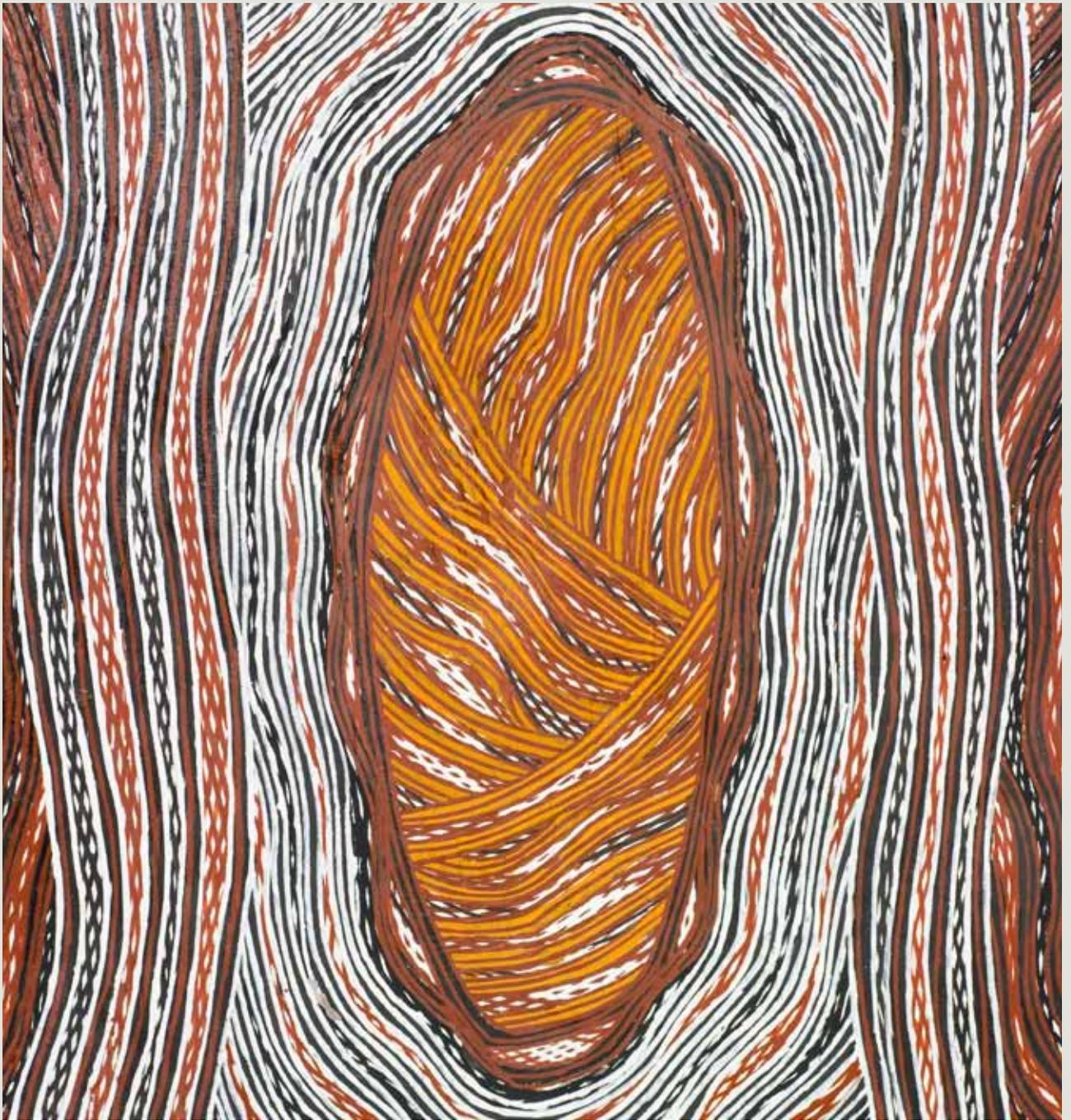


WANYUBI MARIKA



YOUNG GUNS II



Acknowledgements

Published 2008 by Annandale Galleries

2000 copies

Copyright Buku-Larrngay Mulka Arts and Annandale Galleries

ISBN 978-097-576-1373

Design by Anne Gregory

Printed by Sydney Print & Design

Photos pages 28, 29 and artist portraits courtesy Buku-Larrngay Mulka

All other photography by Murray Fredericks 2008

All barks & sculptures natural earth pigments and pva fixative

Front cover

Wanyubi Marika - *Mumut'thun* 2007 168 x 61 cm (detail)

Frontice

Wanyubi Marika - *Mardayin Site* 2007 138 x 48 cm (detail)

Back cover

Gunybi Ganambarr - *Fishtrap* 2007 incised bark 162 x 55 cm (detail)

WANYUBI MARIKA & YOUNG GUNS II

bark paintings ceremonial poles sculpture

Opening Reception For The Seven Artists

Wednesday 16 April 6:30 - 9:00 pm

Exhibition dates 16 April - 10 May 2008

ANNANDALE GALLERIES

In association with Buku-Larrngay Mulka NE Arnhemland

In association with Buku Larrngay Mulka
110 Trafalgar Street Annandale Sydney NSW 2038 Australia
Telephone (61-2) 9552 1699 Fax (61-2) 9552 1689
annangal@ozemail.com.au www.annandalegalleries.com.au
Gallery Hours Tuesday - Saturday 11:00 - 5:00 pm **ACGA**

INTRODUCTION

Nearly thirteen years have passed since my wife Anne and myself, armed with a letter of introduction from Djon Mundine arrived on the doorstep of the arts centre at Yirrkala in Northeast Arnhemland. Annandale Galleries had been open in the current space since 1991 and although we had put together some exhibitions of Western desert painting in Paris as early as 1986 we had no Aboriginal art in the program at Annandale. Andrew Blake, the director of the arts centre at the time, warmly greeted us and I still vividly recall the dinner, lit by candles in the trees behind the Yirrkala arts centre with Andrew, the Director and his wife Diane. We also met Will Stubbs who was helping out at the time and we all made a trip into the country by four - wheel drive to collect a bark at one of the outstations. It was a different world when we arrived; indeed for someone not long in Australia like us, we had landed on another planet. The landscape, the fierce light, drinking water directly from the streams and above all the art and artists made a lasting impression on both of us.

This meeting led to our first exhibition of Aboriginal art at Annandale Galleries entitled *Big Bark* in 1995. So much has changed since then it is impossible to go into any detail here. Our clients were mostly 'crossover' collectors who were familiar with our program of mostly abstract European and Australian contemporary art. Apart from the museums who had purchased a number of works, most had never acquired an Aboriginal work of art – period - and of those who had, most were buying their first bark painting. The market for this type of work, while highly respected by curators and academics was quite small by comparison even to the Western desert movement, never mind the art market in general.

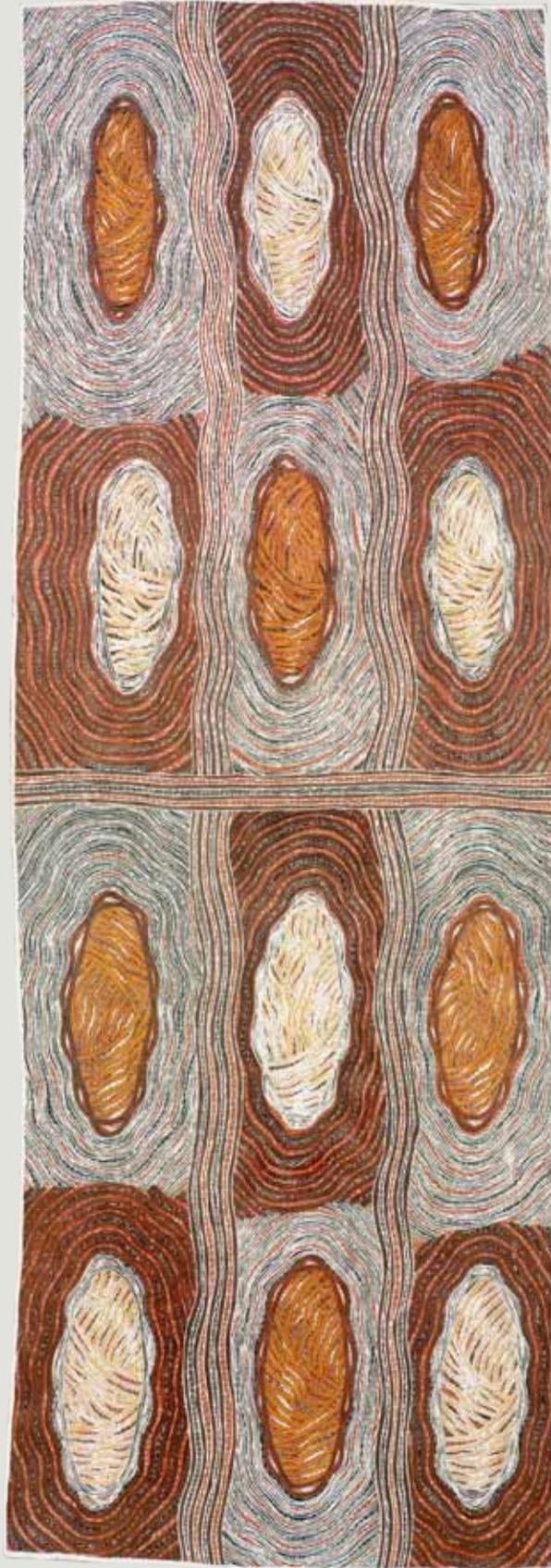
Nowadays, Aboriginal art is booming both in Australia and overseas. Our clients come from America and Europe as well as Australia. As an art movement, Aboriginal art is unquestionably the most significant cultural contribution to the creative continuum in the visual arts to emerge from Australia. Along the way there have been the inevitable problems that come from an explosive growth in any field. Fluctuations in quality, naïve or misguided categorizations, prices that lack the backing of sound judgement to name just a few.

