



WANYUBI MARIKA
&
YOUNG GUNS II

Acknowledgements

Published 2008 by Annandale Galleries
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ISBN 978-097-576-1373

Exhibition curated by Andrew Blake & Will Stubbs
Design by Anne Gregory
Printed by Sydney Print & Design
Photographs on pages 28, 29 and artists portraits courtesy Buku Larrngay-Mulka Arts
All other photographs by Murray Fredericks, 2008
All barks & sculptures natural earth pigments and pva fixative

Front cover
Wanyubi Marika *Mumut'thun* 2007 217 x 77 cm

Back cover
Gunybi Ganambarr *Fishtrap* 2007 162 x 55 cm

Frontice
Wanyubi Marika *Mumut'thun* 2007 168 x 61 cm

WANYUBI MARIKA

bark paintings ceremonial poles

YOUNG GUNS II

bark paintings ceremonial poles sculpture

Gunybi Ganambarr
Yilpirr Wanambi
Yinimala Gumana
Yalanba Wanambi
Dhurrmumuwuy Marika
Barayuwa Munungurr

Opening reception for artists Wednesday 16 April 6:30 - 9:00 pm

Exhibition dates 16 April - 10 May 2007

ANNANDALE GALLERIES

In association with Buku Larrngay-Mulka Arts

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

Next Generation

Maningrida Arts & Culture (MAC) is currently witnessing the rise of a younger generation of artists who are establishing themselves as professionals. This exhibition aims at showing the cultural, family and artistic relationships between the current senior Maningrida artists and the next generation of Maningrida stars. Bill Gregory and I have deliberately chosen to include in this show most art forms produced in the region: bark painting, wooden sculpture and fibre art. The diversity of media used by artists reflects the dynamic power of Maningrida modern art.

Passing on artistic skills and cultural knowledge generally happens in a relaxed and informal environment within the family. Children commence learning by observing their parents making art, watching their techniques and learning about the stories related to the artworks. As teenagers, some choose to go through practical training, which consists initially in gathering and preparing materials prior to creating an artwork. For example, I have many times seen young teenage boys helping their fathers to cut barks or to look for trees suitable for making hollow logs. Instead of being assisted by a family member to learn crosshatching, as formerly common, artists now tend to practice their rarrk on Mimih's spirit figures. Artists such as Emmanuel Wurrkidj or Bronwyn Kelly presented in this exhibition began by producing Mimih spirit figure carvings. These first carvings are almost like practice boards where one can experiment with rarrk and test the market response. Great care and effort are put into the making of these first works, which commonly indicate the style quality of rarrk that will eventually be used on bark. What is also interesting about these first works is that one can already see the emergence of an individual style within each artist. Generally, these young artists will move onto painting on bark or hollow log after some months and will start exhibiting promising new work.

Some senior artists such as John Mawurndjul are serious about training their family members as they see the making of art as not only an important cultural statement to be delivered to balandas (non-aboriginal people) but also as a rewarding professional career option. During my time at MAC, I have seen the first works of some of these young men and women who are now exhibiting regularly. The arts centre is also playing an important role in terms of encouraging and mentoring younger artists. It is a form of teamwork as the arts centre does not interfere with the tutoring but is liaising with the senior artist to discuss the encouragement and progress of the younger artist.

In this exhibition, there are numbers of interesting family connections between some of the stars and younger artists. For example, senior Burarra artist Tommy Gondorra Steele has taught his daughter Fiona Jin-majinggal Mason how to paint and how to make fish traps in recent years. They both favour the representation of jima jima *water lilies* and their work, while looking very similar, differs in the palette of yellow and in some of the compositions. Fiona Jin-majinggal only started to exhibit last year but has already successfully participated in a few group shows. Still in the field of painting, it is impossible not to mention the pivotal roles of John Mawurndjul and of his late brother Jimmy Njiminjuma in tutoring and mentoring several family members. Mawurndjul first taught his eldest daughter Anna Wurrkidj and wife Kay Lindjuwanga, who are now both established artists. He is now tutoring his younger daughters Josephine Wurrkidj and Semeria Wurrkidj. His influence on younger artists does not end there as he also inspired nephew Emmanuel Wurrkidj to take up painting. Emmanuel Wurrkidj started to work and make mimih spirits in late 2004. I was immediately amazed by the quality of his work right from the start. The almost orange dominant in his art and the fluidity of the movements of the four colours used for his rarrk were reminiscent of John's work although quite different and already showing a distinctive individual touch. After talking to both Emmanuel and John, I discovered that Emmanuel had been watching his uncle from a distance but had never formally sat with him to learn how to paint.

