pp. 1-10.
- Coleman, E. B. (2001). Aboriginal Paintings: Identity and Authenticity, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 59 (4), pp. 385-402.
- Coleman, E. B. (2005). *Aboriginal Art, Identity and Appropriation*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing.