

DJALKIRI

WE ARE STANDING ON THEIR NAMES

Blue Mud Bay

EDUCATION KIT - PROJECT NOTES

Djalkiri is a cross-cultural art project which commemorates the 150th anniversary of the publication of *On the Origin of the Species* by Charles Darwin.

In 2009 *Nomad Art Productions* in Darwin brought a group of artists, scientists and printmakers together for a cross-cultural collaborative workshop in northern Australia. During the project nine Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists created art about the land, knowledge, history and events of the region. The result is an exhibition that explores the unspoiled environment of remote Blue Mud Bay in Arnhem Land and records knowledge of the natural environment, heritage, traditions and change.

The *Djalkiri Education Kit* provides an introduction to the exhibition from an educational perspective. More information can be found in the *Djalkiri* exhibition catalogue.

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MESSAGE FROM BLUE MUD BAY

“Yolngu. Njarra dhuwala Djambawa, nhän, yana njarra yurru dhäwu lakarama njurukiyi what was happened on that day nunhi we got together, the artists got together.

A, manymak nunhi nanapurrun Yolhjuw, nanapurrr nunhi marngithirr walalangala, ga walala nunhi nanapurrunngu milkuma walalangu djujuny ga mayali, nhaltjan nunhi wala nuli ... djäma ga rumbalkuma nulanuru wänanuru, Ga bala nuli rumbalkumana nunhi picture, wunji malana wänapuy a djujunymirri, dhäwumirri, a mayali mirri.

A nanapurru nunhi marngithu walalangalanuw, walanguw techniquegu njarri mala, nhaltjan walal nanapurruny a milkunjal balanya nhakun walala picture djaw’yun a camera-y a bulu nhakuna walala miny’tji yarpuma nunha mala, a boardlili, bulu walala nunhi, a rumbalkuma nanya njarri-nalmarama nunhiyi wiripu djorra ga wiripu djorra, ga plate nunhiyi balanya steel plates nhakuna nunhi walala wukirri.

Translation. I want to talk about that day when the artists got together. Manymuk, it was good. It was really good for us the Yolngu people. We learned very much from them. The techniques they were using to show us, and the Balanda (white person’s) way of doing art. For us we were learning from them. And the others, those people who were working with us, the njarri (foreigners) have learned from us, how we make the patterns, careful and tight. We told them and

we showed them that this country has the stories. And those stories were there from beyond, from our ancestors to us, our grandfathers to our fathers and to us.



Djambawa Marawili.

When those njarri artists were walking around in that country, they were walking about the land, but the patterns and the designs are beneath, they come from our ancestors. The way we were working together was really important because we were looking from both worlds, the Balanda world, the Balanda way of significance in how to describe and how to paint it and how to make those pictures real, those paintings of country, with substance, with story, with meaning.

We did the same thing too. We gather the information, we made it really happen in a partnership. We were both working together to show ourselves that we are both artists in the Balanda world and also in the Yolngu world. And it was really important.

So that is what I felt on that day.

And the other artists were feeling the same thing too. It was a good team. We were learning together and having a good partnership. Working together to lift the art from the country to make it really strong. It was really important for us to be working at the foundation. It was Djalkiripuyru (people from the foundation, footprint people), made it really strong, the relationship with those artists and that is really important to me.”

Thank you. Djambawa Marawili

Art is a way of establishing connections between people across cultures — works become the memory of an event, an impression of what has been seen, heard and felt. The project began by establishing connections, exploring country, visiting places, and in the case of the visitors, making collections. The visitors were new to the place and the resident artists deeply connected. But both were equally excited by the idea of exploring new ways.

Howard Morphy. Djalkiri Catalogue Essay 2010



Djambawa with clan leader Marrirra Marawili speaking to the group at the Baniyala memorial site.

TRADITIONAL LAND OWNERS

Arnhem Land is located in the north-eastern corner of the Northern Territory and consists of 96,000 sq km of land. Arnhem Land was named in 1803 by Matthew Flinders after the Dutch ship *Arnhem* which explored the coast in 1623, and was proclaimed an Aboriginal Reserve in 1931. Today the Land Trust is held as Aboriginal freehold land (with the exception of mining leases).

The Aboriginal people of East Arnhem Land are known as Yolngu (Yol nyu) and have lived in the region for at least 40,000 years within long-established land and sea estates. Clan groups continue to live throughout Arnhem Land maintaining cultural and spiritual links to the country.

The main language is *Yolngu Matha*, which has many different dialects. English is a second language for many Yolngu people. Yolngu groups are connected by a complex kinship system (*gurrutu*). This system governs fundamental aspects of Yolngu life, including responsibilities for ceremony and marriage. Kinship relations and hereditary estates are passed from one generation to another through traditional bark paintings, songs and rituals and story telling.

Everything in the Yolngu worldview is made up of two moieties. One is Yirritja and the other one is Dhuwa. Dhuwa and Yirritja make up our worldview. They are two halves of our holistic worldview. Yirritja and Dhuwa fit together perfectly. Everything in Yirritja and Dhuwa is connected. Yirritja and Dhuwa people intermarry and everything in the land is either Yirritja or Dhuwa.

Dr R. Marika <http://livingknowledge.anu.edu.au>

The township of Nhulunbuy and the associated bauxite mining operation are located on the Gove Peninsula. Yirrkala is the largest Yolngu community 15 km south-east of Nhulunbuy and is the home of Buku Larrnggay Mulka Art Centre. Yirrkala has a population of 800 people.

Yolngu leaders have advocated for Aboriginal land rights since the 1960s. In 1963, the Federal Government removed part of the Arnhem Land Reserve for a bauxite mine. In response the Yolngu people of Yirrkala sent a bark petition to the House of Representatives. The bark petition attracted national and international attention and now hangs in the national parliament as a testament to the role of the Yolngu people in the birth of the land rights movement.

References:

Garma Festival of Traditional Culture: <http://www.garma.telstra.com>
Charles Darwin University Yolngu Studies: <http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/yolngustudies/>
East Arnhem Land Tourist Association: <http://www.ealta.org>
Buku Larrnggay Mulka Art Centre: <http://www.yirrkala.com>

MONSOON TRADERS (MACASSANS)

Approximately 100 years before European settlement (1788), the northern shores of Australia were visited by monsoon traders from the eastern part of (modern day) Indonesia. These trader fishermen, collectively known today as Macassans, sailed from the Indonesian port of Makassar on the island of Sulawesi to the northern shores of north Australia in search of marine products for the Chinese market.

Leaving Makassar with the northwest monsoon in December each year, these trader fishermen sailed to the Northern Territory coast and to the Kimberley coast of Western Australia. The Arnhem Land coast was known to the Macassans as Marege and the Kimberley coast as Kayu Jawa.

Camps were established in sheltered bays from which marine products such as trepang (holothurian), turtle-shell (from the hawks-bill), pearls and timber were collected. Using the south-easterly trade winds (east monsoon) in March or April they returned to Makassar where the products were used locally or on-shipped to markets in China. In its heyday during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Macassan trepang industry involved 1000 men and 50 vessels annually.

During their annual voyages to Australia the Macassans generally had amicable relationships with the Indigenous people they encountered, exchanging goods in return for labour and access to places to set up their trepang processing camps. These camps involved prefabricated smoke houses, huts and cooking sites to boil and smoke the trepang. Some intermarried and a few Aboriginal people went back to Makassar to live.

A hundred years later, the legacy of this centuries old contact lives on, particularly in the artistic and ceremonial practices of the Yolngu from central and northeast Arnhem Land. Indigenous peoples' continued interest in this cultural interchange has led to a number of reciprocal visits between Yolngu and Makassan/Bugis people from Sulawesi. These recent visits (beginning in 1986) have enabled people to discover and meet relatives and relive old memories of the trepang days. For many Aboriginal people this rediscovery, which has also involved ceremonial exchange, has been viewed as a reaffirmation of significant aspects of their cultural heritage.

Quote: The Northern Territory Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport
Maritime Heritage Monsoon Traders (Macassans)
<http://www.nt.gov.au/nreta/heritage/maritime/monsoon.html>

THE PLACE

Djalkiri took place at Blue Mud Bay in *Miwatj* (or sunrise country), the most easterly region of Arnhem Land. The Blue Mud Bay coastline and hinterland are largely unspoiled and managed by the Traditional Owners, the *Yithuwa Madarrpa* people. The coast consists of a myriad of inlets, beaches, sand hills, salt flats and mangroves. Also connected are the extensive freshwater floodplains that support vast numbers of water birds and wildlife associated with the rivers and estuaries that in turn flow into the bay.

The area is also known as the *Laynhapuy Homelands*. The *Laynhapuy Homelands* have three groups of Traditional Owners who are linked by family, ceremonial and other cultural connections. The three land management groups share information and cooperate on management and training programs.

On the *Laynhapuy Homelands* only senior Traditional Owners are able to speak for their country and approve land management activities. Traditional Owners guide the management of the Homelands and set priorities for the management program and ranger activities.

(<http://www.environment.gov.au/indigenous/ipa/declared/laynhapuy.html>)

Yilpara is one of the largest communities in the *Laynhapuy Homelands*, with a population around 130 people mostly made up of children and young adults. The community sits proudly on the shores of Blue Mud Bay, the site of the recently successful sea rights claim in the High Court of Australia. It consists of a store, school, airstrip, office, workshop, art room, vegetable garden, visitor centre, and scattered houses. Power is supplied by a generator and water from a nearby bore. Buffalos are common visitors and crocodiles are plentiful along the nearby estuaries.



Yilpara community, photograph by Jörg Schmeisser.

LIFE AND DEATH IN BANIYALA

JENNESS WARIN SPEAKS TO DJAMBAWA MARAWILI

We are the Yithuwa Madarrpa people of Blue Mud Bay. We are the people of the mud, leaving footprints in the mud where the mangroves meet the sea.

Blue Mud Bay is about three hours drive south of Nhulunbuy, the bauxite mining town. Groote Eylandt, with its manganese mine is just to the east. We are the largest Laynhapuy Homeland, with about 130 people. There are about 35 children up to 11 years old. From 11 to 25 years there are about 50 young people. There are about 45 people over 25 years of age. And we have maybe two old people over the age of 55. My community, Baniyala, is small, but about half are children and young people. These are my concern. Education and work.

Our young people have even less education than those of my generation. We went to missionary schools. We have a school at Baniyala with two classrooms, and four teachers — two have good English and two are learning and a balanda (white) teacher visits almost once a week. The teachers have been training for five or six years, but only one is qualified. He teaches the older kids. But the children and young people have not been taught

to speak, read and write English or to do arithmetic. Not one of our children goes on to a proper high school. So our young people can't get jobs. And without jobs they cannot get a decent life.

For many years people have asked us whether we want training. We give them the answers to their questions; they take our names and the information they want. This has been happening since 1974, when Baniyala was first begun as a community. They are still asking the same questions. If instead they gave us proper tools and built a secure building to lock the tools away, we would get on with the work that has to be done. If we had tools to do the work and good education in English and arithmetic then we would also be able to run our own budget. We would have proper hours of work and be able to give people who work proper wages. When this happens, then my people will be able to look ahead. They will compete with each other to do well, knowing and feeling that we own our sweat and work. Then we can be honest with ourselves.