Emmanuel concentrates exclusively on representing Dilebang, which is for him the most sacred place in his country. His work has already been noticed by the art world as he was selected for the 23rd NATSIAA in 2006 and just had some of his work prominently featured in London .

Irenie Ngalinba and Aileena Lamanga are the daughters of the late Jimmy Njiminjuma who passed away in 2004. Ngalinba was taught how to paint by Njiminjuma who was a very influential artist within the modern Kuninjku art movement. She brought her first works to MAC in late 2001 when she was only 22 years of age. Not long after bringing her first paintings, Ngalinba started to make larger works, showing great confidence in her ability to paint and to manage larger compositions. Her repertoire of subjects for a young artist is quite varied and mirrors that of her father. After holding her first solo show in 2006, she was selected for this year Xstrata Emerging Artists Art Awards held at the Queensland Art Gallery. She is not only on a trajectory with her own career but is also managing to teach and tutor several family members including her husband Elyssa Cameron, brother Seymour Wulida and sister Aileena Lamanga. In this exhibition, both Elyssa Cameron and Aileena Lamanga are well represented with some major works. Like her sister, Lamanga concentrates on depicting the power emanating from Kurruldurl site where she and her family reside. In her paintings titled *wak wak crow dreaming*, she has depicted the crow totem ancestor called *Djimarr*. The *rarrk*, or abstract crosshatching, on these works represents the design for *Djimarr*. Today this Being exists in the form of a rock, which is permanently submerged at the bottom of Kurruldurl Creek. Elyssa Cameron, Ngalinba's husband is a Rembarnga man from the Bununggu clan. Rembarnga and Kuninjku people have close associations, contiguous country and sometimes intermarry. Elyssa started to paint in 2003. His first paintings were in the style of Ngalinba's and of the same subjects but he is now depicting his own stories such as the waterhole at Bulukaduru, an important site for his people.

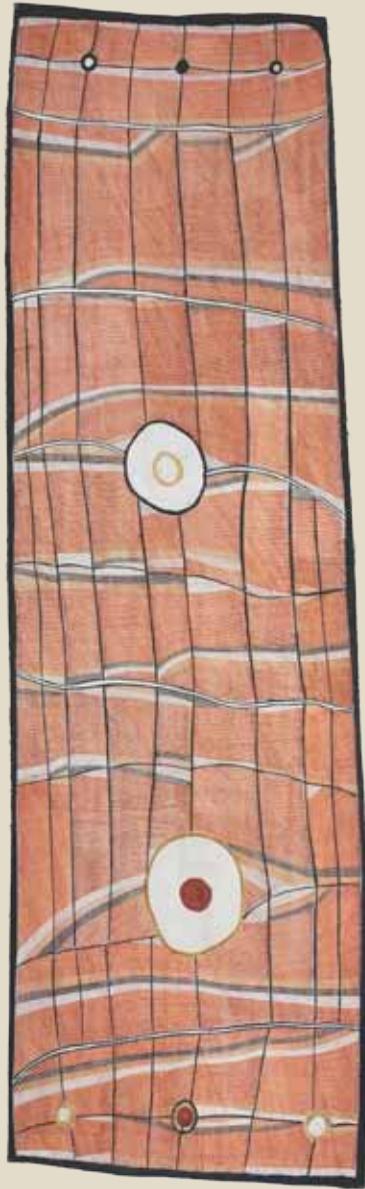
In the field of timber sculpture, Samson Bonson who has been under the apprenticeship of Crusoe Kurddal is now an accomplished carver. Like Kurddal, he favours representation of dotted mimih figures. His double headed mimih spirit figure is an astonishing sculpture, showing not only his skills as a carver but also his creativity and humour.

Fibre art has always been strong in the Maningrida region. In recent years, Marina Murdilnga daughter of Mick Kubarkku has invented a new fibre representation of *yawkyawk young woman with a fish tail*. These are flat woven figures made from pandanus with a bamboo frame. Using the knotting technique traditionally used for making bags, Murdilnga plays with colours to create patterns within each section of the body of the yawkyawk. This new form of fibre sculpture has inspired other artists such as Frewa Bardaluna who is also showing some works in this exhibition. Bardaluna, an accomplished traditional weaver has only started to make sculptures this year but is already impressing collectors with her tight weave and fantastic colour combinations. The revival of making of fish traps started in 2002 in Maningrida and senior fish trap makers George Ganyjibala and Jack Maranbarra have led the way in teaching their wives and family members how to make fish traps from jungle vine. Today, many Burarra weavers are making fish traps, reminiscent of an ancient tradition combined with contemporary ideas. Fish traps come in many different shapes, sizes and colours as sometimes artists use pandanus rather than jungle vine in their manufacture.

