



# REBECCA HOSSACK

ART GALLERY

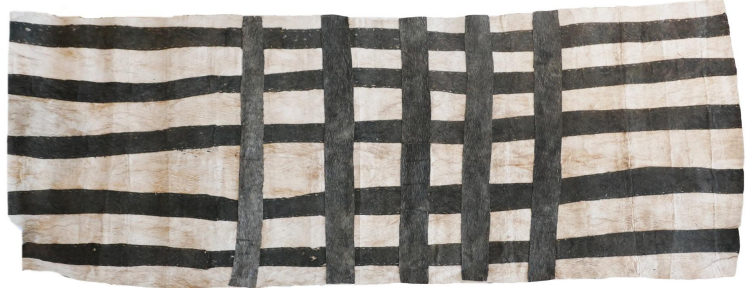
## Press Release

### *Eye of the Sun*

**5 November - 30 November  
2022**

Private View: Thursday 10 November

Details of Ilma Savari, *Majanune*, 2020, painted and appliquéd barkcloth, 227 x 96 cms; Ilma Savari, and *Bojo e Sore*, 2020, painted and appliquéd barkcloth, 200 x 70 cms. Photo: Grace Van Holle. Image courtesy of the Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery.



The Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery is proud to present a ground-breaking exhibition of painted barkcloths -or *nioge* - by the Papua New Guinean artist, Ilma Savari. *Eye of the Sun* is the first ever solo exhibition by a female artist from PNG to be held outside the country.

Savari (born 1969), is a member of the Ömie people, a group from the remote volcanic slopes of Mount Lamington in south-eastern Papua New Guinea. Earlier this year she achieved the distinction of being the first Ömie artist to have work hung in the Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition 2022.

Savari's boldly composed and meticulously executed images are painted on sheets of fine-grained barkcloth made from the inner bark of mulberry or fig trees. Additional elements are appliquéd onto this ground, stitched with a needle fashioned from the finest bone of a bat wing.

Her restrained palette - of ivory whites, charcoal greys, cinnamon reds, and brilliant golds - derives from her immediate rainforest environment. Pigments are made variously from pounded and chewed leaves, roots, volcanic ash and fruit pulp.

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*Nioge* are a central feature of Ömie life and culture. Made almost exclusively by women, they are used for personal adornment, domestic comfort, and ceremonial purposes. The essential iconography of their decoration derives from long tradition and combines schematic *Soru'e* (tattoo) designs with figurative elements gleaned from close observation of the natural world.

Every pattern and colour choice is freighted with meaning. *Nioge* play a vital role in contemporary Ömie society in their recording and preservation of ancestral stories and spiritual teachings. Deploying these traditional elements in her own distinctive fashion, Savari creates work that combines a deep knowledge of her ancestral history with an unexpected contemporary directness.



Details of Ilma Savari, *Victory Banner*, 2020, painted and appliquéd barkcloth, 242 x 113 cms. Photo: Grace Van Holle. Image courtesy of the Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery.

**Rebecca Hossack** said: 'In 2019, I made the arduous five-day trek up Mount Lamington to visit the remote Ömie villages. I was enormously excited by the vitality of the culture and the quality of much of the *nioge* work being done. But it was Ilma Savari who impressed me most: her poise, her dedication and the clarity of her vision. I am thrilled that she is having her first exhibition at the Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery.'

The Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery, as part of its thirty-four-year engagement with Non-Western artistic traditions, is committed to championing indigenous women artists from around the globe.

### **About Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery:**

Over the course of three decades the gallery has built an international reputation for innovation, individuality, energy and excellence. Rebecca Hossack has been a great champion of Non-Western artistic traditions, and hers was the first art gallery in Europe to exhibit Australian Aboriginal painting, which it continues to promote.

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**Listings information:**

***Eye of the Sun***

5 November - 30 November 2022

Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery,

2a Conway Street, Fitzroy Square, London W1T 6BA

Free admission

**Gallery opening times:**

Monday - Saturday: 10 am - 6 pm

Closed Sunday

**Note to editors:**

For further information, interviews and images, please contact:

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Details of Ilma Savari, *Eje - Breast Plate*, 2020, painted and appliquéd barkcloth, 330 x 66 cms. Photo: Grace Van Holle. Image courtesy of the Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery.

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