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## **SAMA-LIGONIER VALLEY TO EXHIBIT AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL ART COLLECTION**

Ligonier – The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art attempts to provide its patrons with a diverse cultural experience in fine art. In recent years, the Museum has exhibited the work of Tibetan and Nepalese monks, Chinese peasant folk artists, and Kamal Youssef’s confluence of Middle Eastern and Western cultures. In that tradition, SAMA-Ligonier Valley is pleased to announce its latest exhibition, *Ritual Abstractions: Australian Aboriginal Paintings from the Collection of Anne M. MacDougall*. The exhibition opens May 4 and will remain on view through August 5.

Contemporary Australian Aboriginal paintings are derived from rock engravings dating back at least 40,000 years and are considered part of the world’s oldest continuous art tradition. Before the arrival of Europeans, Aboriginal painting was made solely to fulfill traditional cultural needs. But in the early 1970s, acrylic paints were introduced, and what was once ephemeral suddenly became permanent.

The vibrant abstract imagery in these paintings depict sacred stories, the earth and cultural traditions that remain relevant today. Imbued with complex layers of meaning, the paintings offer a glimpse into ancient traditions that shape the past, present and future. *Ritual Abstractions* offers nearly 40 paintings and artifacts that honor and exemplify the beautiful visual language that has been passed down from generation to generation.

The Museum will celebrate the exhibition with a Lunch a l’Art program on July 19. Art collector Anne MacDougall will provide an in-depth discussion on the works featured in the exhibition. Cost is \$15 or \$12 for SAMA members. Reservations are required by July 13 by calling the Museum at (724) 238-6015.

*Ritual Abstractions* also will be the featured exhibition for the Museum’s 17<sup>th</sup> annual Garden Party. Scheduled for June 2, this year’s “Orient Express” event will feature live music, games of chance, live and silent auctions, gourmet cuisine by Vallozzi’s, as well as a display of train memorabilia by Derry Railroad Association and other railroad enthusiasts. Tickets are \$125 per person and may be purchased by calling the Museum.

The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Ligonier Valley is located at One Boucher Lane and Route 711 South in Ligonier. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through

Friday and 1 to 5 p.m. weekends. The Museum is a handicapped-accessible facility and is open to the public free of charge. For more information, call the Museum or visit [www.sama-art.org](http://www.sama-art.org).