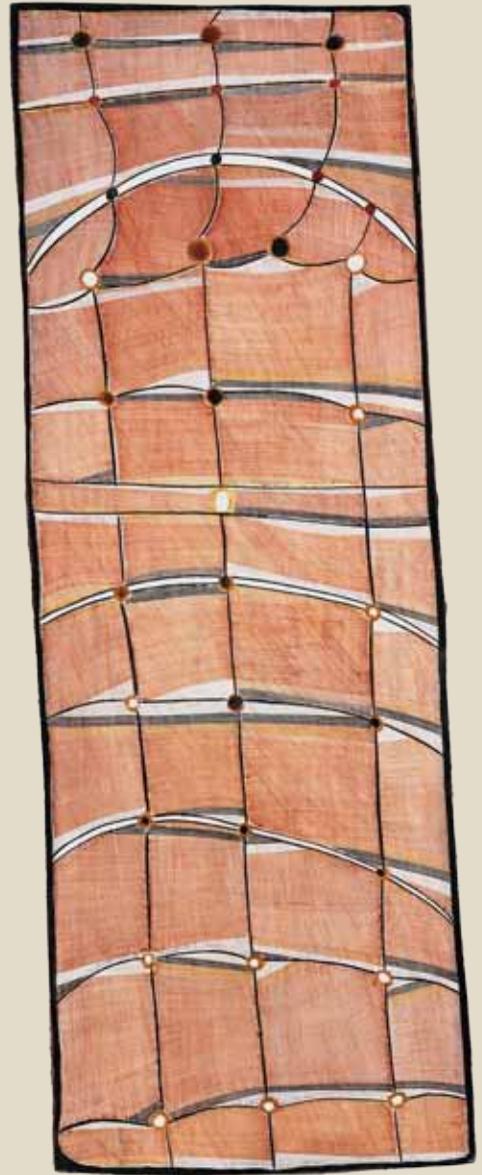
By drawing comparisons and indicating connections between established and emerging artists this exhibition hopes to highlight the dynamism and inventiveness of contemporary Maningrida art. The works presented by the new generation of artists are already showing the energy, talent and hard work required to sustain a brilliant future. Many of these artists are still young and will assuredly become prominent figures in Maningrida's art history.

Apolline Kohen Director
Maningrida Arts Director October 2007





John Mawurndjul
Billabong at Milmilngkan Site 2007
185 x 55 cm (detail opposite)