Djambawa Marawili

<http://www.cis.org.au/policy/summer04-05/polsumm0405-7.htm>

THE PROJECT

The concept for this project came about during the 150th anniversary of the publication of *On the Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin in 2009 with its evolutionary focus on relationships between animal species. Charles Darwin showed that all living things have evolved from common ancestors. His evolutionary theory of natural selection forms the foundation of modern biology and an explanation for the Western understanding of the diversity of life.

The Yolngu people of Blue Mud Bay have a different view. Yolngu belief and knowledge is contained within songs, stories, ritual and art. Paintings are like maps depicting living things and elements of the world. All have meaning and are based on an organisation of knowledge and relationships.

This is expressed through the *Djalkiri*, which actually means *foot or footprints*, but when applied to Yolngu law it takes on a more profound meaning referring to the underlying *foundation of the world*.

The idea was to bring a group of artists, scientists and printmakers together to think about Western scientific ideas and knowledge together with the holistic perspective of Yolngu people.

The title of the exhibition, *Djalkiri: We are standing on their names - Blue Mud Bay*, comes from the words spoken by clan leader Djambawa Marawili. It is about the cultural inheritance of the ancestors, it is also about respecting different cultures and beliefs, walking together in the footsteps of their knowledge.



(Above and right) Welcoming ceremony at Blue Mud Bay.



Artists with Laynhapuy Rangers in the Yilpara floodplain.



Senior custodian of the Blue Mud Bay region Waka Mununggurr at the site of the Lulumu sand sculpture (ancestral stingray).

THE WORKSHOP

For the visitors, the project workshop began with an early morning flight from Darwin to Nhulunbuy, then a short drive to the Yirrkala Art Centre. Known as *Buku Larrnggay Mulka*, the centre represents artists from the *Miwatj* (sunrise country), the most easterly region of Arnhem Land. *Buku Larrnggay Mulka* is a place for artists to work and a place to show the work of the region. It features a vast array of historical and contemporary art detailing the spiritual forces and continuing identity contained in the freshwater and saltwater country of the *Miwatj* region. The visitors were in awe of the large natural ochre bark paintings and *Larrakitj* (memorial poles). Art Centre Managers Andrew Blake and Will Stubbs were generous hosts who, together with Professor Howard Morphy, explained artworks and the history and traditions of the art and region.
<http://www.yirrkala.com/>

Later that morning the workshop team prepared for the three-hour drive to the remote community of *Yilpara* on Blue Mud Bay. After loading printmaking equipment and food into troopies they set off down the dusty and busy Arnhem Highway. A mechanical breakdown followed by an unscheduled stop to pick up 24 etching plates from a roadside culvert slowed the journey and the group finally arrived at *Yilpara* at dusk.

The reception was overwhelming. The whole community had gathered and was patiently waiting to perform a welcoming ceremony for the travel weary visitors. Congregating on the beach overlooking Blue Mud Bay, the new guests were met by spear-wielding dancers, looming and retreating in a traditional test of the new relationship. The Yolngu then led the visitors to their campsite for a smoking (cleansing) ceremony.

The camp consisted of traditional raised bark shelters, outdoor kitchen, bower shelter and shower block. The site was made in the shape of *Lulumu*, the ancestral stingray who had created the land before returning to the sea. That night Djambawa Marawili sang of *Lulumu* and the branches of the

trees that waved above our heads in the evening breeze.

The Yolngu artists who took part in the project were all closely related to *Yilpara*. None of the visiting artists had been to *Yilpara* before but all had travelled widely as artists. The Yolngu artists and the community saw their role initially as welcoming the visitors and showing them the ancestral footprint (*djalkiri*) on their land.

THE JOURNEY - HOWARD MORPHY

We set off from Buku Larrnggay Mulka art centre in Yirrkala in two vehicles heavily laden with artists' materials and food on the four-hour journey on dirt roads. There was a hint of tension in the air. The etching plates were to have arrived a week before we set off, but had been delayed. We received advice that they had been dropped off the previous evening by the lorry driver in the bush just off the Central Arnhem Highway on the Yilpara road, third culvert on the left. Half an hour into our journey one of the vehicles broke down at the Giddy River Crossing. The remaining vehicle set off for Yilpara laden with supplies and Judy, Jörg and Fiona. The rest of us remained behind for six hours waiting for a replacement vehicle. Djambawa Marawili and the Yilpara community waited patiently and welcomed us at dusk with song and ceremony. We were then led to the clearing in the bush that was to be our home for the next week. The clearing had been made in the shape of Lulumu, the ancestral stingray who had created this land in a short and angry foray inland before returning to the sea. Around the edge of the clearing a series of wooden platforms with roofs of stringy bark provided us with places to sleep. Djambawa sang of Lulumu and the branches of the trees that waved above our heads in the evening breeze.

Howard Morphy Djalkiri Catalogue Essay 2010

During the first few days at *Yilpara*, elders and rangers introduced the visitors to the area. Community leader Djambawa Marawili and Howard Morphy led an introductory walk through important burial grounds and significant sites along the beach, including an immense sand sculpture of *Lulumu*, the stingray that created the billabongs and coastline. The visitors were shown important inter-tidal zones where fresh water combines with salt water, mixing through the floodplains and estuaries that provide the basis of many Yolngu metaphors and associations for the origins of creation and continuing life.

The visiting artists collected things they found like snake skins, a turtle shell, seeds, feathers and broken toys.

They also accumulated images on their cameras and sketched in their notebooks. Glenn Wightman, an ethno-biologist with over 20 years experience in Northern Australia, collected plant species and discussed traditional plant and animal use with rangers, Traditional Owners and artists.

While the visitors were out bush, printmaker Basil Hall set up a temporary print workshop at the community visitor centre. The Yolngu artists began working directly onto zinc plates with bitumen and painting onto acetate. After two days of talks and exploration, the visiting artists also began to draw, first onto paper then onto plate. The artists interacted closely together as they camped, cooked, ate, walked the country, shared stories and created art. At night they watched archival films depicting Yolngu culture and showed images of each other's work. Around the campfire they discussed culture, history, sea rights and the events of the day.

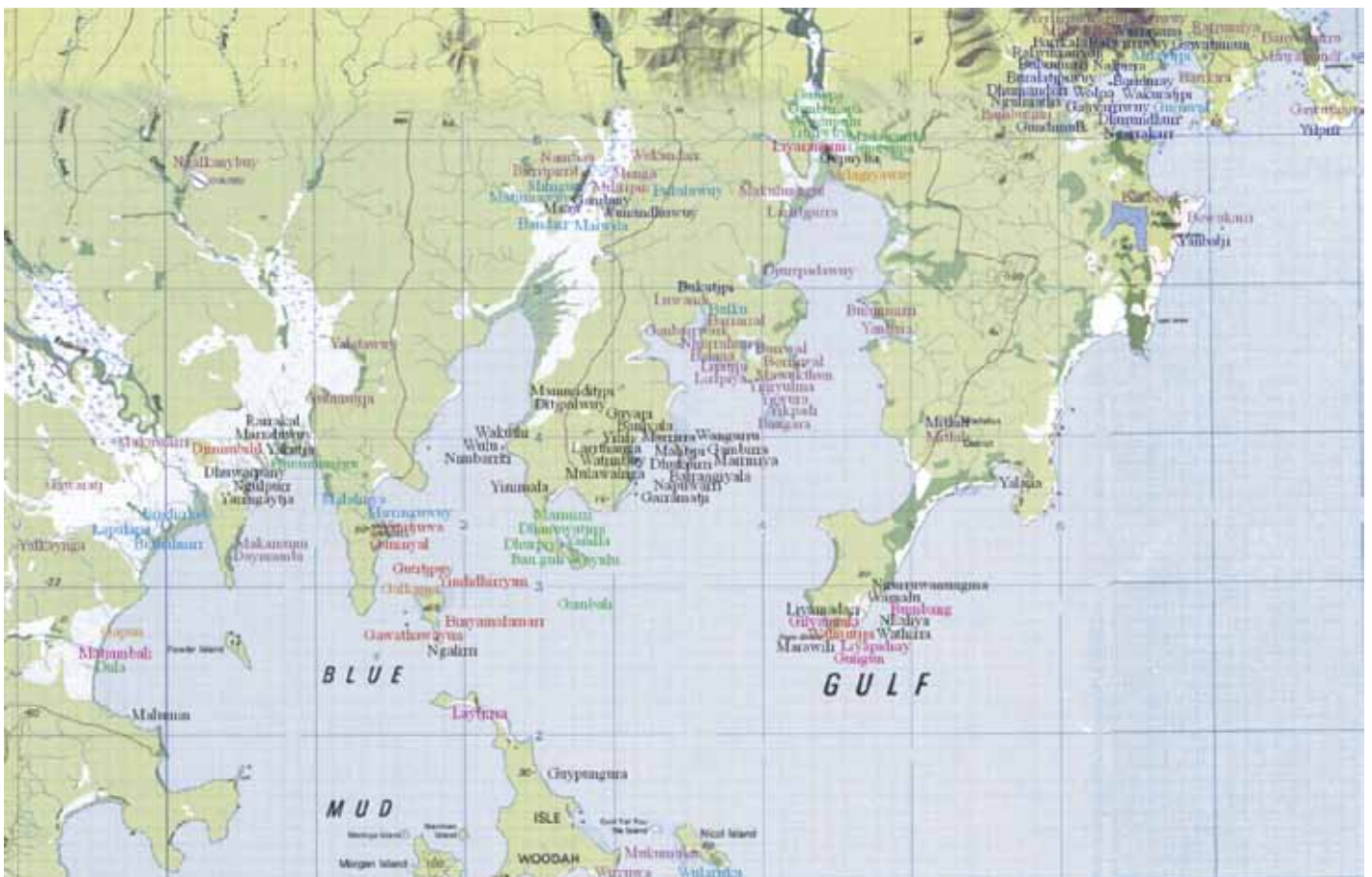
SEA RIGHTS

At *Yilpara* there is a blue and white flag standing in the sea just below the low water mark. The flag is a symbol of the saltwater country called *Mungurru* and had been placed there in celebration of the High Court case that recognised Yolngu ownership of the intertidal zone in the Northern Territory.

The Blue Mud Bay decision means that fishing licences issued by the NT government are illegal. It's the Aboriginal Land Council that is entitled to grant these licences. It also means that commercial fishers cannot enter Aboriginal land without permission, which means they can't fish there either.

This affects commercial fishers who mainly fish for barramundi, mud crabs and trepang (sea cucumber). All three species are almost always caught between the low and high water marks. Hence Aboriginal people now control access to the waters of a major fishery. It stretches over 80% of the coastal area of the Northern Territory because this is the area covered by Aboriginal land.

More information National Indigenous Times
<http://www.nit.com.au/news/story.aspx?id=15607>



COLLABORATIVE PRINTMAKING

As collaborating printmaker, Basil Hall worked closely with all the artists. In this case the word *collaboration* refers to the printmaker and artist working in partnership. Basil Hall has the technical knowledge and skills to assist the artist to realise their vision for the work so there is a constant conversation between printmaker and artist about techniques, mark making, process and outcomes.



