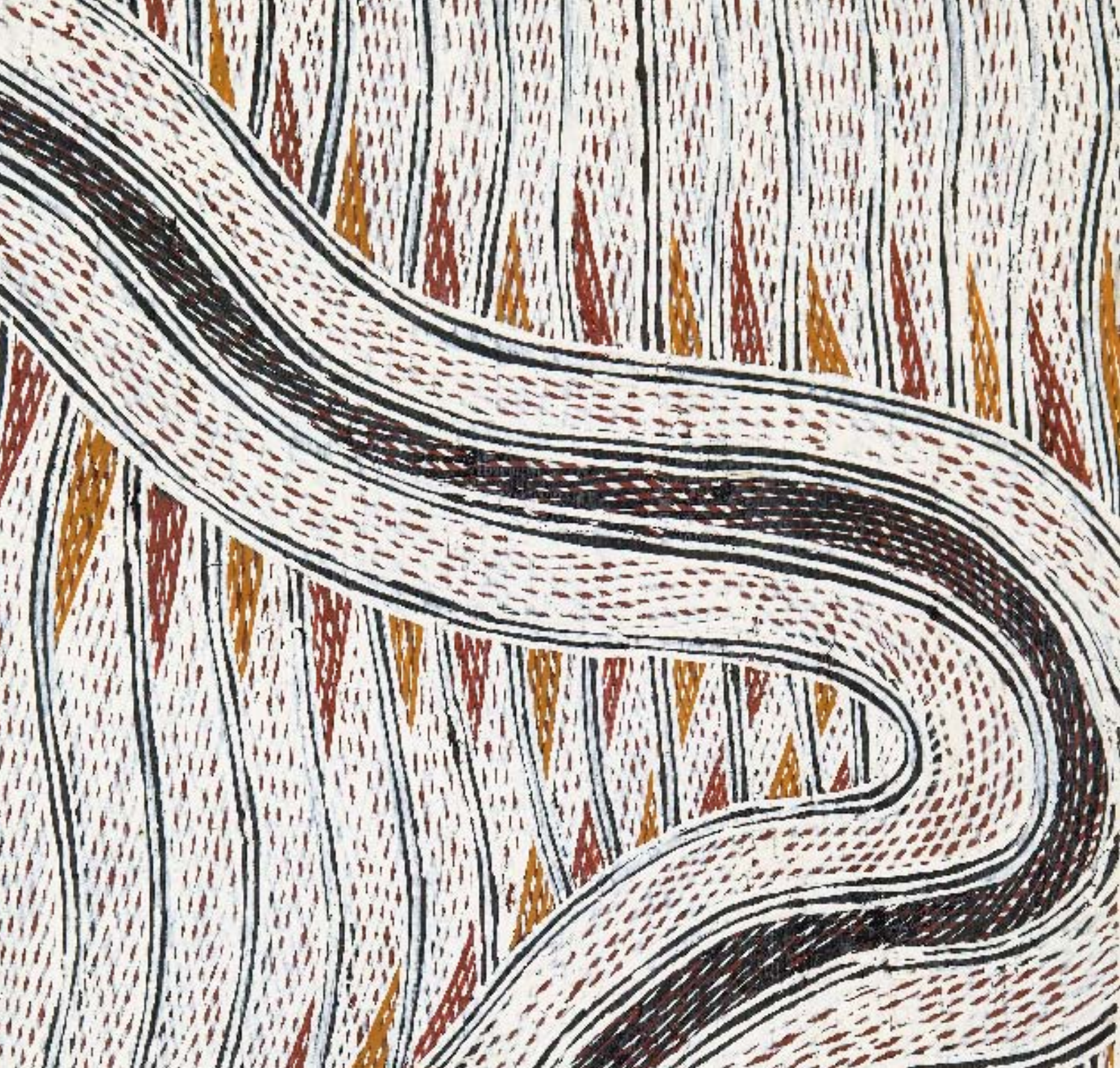




GALUMA
MAYMURU





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Design by Anne Gregory

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All works natural earth pigment on bark / hollow log