John Mawurndjul
Mardayin Site 2007
138 x 48 cm

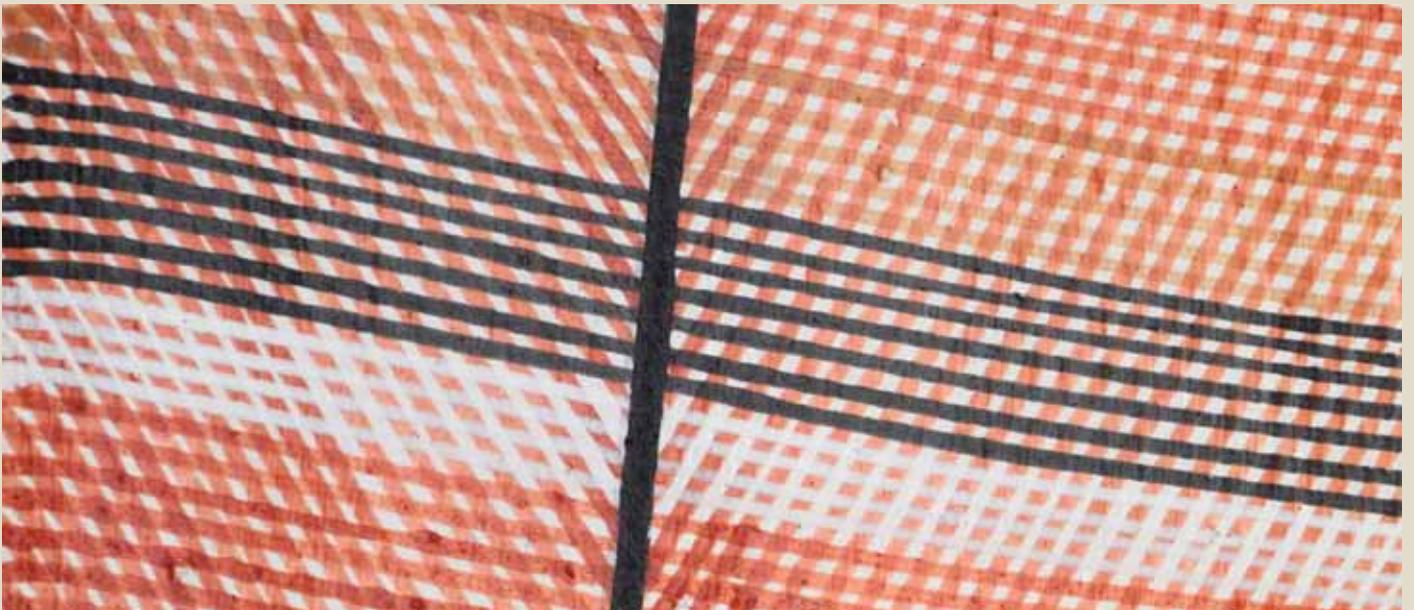




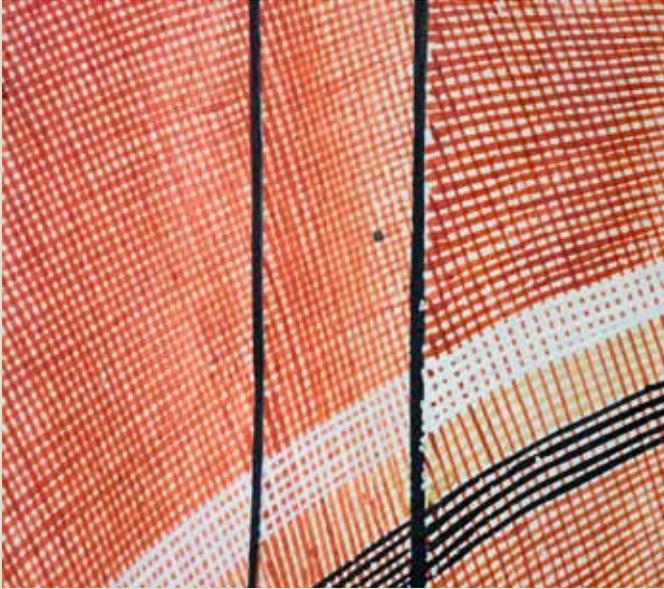
Kay Lindjuwanga
Billabong at Milmilngkan 2007
136 x 27 cm (detail opposite top)



Anna Wurrikidj
Milmilngkan 2007
99 x 45 cm (detail opposite bottom)