However, there are a few places where art is made and collected for exhibition around the world that have kept these problems to a minimum. The bark painting in Arnhemland has not been subject to the pressures to the same degree as the Western Desert movement. Andrew Blake and Will Stubbs at Buku-Larrngay Mulka Arts, guided by elders such as Djambawa Marawili and Wanyubi Marika, have done a remarkable job in keeping the integrity of the work protected and relatively untouched by the problems that have plagued other regions. In recent years they successfully exported the work overseas and kept a keen eye on the young and emerging artists. Overall, despite the inevitable fluctuations, the market has worked in their favour and the wind has been at their backs as more and more people realize the cultural significance and the joy of collecting these works.

The most tangible outcome of all this activity is that more young Aboriginals are committing to becoming full or near full time artists. They are maturing at an earlier age and finding their own 'containers' or styles to a degree that was unimaginable even a few short years ago when market realities would have relegated them to assisting elder artists if a pragmatic place could be found for them at all. All that has changed now and we see in this exhibition the sons and grandsons of the older artists producing work of extraordinary depth and beauty. Led by the example of their elders, who have also progressed in leaps and bounds, the younger generation of artists have a more free rein to express themselves and bring their own direction and emotion to the timeless and age old sacred stories from which the art derives. It is their voice that will be the voice of the future.

I extend my thanks and gratitude to Andrew Blake and Will Stubbs for their tireless efforts in making this important exhibition possible. I would also like to thank all seven artists for making the trip to Sydney for the opening. In particular Wanyubi Marika, the leader of the artist's cooperative at Buku-Larrngay Mulka Arts, both for his spectacular solo show within the exhibition and for his leadership and wisdom which allows the rest of us to continue to experience the growth, the innovation and the beauty of the art from this extraordinary region of Arnhemland.

- Bill Gregory Sydney March 2008



Wanyubi Marika
Mumut'thun 2007
217 x 77 cm 3117A

VIEW FROM THE MIDDLE

As an 'art co-ordinator' from the remote indigenous community of Yirrkala in Arnhem land my role in a catalogue like this is pretty hard to define. I have no qualifications in artspeak and cannot understand, let alone write, it. I have no deep sacred knowledge or fluency in Yolngu culture sufficient to add to the artists work itself.

The ferrety title of 'art co-ordinator' translates for me to 'middle man'. I am the man in the middle and unless I can bring something which adds to your feeling for who why and where this work was made you would be better skipping to another essay.

WANYUBI

Wanyubi Marika is from a family which takes greatness as a given. The synopsis of the ABC TV show Dynasties episode which featured the Marika family reads "The Aboriginal dynasty that gave Australia the closest thing to a Magna Carta and made the custodianship of land and culture its greatest strength."

His father, Milirrpum Marika, was the lead plaintiff in the landmark Gove Land Rights case (formally cited as Milirrpum v Nabalco Pty Ltd (1971) 17 FLR 141)

His mother, a pioneering and distinguished healthworker and ordained Uniting Church minister. Her brother, Gawirrin Gumana AO, a ceremonial leader and famous artist (overall winner Telstra NATSIAA 2002- last surviving painter of the Yirrkala Church Panels, 1963).

I will stop there without exhaustively listing the other stellar members of his extended family such as Wandjuk, Mawalan and Banduk Marika because that point has been made. He was born to Yolngu royalty.

But Wanyubi's story was not to be a fairy story. He is not the pampered Prince. His father died when he was very young. His mother, Liyapadhiny, was a diminutive, selfless humble woman who eschewed worldly influence. His father's brothers had many able and ambitious sons who were older and closer to power in the Marika heartland of Yirrkala than he.

Wanyubi has sought his own way. It has taken him through hard work as a trainee teacher, a dance performer, a bulldozer driver, a young mayor of Yirrkala, a mainstream student and an elder directing ceremony, to his current prime.

In 1998 the Yolngu advocated their sea rights in the Saltwater collection (ANMM) and Wanyubi felt compelled to paint for the first time. His success in this field has fed itself to this point, his fourth major exhibition.

Ten years earlier he was one of the few Yolngu able to obtain work with the multinational aluminium mine his elders had unsuccessfully tried to resist. He grew himself from his role in the 'environmental section' cutting the lawns of the big bosses in the mining town to become in 2000 the founder and Senior Ranger of Yirrkala Rangers. He is the guiding light of a body which since he achieved the declaration of the Laynhapuy Indigenous Protected Area in 2006 employs almost 50 young Yolngu custodians as rangers over the thousands of square kilometers that is their heritage.

When I mentioned to him that the essay would try to let people know more about him I said, 'I guess that most people would be surprised to know that besides being an artist you are also a Senior Ranger'. He replied 'It's the same thing. Protecting the country through the gamunungu (ochre painted sacred designs) is the same thing as protecting the land physically as a ranger. There is no difference.'

ESSENCE

You don't have to be Yolngu to believe in a sense of place. We all know that sense that is triggered if for instance someone asks you about your first classroom. You might have forgotten what it looked like or where it was but you can still feel its essence. The mental pulse that is triggered in your mind is not confined to the area of smell/sound/taste or sight but perhaps a combination of all and including a sense of space or dimension.

Although we all know this Sense, our language struggles to find a word. 'Atmosphere' seems a little light on. Even borrowing 'Ambience' from the French falls short of that distinct impression each place we habitate leaves in our mind. Lets call it Essence.

The DNA of a person could also be thought of as their Essence. The visual representation of that Essence is a series of strokes in a kind of bar code that varies uniquely between individuals as does a fingerprint. Only a scientist can read these marks.

The thousands of strokes in each of these works create a pattern. Each pattern is distinct. Each of the hundreds of clan estates within East Arnhem has its own unique pattern. Like DNA this pattern is not an artefact of the scientist who can render it visible, or interpret it, but a naturally occurring manifestation of the identity of its source.

These patterns (known as miny'tji or sacred clan design) are not created by the artists but revealed by them. The vehicle for the patterns (and songs which are another dimension of this identity) is water. The actions, interactions, reactions of water in all its states is the modeling tool for the Yolngu worldview. From dew in a spiderweb to a waterspout. From misty rain to a tsunami. From a baby's fontanelle to a freshwater spring bubbling under the ocean. All these states and their interactions are the carriers of sacred patterns.

In Yolngu cosmology these patterns are inherently powerful. They are radioactive. It is only recently that they have started to be shared outside of a strict sacred information exchange. Each unit of one of these estates; the people, animals, sea, clouds, plants has the clan design of that estate etched unseen within each molecule.

Before the Yolngu the land was already complete. It had everything it needed to sustain itself. But it was mute. It could not express itself. It grew a 'tongue' in the form of the Yolngu to proclaim it's identity. Thus, through the hand of the artist the land shows it's Essence.

Like DNA, which we have only recently been able to visualize, the miny'tji was always there. Like DNA, miny'tji is passed down through the generations. Like DNA, the shape of the miny'tji is wrought by the forces which originated the vessel.

The pattern which crystallizes the identity of the waters off Yalangbara is revealed by Wanyubi. It is the hole created in this water in the millisecond of the withdrawal stroke of an ancestral paddle. It was in this moment that the identity of this coastal sea was set for all time.

The ripples radiating from this void define and describe the Essence of the saltwater estate of Mulmutthun belonging to the Rirratjingu clan of the Dhuwa moiety. This pattern has replicated itself through the generations since the moment the Djang'kawu Sister caused it in the pre-Dawn light before her first footfall on Yolngu land. Wanyubi's individual hand and artistic vision makes his expression of this Essence unique in that lineage but true to all its precursors.

YOUNG GUNS

All the young men in this show are links in their own particular web of Essence. They are of those Essences and they also reveal them in their work.

Gunybi paints from across his ancestry. The freshwater of his mother carries mud stirred up from the bed of the Gangan River by giant crayfish as it tends the entrance to a gushing artesian font. His own paternal pattern sings spring water filtering through the special reeds at Ngalkanbuy flavoured by the threat bubbling from a Barracuda's mouth mixing with brackish tidal inflow.

Yalanba's water is rivulets flowing honey as Yilpirr's is the tangy vengeful blood in a mosquito's gut, stinking of a midnight ambush.

Dhurrumuwy's chop and spray mixes with the turtle hunter's sweat of fear and exertion in the waters between the mainland and Bremer Island.