Front cover *Galuma Maymuru* detail page 16

Back cover *Dhukal Wirrpanda* detail page 26

Frontice *Galuma Maymuru* detail page 18

GALUMA MAYMURU DHUKAL WIRRPANDA

bark paintings and ceremonial poles



Opening Wednesday 11 July 6:30 - 9:00 pm

Exhibition dates 11 July - 11 August 2007

ANNANDALE GALLERIES

In association with Buku-Larngay Mulka NE Arnhemland

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Gallery Hours Tuesday - Saturday 11:00-5:00 pm **ACGA**



Galuma Maymuru
Mungurru 2007 - 171 cm
Mangalili ga Dhudi Djapu 2006 - 214 cm
Mangalili at Djarrakpi 2006 - 238 cm
Mungurru Larrakitj 2006 - 198 cm

INTRODUCTION

Bill Gregory Director Annandale Galleries Sydney June 2007

Galuma Maymuru is an artist who has painting in her blood. Aboriginal people in general are highly creative people when it comes to painting due to the constant exposure to body paint in ceremony from an early age. They grow up with it. Naturally, some have a more natural feel for the process of painting – a facility if you like. Others may lack this facility but still produce paintings of great beauty due to their positions in the ceremonial hierarchy and access as guardians of powerful stories and regardless of their 'aesthetic' and compositional flair or lack of still produce powerful images. Now and again the two elements come together and we see an artist who has both the natural flair and love of painting as well as kinship relationships that provide important subject matter. Galuma Maymuru is one such artist. Her Father and teacher was the great Narritjin, a key painter on the great Yirrkala church panels. Her husband and sometime collaborator Dhukal Wirrpanda is one of NE Arnhemland's best artists, also represented in this important exhibition and her son-in-law Djambawa Marawili is a ceremonial elder of the highest order and a painter of great renown.

The painting in NE Arnhemland has matured to an extent in the last five years that would have seemed unthinkable at that time. Led by the example of Djambawa Marawili and Galuma Maymuru there is a renaissance going on of unprecedented proportions. The younger artists are painting more freely and with more emotive content than ever before. This is partly due to market forces, as the increased interest in this work has allowed many of them to become full or nearly full time artists with the logical outcome being more work of significant and ever changing stylistic innovation. A significant watershed in this development was the exhibition 'Buwayak - Invisibility' at Annandale Galleries in 2003. In this exhibition Maymuru, Marawili and Wanyubi Marika produced paintings in a new, mature style that was breathtaking in its innovation and long lasting in its influence. The work of Galuma was a standout in that show and led the way towards further innovation on her part and an example to the younger artists.

A painting by Galuma Maymuru is instantly recognisable those familiar with the work from this area. The signature clusters of dots that cross with the rarrk she inherited from Narritjin. However, it is the extraordinary rhythm in the works that really set her apart. There is an organic flow to the work that reflects her vision of the land from which the stories derive. They are robust compositions which also betray a female sensibility which is perhaps less concerned with the law and more with communicating and sharing with us her own vision of the land, wind, sea and sky.

If she were a western artist we might compare her to Matisse in that she intuitively understands the arabesque, how to curve her line and rarrk to produce images which shimmer like the play of light on water while contrasting with definitive images and strong composition, rather like the way Matisse uses a ramrod straight back to set into relief the arabesque nature of his odalisques.

Maymuru understands that the rarrk, or crosshatching is not simply infill but is the essence of the human body and she perceives the body as organic and shaped more by curve than straight line.

The resulting rhythm is something to behold and produces a depth that draws the viewer in until we are enfolded by the composition. They have a substantiveness and clarity that detonates the space between the viewer and the artwork. Everything around our line of vision seems to come alive as a result of the painting. It is not just 'on the wall' but transforms the room and our surroundings. Contemplation of these works leaves us with more than simply aesthetic satisfaction but with a spiritual glow.