Artists at work during the print workshop at Blue Mud Bay.

Basil Hall has spent many years working with Indigenous artists jointly developing ways to convey artistic methods and aesthetic effects via print. Traditional techniques such as carving, or painting are often incorporated into the prints. So Basil Hall spends a lot of time talking with the artist and becoming familiar with their work and artistic practice.

THE PRINTMAKING PROCESS

The process of printmaking involves transferring ink from the surface of one material to another (usually a metal plate or a wooden block onto paper or fabric). If the plate or block has been made to receive ink in the same way each time it is applied, this is called the *matrix* and more than one print can be made. A number of identical prints is called an *edition*. Traditionally there are four ways to make a print, *relief*, *intaglio*, *stencil* and *lithographic*. The matrix, or ink-holding surface, is different for each one.

In the *Djalkiri* project all the prints created are etchings and screenprints. Some etchings will involve more than one plate (or matrix). Etching means that the matrix was created by using acid to incise a zinc or copper plate. Each matrix is inked up by hand and rolled through a press to force the ink from the matrix onto the paper. In making an etching, the plate is first coated with an acid-resistant material called a ground. The names of the various types of etchings come from the types of grounds used. Hard ground and soft ground are used to make lines and an aquatint ground is used for tones.

As the artist develops the plate, the printer will print and test the image to check the development of the marks and tones; this is called a *proof*. A number of proofs can be made until

the artist is satisfied with the image. To make the proof, ink is applied into the grooves of the etching plate with a soft cloth and the plate surface is wiped clean. Finally the printer covers the plate with a moist sheet of paper, and runs it through a press. The press forces the paper into all the depressions of the plate and pulls the ink out onto the paper. Multi-coloured prints may require a separate plate for each colour; these are printed sequentially on top of each other to produce the final work of art. This process is called *registration*. Most of the *Djalkiri* prints are multi-plate colour etchings; some are also screenprints.

Once the plate work is complete the artist approves the final proof. The printer produces a limited number of identical prints the same as the proof. At the end of the editioning process the printer will number the prints. This is called a limited edition. An edition number will appear on each individual print as a fraction such as 5/25, meaning that this particular print is number 5 of 25 prints made. The artist then signs the prints in pencil. Limited edition prints are produced on the understanding that no further impressions of the image will be produced, so at the conclusion of the editioning process the plate is *struck* (marked) to prevent further editions of the same matrix being made.



Jörg Schmeisser and Mats Uden at Basil Hall print studio in Darwin.

HISTORY OF ABORIGINAL PRINTMAKING

Printmaking was introduced to Aboriginal communities in the 1960s and has rapidly grown to be a major part of the Australian Aboriginal arts industry. Printmaking is now commonly practised by Aboriginal artists, providing a steady income and an affordable way for art collectors and art lovers to collect art by well known artists.

Amongst the first Aboriginal artists to make prints in the 1960s were Kevin Gilbert and Bede Tungatalum from the Tiwi Islands. Within a decade the practice spread to other communities as Aboriginal artists began to work in collaboration with printmakers. For many Aboriginal artists the process of printmaking complements the traditional practice of carving or scoring designs onto the surface of wood or stone. The overlapping of layers of single colours in screenprinting is also similar to the way traditional bark and rock paintings are made. This process also allows easy transfer of designs onto fabrics as practised by the Tiwi Islanders.

In the 1980s and 1990s art schools and print workshops began to invite Aboriginal artists to participate in printmaking programs. During the 1980s print studios such as the Canberra School of Art developed programs which involved Indigenous artists from Arnhem Land, Tiwi Islands and Central Australia. Some of the first artists to participate in these workshops included Johnny Bulun Bulun, England Banggala, Banduk Marika, Ellen Jose and Naminapu Maymuru. In the 1990s Canberra's Studio One Printmaking Workshop and the Australian Print Workshop in Melbourne also started to make prints with communities in the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia and prominent individual artists such as Judy Watson, Clifford Possum and Arone Meeks.

Growing interest in Indigenous prints culminated in an important conference held at the Northern Territory University (NTU) in 1993 called *Getting into Prints*. This meeting introduced new printmaking facilities in Darwin. Speakers from the arts industry, Aboriginal communities and peak bodies were able to discuss and explore the way forward for the print medium.

More recently print workshops have been established at a number of Aboriginal communities and print studios have specialised in collaborating with Aboriginal artists. Printers such as Theo Tremblay and Jörg Schmeisser from the Canberra School of Art, Martin King from the Australian Print Workshop, Basil Hall, Monique Aurrichio and Jo Diggins from Northern Editions and later Basil Hall Editions, Leon Stainer from Charles Darwin University, and Frank Gohier and Shaun Poustie from Red Hand Print Workshop have all worked closely with artists and art centres to help create a thriving art movement.

Limited edition prints by Aboriginal artists have been exhibited and collected regularly in Australia and internationally since the early 1980s. The unique quality of these prints has vastly increased the accessibility and public appreciation of the artists and has added new dimensions to their art making practice. Prints by Aboriginal artists are now recognised as being amongst the most dynamic art being produced in Australia.



Marrnyula Mununggurr and Liyawaday Wirrpanda discuss their work.



Printmaker Basil Hall with Liyawaday Wirrpanda during the project.

THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE TOP END

The 'Top End' of Australia has two main seasons, a relatively cool dry period from May to September and a hot, humid wet season from October to April. Some Aboriginal groups recognise a calendar of six seasons: from the monsoon time of lush vegetation and growth, through periods of flowering and fruiting to 'knock em down' storms and grass fires. Later the floodplains become parched and waterholes disappear, the weather grows hotter and more humid and the landscape withers in the sun, awaiting the first rains to come again.

ETHNO-BIOLOGY IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Ethno-biology is the study of the way plants, animals and micro organisms are used by humans. In the Northern Territory, the Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts has been working with Aboriginal peoples to document plant and animal use and language names since 1986. This work is done at the request of Aboriginal elders and aims to assist people to record and conserve traditional plant knowledge for future generations.

Over the years a series of booklets relating to individual language groups has been published. These booklets are based on the results of fieldwork with elders of various communities. The publications record traditional plant knowledge and present it in a format that is suitable for Aboriginal people to learn about traditional culture. Other educational materials produced include plant use posters and illustrated plant identification kits on desert bush tucker and bush medicine.

GLENN WIGHTMAN ETHNO-BIOLOGIST

Glenn Wightman has developed a deep understanding of traditional plant and animal knowledge over 25 years. Since graduating from Melbourne's Monash University in 1981, Glenn has been working closely with the Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory to help them record this precious knowledge in a scientific and culturally sensitive manner. His books on the plants and animals of northern Australia are in some cases the last surviving record of knowledge that has been passed down through Aboriginal Australian generations over thousands of years.

Glenn Wightman has coordinated 15 books from clans of different languages throughout the top half of the Northern Territory and Western Australia. The books are always published in accordance with the wishes of the elders, who retain authorship and full copyright. For a list of publications by Glenn Wightman go to <http://www.nt.gov.au/nreta/publications/nreta/index.html>, or phone 08 89994795.

LAYNHAPUY RANGERS CARING FOR COUNTRY

While Arnhem Land is largely pristine and free from development, the coastline and hinterlands face a real environmental threat from marine debris and invasive plants and animals. Discarded fishing nets, rubber footwear, empty bottles and plastic bags are all carried in by the currents and deposited on the coast. This waste is generated elsewhere but is a major threat to local wildlife, with animals choking on plastic rubbish and snared in discarded fishing nets.

Yolngu Aboriginal Rangers of Dhimurru and Laynhapuy Land Management collect, catalogue and dispose of this rubbish. They also undertake weed management and monitor wildlife. The Rangers combine scientific knowledge and techniques with traditional Yolngu Aboriginal knowledge and understanding of the land, sea and wildlife.



(Top) Glenn Wightman with Laynhapuy Rangers at Yilpara.
 (Above) Glenn Wightman in the NT Herbarium in Darwin.

THE NORTHERN TERRITORY HERBARIUM

The purpose of herbaria is to preserve and document the diversity of plants. The Northern Territory Herbarium is like a botanical library; it has over 4000 species of native plants in its collection. Each plant is preserved, labelled and organised to allow easy access and long-term storage. The plants are pressed, dried and glued or sewn to a sheet of heavy paper together with a data label. The label describes useful information including the plant's Latin name, the origin and date of collection and the name of the collector.

The paper sheets are all the same size and are kept in protective storage cabinets. Some plants are too big to fit onto standard paper. In some cases a specimen may be spread out on several separate sheets. Large structures like pinecones may be stored in separate boxes. Delicate plants such as orchid flowers may be pickled and stored in jars. Photographs may also accompany the specimen sheet. The plant specimens are arranged according to the family, genus and species they represent and the location they were collected.

The purpose of collecting and pressing plants is to allow people to identify species, compare discoveries, identify new plants and document the diversity and distribution of plants worldwide.

The NT Herbarium updates species lists for the Northern Territory. Many of the plants are commonly found and have well recorded information, but for others information is limited or they are rare and hard to find. With the Territory representing a significant part of the continent, there is also a great diversity of plants. Herbarium staff record vital information, plant communities and structure to assist planning and monitor change.

Ref: <http://www.nt.gov.au/nreta/wildlife/plants/index.html>

HOW PLANTS ARE NAMED

Taxonomy is the science of classification. Every plant species on Earth has a single scientific name by which it is known. Having a standard method of naming plants means scientists can communicate clearly and understand which species they are referring to no matter what language they speak. The scientific way of naming plants is called a binomial system because it has two words, the genus name and a species name. The genus is like the family name, while the species name often describes a characteristic of the plant.

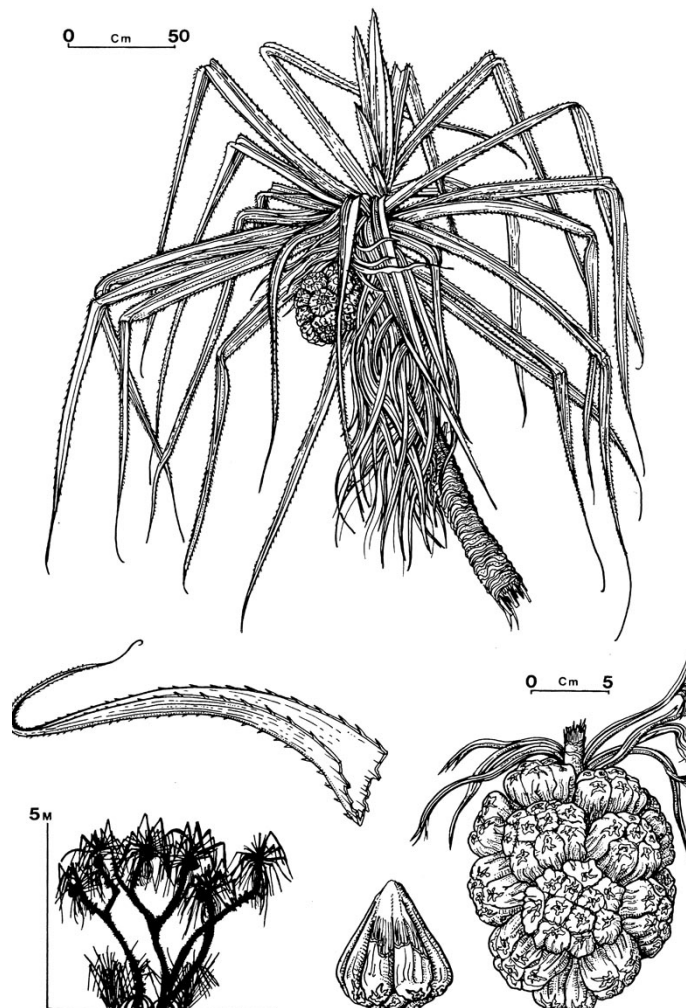
Species often have other variations such as a different flower colour, leaf shape or height. This variation may be sufficient to name a new species, but if the variation is minor or there are lots of overlapping features, a subspecies may be named.