John Mawurndjul



Samuel Namunjda



John Bulunbulun



Terry Ngamandara Wilson

Irenie Ngalinba



Emanuel Wurrkidj

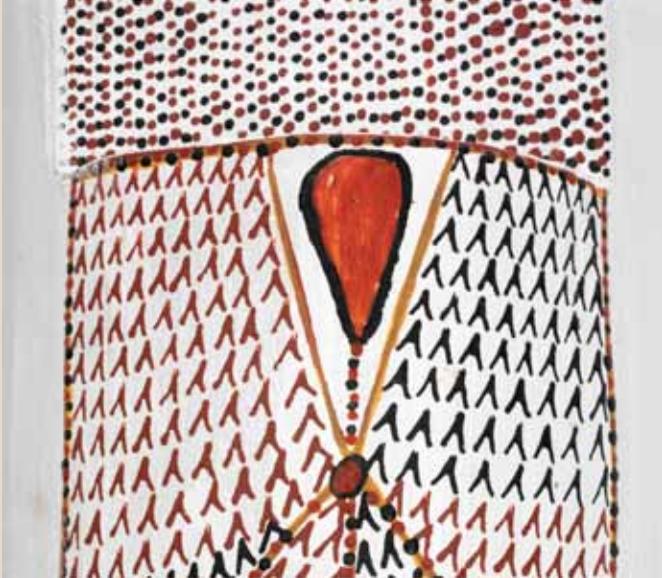


Aileena Lamanga

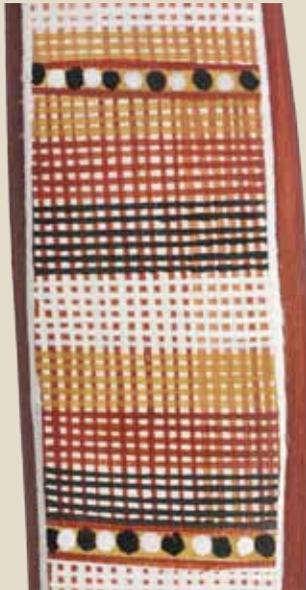
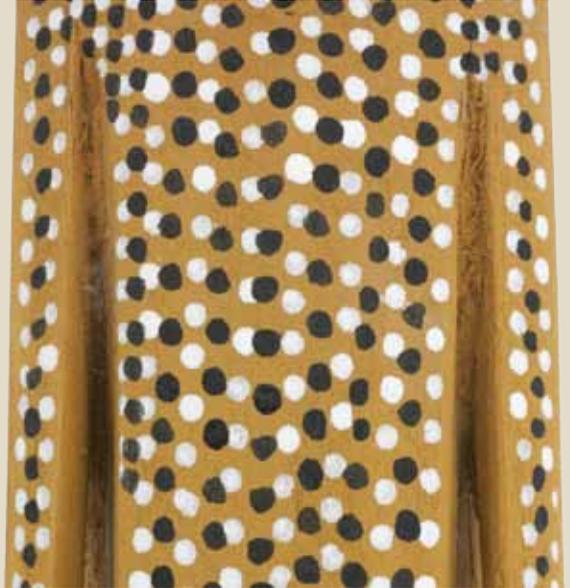


Elyssa Cameron

Owen Yalandja



Crusoe Kurddal



James Iyuna



Bronwyn Kelly



I use art to connect to change in myself and this is more effectively stimulated by art that is consistently evolving. In any art, whether it is that of an individual artist, a small group who work in close proximity thereby influencing each other, or what is described as a movement, the most exciting thing for me is change. Sometimes, the changes are best described as subtle variations which take time for me to register and at other times I am just plain gobsmacked – for lack of a better way of describing something that hits me immediately right between the eyes and moves down to the body all in one motion - awakening my passions. As a discerning collector, I am always looking for the watershed works that herald new directions in style, employ changes in materials or presentation and conceptual shifts that fundamentally change my perceptions about how to respond to the work. Most importantly I am on the lookout for the rise of new artists bringing new blood and sometimes-radical new perspectives to the work. It is in observing these shifts and identifying new 'moments in time' and then supporting these initiatives through exhibitions at my gallery or personally acquiring the work and sharing it with others that I derive the greatest satisfaction as an art lover and a collector.

Some environments are more conducive than others to nurturing change. A number of factors including the proximity of artists to each other and their working environment, the conventional hierarchy around the art and artists which may nurture the interaction of new ideas and, very significantly, the access to market and financial support for the work. Art is not made in a vacuum and an audience is required to complete the cycle. Maningrida is an extraordinary arts centre that supports both new initiatives by established artists and encourages young or emerging work. The artists may live in far flung outstations where they garner inspiration but typically spend a portion of each year in Maningrida (especially during the wet) thereby spending time with each other and becoming aware of the changes in different work. They have financial support through the arts centre system that guarantees buyers for the work and they have the unqualified support of the senior artists who, far from guarding their secrets as is the case with much occidental art, consider it their sacred duty to pass on the knowledge and the law, as well as the technical know how to the younger generations.

John Mawurndjul said at his press conference in Basel in 2005 and has often repeated to me privately since, his primary concern now is to nurture and pass on the knowledge and techniques to his wife, daughters and other artists – as it was passed on to him by the likes of Yirriwala and Peter Marralwanga. It is not competition but collaboration. Mawurndjul manages his altruistic and humble approach while he continues to dazzle us with each new extraordinary body of work. Mawurndjul is typical of the Aboriginal ethos here in that his whole life is ultimately about sharing – whether it is his vision of nature and art with the world or the techniques of rarrking or crosshatching with a nephew.

It is a golden age for the art of Arnhemland in general and Maningrida in particular. Increased exposure in recent years as well as the notable successes of artists like John Mawurndjul in Australia and overseas have contributed to an expansion of both the quality and the amount of art being produced. It is a simple equation; the more success this art has in the public domain, both in public spaces and commercial galleries, the more the work is embraced by the marketplace, the more full time or nearly full time artists there are and the increased time and focus spent on their art produces an inevitable increase in quality.