The new works in this exhibition have been nearly two years in the making and represent both a confirmation of past achievements as well as a pointer to the future of the great medium of bark painting.

It is crucial to understand that when one acquires a piece of bark one is getting an actual piece of the country, unlike western desert painting where the acrylic on canvas is by contrast a representation of country. Maymuru opens up this country for us and with her intimate knowledge of specific place and time honoured story she achieves universal value to which we may all learn and relate our own busy, mostly urban lives to the sanctity of nature. A major experience in her work allows us to recall something, (use the metaphor of the river in 'an inconvenient truth') which we are often in danger of forgetting but when reawakened restores our faith in life as being as it should be – as it is – rather than how we think it should be, throwing out our materialistic yardsticks and allowing us to simply listen to what is inside for guidance and look to nature for succour.

The new paintings of Dhukal Wirrpanda also represent a watershed in his work. Dhukal has been a fixture in NE Arnhemland art since 1985 and always been notable for his ability to translate highly complex songs and stories to the medium of painting. His work has always been beautifully executed, painstakingly rarrked and with definite divisions to render the stories in their completeness. In the new work, Dhukal appears to me to have discovered a certain economy of representation. The works are more abstract and the figurative elements have become sparser and more emblematic. It seems that less has become more. The works are uncrowded and there is a confidence in the compositions displaying a sure touch. The divisions to illustrate the stories have become fewer and the resulting overall effects display an almost hypnotic power. The colour has changed as well with his traditional blacks and whites having given way to a wider range of tones and the use of brown ochres to offset or accentuate his work. ■



Galuma Maymuru *Mungurru ga Balamumu* 2006
214 x 77 cm



Galuma Maymuru *Mungurru VIII* 2007
153 X 79 cm

GALUMA AND DHUKAL

Andrew Blake Director Buku Larrnggay Mulka

This exhibition has challenged everyone involved. It's been quite some time in the making and in the end we've rushed to get the show to Sydney on time. The art is of fine calibre, not easy to create or digest with great depth beneath the shimmering surfaces.

The beliefs expressed in the art of these two senior Yolngu are as compelling as the pictures themselves. Their knowledge of ancient edict, ritual and ceremony has its profundity with them living on their ancestral lands and attending cultural obligations on country with their kin of northeast Arnhem Land.

Galuma and Dhukal have been artists at Buku-Larrnggay Mulka for more than two decades, making art together all the while. It is by no accident that these most recent works are accomplished. There is integrity in the manner these sacred designs are laid down with real belief in the value of the sacred marks manifest of the epic by episode. It is dear.

Histories of Galuma and Dhukal, their parents and grandparents have been well documented such is the richness of it. It's well documented that Galuma, daughter of the great Narritjin, was arguably the first Yolngu woman to be formally instructed to paint the sacred madayin of her people. The story of Dhukal's grandfather, the warrior Dhakiyarr who speared and killed Constable McColl on Woodah Island, the story immortalised in film as re-enacted by Dhukal and his family. They have been instrumental in the early big bark movement and the Saltwater – Sea Rights project in the 90's, the astonishing Buwayak Invisibility show at this Gallery four years ago, major group shows, installations and award competitions.

This body of work is paintings of freshwater that flow through Galuma's Manggalili clan freshwater estate of Wayawu before submerging itself under the large billabongs of Dhukal's Dhudi–Djapu clan freshwater estate and the couple's home at Dhuruputjpi. They are paintings of deep ocean water, currents and swell, tides and surge, rocks and beaches, ancestral sharks, death and cleansing. These subjects are ancient and etched in ritual, names and song. These subjects have been painted before ... but the artists have further developed these forms in the tradition of fine art while forsaking none of their heritage. ■