Wanyubi Marika
Mumut'thun 2007
230 cm 3124A
detail top left



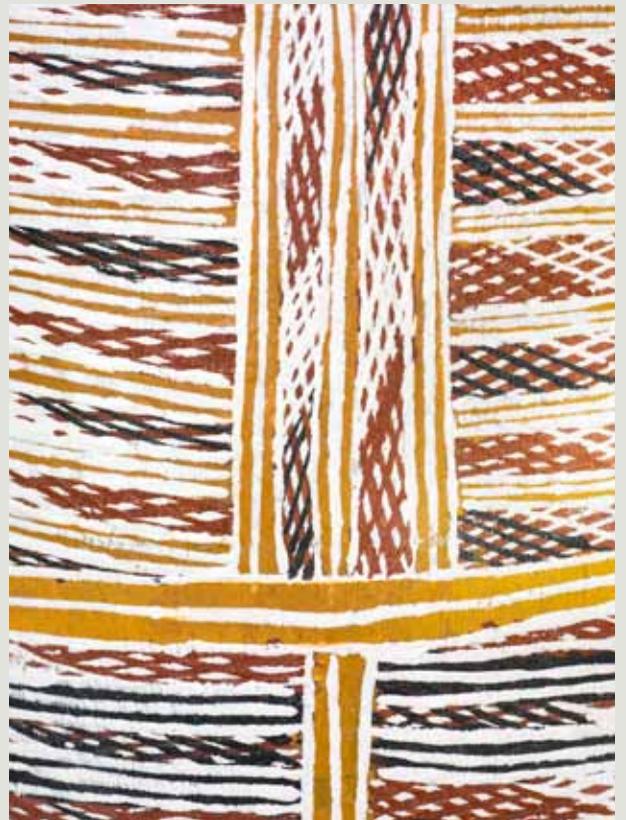
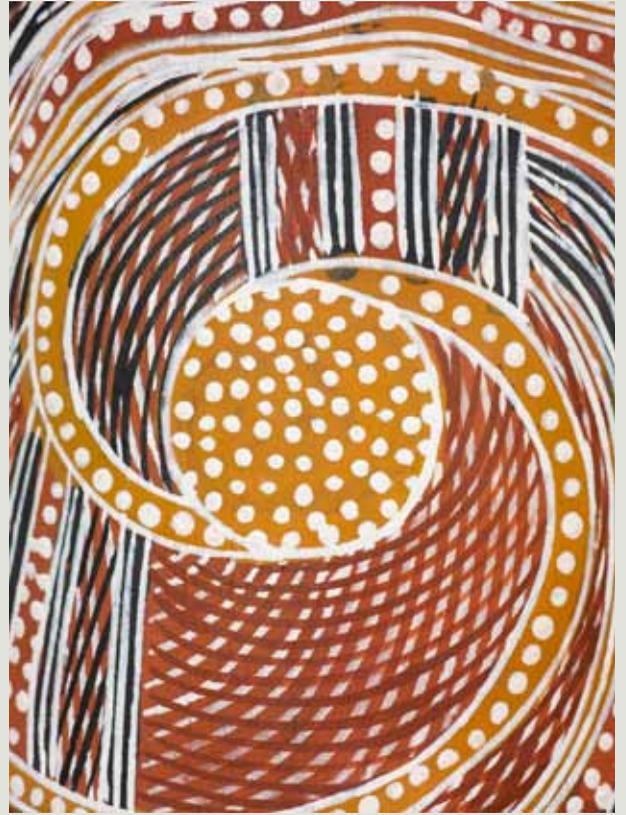
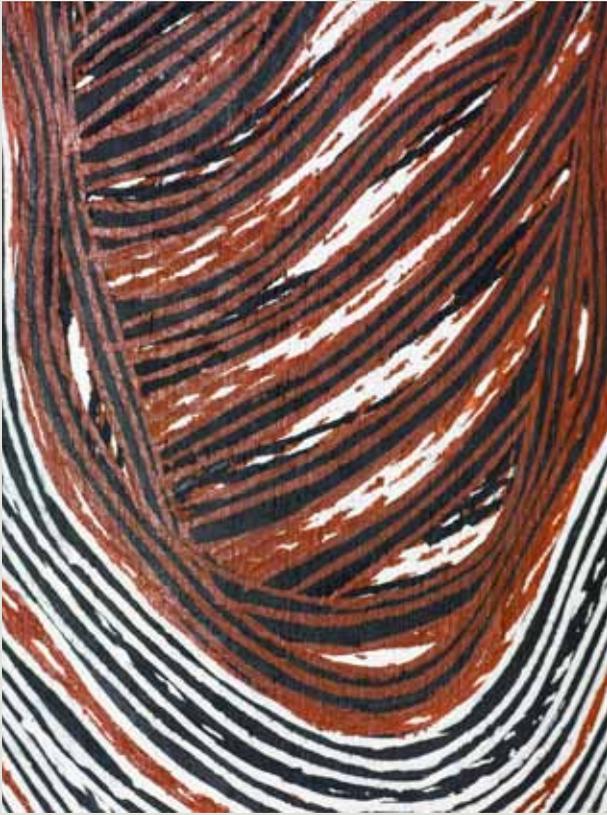
Wanyubi Marika
Mumut'thun 2007
196 cm 3291J
detail top right



Wanyubi Marika
Mumut'thun 2007
169 cm 3291I
detail bottom left



Wanyubi Marika
Yalangbara 2007
177 cm 2755K
detail bottom right



Yinimala traces the tea brown mangrove outflow through a barrage of banked up leaves over the backbone of the snake/sandbar and into the shallow sea enflamed by seawasp venom and finally out to the horizon where tears for tsunami dead merge the clans.

Barayuwa's mother is coastal water at Yarrinya in Blue Mud Bay tainted by tears of fratricidal grief and spilt blood from the slaughtered beached Whale.

All different. All distinct. All unique. But all received in the same way. These young men have all learnt from their elders the secrets of their own Essence through patient instruction and example. This is how Wanyubi learnt and how he passes it on. Three of the young men are rangers with Yirralka. They all paint for Buku-Larrnggay Mulka which he has chaired for almost 7 years. Dhurumuwuy#2 is his namesake.

This means of replication is perhaps more fragile than that which DNA uses. And yet despite over 60 years of direct contradiction from the Western worldview it lives to celebrate another generation in these young artists. The land can be reassured that its identity is not yet lost in East Arnhem.

ARNHEM LAND

Leaving aside the esoteric difference of each spiritual estate from another there is the larger difference between here where I am writing this and down there where you are reading it. Can I communicate that difference to those who have never been here?

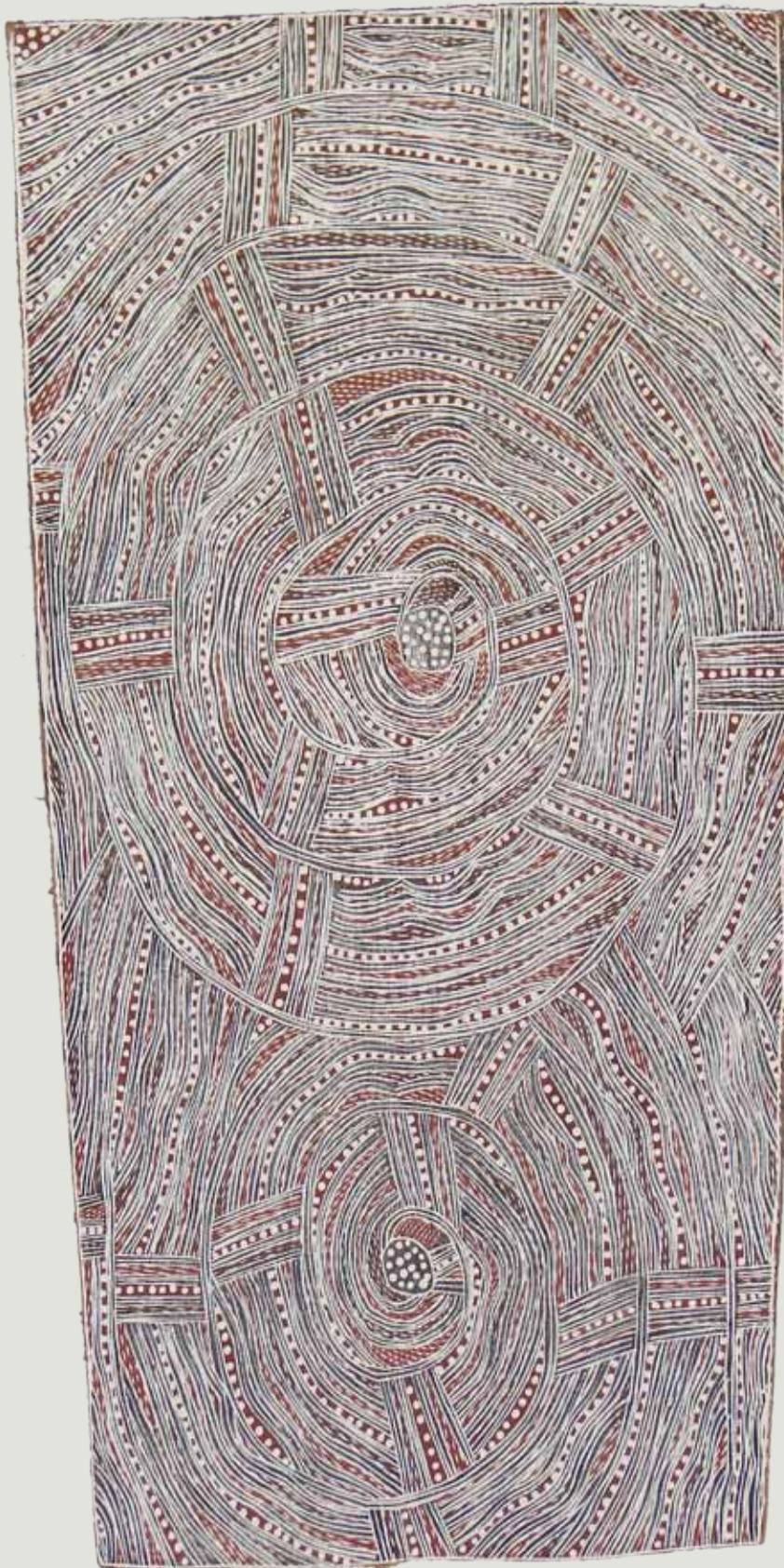
I have lived in East Arnhem for fourteen years now but getting off the plane after holidays elsewhere still whacks me square between the eyes. The shock of difference between here and 'Down South' beats memory every time.

It is wild. It is empty of people and full of life. It is hot beyond any temperate imaginings. It is a never ending forest of stringybark but the trees are all being hollowed by unseen termites and the ground is hard and stony. The sea is crystal clear and the beaches pure white sand but it is impossible to swim (in the Southern sense). There are no signs, fences, roads or buildings but everywhere there are boundaries, foundations, no entry zones, monuments, footprints, ghosts, and spirits.