The current boom in the art of the Maningrida area is proving to be fertile ground indeed for change. My trips up there never fail to provide me with surprises. Some of the younger artists in this exhibition were barely known to me until recently and yet have matured into artists with instantly recognisable styles presenting work in original

ways I could not even imagine a short time ago. The new woven yawkyawks of Marina Murdilnga, the colour relations in the work of Elyssa Cameron, the compositional enrichment in the work of Irenie Ngalimba to name a few are quite astonishing in the speed with which they have moved forward. Some of them are ready for solo exhibitions and have taken their place in major public and private collections.

These creative energies are deeply rooted in tradition and ceremony, so despite the abundance of forms there is a unifying element, a *spirit* if you like which permeates the best of the work. Whether one is looking at a complex Mardayin ceremony bark by the great John Mawurndjul (viewed by many as Australia's greatest living artist) or a humble dilly bag deriving from a utilitarian source by an unknown young artist, the stories of the dreamtime, the laws of the clan and the colour and spirit of ceremony is not far beneath the surface. It is this linking to tradition and stories of a secret/sacred nature to which the art owes much of its power and presence – regardless of the aesthetic disposition and formal abilities of the artists in question.

The success of the stars like John Mawurndjul, Samuel Namunjaja, Ivan Namirrki, Kay Lindjuwanga, John Bulunbulun, Owen Yalandja, Terry Ngamandara and others are well known to aficionados of Aboriginal art and institutions here and abroad. The retrospective of Mawurndjul, the *Crossing Country* exhibition at the AGNSW, the Quay Branly project in Paris and various solo and group exhibitions in Australia, Paris, London and Switzerland have raised the profile exponentially in the last five years. What is less known is the dazzling speed at which young artists from various language groups are throwing down the gauntlet to older generations with work of extraordinary quality. Becoming a successful Aboriginal artist typically requires long years of apprenticeship at the feet of their elders learning both the technical aspects and the knowledge of the law necessary to produce the art. There is no shortcut to developing the flick of the wrist necessary to making *rarrk* the crosshatching which is the cornerstone of the formal aspect of bark painting. It is a long and laborious process to learn how to produce the work and to develop a signature *style* but the current generation advances more efficiently due to increased focus and motivation.

The personal *rarrk* or crosshatching of an artist may be likened to handwriting. Once one is intimate with a certain artist, the *rarrk* is unmistakable. It is therefore of great interest to compare in detail the *rarrk* of various artists at close range that we have addressed in the catalogue reproductions. To become intimate with it allows one to develop our own aesthetic. Repeated viewing over the years of some of the older artists gives one an expected intimacy with the work and a disposition towards certain styles or colours. What is extraordinary at this moment in time is the rate at which the younger artists are developing. Despite a couple of trips a year to Maningrida I had not even heard of Emmanuelle Wurrkidj, Aileena Lamanga and Elyssa Cameron until about 18 months ago. The exhibition contains the first *lorrkon* ever brought in by Joy Garlbin – an extraordinary work that is unconventional in both colour and infill. Some of these artists are in their early twenties but the works they have contributed to this exhibition are extraordinary in their depth and sophistication. They are clearly highly motivated and committed artists and while the work will obviously continue to progress, change and grow, they have already developed recognizable and highly personal containers from which to nurture and embrace the ongoing traditions they have inherited. They are painting with a freedom of expression and infusing the work with personal emotion far in advance of the previous generation at a similar age. They are not undermining their teachers but rather learning from them at a dazzling rate so they can flower into their own style much earlier.

Now to specifically mention some of the innovations highlighted in the works that are in the exhibition. Not since the first great mardayin paintings by John Mawurndjul first exhibited at Annandale Galleries in 1997 has anyone made such a significant contribution to Kuninjku art as Samuel Namunjaja with his wind-dreaming paintings.