Galuma Maymuru Mungurru I 2005
164 x 77 cm

IN THE MIND'S EYE: THE PAINTINGS OF GALUMA MAYMURU

Howard Morphy Research School of Humanities, ANU

Galuma Maymuru of the Manggalili clan and her husband Dhukal Wirrpanda of the Dhudj Djapu clan have lived since the 1970s at the Dhudj Djapu settlement of Dhuruputjpi close to the Garangari wetlands at the north of Blue Mud Bay. They live at a place where the ancestral forces of their respective clans come together. Wayawupuy, the freshwater country of the Manggalili clan, lies inland. The waters of the Wayawupuy river flow past carrying the spirit of the ancestral Nguikal (kingfish) past Dhuruputjpi, through the wetlands and out into the sea. The waters flow in a channel carved out in the floodplains by the ancestral shark Māna, the creator ancestor of the Dhudj Djapu clan, as it ploughed its way inland tormented by the pain from a wound caused by a harpoon thrown ancestral times.

In the dry season the waters flow slowly, sometimes becoming trapped in chains of billabongs that provide a rich source of food in the form of fish, crayfish, rush corms and lily roots. In the wet season the inland rivers begin to flow freely and the water rushes down the watercourse in torrents overflowing the river banks and filling the coastal plains. Great swollen plumes of freshwater push their way through the river mouths out into Blue Mud Bay. In the seasonal cycle freshwater and saltwater come together and mingle — separate but together — the taste of saltwater moves up and down the plain and river system as the seasons turn. In the wet season the Manggalili waters from Wayawupuy join the Dhudj Djapu waters just north of Dhuruputjpi, flowing on top of them as they move together towards the sea. And just as the waters flow together so have the Manggalili and Dhudj Djapu people been related since the beginning of time as husband and wife, mother and child. It is thus appropriate that some of Dhukal's work joins with Galuma's in this major exhibition of her paintings.

Waters are the signs of the forces that underlie the seasonal cycle. Waters carry with them signs of other places, the colours of the mud, the leaves from inland trees and streamers of weeds. The flowing waters contain the memories of people from the past whose names are shared with the characteristics of the water — names that refer to the swirling of the current, to the fish in season, to the patterns of light and shade on the riverbanks, to the colour of the mangroves in the river banks, to the mangrove leaves as they float out to sea with the plumes of freshwater. And in the movement of the waters and in the mixing of the tides can be seen the life force of the ancestral beings that gives energy to the world and fertility to the people who inherit it.

Galuma's and Dhukal's paintings represent this landscape in the north of Blue Mud Bay almost as a process of meditation on the seasonal flow of the waters. Underlying the paintings is the rich body of ancestral law of the Dhudi Djapu and Manggalili clans. In Dhukal's paintings we can see the landscape travelled by the ancestral women Barrnyili and Ganaypa as they walked across the flood plains with their digging sticks, making waterholes where they rested, In the background the clan design represents the quivering impression of the flood plains at the beginning of the dry season as the waters flow and the grasses wave across the channelled surface. The recurring themes of Galuma's art are drawn from the rich reservoir of Manggalili sacred law and the familiar body of ancestral designs that she has been immersed in throughout her life. Galuma's paintings over the years have reflected a continuing dialogue between figuration and abstraction as she paints Manggalili country with her mind. In some cases the figures in the landscape are clearly delineated; we see the parrot fish sought by the ancestral hunter, or the elliptical shape of the yingapungapu sand sculpture used in mortuary rituals. On other occasions the figures seem to merge into the background, barely visible but certainly there.