ABORIGINAL KNOWLEDGE AND PLANT USE

The accumulated knowledge of plant use has sustained thousands of generations of Australian Indigenous people. Many plant species have various uses, including food, medicine, utensils, tools, musical instruments and weapons.

Despite the impact of Europeans, Aboriginal culture remains central to the land. The land is regarded as the relationship between ancestors, living things and living earth. Aboriginal people believe the land is the origin of life; mythical creative spirits came from the earth to create landmarks, animals and plants then sank back into the earth, where they remain.

Traditional Indigenous practice remains strong in many parts of the Northern Territory, for example gathering bush tucker is still common across the 'Top End' and Central Desert and is a vitally important aspect of maintaining a healthy and spiritual life. Collecting plant food was traditionally women's business. Now families go into the bush together to gather food, enjoy the environment and pass on traditional knowledge.



Western scientific drawing of *Pandanus sparallis*.

ORGANISING KNOWLEDGE YOLNGU WAY

The following comes from the Living Knowledge: Indigenous Knowledge in Science Education website.

<http://livingknowledge.anu.edu.au/index.htm>

The information has been adapted from: Rudder, J., (1999) *The Natural World of the Yolngu the Aboriginal people from North East Arnhem Land*, Restoration House. This book is available from Restoration House, email: jtr@rosella.apana.org.au

John Rudder's work on the Yolngu classification system goes into great detail about the way in which Yolngu order the world. While his main research was based at Galiwin'ku, his research applies broadly across the Yolngu region with some local variations.

The Yolngu world is (also) divided into things which are: **walngamirr** (life-having) and things that are, **walngamiriw** (life without).

There are three different kinds of 'life-having' things: things that move themselves, including the sun and celestial bodies, fire and water; things that breath and reproduce, including plants and animals with the exception of humans, who make up the third category.

Living things are further divided on the basis of three questions:

"**nhädhawal?**" (What is this?),
 "**nhaku dhuwal?**" (What's this for?) and
 "**wanhanguwuy dhuwal?**" (Where does this come from?)

Yolngu generally agree on the existence of nine sets of living things:

dharpa - plants with woody stems
mulmu - plants without woody stems
warrakan - all land or freshwater mammals, birds and reptiles except snakes
bäpi - all snakes, legless lizards and worms
miyapunu - marine turtles and marine animals with bones
maranydjalk - stingrays and sharks
guya - fish
maypal - shellfish, crustaceans and some insect larvae
guku - native bees and bee products

A number of species are known only by their own names and are not grouped with others e.g. centipedes, spiders, trepang, sea urchins and other insects. Also there are whole groups of insects that are known only by a single term e.g. cicadas, grasshoppers, butterflies.

Further subdivisions are made within four of the sets of living things:

Warrakan:
 a. **warrakan butthunamirr** (flying warrakan)
 b. **warrakan marrtjinyamirr** (walking warrakan)

c. **warrakan gal'yunamirr** (crawling warrakan)
 d. **warrakan djuryunamirr** (sliding warrakan)

Miyapunu:

a. **ngarakamirr miyapunu** (miyapunu with shells)
 b. **balawalamirr** / yangara'mirr / barrwanmirr miyapunu (miyapunu with horizontal flukes on their tails/with tails/with skin i.e. dolphin, dugong and whales)

Maranydjalk:

a. **maranydjalk** (stingrays)
 b. **mana** (sharks)

Maypal:

a. **maypal** (molluscs and some insect larvae)
 b. **dhunggalmirr** / **gongmirr maypal** (maypal with 'hands' i.e. crabs, shrimps, crayfish)

The second method of classifying relates to the uses that things have. Two major categories result:

maranhu (food) and
mirritjin medicine.

Food can be further subdivided as follows:

Maranhu:

ngatha (vegetable food)
ngatha (all root foods, nuts and the growth centres of palms)
borum (fruit)
guku (honey)
gonyil (meat and eggs)

The third way of describing differences between natural species relates them to the places where they are found:

retjapuy - belonging to the monsoon forest or jungle
diltjipuy - belonging to the open eucalyptus forest
baralapuy - belonging to sand dune country
gulunbuy - belonging to the freshwater holes and swamps
rangipuy - belonging to the beaches

Fish are known by a number of habitats identified in the water:

garrwarpuy guya - fish that live near the surface
ngoypuy guya - fish that live near the bottom
mayabuy guya - fish that live in the rivers
raypinybuy guya - fish that live in fresh water
gundapuy guya - fish that live among reefs and rocks

There are at least ten categories of habitat recognised in which **maypal** (shellfish and crustaceans) can be found, and a number of these have subcategories. For example, one of the ten groups is that of **maypal** associated with rocks called **gundapuy maypal**. There are four distinct sets of these:

gundapuy maypal - those attached to rocks and reefs
warraulpuy maypal - those that move over the outer surfaces
lirrapuy maypal - those that move around the edges of rocks
djinawapuy maypal - those attached to rocks or inside coral

ARTWORK PLANT AND ANIMAL SPECIES

Plant and animal species depicted in artworks from Yilpara field trip, 12-16 October 2009. Notes by Glenn Wightman

Bold = Yolngu name, *italics* = scientific name.

Djambawa Marawili Garrangali

Saltwater Crocodile, **Bäru**, *Crocodylus porosus*, with two nests and eggs, upper left corner straight lines represent the freshwater areas where they nest, the wavy lines represent the salt water where they generally live and hunt.



Fiona Hall Pandanus - Gunga

Spring Pandanus, **Gunga**, *Pandanus spiralis*, various insects and spiders. Pandanus is an important species for Yolngu and other Aboriginal groups in north Australia. It provides important food, medicine, fibre resources and a number of minor uses. Pandanus forests fringing waterways are also important habitats and food resources for many animals.



Jörg Schmeisser Mangroves and Notes

This plate depicts some of the most important plant and animal relationships in the intertidal zone. The Stilt-root Mangrove contains the important food resource of mangrove worms. Drypetes leaves are used as flavouring for cooking saltwater animal foods. Mud Crabs are often found in mangrove tree roots. Club Mangrove leaves are used as stingrays for spear practice.



Club Mangrove, **Djulinganing**, *Aegialitis annulata*
Stilt-root Mangrove, **Walmu**, *Rhizophora stylosa*
Drypetes, **Djilka**, *Drypetes deplanchei*
Mud Crab, **Djindjalma**, *Scylla serrata*

John Wolseley Sea Wrack: Tide after Tide Baniyala

This image reflects the biodiversity of the habitat and the region. It includes a large number of species, including.

Spring Pandanus fruit, **Laluk**, *Pandanus spiralis*
Peaceful Dove, **Gurrudut**, *Geopelia placida* bird
Mud Crab, **Djindjalma**, *Scylla serrata* shell
Water Chestnut, **Rakay**, *Eleocharis dulcis* tubers



Dugong, **Djununggayangu**, *Dugon dugong* jaw bone
Thespesia, **Meli**, *Thespesia populneoides* fruit
Cedar Mangrove, *Xylocarpus moluccensis*
Beach Spinifex, *Spinifex longifolius*
Stilt-root Mangrove, **Walmu**, *Rhizophora stylosa*
Sand Palm, **Dhalpi**, *Livistona humilis*
Silver-leaved Wattle, **Dhurrtji**, *Acacia holosericea*
Beauty Leaf, **Ganarri**, *Calophyllum inophyllum*
Club Mangrove, **Djulinganing**, *Aegialitis annulata*
Casuarina, **Mawurraki**, *Casuarina equisetifolia*
Indian Almond, **Matpana**, *Terminalia cattapa*
Water Chestnut, **Rakay**, *Eleocharis dulcis*
Giddy River Sedge, *Dapsilanthes ramosus*
Sedge, *Cyperus digitatus*, Sedge, *Fimbristylus dichotoma*

Judy Watson kurrajong, disc, sea rights 1

These plant species are important for Yolngu. They are sources of food, with both Kurrajongs having edible seeds and yams. The Casuarina is an important species for utilitarian and spiritual reasons.

Red-flowered Kurrajong, **Dharrangulk**, *Brachychiton paradoxus*
Northern Kurrajong, **Nanungguwa**, *Brachychiton diversifolius* fruit



Background
Casuarina, **Mawurraki**, *Casuarina equisetifolia*

Liyawaday Wirrpanda Yalata

Water Chestnut, **Rākay**,
Eleocharis dulcis.

This floodplain sedge is used for medicine, the yams are eaten by geese, broilgas and Yolngu; it is good to eat.

We also recorded the names

Widil, Yalata and **Biwiya** for this species.

Broilga, **Gudurrku** or **Dhangultji**, *Grus rubicunda*, footprints.

Marwat, a fine hair paintbrush used for fine painting is made from these stems. It is a metaphor for transmission of knowledge, and using this brush helps you to think clearly as you paint.



Mulkun Wirrpanda Yalata

The floodplain is seasonally flooded during the Wet season and tidal surge creates areas of brackish water.

During the Dry season the grass and black earth dry out. Then the fires come, turning a swamp into a huge plain of cracked black earth.

Freshwater springs dot this sun baked plain forming small islands of vegetation and as **Rarrandarr** (the hot time) builds, the thirsty birds come to these sacred springs in their thousands. The noise of the **Gudurrku** or **Dhangultji** (broilgas) and **Gurrumattji** (magpie geese) is deafening, the mud scored with their tracks and the sky dark with the flocks of wheeling birds.

The design repeated throughout represents **Dharrangi**, a freshwater plant associated with this homeland for the **Dhudi**

Djapu and the ancestral shark.

Ref: Buku Larrnggay Mulka.



Marrnyula Mununggurr Dhangi

A spiritual residence for ancestral beings **Māna** the Shark and **Bol'ngu** the Thunderman surrounded by permanent fresh water. Rains inspired by the actions of **Bol'ngu** feed the rivers and fill the billabongs. Catfish and mussels, freshwater crayfish and others feed the Yolngu and wildlife.

The grid reflects the landscape of **Wandawuy** - a network of billabongs surrounded by ridges and high banks. Its structure also has reference at one level to woven fish traps.