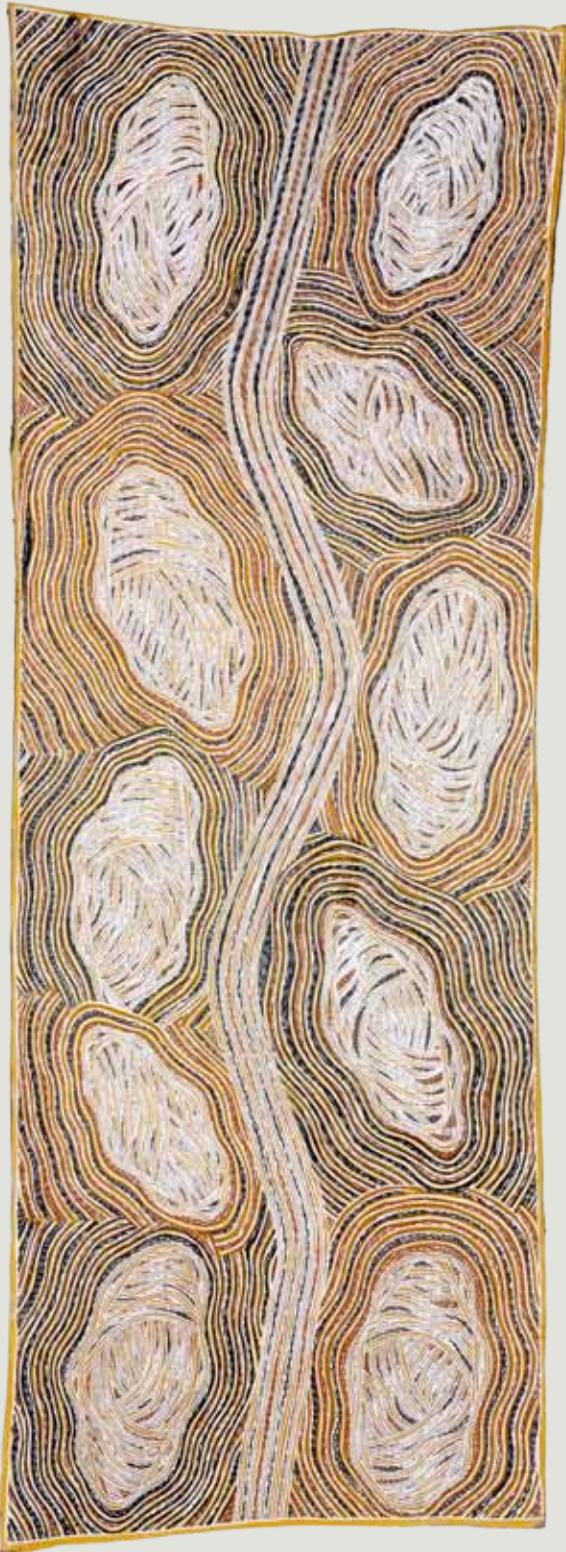
Although it is rich in life it is poor in comfort or ease for that life. Everything must be adapted to being thrashed by the sun and drowned by the rain. There is no soil of any richness left clinging to the substrate. Everything is prolifically fertile, clings to survival for a short lived courageous struggle and then is either fried or rotted away without trace or memory. The South looks soft and smooth like a well stuffed pillow. Up here we are all just clinging on in the mouth of the furnace and wilting and wrinkling and hollowing as one.

The carhorns beep to summon us to another communal grieving as the identity of the deceased is sung but their name never spoken. Wailing and flailing mourners go mad with their pain and then rippling laughter and giggles bubble up immediately after. Ask not for whom the horn beeps. It beeps for thee.

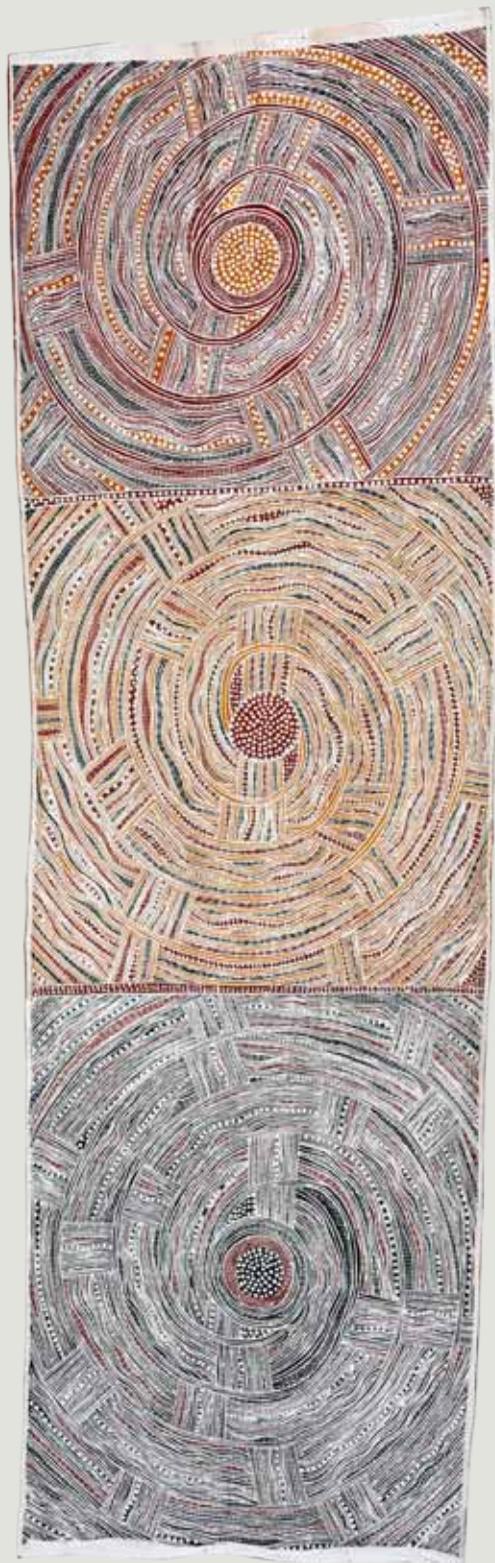
- Will Stubbs Art Co ordinator Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Arts Yirrkale NE