In many of the paintings she has produced for her latest exhibition it is still possible for those who know her work well to see the figurative forms emergent in the broad contours of the pattern. We know that these paintings evoke the power of the waters of the Wayawupuy River and the saltwaters off the coast at Djarrakpi, the other Manggalili homeland at Cape Shield. Looking through the patterns on the surface of the bark we can see the movement of the parrot fish below the surface the water, we can almost sense or think we see the sand crab scuttling across the beach, and we can see the pattern of clouds reflected in the waters of the bay. In the lines that break up the structure of the paintings we can see the course of the Wayawupuy River. We can see outlined the core designs of the Manggalili clan — the opposed meandering lines that represent the bones of the clan, its spiritual core. And yet what strikes the viewer most about these paintings is the qualities of the surface and pattern and their evocation of the landscape. The interpenetration of colour and line on the boundaries between form and formlessness gives life to the paintings, so that we can see and sense the ripples and changing patterns on the surface of the water or the marks made by the tide on the beach.

Certainly the paintings are abstractions, yet they come out of a lifetime as an artist schooled in the tradition of Yolngu art. Galuma was taught to paint originally by her father Narritjin Maymuru and has developed her style working in the rich artistic environment of Blue Mud Bay. The structure of the paintings come out of the mind's eye of the artist — as Galuma said to me once she 'thinks the paintings through' before she begins to work, and the beauty of those thoughts find expression in her paintings. ■



Galuma Maymuru
Wayawu Yoku Dhudi Djapu 2005
120 x 53 cm



Galuma Maymuru *Yambirku* 2006
137 x 84 cm



Galuma Maymuru *Mungurru VI* 2007
119 x 49 cm



Galuma Maymuru *Mungurru III* 2006
121 x 48 cm



Galuma Maymuru *Mungurru IV* 2006
103 x 50 cm



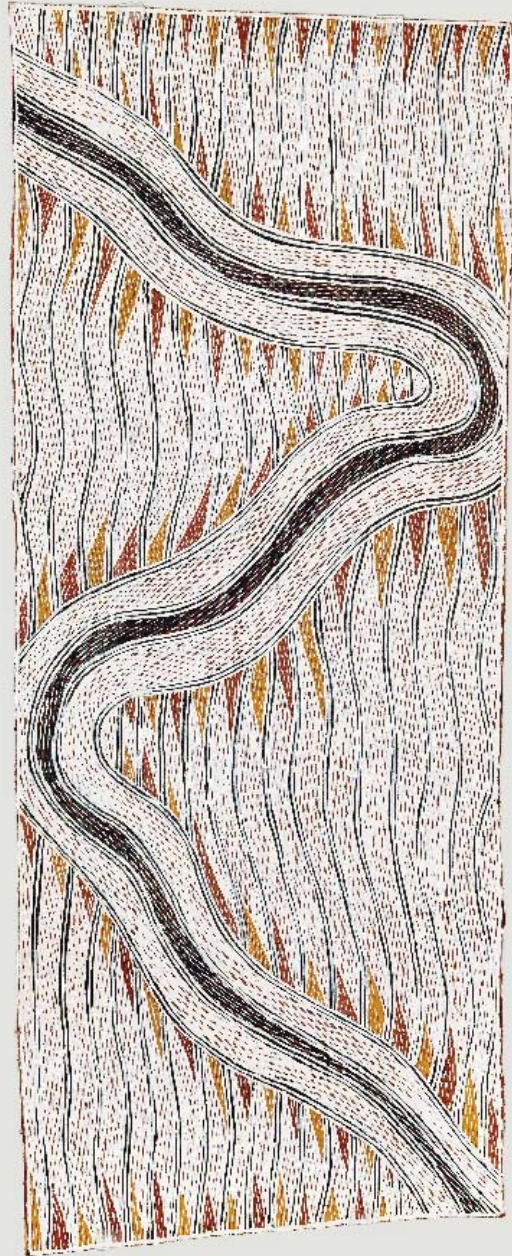
Galuma Maymuru *Mungurru VII* 2007
107 x 53 cm