Ref: Buku Larrnggay Mulka



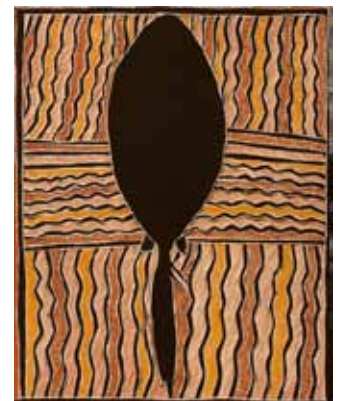
Marrirra Marawili Gurrtjipi

Dukpirri Saltwater Stingray

The mythical saltwater stingray **Gurrtjipi** or **Lulumu** is an important creation figure of the spiritual landscape of **Madarrpa** country. The ancestral stingray helped form coastal landscapes in the region.

Djambawa Marawili showed us the path of creation as **Lulumu** tracked back into the bush from Baniyala following a small tidal creek that exists today. Here he bit into the ground forming several small billabongs, which are still used as a source of fresh water. Heading out to the point named **Lulumu**, he became a white rock surrounded by the slow tides.

A sand sculpture of a stingray near Yilpara is a powerful symbol of human - animal connection. **Lulumu's** two eyes are now holes in the ground, where people pick up sand and throw it towards the rock for good luck and plenty of fish.



ARTISTS AND PARTICIPANTS

The *Djalkiri* artists come from diverse regions from across Australia including:

- Arnhem Land - Northern Territory
- Canberra - Australian Capital Territory
- Adelaide - South Australia
- Brisbane - Queensland
- Melbourne - Victoria

Each of the artists engage in different kinds of art making. Following are short biographical statements about the artists and notes about their art. These statements provide a brief insight into the rich cultural and artistic diversity of the group.

The artists

- Djambawa Marawili - Arnhem Land
- Fiona Hall - Adelaide
- John Wolseley - Melbourne
- Jörg Schmeisser - Canberra
- Judy Watson - Brisbane
- Marrirra Marawili - Arnhem Land
- Marrnyula Mununggurr - Arnhem Land
- Mulkun Wirrpanda - Arnhem Land
- Liyawaday Wirrpanda - Arnhem Land



Glenn Wightman, Peter Eve, Jörg Schmeisser, Angus Cameron, Marrirra Marawili, Basil Hall, Howard Morphy, John Wolseley, Djambawa Marawili.



John Wolseley, Mulkun Wirrpanda, Marrnyula Mununggurr, Jörg Schmeisser.

The workshop facilitators

- Basil Hall - printmaker
- Glenn Wightman - ethno-biologist
- Professor Howard Morphy - anthropologist
- Peter Eve - photographer
- Angus Cameron - curator and project manager
- Rose Cameron - curator and project manager



Mulkun Wirrpanda, Fiona Hall, Judy Watson, Marrnyula Mununggurr.



Garrangali **Etching and screenprint**

Garrangali is the sacred and dangerous area where Baru the crocodile nest, on Madarrpa clan land. This Garrangali is away inland up a creek to an area marked by an oasis of tall trees and forest surrounded by the expanses of a 'featureless' floodplain. Here fresh water bubbles to the surface to mix with the surge of saltwater tidal contamination. During the Dry, considerable heat shimmers across the dust, remaining inaccessible without rights of passage when inundated with flood waters during the Wet. Baru the ancestral crocodile ventures here from Yathikpa, bringing the power and authority of the Ancestral Fire with him. The sacred clan design of cross-hatched ribbon swirling flame denotes this fertile mix of waters and fire in this sacred area. Garrangali is revered as a reservoir of Madarrpa soul. To venture into these parts is for those with appropriate knowledge and the preparedness for the intense heat of fire and the ire of the crocodile.

DJAMBAWA MARAWILI AM

Clan Yithuwa Madarrpa - Nyungudupuy Madarrpa, Moiety Yirritja, Homeland Baniyala

Djambawa Marawili is a leader of the Madarrpa clan and an activist and administrator on the interface between non-Aboriginal people and the Yolngu people of North East Arnhem Land. In 1988 he was involved in the production of the Barunga Statement, which led to Bob Hawke's promise of a treaty; the Royal Commission into Black Deaths in Custody; and the formation of ATSIC. He was instrumental in the initiation of the Saltwater exhibition in 1999 and coordinated the Federal Court Sea claim in 2004 which eventuated in the High Court's determination in the 2008 Blue Mud Bay case that Yolngu did indeed own the land between high and low water mark.

In these political engagements, Djambawa draws on the sacred foundation of his people to represent the power of Yolngu and educate outsiders in the justice of his people's struggle for recognition. Away from the spotlight of activism, Djambawa fulfills several other important leadership roles. The principal ones are: as a ceremonial leader; as an administrator of several mainstream Yolngu organisations; as the leader of a 200-strong remote homeland community; and as a family man with three wives, and many children and grand children.

Djambawa's art is closely related to his role as a leader and he draws on the sacred foundation of his people to represent the power of Yolngu and to educate others in the justice of his people's struggle for recognition. Living at Yilpara, three hours from Yirrkala, he is immersed in the country he paints and carves. His work is represented in most major Australian collections, and in several overseas collections. In 1996 he won the prestigious National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award Best Bark Painting Prize. In 2010 he was awarded an Order of Australia.



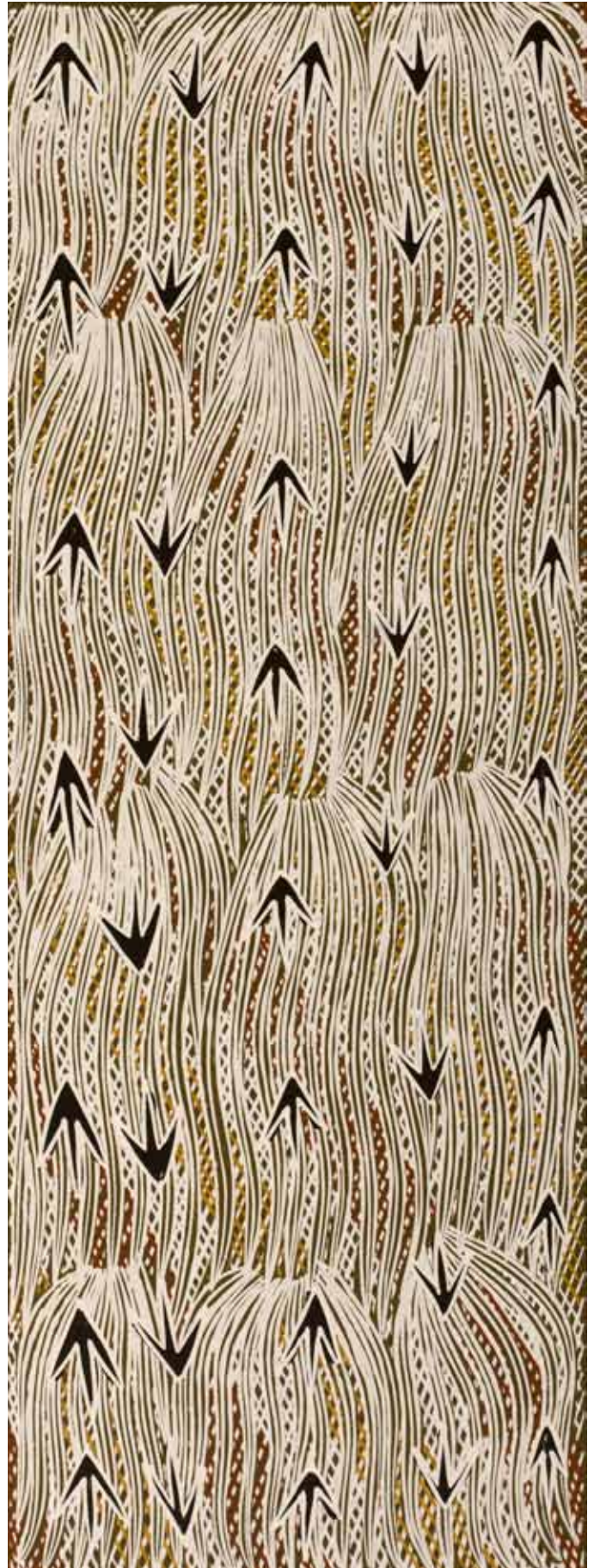


LIYAWADAY WIRRPANDA

Clan Dhudi Djapu,
Moiety Dhuwa, Homeland
Dhuruputjpi

Liyawaday is the granddaughter of the famous artist Narritjin Maymuru and is the third wife of Djambawa Marawili. She lives with him at his homeland of Yilpara where she has assisted him with most of his major works over the last ten years. She also helps with the work of her mother, Galuma Maymuru, and her father, Dhukal Wirrpanda.

It is often her role to complete the fine cross hatching or **marwat** with a fine brush made of a few human hairs. She has consistently produced work in her own right drawing on her own Dhudi- Djapu clan designs which her father has shared with her. Her first exhibition was at Annandale in 2009 and marked her coming of age as an artist.



Yalata Screenprint

Liyawaday has painted her Dhudi-Djapu clan's design of country that was transformed by the principal creator beings for the Dhuwa moiety - the Djan'kawu. They passed through the plains country of Yalata towards the place where Dhudi-Djapu live today at Dhuruputjpi. The two Djan'kawu sisters have names in this country of Ganaypa and Banyali, they sang the brolga Dhangultji as they walked with their walking sticks - Wapitja. With these they dug waterholes as they went, naming them and thus sanctifying them with special qualities.

Today they retain these same qualities for the Yolngu, the water and knowledge that surfaces from these wells by their actions are sung in ceremony for this country. Wan'kawu the sacred goanna for Djapu clans and associate Dhuwa emerged from one of these waterholes by the upper reaches of the plain, a place called Dhakarra or Walirwan. Wan'kawu witnessed the first sunrise over this area to see Dhangultji walking over the plain, waterhole to waterhole, leaving their footprints in the drying mud.

This image depicts these plains inundated with flood waters of the Wet. Grasses are suspended by this sacred water, its gentle flow is towards the sea of Blue Mud Bay. Both the Sisters and the brolga are manifest in the footprints.



Gurrtpi Etching and screenprint

The depicted Gurrtpi is the stingray hunted much on the shallow shores of Blue Mud Bay. It is also a totem for the Madarrpa at Baniyala, as they talk of Gurrtpi having a path of creation at Baniyala. A few hundred yards down the beach, a small tidal creek cuts through the dunes to the flat country immediately behind. This creek named Mawangga was used by Gurrtpi to track back into the bush. Here he bit into the ground, forming several small billabongs, a source of water for Yolngu living there. His path continued along the direction that is now the Baniyala air strip to flat sandy country before heading out to the point Lulumu to become a white rock.