Wanyubi Marika
Mumut'thun 2007
217 x 77 cm 3117A
3323g

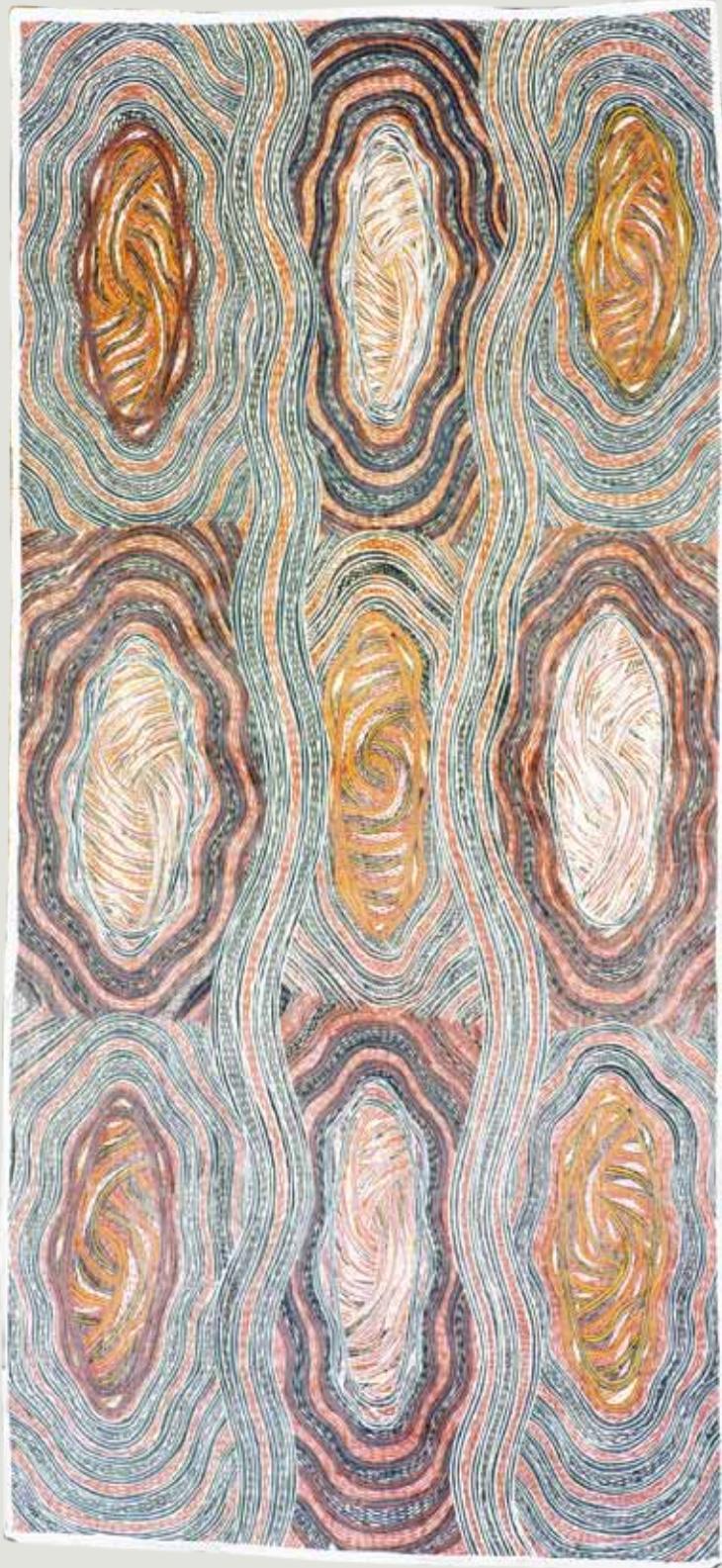


Wanyubi Marika
Mumut'thun 2007
168 x 61 cm 30951



Wanyubi Marika
Mumut'thun 2007
186 x 58 cm 3163L





Wanyubi Marika
Mumut'thun 2007
125 x 58 cm 3142G



Wanyubi Marika
Mumut'thun 2007
104 x 69 cm 3145H



Gunybi Ganambarr
Warrukay 2007
301 cm 3076A



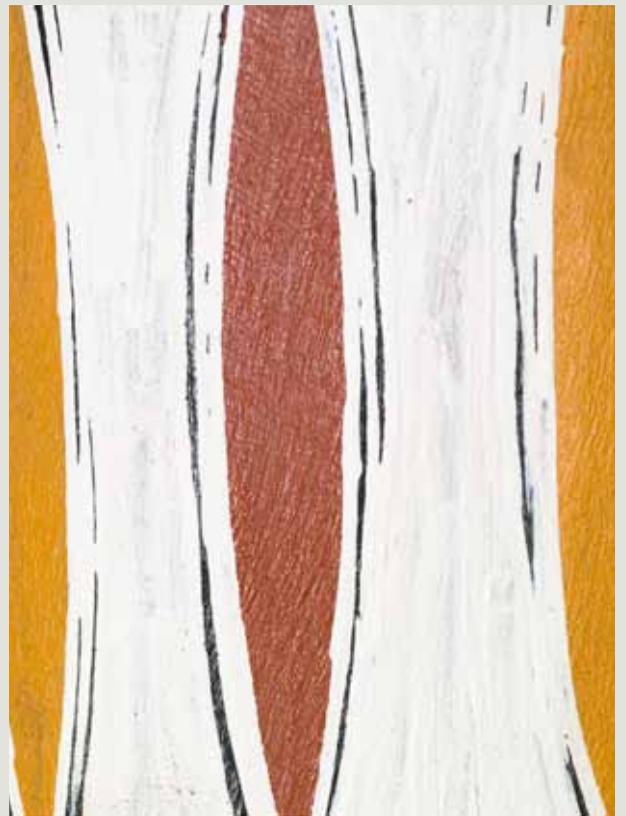
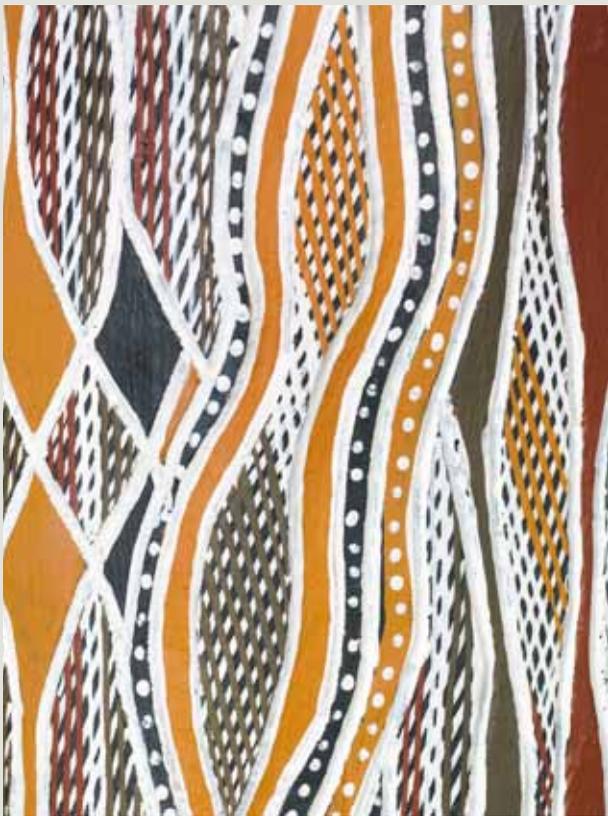
Gunybi Ganambarr
Dalwangu Larrakitj 2007
306 cm 3262G



