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PRESS RELEASE

## Gordon Hookey: *A Ready Made Joke*

Melbourne Art Fair

30 July – 3 August

The art of Indigenous artist **Gordon Hookey** presents an explosion of raw emotion and frustration, bringing to the foreground a number of historical and contemporary Australian political issues. **Hookey** uses the brightly coloured canvas as a playing field to flesh out the deep seeded matters on Indigenous injustices, the war in Iraq, the relationship between Australia and other Western Countries, immigration, and federal politics.

This installation at the 2008 Art Fair is a further development in **Hookey's** practice. This body of work entitled *Ready Made Joke*, consists of painting, sculpture, ready-made, found objects, and assemblage. The artist is using contemporary issues in world politics as a spring board in which to generate images. **Hookey** believes in casting a wide net, sourcing issues from foreign shores and using them to comment on issues closer to home. Oppression and injustice manifests itself in many ways across the globe, but their effects are universal.

Many of these works provoke what **Hookey** refers to as a 'Euro- Western cultural cliché, for example the Stop Sign, which displays the word 'Go'. **Hookey** uses well-known iconography as a tool to communicate his message. Another example of the 'aboriginal-eyesation' of a Euro-Western cultural icon is of Elvis Presley, becoming Pelvis Deadly, the legendary black Elvis. By using such imagery **Hookey** is communicating with both sides of the divide, injecting his work with a greater level of potency.

**Gordon Hookey** completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts at the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney, in 1992. Hookey has held a number of exhibitions and collaborative projects in Australia and abroad since the early 1990s. Recent group exhibitions include *Culture Warriors*, National Gallery of Australia (2007), *Power and Beauty*, Heidi Museum of Modern Art (2007), (2003), *Uncommon world*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (2001), and *Beyond the pale: contemporary indigenous art: 2000 Adelaide biennial of Australian art*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide (2000). **Gordon Hookey's** work is represented in the collections of the National Gallery of Australia, National Gallery of Victoria, Canberra and the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane.

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level 1, 12 river street, south yarra, victoria 3141  
vernissage : 7 – 10.30pm wednesday 30 July 11, 2008  
exhibition ends: sunday 3 august

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