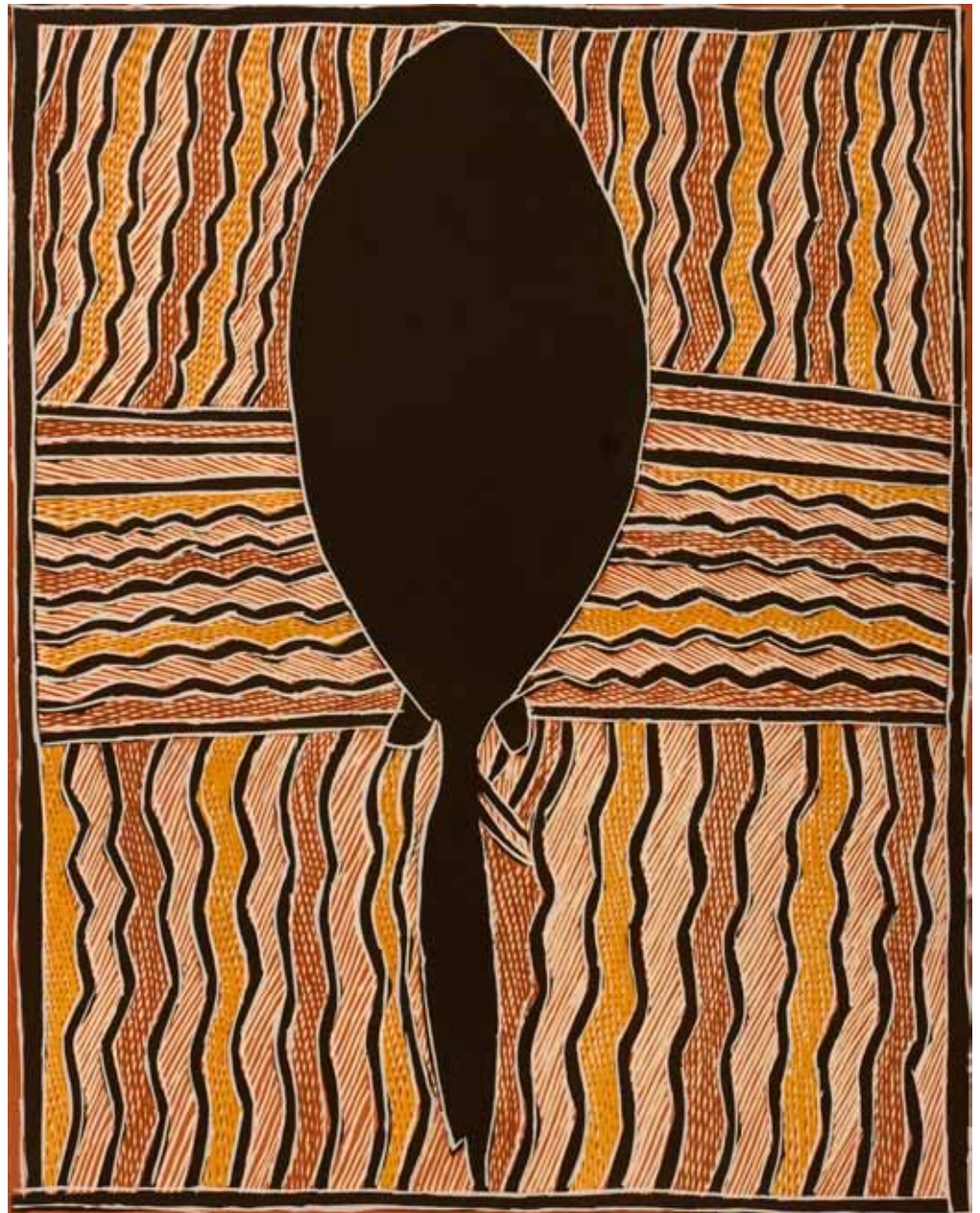
During the days of Wongu the Djapu warrior, an area in the shape of the stingray was cleared by him and others who came to country to hunt Gurrtpi mid-way through the Dry season. The area is still clear today. His two eyes are holes in the ground where the current inhabitants pick sand to throw in the direction of the rock at Lulumu for good luck and plentiful fishing. The stingray, Gurrtpi has been depicted in these waters.

MARRIRRA MARAWILI

Clan Madarrpa, Moiety Yirritja, Homeland Baniyala

Murrarra is an elderly artist and community leader, his father is Mundukul, a name for the Ancestral Lightning Snake and the Black Headed Python found, amongst other places, at Baraltja on Madarrpa clan land. These ancestors and places are the subject of many of Murrarra's paintings.

His brother artists are Watjinbuy (dec 2000), Bakulangay (dec 2002) and Ngulwurr. He resides at Baniyala and his active role as chief lieutenant under Wakuthi (dec 2005) has been documented on film by Ian Dunlop. Murrarra is also known as Gumbaniya. He has had health issues of his own, which he has dealt with in a customary courageous and phlegmatic style. As he ages his output has slowed considerably but the quality of his pieces is unchanging. It is not unusual for the arts centre to receive queries about works of his from the 1970s in collections or private hands.





Bawu
Etching and Chine-collé

In October 2009 I had a trip to Yilpara with other artists Fiona Hall, Judy Watson, John Wolseley and Jörg Schmeisser. We worked with Marrirra Marawili, Djambawa Marawili, Liyawaday Wirrpanda and Mulkun Wirrpanda. Basil Hall came along to help with the printing process. He took the images back to his studio for printing in Darwin. Winsome Jobling made the paper for the Bawu to go on to the print.

Ethno-biologist Glenn Wightman and anthropologist Howard Morphy were also part of this group. Rose and Angus from Nomad Art organised the workshop. Peter Eve took photos of the workshop and Yilpara. The next day we were sitting under the tamarind tree and Djambawa was telling us a story about Yilpara and the sea rights ceremony. He told us about the flag.

That night I dreamt about the Bawu and then asked Marrirra and Djambawa if I could paint my mother's design. I got the permission from them and this is the story for my print. Bawu represents the sailing cloth. It is the Madarrpa and Mangalili clan design. The design in the middle is Bawu. On the top the white represents the clouds and the blue represents the water.

The lines around Bawu represent the saltwater-Mungurru connected to Yilpara and Djarrakpi homelands. This is my first painting from my mother's clan. It tells the story of sea rights. The ceremony for sea rights at Yilpara had this flag situated in the sea connecting clouds and water.

MARRNYULA MUNUNGGURR

Clan Djapu Balamumu, Moiety Dhuwa, Homeland Wandaway

Marrnyula's father is Djutjadjutja Mununggurr, a senior Djapu leader and major artist, her mother is Nogirra Marawili, senior advisor to children at Yirrkala school, also an artist. Marrnyula's first occupation was homelands teacher. Marrnyula now resides at Yirrkala where she manages the Buku Larrnggay Mulka print workshop.

In 1994, Marrnyula produced an aids awareness poster for Aboriginal communities. In 1997, she was invited by the Cultural Olympiad to partake in ORIGINS portfolio, a unique opportunity to bring together printer and printmaker in an exciting, innovative and collaborative project.

One of the many accomplished women painting on bark in Arnhem Land, Marrnyula readily extends her visual practice to print medium, both traditional values and practices and images of contemporary Arnhem Land life find a place in her art.





Birrkuda
Etching and screenprint

This is Yirritja honey. We call Birrkuda, Gawarratja wanga, (place). This painting is from my mother's clan, her miny'tji (design). I am looking after this design for her because she has passed away now. My bothers Dhukal and Wuyall and me look after this for her. We look after this land and the miny'tji for all her grandchildren as well. It is a Honey site of Ancestral times sung by the Yirritja.

This image shows the honey at the place known as Gawarratja belonging to the clan of Mandawuy Yunupingu's (Yothu Yindi Band) mother-in-law, who is recently deceased, leaving her sister as the only surviving member of this clan. Their clan was decimated by a massacre in the early 1900s, which is told in the Yothu Yindi CD Birrkuda. The sensitivities of this history have meant that this design is not often reproduced. In this instance, this elderly Dhudi-Djapu woman has painted her mother's pattern.

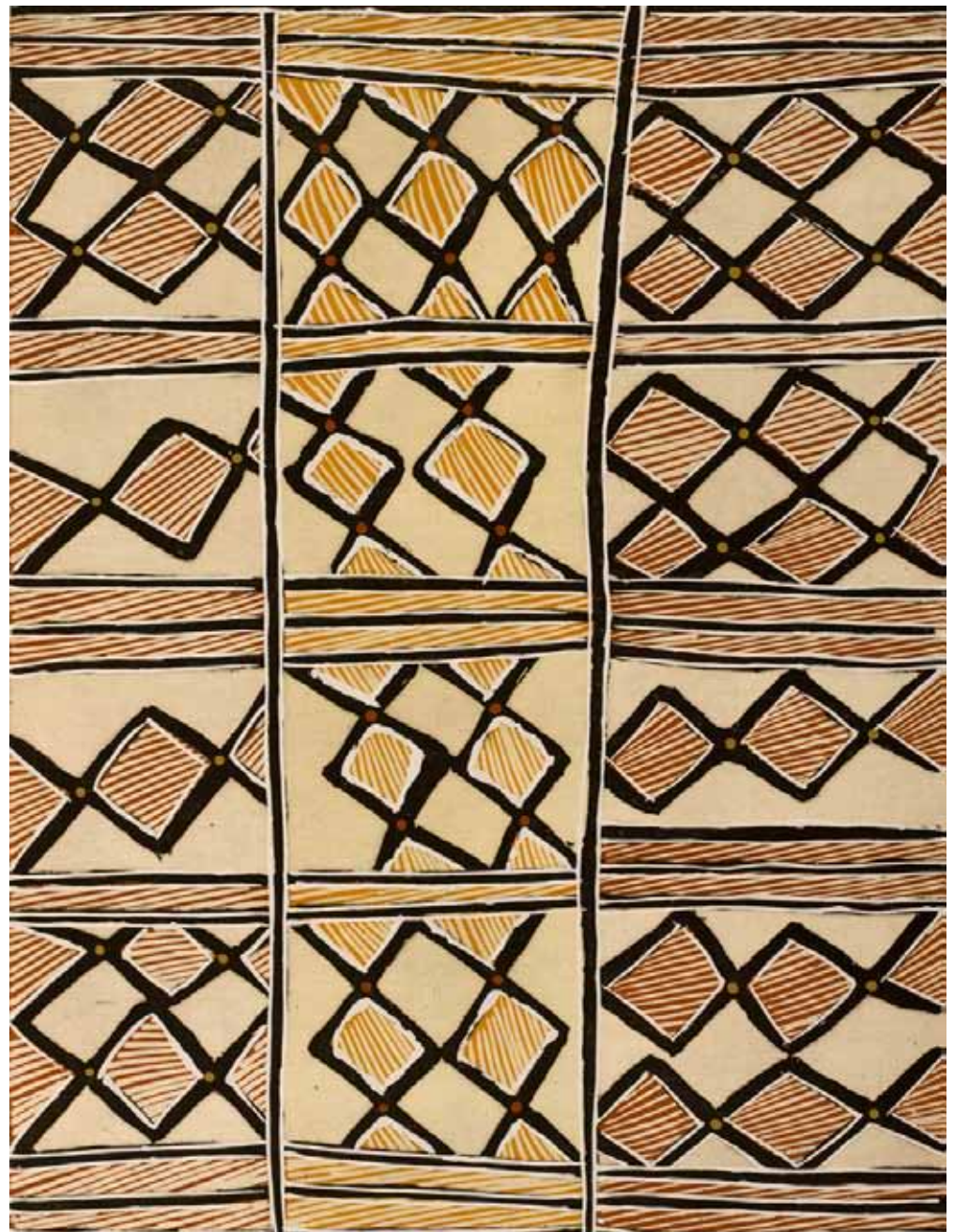
MULKUN WIRRPANDA

Clan Dhudi-Djapu, Dha-malamirr, Moiety Dhuwa, Homeland Dhuruputji

Mulkun Wirrpanda is the daughter of the great Yolngu leader Dhakiyarr Wirrpanda. As the eldest and most knowledgeable for the Dhudi-Djapu clan from Dhuruputji, Mulkun Wirrpanda is acknowledged as a leader. Mulkun is one of the few Yolngu women to have this status.