Gunybi Ganambarr
Baraltja 2007
226 cm 3186L- incised pole



Gunybi Ganambarr
Dalwangu Larrakitj 2007
207 cm 3274X





Gunybi Ganambarr
Warrukay 2007
double-sided bark - recto
146 x 34 cm 29921



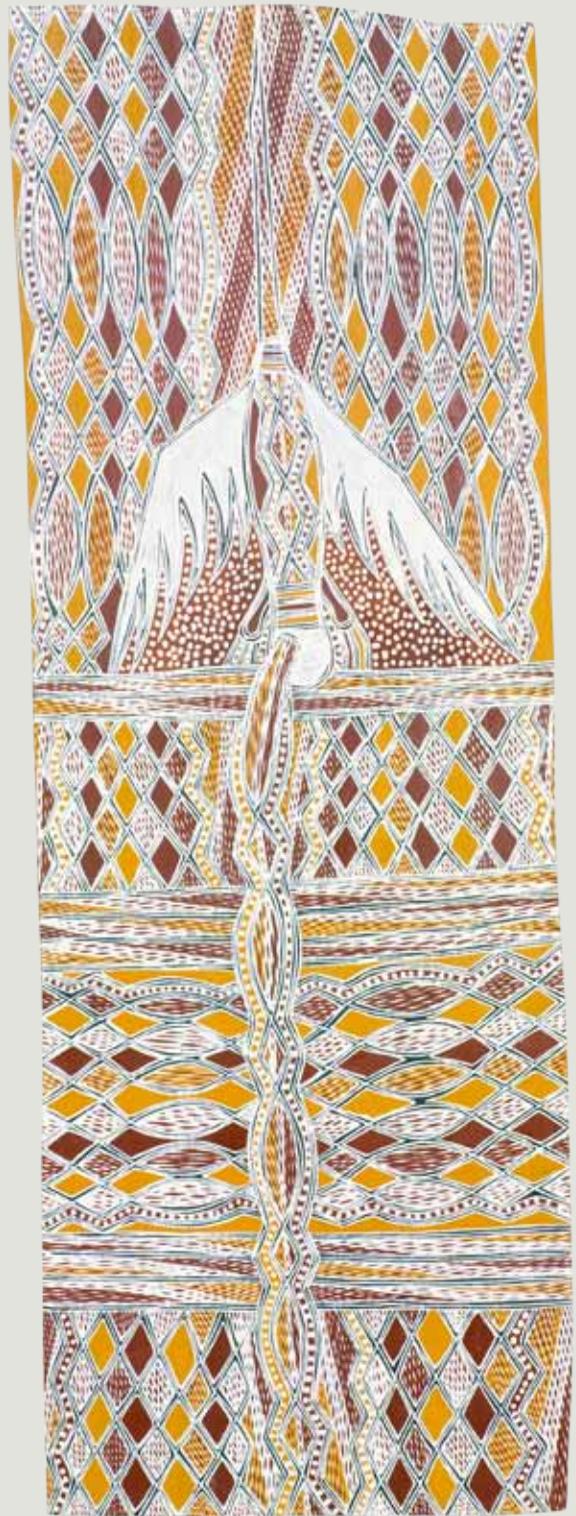
Verso



Gunybi Ganambarr
Wurrani / Munbi 2007
double-sided bark recto
111 x 46 cm 2992H

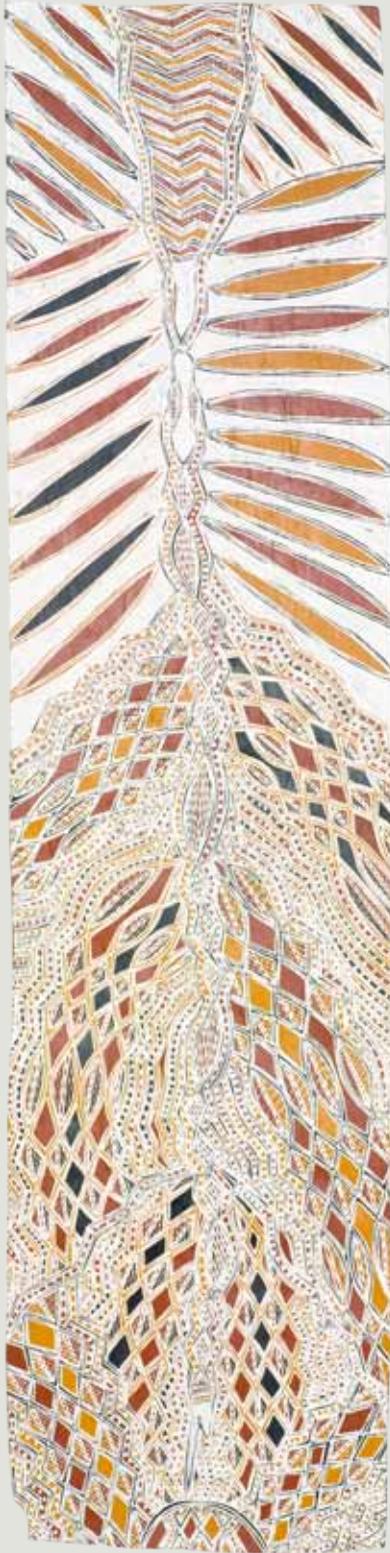


Verso

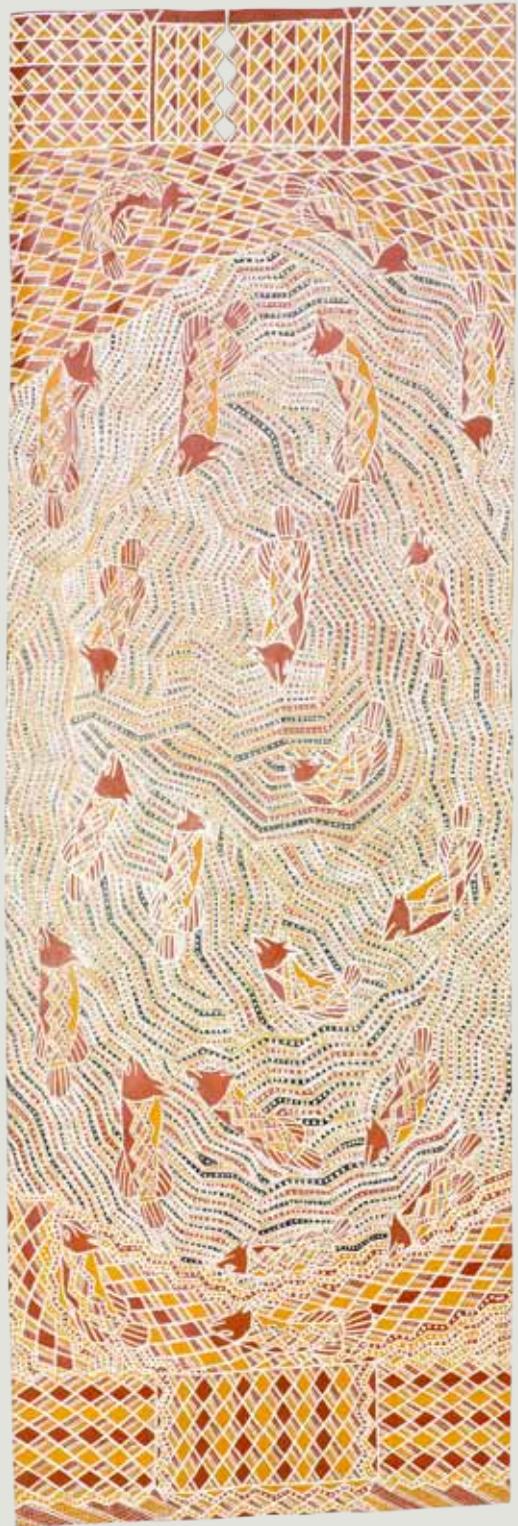


Gunybi Ganambarr
Wurran 2007
double-sided recto
90 x 31 cm 3005H

Verso



Gunybi Ganambarr
Baraltja 2007
double-sided recto
136 x 34 cm 3128J



Verso



Yinimala Gumana
Burru'tji 2007
280 cm 3280I
detail opposite top left



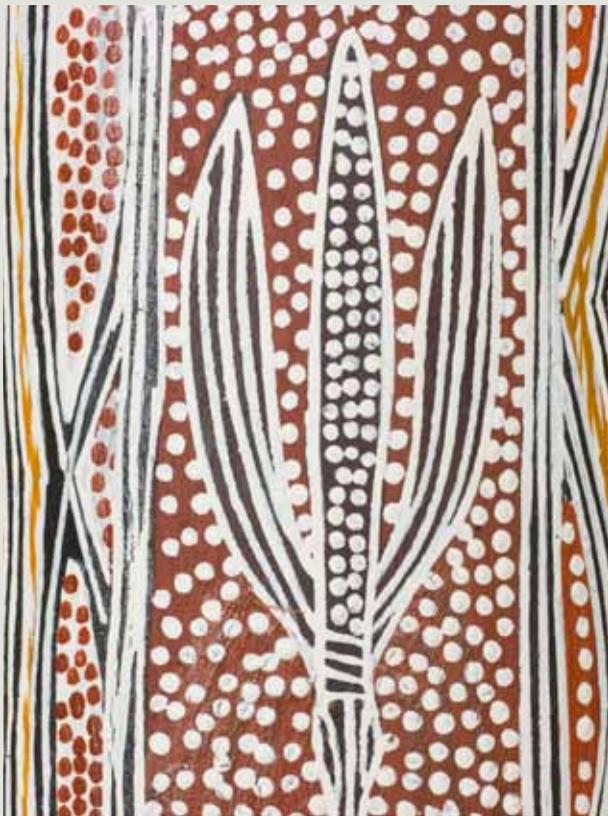
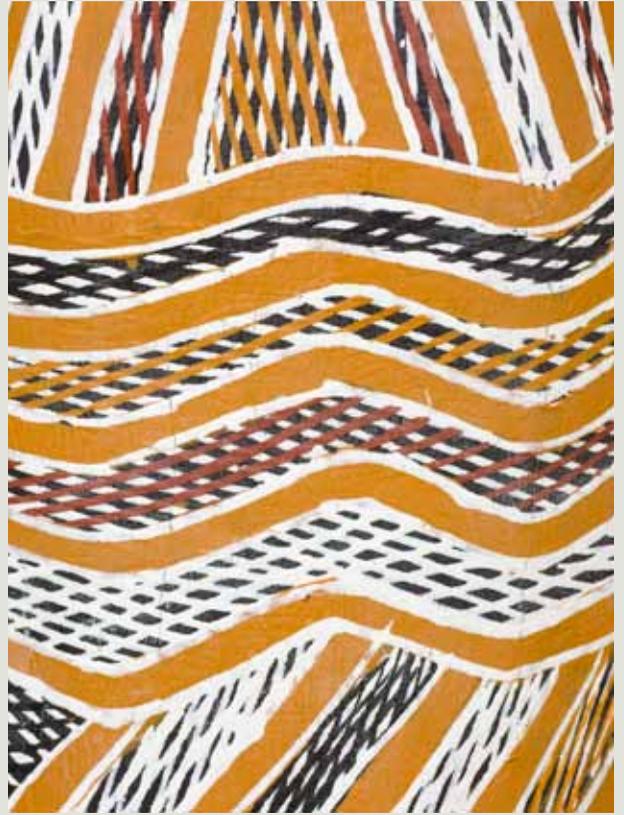
Yinimala Gumana
Yingapungapu 2007
327 cm 3227G
detail opposite top right



Yilpirr Wanambi
Miringu 2007
250 cm 3278N
detail opposite bottom left

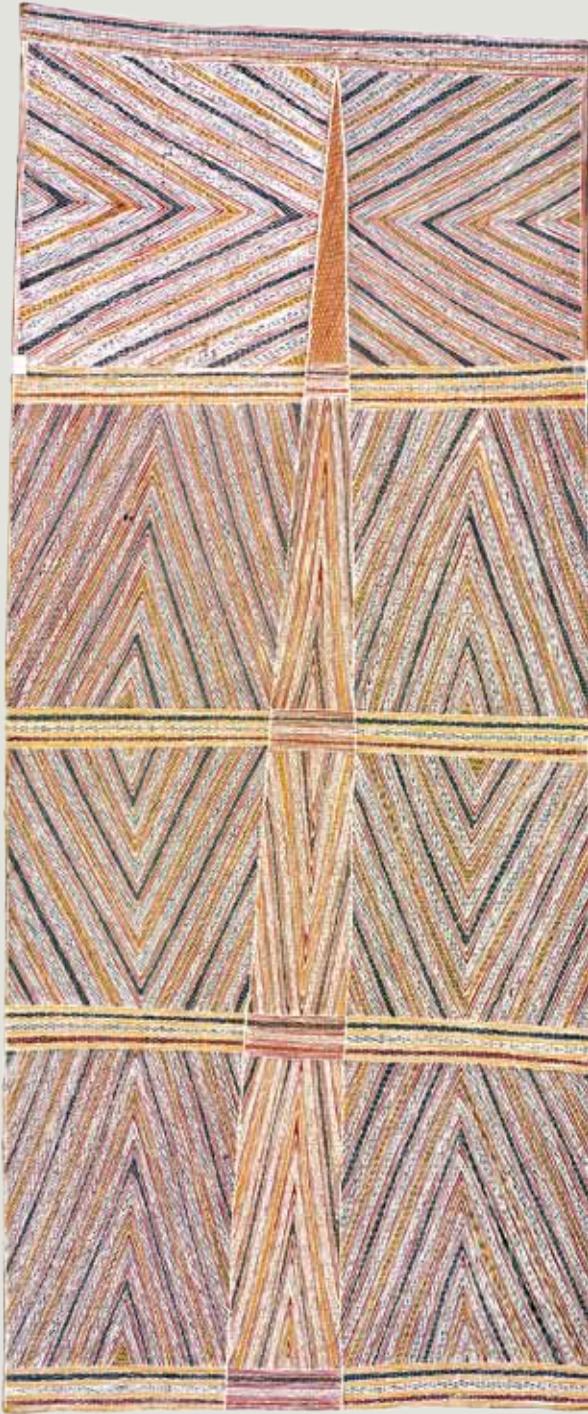


Yilpirr Wanambi
Dhapuyngu 2007
274 cm 3270W
detail opposite bottom right





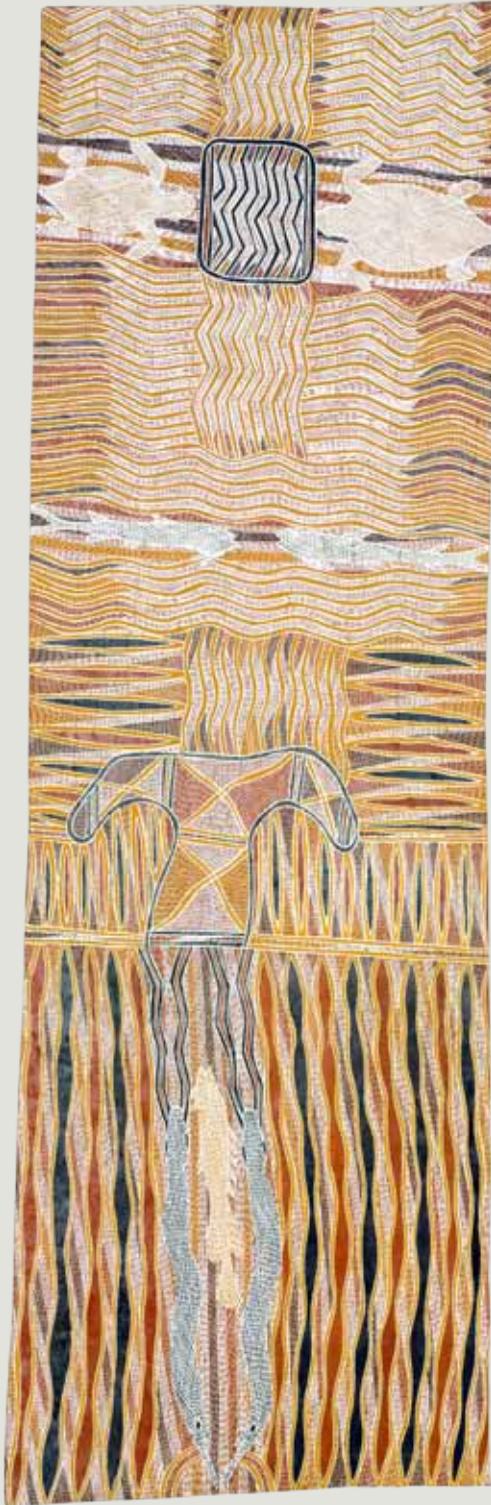
Barayuwa Munungurr
Munyuku 2007
90 x 65 cm 3243Y



