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Flying Arts celebrates 45 years of bringing colour to Queensland communities
with retrospective exhibition celebrating founder Merv Moriarty

In 1971, a Queensland artist with an airplane and a vision to bring art to the bush and beyond founded The Flying Arts School. In 2016, Flying Arts celebrates its 45th year by paying homage to renowned artist, teacher and founder of the organisation, Merv Moriarty, with a special retrospective exhibition.

COLOUR: Mervyn Moriarty, A Retrospective Exhibition will launch at the Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts on Saturday 8 October with some exciting public programs including a curator talk and walk-through at 12:30pm, followed by an exclusive 'In Conversation with Merv Moriarty' at 1:15pm. Following the launch, the exhibition will be open from 10am to 4pm Monday to Saturday, 10 to 22 October.

Five decades of Moriarty's works will be exhibited in *COLOUR*, including some early pieces painted by Moriarty in Brisbane during the 1960s-70s; an award-winning work from the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art's collection; as well as the premiere of a new, previously unexhibited series.

Exhibition curator, Sarah Barron, had the immense task of researching, locating, and bringing together these artworks.

"Merv is greatly inspired by the people he has met and taught, and by the places his teaching and travels have taken him. Affectionately known as the 'Flying Artist', Merv Moriarty has remained committed to teaching and creating art for more than five decades," reflects Barron.

During his time at the helm of Flying Arts from 1971 to 1983, Moriarty made over 1,250 trips, flew over 400,000 kilometres, visited over 25 different locations in remote and regional Queensland multiple times, and delivered 20,000 individual tutorials to local artists. From south west Queensland to the Torres Strait Islands, some of the remote locations Moriarty flew to included Quilpie, Blackall, Mount Isa, Weipa and Thursday Island.

"Merv is a greatly cherished and respected artist and art educator, cited by many Australian artists and art teachers as having a profound impact on their lives and practice," said Barron.

Primarily working with the figure and landscape, Moriarty's art displays a masterful understanding of colour relationships, composition and form. The title of the exhibition, *COLOUR*, is testament to his ongoing fascination with colour.

"This retrospective and current exhibition of my work, which is such an extraordinary honour, has so enhanced my focus and sense of self that I now cannot imagine it not being there. I am painting again, loving it and feeling good about my past and present work," states Moriarty.

"If I have been enamoured of colour in the past, I am in awe of it now. My current work is colour and landscape and comes straight out of where I now live, on the aptly named Sapphire Coast in NSW. I am sketching in the field first, using watercolours or acrylics, with final works exploring the flexibility of modern acrylic paints on canvas.

"It is now 45 years since I took off on the first flying art school flight with my just acquired pilot's license. It seems extraordinary to me that with all the huge challenges Flying Arts has weathered and survived, it has now found itself in the best of hands."

Since Moriarty founded the organisation in 1971, Flying Arts has made over 7,000 trips and travelled over two million kilometres by land and air to deliver over one million tutorials to artists across regional and remote Queensland.

Flying Arts CEO, Kerryanne Farrer, is honoured to lead the organisation in celebrating its 45th year.

"This retrospective is a rare opportunity to see a snapshot of Moriarty, the artist," said Farrer.

"We hope to celebrate the extraordinary career of our founder Merv Moriarty with this exhibition, as well as his enormous cultural contribution and impact on three generations of artists across regional Queensland.

"While the organisation Merv founded in 1971 has evolved over time, Flying Arts has remained true to his original vision - to nurture a resilient visual arts culture, primarily among those who have the least access.

“45 years after his first flight, Merv Moriarty and Flying Arts are both still going strong, and we hope friends, former students and fans of Merv’s work residing in Brisbane and across Queensland can come and celebrate with Merv at the launch on Saturday 8 October.”

Further information and bookings for the public programs can be found at <http://flyingarts.org.au/whats-on/flying-arts-turns-45/>, or by contacting Flying Arts on 07 3216 1322 or info@flyingarts.org.au