Crusoe Kurddal
Mimih Spirit 2007
270 cm



Hamish Karrkarrhba
Mimih Spirit 2007
198 cm



Samson Bonson
Mimih Spirit 2007
173 cm



James Iyuna
Mimih Spirit 2007
104 cm



Owen Yalandja
Yawkyawk 2007
235 cm



Jack Mardilanj
Mimih Spirit 2007
170 cm



Jack Mardilanj
Mimih Spirit 2007
192 cm



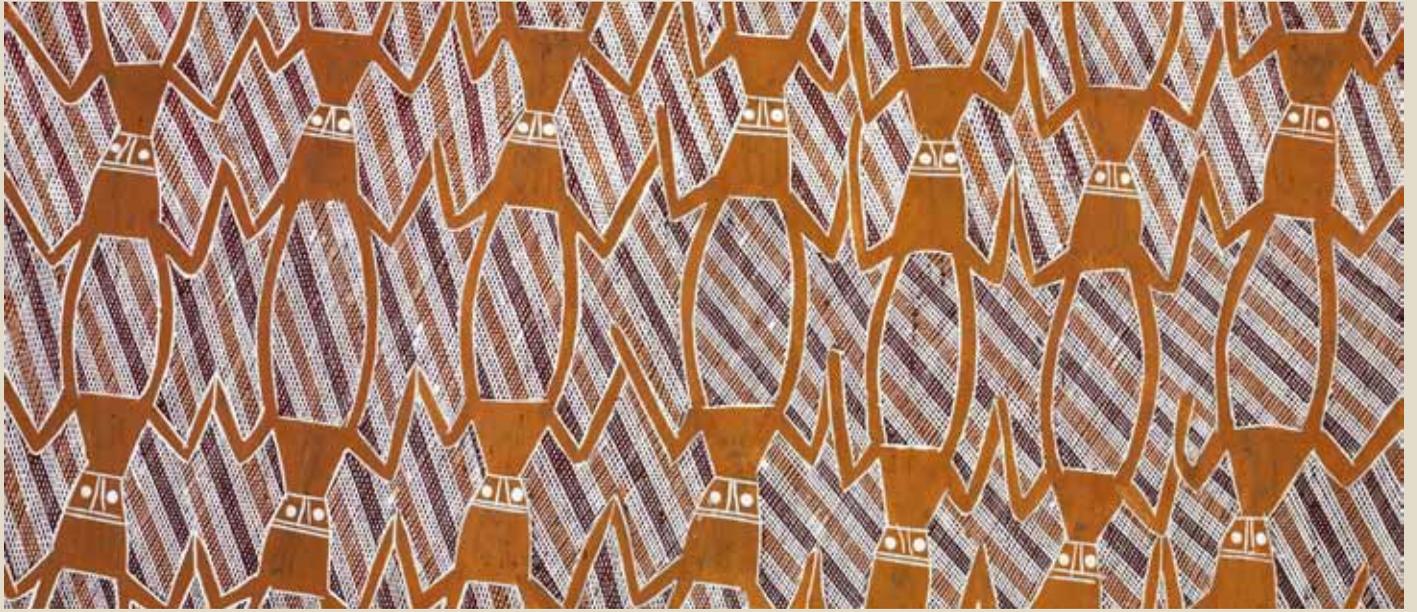
Bronwyn Kelly
Mimih Spirit 2007
230 cm



Fiona Jin-manggihal Mason
Waterlily 2007
131 x 59 cm (detail opposite top)



Tommy Gondorra Steele
Jima jima - Waterlily 2007
127 x 35 cm (detail opposite bottom)





Emanuel Wurrkidj
Dilebang Site 2007
178 x 42 cm (detail opposite top)

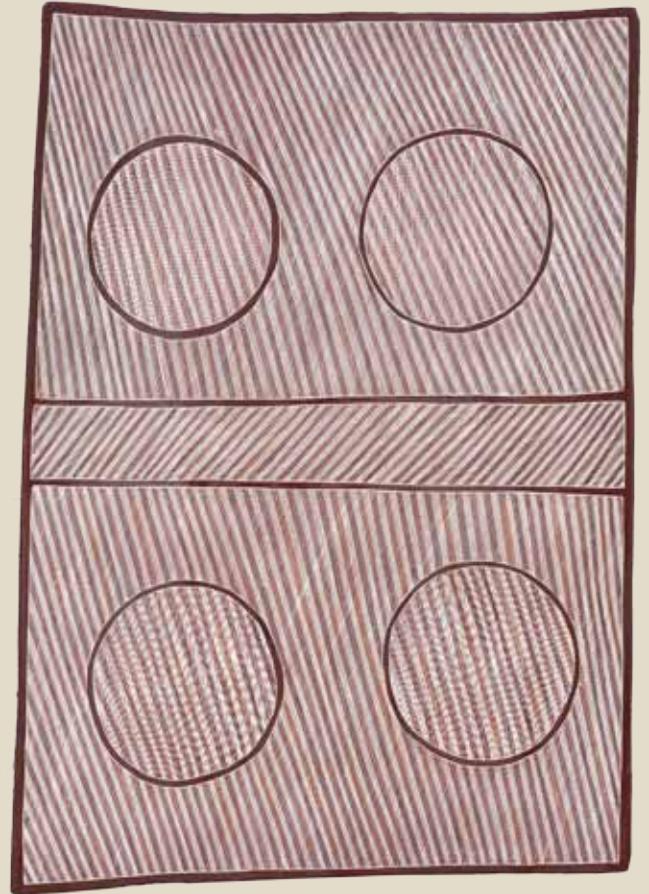


Aileena Lamanga
Billabong 2007
132 x 48 cm (detail opposite bottom)