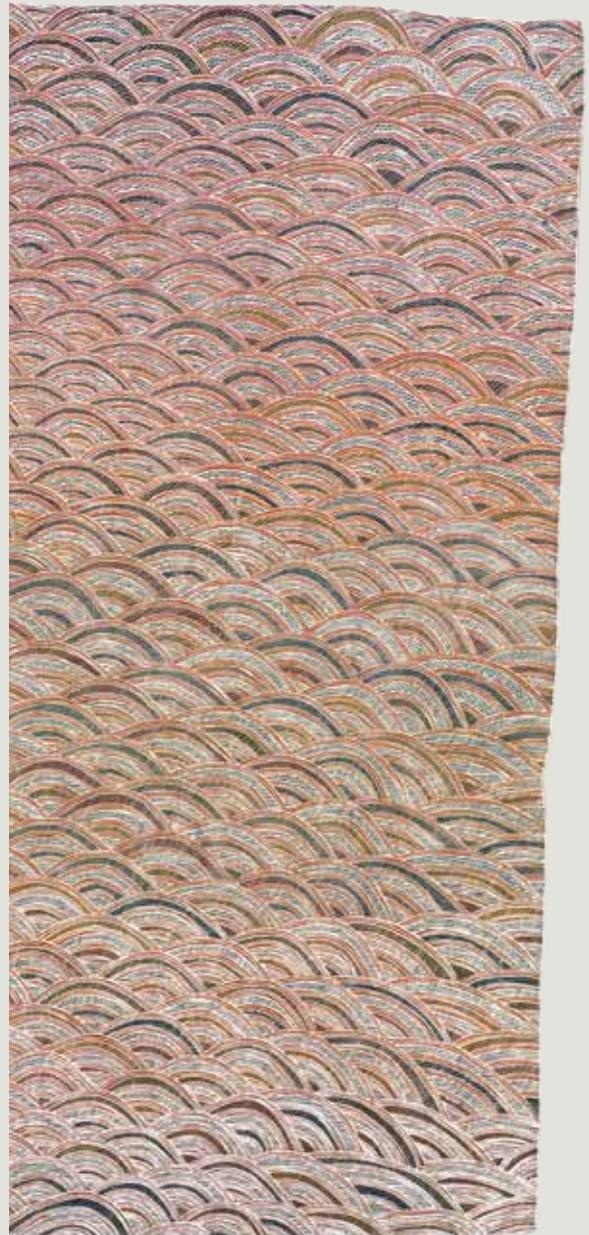
Yilpirr Wanambi
Manybala 2007
114 x 50 cm 31711



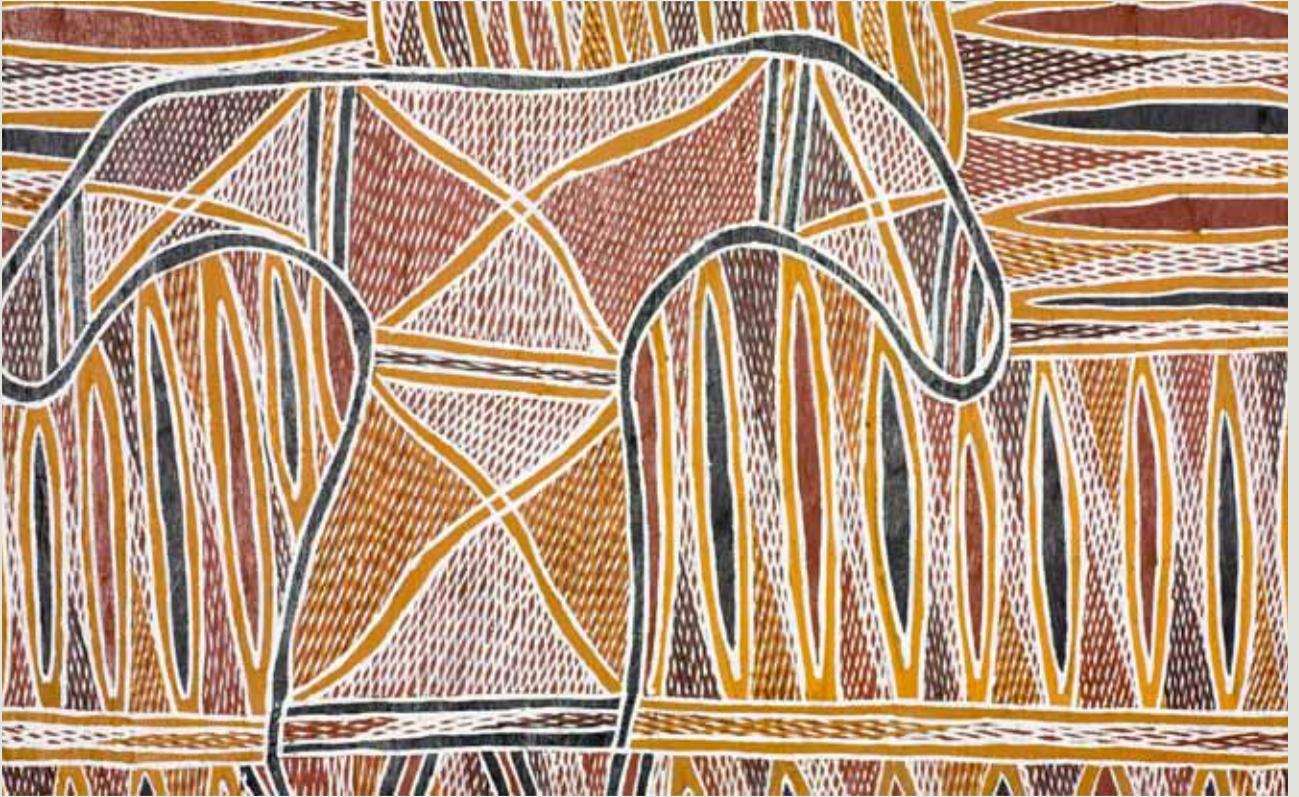
Yilpirr Wanambi
Miringu 2007
169 x 33 cm 3240P



Yinimala Gumana
Garrapara 2007
204 x 66 cm 3313J
Detail opposite top



Dhurrumuway Marika
Rulyapa 2007
121 x 59 cm 3313H
Detail opposite bottom





Dhurrumuwuy Marika
Rulyapa 2007
301 cm 3242Z
Detail opposite top left



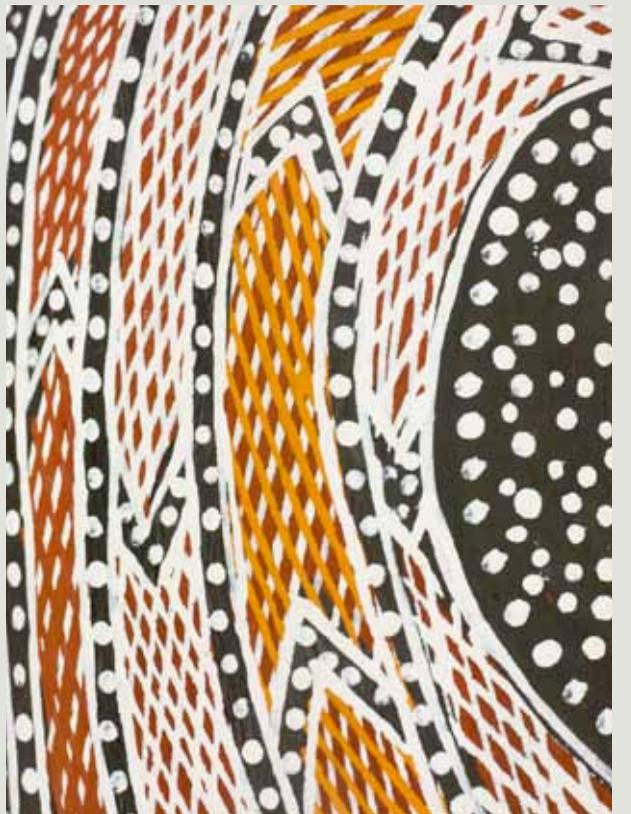
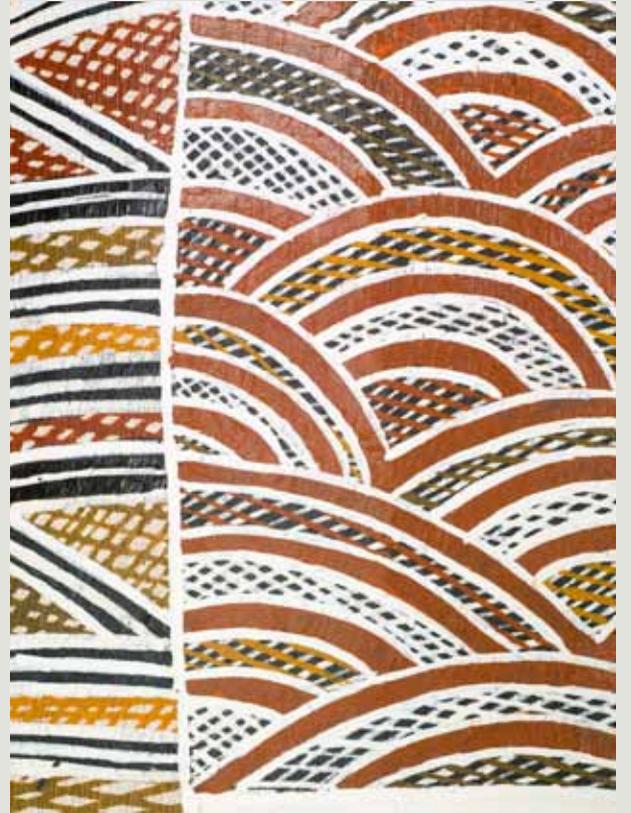
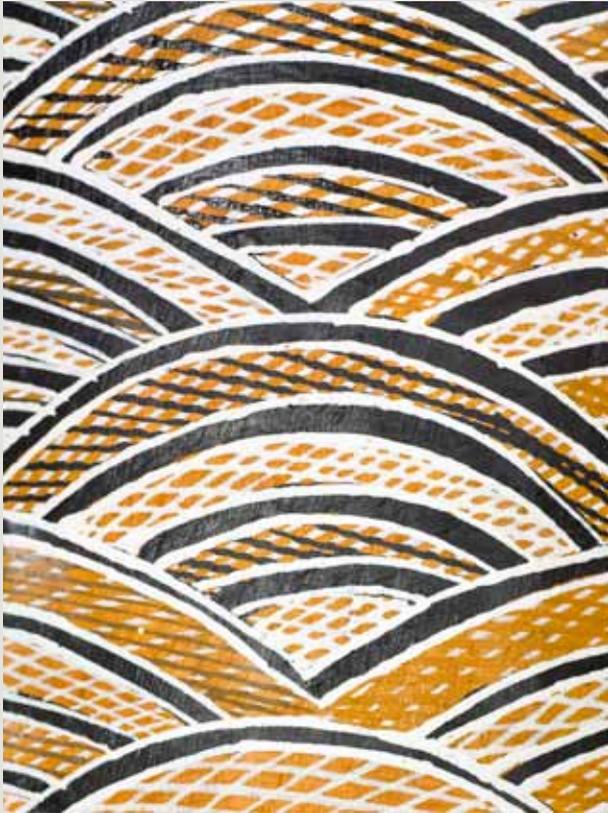
Dhurrumuwuy Marika
Rulyapa 2007
306 cm 3269V
Detail opposite top right