Mulkun Wirrpanda paints Dhudi-djapu miny'tji (sacred clan design) that depicts her land at Dhuruputji. Mulkun was an early practitioner of works without figurative imagery within the miny'tji. Until recently the painting of this 'raw' miny'tji was restricted to ceremonial use. The work is always done using natural earth pigments (ochres). Mulkun paints on bark, larrakitj (memorial poles) and yidaki (didgeridus) and is a talented carver, weaver and printmaker. Her work has been exhibited throughout Australia and in Asia.

Mulkun Wirrpanda is widow to Wakuthi Marawili, a Madarrpa clan leader. She is also mother (by kinship) to senior artist Djambawa Marawili, who chairs the Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Art Centre and Museum. Dhakiyarr's descendents have taken steps to restore his honour. Seventy years after his disappearance, the Wirrpanda family held a Wukidi or burial ceremony in Darwin, a ceremony to resolve a conflict between tribes that have wronged each other. A commemorative artwork was installed in the Darwin Supreme Court.



Our journey began with a dance: in this ceremonial way the Blue Mud Bay community welcomed us to their country. Over the following days as they showed us around they unfolded for us the living map of their land and sea, which charts Yolngu culture and embodies Yolngu ancestry. We learned that their homeland is a story place; it is the larder and the medicine chest, the almanac and vast encyclopedia. We saw that their sea and land and sky are home to many creatures, and learned they harbour sacred places where past and present are manifest, perpetually.



The time when we visited was the lead-up to the Wet. The last of the burning was in progress, washing the land with fire in readiness for the rain. Some of the plants were already pushing out fresh new growth and bursting into flower. I felt that I could hear them singing out to the rains to hurry up and come.

Not long before travelling to Blue Mud Bay, I listened to Djambawa Marawili sing a song of his country to his bark paintings at an exhibition in Moscow. I didn't know the words of his song, but I sensed that through his singing his saltwater world flowed into the space around them, easing them into a strange land and culture, for his paintings and their stories were very far from home.

For each of us, home is a place that is not only fixed on a map but floats along the tributaries of our consciousness. The place I come from is, I think, located somewhere on the ebb tide of the world at large, a place in a culture in a continual state of flux, drifting without an anchor. It is a place which is sharing less and less of its space with its kindred plants and animals. Too often the world I belong to absolves itself of guilt and responsibility for its actions by washing away the traces of its murky history. I have a sinking feeling that I'm from a society that is now foundering out of its depth, which laid down its foundation on quicksand. I learned at Blue Mud Bay that Yolngu culture is a fluid one, with a deep knowledge of and respect for the source from which it flows. A tide of goodwill from the community there invited us to walk and sit together to create Djalkiri. In the slipstream of this collaboration our different worlds are flowing together, making ripples on the surface where our cultures meet.

FIONA HALL

Fiona Hall is a prolific and highly regarded artist. She began her career as a photographer in the 1970s but has expanded her practice to include such diverse mediums as knitting, beading, painting, printmaking, sculpture/installation, garden design and construction and costume.

Much of Hall's work over the past 15 years has had botany and/or ethno botany as central themes, in particular the series *Paradisus Terrestris Entitled* (Collection *National Gallery of Victoria*), in which Australian indigenous flora is aligned with scientific and Aboriginal botanical naming systems. This series led her to do extensive research into the botany and Aboriginal ethno-botany of several Australian regions, including the 'Top End'.

Hall is very interested in science and the role of the museum and how this institution orders language and knowledge through the creation of taxonomies. Fiona Hall is represented in eleven state art collections nationally.



Pandanus, etching

Drawing on the tide - Baniyala

Since the early days of European settlement there has been a tradition of heavy-footed artists drawing and documenting parts of the continent about which they know little. As for myself, when I arrived at Baniyala I was just plainly discombobulated. Here I was with Yolngu artists of such distinction and with such brilliant ways of expressing in paint their vast knowledge about the place that I thought - goodness me - I'm starting from scratch here!



In these etchings I may have found a way of making ignorance a virtue - or even a valid stratagem for drawing. There I was on the edge of the sea with a blank unmarked etching plate and an empty mind. At least a mind 'trying' to be empty. I watched the ebb and flow of the waves, and how sometimes the energy and openness of the sea would deposit some leaf or coral to add to the random scatterings at my feet. As I drew each fragment, carefully mimicking the placement of each one as it rested on the sand, I was fascinated by the idea that there was a hidden order in the pattern of disparate objects as they rested on the sand.

Djambawa told me that a mangrove leaf (*Aegialitis annulata*) with an odd resemblance to a stingray was used by children at play when they are re-enacting the mythic stories about a giant ray which created some of the landforms of Baniyala. Glenn then identified some little water chestnut corms as Biwiya (*Eleocharis spacelata*). Sprouting from these important edible corms are the slender leaves which figure in the marvelous paintings of the Garangalli floodplains by Mulkan Wirrpanda. Howard, then told me that a feather I had found was that of a Brolga, and how those magnificent birds play a significant role in the great creation stories about Garangalli. And then Glenn said that Brolgas feast on these Biwiya. When I showed him a Koel feather which blew away before I could put it in my etching he said they say here that when the Koel sings it is ripening the black Plums (*Vitex glabratus*).

Each day as we all worked in the centre, these gems of information - given so generously - mediated our printmaking. And as these images of small things slowly spread across the dark velvety ground of my etching plate I felt as if some invisible ordering force was at play. Now when I look at the finished etchings I hope that I may have learnt just a little bit about some of the mysterious systems of correspondences and interconnections which are a part of the Yolngu cosmic understanding of the nature of the world.

JOHN WOLSELEY

John Wolseley was born in 1938 in England and settled in Australia in 1976. He has travelled and painted all over the continent from the deserts of central Australia to the forests of Tasmania and the tidal reaches of the far north west. His work over the last twenty years has been a search to discover how we dwell and move within landscape - a kind of meditation on how land is a dynamic system of which we are all a part. Recently, he has documented the different stages of a bushfire and the miraculous re-generation of the blackened trees and scrubs in an eternal cycle of destruction and renewal.

Much of the artist's work has been about the evolution of the earth's surface through continental drift as seen in the 1996 exhibition *Tasmania to Patagonia: Tracing the southern continents* and the 2001 installation *Tracing the Wallace Line*. Both these exhibitions described how the earth's geological structures have metamorphosed over time and how the microcosmic world of species evolved and changed as an integral part of those greater movements. These projects looked at how even the land beneath our feet is moving and unfolding and included painting, drawings and installations which related the minutiae of natural forms to the abstract dimensions of geology.



Sea Wrack - Tide After Tide, Baniyala, etching



Travelling with a plate

I follow the confusing lines of the mangrove-roots with a pencil. The tip of the lead and the needle's point are my fingertips. I draw and get my bearing. I get closer, connected to where I happen to be.

Time seems to slow down as I work. The moment is extended, the flow of time measured, departure delayed. While I observe, the other senses are alert: I taste the air and the dust, I feel the rough stones, hear the cicadas, smell the smoke. And somehow this will find its way into the picture. The sketched lines of first thoughts remain on the surface, together with the defined marks of the final image. On the way back to base: baggage, precariously close to the plates, the copper is bruised by the movement of the travelling car, cold weather cracks the ground, the heat will let the block-out stick to my hands. In the end it is both the travel and I who create the marks which will make the print of the journey.

JÖRG SCHMEISSER

Jörg Schmeisser was born in Germany in 1942 and has lived in Australia since 1978 when he was appointed Head of Printmaking and Drawing at Canberra School of Art at the Australian National University. Schmeisser's distinguished printmaking career is informed by a restless curiosity about the perception and essence of the visual world. From the beginning, Schmeisser has been inspired by travel, his imagination fired by regular experiences of the unfamiliar and unknown.

His love of travel has taken him to Israel, Thailand, Japan, China, USA, Europe and India. He has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions nationally and internationally. In 1968, he was awarded a German Academic Exchange Scholarship to Japan and in 1974 he received the Aldegrever-Gesellschaft Scholarship.

Jörg Schmeisser's work is part of many high profile, public and private collections throughout Australia and overseas including the National Gallery of Australia; Australian National University; National Gallery of Victoria; Museum of Modern Art, New York.



Mangrove Tree, etching



JUDY WATSON

Judy Watson is an Aboriginal descendant of the Waanyi people of northeast Queensland who has gained wide national and international recognition. She was one of three Australian Aboriginal women artists chosen to represent Australia in the 1997 Venice Biennale.

Trained in painting and printmaking, much of her art is concerned with tracing ancestral roots. Some of her activities as a printmaker could be compared with charting topographical maps in which the cultural, spiritual and historical heritage of her people is recorded, almost like a visual parable which can be interpreted on many levels. Watson's work often explores her connection with Waanyi country, the land of her grandmother and great grandmother but she is also interested in women's issues, political issues and the environment.

She has been involved in many projects in the NT and resided in Darwin working as an artist and lecturer at Charles Darwin University before relocating to Brisbane in 2002.

Blue Mud Bay prints 2010

When the red flowers appear on the kurrajong, the mud crabs have good flesh on them

We ate the crabs and fish, tasted buffalo stew, heard the buffalo snuffling around our camp

People danced and welcomed us with blue flags and great ceremony

Our camp is in an open area where the stingray came in and bit the ground in different places. The eyes of the stingray are waterholes where freshwater bubbles up out of the ground.

Boat/sails/prau, the dreaming Macassans

'We had those designs', said an old man

Wangarr – ancestral presence in the country, in the land

Past, present, future

Djalkiri - strong spirit places

Different currents that go under and over each other

mungurru – great current

Waters – shared between the clans

Baru, crocodile, diamond, fire

Mäna, the shark came inland up the river from the sea

Casuarina, Wangupini, the cloud of this tree

That arises in the sea

We sing about this tree

11 clans in the map of Blue Mud Bay, different dialects

Matthew Flinders met a captain of the Macassan fleet who had exchanged names, Pobasso with Yolngu – Wirrpanda

Garrangali the name of the band, is the crocodile's nest, a jungle area on the floodplain

Garrangari, the floodplain

Djambawa: I am still living and surviving with all those stories. The sand is still alive

The shape is still alive

The stories are still alive

Blue – sea

White – cloud

Invisibility



kurrajong, disc, sea rights 1, etching, 2010 incorporating documents from the Blue Mud Bay Native Title Case judgement, which recognised Yolngu ownership of the intertidal zone in the Aboriginal Land Rights, (Northern Territory) Act. (Judy Watson always titles her work without capital letters)

BASIL HALL



Basil Hall was born in Victoria in 1954 and studied at the Australian National University and Canberra School of Art. In 1987, he was appointed Director of Studio One National Print Workshop, a position he held until 1994. During this period, the workshop developed a strong relationship with Aboriginal communities, printing many editions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. In 1995, Hall won a Churchill Fellowship and travelled to Europe and the USA visiting print workshops. From 1996 to 1999 he was Lecturer in charge of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Printmaking Workshop at Northern Territory University and Editioning Manager at Northern Editions at the University until 2002. That year, Hall established Basil Hall Editions in Darwin. Over the past ten years, Hall has become increasingly more focused on Aboriginal art and has become one of Australia's most important producers of Aboriginal prints.