Galuma Maymuru *Mungurru II* 2006
96 x 54 cm



Galuma Maymuru *Mungurru with
Balamumu* 2007 83 x 57 cm



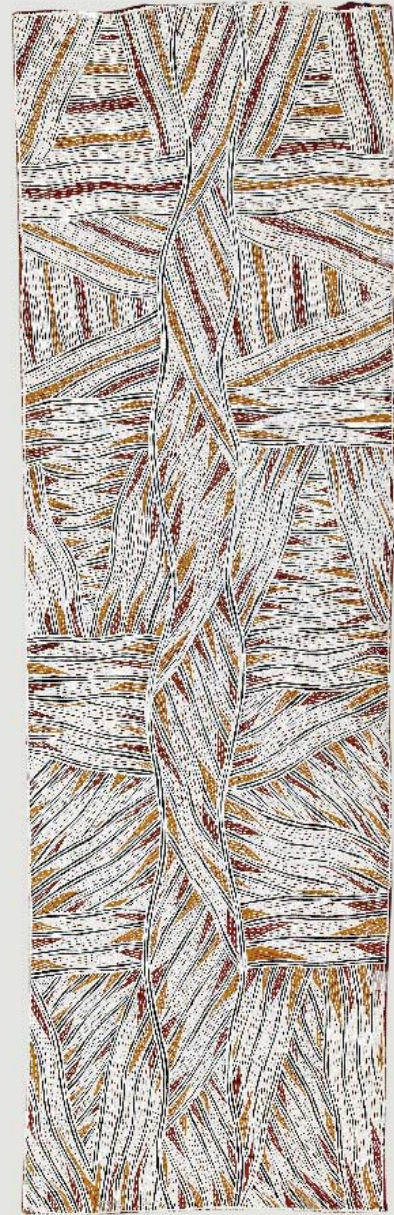
Galuma Maymuru *Wayawu in Mungurru* 2006
82 x 35 cm



Galuma Maymuru *Yingapungapu I* 2006
114 x 30 cm



Galuma Maymuru *Mungurru V* 2007
91 x 30 cm



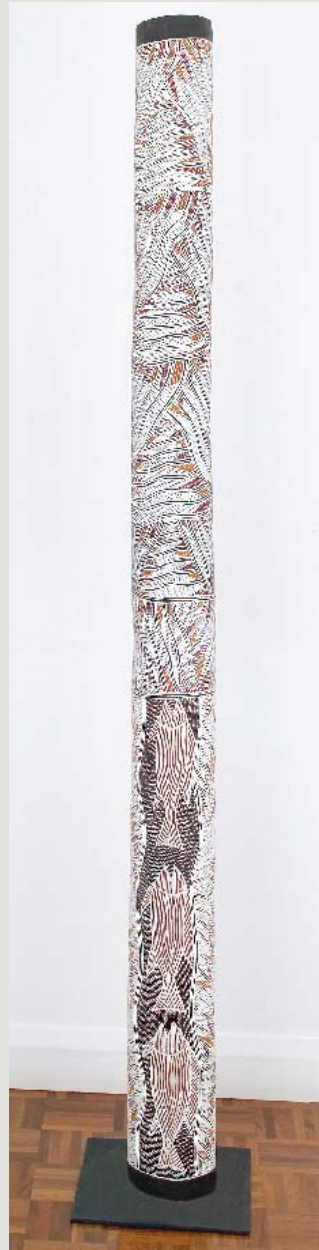
Galuma Maymuru *Mungurru Djatja* 2006
103 x 32 cm