Yalanba Wanambi
Three Rocks in Trial Bay 2007
317 cm 3245J
Detail opposite bottom left



Yalanba Wanambi
Three Rocks in Trial Bay 2007
331 cm 3216I
Detail opposite bottom right

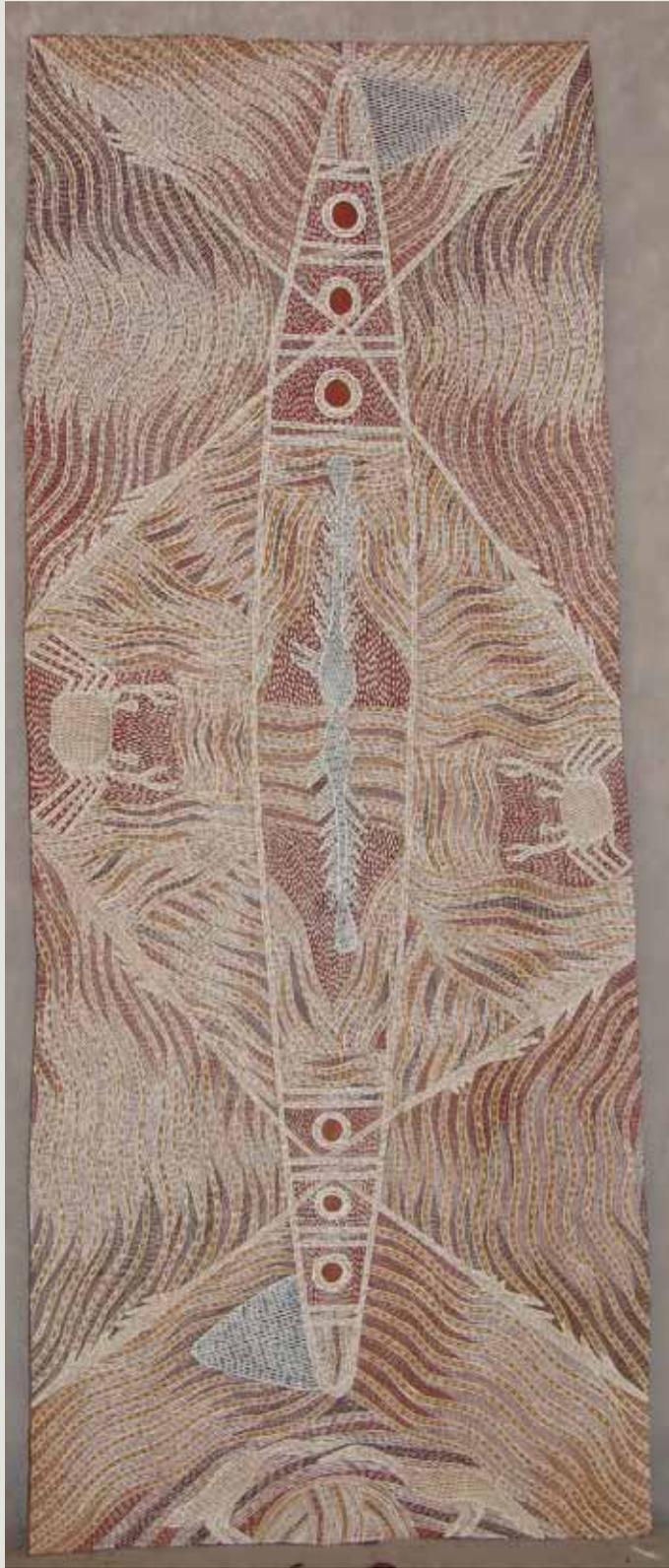




Yilpirr Wanambi
Mirngu 2007
174 x 77 cm 3324Z
32



Yalanba Wanambi
Bamurrungu 2007
202 x 62 cm 3321X
33



Yinimala Gumana
Wingapungapu 2007
177 x 69 cm 3331S



Barayuma Munungurr
Yarrinya 2007
243 x 18 cm 3258A

WANYUBI MARIKA

EXHIBITIONS

- 1999 - 2001 *Saltwater - Yirrkala Bark Paintings of Sea Country* - a National Tour - Drill Hall Gallery Canberra ACT, John Curtin Gallery, Curtin University Perth, National Maritime Museum Darling Harbour Sydney NSW, Museum of Modern Art at Heide Melbourne Vic, Araluen Art Centre Alice Springs NT, Queensland University of Technology Brisbane.
- 2000 *State of My Country* - A survey of contemporary Aboriginal Art Hogarth Galleries Sydney NSW
- 2001 *New from Old* - Gawirrin, Yangarriny, Dula, Wanyubi, Wukun - Annandale Galleries Annandale Sydney NSW
- 2002 *Sydney Opera House* Larrakitj installation
- 2003 *Buwayak* Annandale Galleries Sydney
- 2003 *Wukidi* Installation Supreme Court Darwin
- 2003 *Abstractions* Drill Hall Gallery Canberra
- 2004 *Wanyubi Marika* first solo show Annandale Galleries
- 2005 *Telstra NATSIAA*
July - August 2005 Yakumirri Raft Artspace (exhibition purchased by the Holmes a Court collection)
- 2005 14 October - 27 November *Yakumirri* Holmes a Court Gallery Perth
17 July - 10 September 2006 - *l'Esprit de la Terre d'Arnhem, art Aborigene du Nord de l'Australie*
Passage de Retz Paris
- 2007 Extrata Coal Emerging Indigenous Artist Competition Museum of Modern Art Queensland Art Gallery Brisbane
- 2007 *Galuku Gallery* Festival of Darwin NT
- 2007 *Bukulu\thunmi - Coming Together, One Place* - Raft Artspace Darwin NT

COLLECTIONS

- Saltwater - National Maritime Museum Sydney
Art Bank Sydney NSW
Sydney Opera House Sydney NSW
Kerry Stokes Collection
Supreme Court NT
Holmes a Court Collection
Kerry Packer Collection
Seattle Art Museum
Queensland Art Gallery
Kelton Foundation



BIBLIOGRAPHY

- The Djungguwan at Gurrkawuy 1976 - a four hour epic directed by Ian Dunlop includes footage of Wanyubi as a young boy painted for initiation with his father Milirrpum.
Saltwater Country - Bark paintings of Sea Country published by Buku-Larrnggay Mulka

YOUNG GUNS II

YINIMALA GUMANA

When he was a young boy his father passed away. His father's brother took him in. This was the leprotic genius artist and songman Gawirrin Gumana AO. When I was 14 the old man started to teach me (how to paint). He has always lived in the remote homeland of Gangan inaccessible for much of the year- three hours from Yirrkala. Now married to Raymattja #2 and the father of one year old son Lalamurruma he is a ranger. *Now I have to take my father's leadership and control and work with the community and encourage them to have a good life because of these paintings.*

DHURRUMUWUY MARIKA

Born to Bakamumu Marika, long term leader of the landowning clan of Yirrkala and his mother Djuna Wunungmurra, daughter of Yanggarriny Wunungmurra winner of the 1997 Telstar NATSIAA First Prize. Ten years ago he relocated from his father's power base to his mother's remote Gangan. *Yinimala taught me how to paint. It's a really hard job but I enjoy painting my Riratjingu water. My father was surprised when I started to paint last year and he was really happy for me. All my big brothers don't know how yet. I have lots of brothers from Gumatj mothers but I am the only one from a Dhalwangu mother. I am going to ask my father for some new designs to learn.*

YALANBA WANAMBI

His father Mithili and his elder siblings Wukun, Boliny and Ralwurrandji have all made their mark in the artworld. His role had been until recently as apprentice and assistant. A sickly child, his mother died when he was young and he was partly raised by Howard and Frances Morphy in their years at Yirrkala. Principally though his sisters and Narritjin brought him up. He has largely lived in the homeland communities of Yilpara and Gangan. He was only recently hospitalised for heart problems. He is single without children.

YILPIRR WANAMBI

Yilpirr's paternal grandfather was Wawit - Donald Thomson's trusted confidante. After Wawit died, Yilpirr's father was raised by the father of Wukun Wanambi. And in turn when Yilpirr's father died Wukun and his sisters raised him. Yilpirr's mother is Liyamadal #1 Marawili. She shares a mother's mother with Djambawa Marawili. Yilpirr is her third child but his elder siblings are now deceased. Yilpirr married Liyamadal #2 Marawili, Djambawa's daughter and moved from Gangan to Yilpara after his brother's death in 2005. This is when he started painting.

BARAYUWA MUNUNGGURR

For thirty years the ceremonies of East Arnhem land were presided over by two brothers of the Munyuku clan, Gambali and Dula Ngurruwuthun. They were Djirrikay (or ritual leaders). When they died within weeks of each other in 2001 a void was left. Barayuwa is their sister's son and carries on the Munyuku design of his mother clan. He is married to Whaiora Tukaki and has three little girls. They both have worked at Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre for the last five years.

GUNYBI GANAMBARR

Gunybi is from the numerically small Ngaymil clan but mainly lives on his mother's clan land at Gangan where he has received tutelage from artists like Gawirrin Gumana and Yumutjin Wunungmurra. As one of the sought after ceremonial yidaki players he was groomed for authority at a young age. He is married to Lamangirra, a daughter of Djambawa. He has a startling innovative flair to produce groundbreaking sacred art that is at once novel and still entirely consistent with Yolngu madayin (law). This has seen him invited to both the National Sculpture Award and Xstrata Emerging Indigenous Art Award.



Gunyubi Ganambarr
born 1973



Barayuwa Munungurr
born 1980



Yinimala Gumana
born 1982



Yilpirr Wanambi
born 1975



Dhurumuwuy Marika
born 1981



Yalanba Wanambi
born 1973





ANNANDALE GALLERIES