Disturbances in the Field:
Exhibiting Aboriginal Art in the U.S.

FRED MYERS
Professor of Anthropology
New York University

This lecture considers the role of varied agents in the circulation of Papunya art across the relations between the Australian and the international art fields. My analysis follows an exhibition that took place at NYU's Grey Gallery in 2009, tracing in particular the circulation of the highly valued 'early Papunya boards' -- internationally. By focusing on the unsettled nature of Aboriginal art's circulation and the problem of producing its value socially in a world that is not consolidated, I consider Bourdieu's field of cultural production as "in the making." Finally, my argument cautions against Bourdieu's tendency to treat national art fields as independent or autonomous.

Fred Myers is the Silver Professor of Anthropology at New York University. He has been involved with Indigenous people in Central Australia since 1973. In addition to his long association with the Pintupi artists of the Papunya Tula Arts cooperative, Myers has written frequently on questions of place and personhood, and on issues of culture, objects, and identity as they are understood both within Indigenous communities and circulated through different regimes of value. A recipient of numerous grants and awards for his research and writing, his books include Pintupi Country, Pintupi Self: Sentiment, Place and Politics among Western Desert Aborigines (1986), Painting Culture: The Making of an Aboriginal High Art (2002), and edited volumes The Traffic in Culture: Refiguring Anthropology and Art (co-edited with George Marcus, 1995), and The Empire of Things (2001). His current project involves the repatriation and "re-documentation" of ten hours of film footage from 1974 with the two current Pintupi communities.

Monday
February 25, 2013, 3:15-5:00 pm
Conference Room, Building 50, Room 51A

ANTHROPOLOGY COLLOQUIUM