GLENN WIGHTMAN



Glenn Wightman is one of the few non-Indigenous Australians to have developed a deep understanding of the country's traditional plant and animal knowledge. Since graduating from Melbourne's Monash University in 1981, Wightman has been working closely with the many Aboriginal communities in the Top End of the Northern Territory, an area rich in biodiversity, to help them record this precious knowledge in a scientific and culturally sensitive manner. His books on the plants and animals of northern Australia are in some cases the last surviving record of knowledge that has been passed down through Aboriginal Australian generations over thousands of years.

Wightman has coordinated 15 books from clans of different languages throughout the top half of the Northern Territory and Western Australia. The books are always published in accordance with the wishes of the elders, who retain authorship and full copyright.

HOWARD MORPHY



Professor Howard Morphy is Director of the Research School of Humanities (formerly Director, Centre for Cross-Cultural Research) at the ANU. He was previously Professor of Social Anthropology at Univeristy College, London. Morphy has published widely in the anthropology of art, aesthetics, performance, museum anthropology, visual anthropology and religion. He is writing a biography of the Aboriginal artist Narritjin Maymuru in text and multi-media form.

He is currently leading a multidisciplinary team of researchers looking at the interrelationship between culture, society and ecology over time among the Yolngu people of Blue Mud Bay. A major interest is in developing digital publishing in the social sciences and humanities through ANU's Consortium for Research and Information Outreach (CRIO).

PETER EVE



Peter Eve has been working as a freelance photographer and designer in Darwin since 2001. A constant traveller from Cairns to the Kimberley and from Arnhem Land to the red centre, his photography celebrates Indigenous culture and the environment of remote Australia. His evocative images are regularly published in national editorial journals, newspapers, art magazines and shown in art galleries nationally. Well known for his versatile approach and fresh eye, Peter has a unique ability to capture community life and distinctive personalities in isolated and regional Australia, while his landscape images encapsulate the essence of wilderness and place.

www.monsoonstudio.com.au



ANGUS CAMERON

Angus Cameron has 20 years experience as an arts educator and has been working in the Indigenous arts industry in the Top End since 1997. He has been involved in a range of art related projects including publishing, project coordination and exhibition development.

In 2003 he curated an exhibition titled Emerge - Discovering New Indigenous Art at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT). More recently, he has been the Industry Development Officer with the Association of Northern, Kimberley and Arnhem Aboriginal Artists (2003 – 2005). Angus has worked closely with Indigenous art centres across the Top End and was the author of a consumer guide designed to protect the rights of artists and promote ethical business practice in the Indigenous art industry.



ROSE CAMERON

Rose has been working in Darwin in the Indigenous arts industry since 1999 and has been involved in arts management since 1990. With a Graduate Diploma in Arts and Entertainment Management, her experience includes project and event management in Victoria and the Northern Territory.

Rose was Marketing Manager of Tiwi Art Network from 2002 - 2004 and Business, Projects & Marketing Manager at Northern Editions, Charles Darwin University Printmaking Workshop from 1999 - 2002. She was Project Coordinator for the 18th National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award at (MAGNT) in 2001 and NT Curator for Sculpture by the Sea in 1998 (The National Olympic Games arts event).

CURRICULUM LINKS

Djalkiri has strong connections to the first phase of the Australian Curriculum through Science and History.

Science

Year K – 10 Strands
Science Inquiry Skills

- Questioning and predicting
- Investigation methods
- Fair testing
- Using equipment
- Observing and measuring
- Analysing results
- Communicating
- Developing explanations
- Reflecting on methods

Science as a Human Endeavour

- Influence of science
- Nature of science
- Science in the community
- Science and culture
- Contribution of scientists
- Collaboration in science
- Science and culture
- Science careers

Science Understanding

- Grouping living things
- Interactions of living things
- Change at the Earth's surface
- Forces and motion
- Evolution

Year 11 – 12

Biology

Unit 2 – Change and survival

Earth and Environmental Science

Unit 1 - Origins and interactions

Unit 2 – The dynamic Earth

Unit 3 – Life through time

History

Year K – 10 Content Description
Knowledge and Understanding

- First Australians
- The diversity of cultures, beliefs

Languages and social organisation

- Early contacts

Skills

- Historical questions and research
- Analysis and use of sources
- Perspectives and interpretations
- Comprehension and communication

The Arts

Djalkiri can be used as a starting point to develop investigative themes on:

- How art reflects values, beliefs and traditions
- The role of artists in different societies
- Design considerations and constraints
- Aesthetics
- Relationships to the land as expressed by Indigenous culture
- Media, materials and technologies
- Continuity and change
- Society and culture
- Social dimensions of art
- Natural science, botany and ethno-botany

WEB SITES

Art

Basil Hall Editions - printmaking studio

<http://www.basilhalleditions.com.au>

Buku Larrnggay Mulka, Yirrkala Art Centre

<http://www.yirrkala.com>

Nomad Art

<http://www.nomadart.com.au>

Monsoon Studio photography

<http://www.monsoonstudio.com.au>

Film

Ten Canoes

<http://www.tencanoes.com.au>

Yolngu Boy

<http://www.yolnguboy.com>

History and Place

Bureau of Meteorology

http://www.bom.gov.au/iwk/climate_culture/Indig_seasons.shtml

East Arnhem Land Tourist Association

<http://www.ealta.org/index.html>

Maritime Heritage Monsoon Traders (Macassans)

<http://www.nt.gov.au/nreta/heritage/maritime/monsoon.html>

Travel NT

http://en.travelnt.com/assets_static/seasons-of-kakadu/kakaduSeasons.swf

Indigenous Language and Culture

Charles Darwin University's Yolngu Language and Culture

<http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/yolngustudies/>

East Arnhem Land Tourist Association:

<http://www.ealta.org>

Garma Festival of Traditional Culture:

<http://www.garma.telstra.com>

Links to additional Yolngu language resources

Aboriginal Resource and Development Services Inc

<http://www.ards.com.au/langresources.htm>

Living Knowledge - Australian National University

<http://livingknowledge.anu.edu.au/learningsites/seacountry/index.htm>

Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation

<http://www.dhimurru.com.au/default.html>

Wikipedia article on Yolngu language varieties

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yolngu_Matha

Music

Garrangali Band, Yilpara

<http://garrangali.bandcamp.com/track/garrangali>

Music sung in Yolngu language by Gurrumul Yunupingu

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bawDFY8G-o4>

Skinnyfish Music

<http://www.skinnyfishmusic.com.au/site/>

Science

NT Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and Arts

<http://www.nt.gov.au/nreta/>

Laynhapuy Rangers

<http://www.environment.gov.au/indigenous/ipa/declared/laynhapuy.html>

Tropical Savannas Cooperative Research Centre:

<http://savanna.cdu.edu.au/>

Wetland Habitats Of The Top End - Michael Michie

<http://members.ozemail.com.au/~mmichie/habitat1.htm>

Selected Reading

Djalkiri Exhibition Catalogue

Nomad Art Productions

<http://www.nomadart.com.au/gallery@nomadart.com.au>

Saltwater - Yirrkala Bark Paintings of the Sea Country

Buku Larrnggay Mulka Centre

<http://www.yirrkala.com/art@yirrkala.com>

For a list of publications by Glenn Wightman go to

<http://www.nt.gov.au/nreta/publications/nreta/index.html>,
or phone 08 89994795.

Acknowledgements

The *Djalkiri* Education Kit was developed by Nomad Art Productions for use in schools and at exhibition venues.

The activities may be reproduced for teaching purposes. Permission to reproduce any material for other purposes must be obtained from Nomad Art or from the artist.

Author - Angus Cameron, Nomad Art Productions, Darwin

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INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND PROTOCOLS

Protocols, cultural sensitivity, awareness, trust and generosity were key elements of the Djalkiri project. The sharing of knowledge and cultural exchange can only grow when the elements are right. Aboriginal people have been associated with the Blue Mud Bay region for tens of thousands of years and have an intimate knowledge of land management which has been passed down through the generations. Prior to the workshop permission was sought from the Traditional Owners to conduct the project. Upon arrival Traditional Owners welcomed the group to their country.

There are no fixed rules when interacting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Every community is different and there are hundreds of Aboriginal language groups in Australia each with a unique cultural background.

The following principles are taken from the Australian Broadcasting Commission program *Message Stick - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Online* and provide a guide for working with Indigenous peoples.

Respect

The rights of Indigenous people to own and control their cultures should be respected. Diversity of Indigenous cultures should be acknowledged and encouraged. Indigenous worldviews, lifestyles and customary laws should be respected in contemporary life.

Indigenous Control

Indigenous people have the right to self-determination in their cultural affairs.

Consultation, Communication and Consent

Indigenous people should be consulted on the way in which their history, community, interviews, lives and families are represented and used.

Indigenous people should be consulted on the use and representation of their Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property. Prior to use, Indigenous peoples should be informed on the implications of consent. Consultation should address the communal nature of Indigenous society and cultural expression.

Interpretation, Integrity and Authenticity

Indigenous people should be consulted concerning the integrity and authenticity of the ways in which their history, community, interviews, lives and families are represented. Indigenous people should be consulted concerning the integrity and authenticity of the representation of their cultural and intellectual property.

Secrecy and Confidentiality

The right of Indigenous people to keep secret and sacred their cultural knowledge should be respected. Sacred and secret material refers to information that is restricted under customary law. For instance some information may only be learned or viewed by men or women, or only after initiation.

Indigenous people have the right to maintain confidentiality about their personal and cultural affairs.

Attribution

Indigenous people should be given proper credit and appropriate acknowledgement for their achievements.

Indigenous people should be given proper credit and appropriate acknowledgement for their contributions and roles in the development of stories.

Indigenous people should be given proper credit and appropriate acknowledgement for the use of their cultural material.

Continuing Cultures

Indigenous people have responsibility to ensure that the practice and transmission of Indigenous cultural expression is continued for the benefit of future generations.

Sharing of Benefits

The contribution of Indigenous people should be recognised by payment where appropriate.

Indigenous people have the right to be paid for the use of their Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property.

The issue of copyright ownership of the story, image, music, contributions and artwork should be discussed up front.

Indigenous people should have the right to control exploitation of their cultural and intellectual property. If consent is given Indigenous people have the right to share in the benefits from any commercialisation of their Indigenous cultural material.

Recognition and Protection under the Law

Indigenous people have the right to protection of their cultural and intellectual property.

Reference:

<http://www.abc.net.au/message/proper/ethics.htm>