Galuma Maymuru *Djarrakpi ga Dhudi*
Djapu 2006 - 267 cm



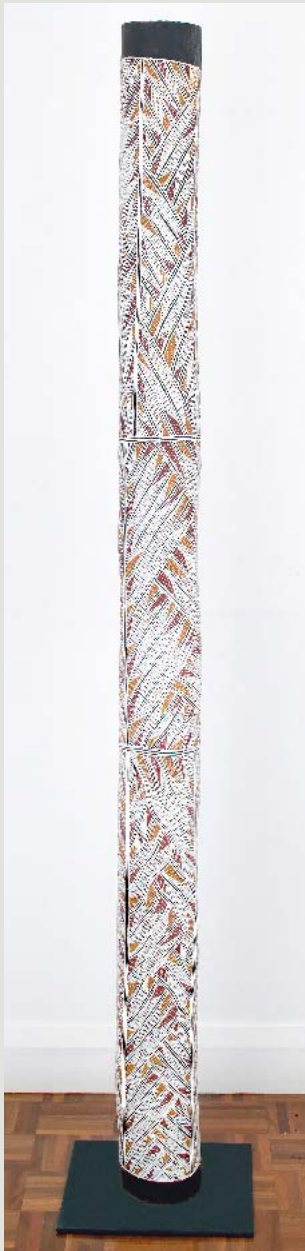
Galuma Maymuru *Wukidi Larrakitj*
2006 - 261 cm



Galuma Maymuru *Yambirrkku*
2007 - 201 cm



Galuma Maymuru *Mangalili Larrakitj*
2006 - 210 cm



Galuma Maymuru *Monuk Gapu*
2007 187 cm



Galuma Maymuru *Yingapungapu ga
Dhudi Djapu* 2007 230 cm



Galuma Maymuru *Mangalili Dhudi
Djapu* 2004 164 cm



Dhukal Wirrpanda *Yingapungapu Munguru I* 2005
114 x 40 cm



Dhukal Wirrpanda *Wukidi ga Yingapungapu II* 2006
135 x 47 cm



Dhukai Wirrpanda
Wukidi ga Yingapungapu I 2005
145 x 61 cm



Dhukal Wirrpanda *Wukudi I* 2007
138 x 58 cm



Dhukal Wirrpanda
Mana at Garranyirri 2006
92 x 58 cm



Dhukal Wirrpannda *Yalata* 2005
92 x 47 cm



Dhukal Wirrpannda *Wukidi II* 2007
99 x 50 cm

SELECTED BIOGRAPHY

Galuma Maymuru was born 1951 in Djarrakpi, she lives and works in Yirrkala NE Arnhemland in the NT. Galuma was one of the first Yolnu women to be instructed (by her father, the great Narrinutjin) to paint the sacred clan designs that were previously the domain of high-ranking men. She said of her father's teaching, 'he used to let me sit next to him, me and my brothers and he used to show us all the paintings from Wayawu and Djarrakpi. And he'd say this is our paintings and I'm telling you this about the paintings for in the future when I'm passed away you can use them'. Like her father, Galuma stresses the importance of keeping her clan sacred paintings alive: 'I really want this painting to keep going. Mu gurrung (Djambawa Marawili) is looking after it, ... I have to teach my kids in case some one might steal the designs. So my kids can know what their mother's painting is'.

5 EXHIBITIONS

- 1984 Museum and Art Gallery of the NT Darwin *The First National Aboriginal Art Awards Exhibition. Also, 1992*
- 1999 Australian National Touring Exhibition - *Saltwater Country – Bark Paintings from Yirrikala*
- 2000 Old Parliament House Canberra ACT - *Fifth Indigenous Heritage Art Awards*
- 2002 Sydney Opera House - *Larrakitj installation*
- 2006 National Museum of Women in the Arts Washington DC USA
Dreaming their Way – Australian Aboriginal Women Painters

5 COMMERCIAL SHOWS

- 1996 Annandale Galleries Sydney - *Big Barks*
- 1999 William Mora Gallery Melbourne (solo) - *In Memory of Narritjin*
- 2001 Helen Maxwell Gallery Canberra - *Sacred bark paintings from Outstation artist Galuma Maymuru*
- 2003 Annandale Galleries Sydney - *Buwayak Invisibility*
- 2003 Rebecca Hossack Gallery London Larrakitj
- 2005 Holmes a Court Gallery Perth WA Yakumirri

5 COLLECTIONS

National Gallery of Australia Canberra
The Helton Foundation California USA
The JW Kluge Collection Virginia USA
Sydney Opera House Australia
Kerry Stokes Collection Perth WA

5 PUBLICATIONS

Gillian Hutchenson 1997 *Gong Wapitja – Women and Art from Yirrikala* Aboriginal Studies Press
Buku-Larrngay Mulka & Jennifer Issacs 1999 *Saltwater - Yirrkala Bark Paintings of Sea Country*
Howard Morphy & Margo Smith-Bowles (ed) 1999 *Art From the Land* University of Virginia
Jennifer Isaacs 1999 *Spirit Country – Contemporary Australian Aboriginal Art*
2003 *Buwayak Invisibility* - catalogue for Annandale Galleries Sydney exhibition
2004 *Tradition Today Indigenous Art in Australia* - Art Gallery of NSW

SELECTED BIOGRAPHY

Dhuakal Wirrpanda's father is Djungi. The Banyala Artworks catalogue records Dhukal's date of birth as 1955. Dhuakal is one half of the celebrated husband-wife team, referred to in Judith Ryan's *Spirit in Land*, with his wife Galuma Maymuru. They reside at his homeland, Dhuruputjpi, approximately 200 kms from Yirrkala and have been important members of the leadership of the Homeland Movement in maintaining their links to their clan country. Along with his brother Wuyal, Dhukal forms the leadership of the Dhudi-Djapu clan whose more famous members include Dhakiyarr (the defendant in the famous High Court case) and David Wirrpanda (the youngest ever draft pick in the AFL).

5 EXHIBITIONS

- 1984 Crafts Council Gallery Sydney - Banyala Artworks
- 1996 Museum and Art Gallery of Northern Territory Darwin - National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards. (Also, 1997 & 1998)
- 1997 Museum of Contemporary Art Sydney - Natve Title
- 1999 Australian National Touring Exhibition - Saltwater Country – Bark Paintings from Yirrkala
- 2005 22nd Telstra NATSIAA MAGNT

5 COMMERCIAL SHOWS

- 1999 William Mora Gallery Melbourne - In Memory of Narritjin - Bark Paintings and Carvings by Galuma Maymuru and Dhukal Wirrpanda
- 2001 Ben Grady Gallery Canberra ACT - Yol'u Bark
- 2002 Framed Darwin Gallery NT - Barks for Galuma Maymuru and Dhukal Wirrpanda
- 2003 Annandale Galleries Sydney - Buwayak Invisibility
- 2006 Mina Mina Art Gallery Brunswick Heads - Arhem Land Ochres

5 COLLECTIONS

National Gallery of Australia Canberra
Art Gallery of New South Wales Sydney
The JW Kluge Collection Virginia USA
National Gallery of Victoria & Queensland
Kerry Stokes Collection Perth WA

5 PUBLICATIONS

1984 Banyala Artworks - catalogue for Yirrkala Literature Production Centre
Buku-Larrngay Mulka & Jennifer Issacs 1999 Saltwater - Yirrkala Bark Paintings of Sea Country
Howard Morphy & Margo Smith-Bowles (ed) 1999 Art From the Land University of Virginia
Jennifer Isaacs 1999 Spirit Country – Contemporary Australian Aboriginal Art
2003 Buwayak Invisibility - catalogue for Annandale Galleries Sydney exhibition
Dhakiyarr vs the King (Film). Dhukal was the proagonist in this film. The film was the winner of the prize for the Most Outstanding Film out of the 13 Finalists in the Dendy Awards at the Sydney Film Festival 2004.



The background is a traditional Aboriginal dot painting. It features a repeating chevron or zigzag pattern. The pattern is composed of multiple parallel lines, each filled with fine white dots. The lines are colored in shades of brown, tan, and black, creating a textured, layered effect. The overall composition is symmetrical and rhythmic.

DHUKAL
WIRRPANDA

ANNANDALE GALLERIES