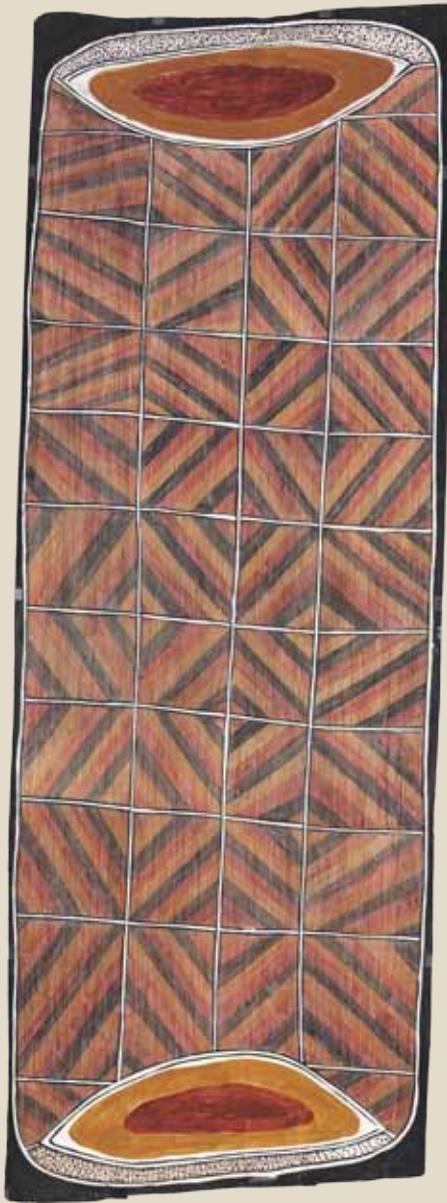


John Bulunbulun
Untitled 2006
161 x 72 cm (detail opposite)

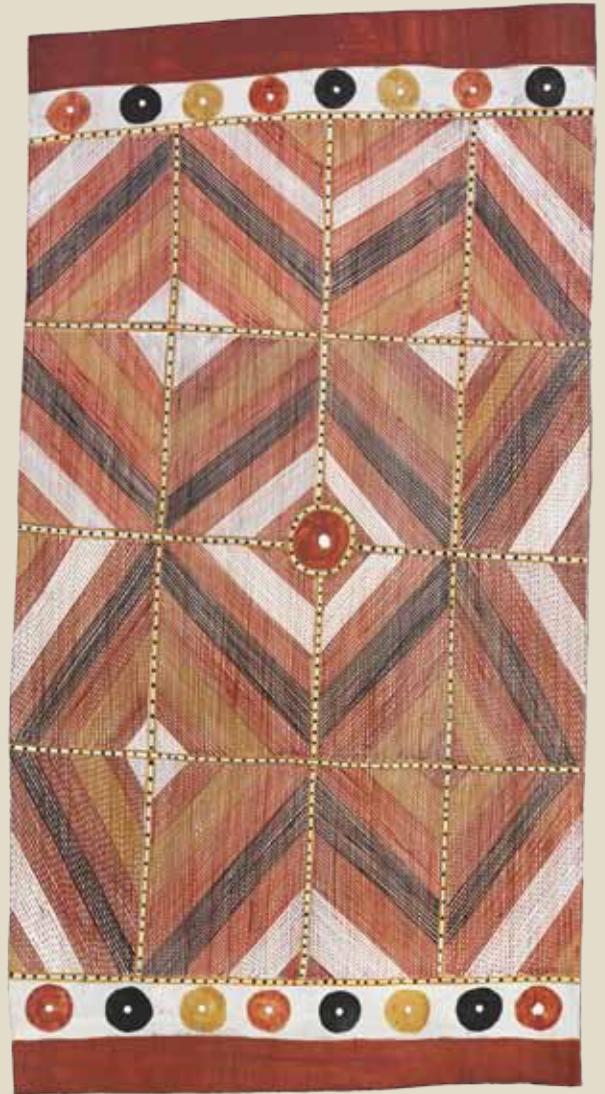


Terry Ngamandara Wilson
Waterhole at Barlpamarra 2007
78 x 56 cm

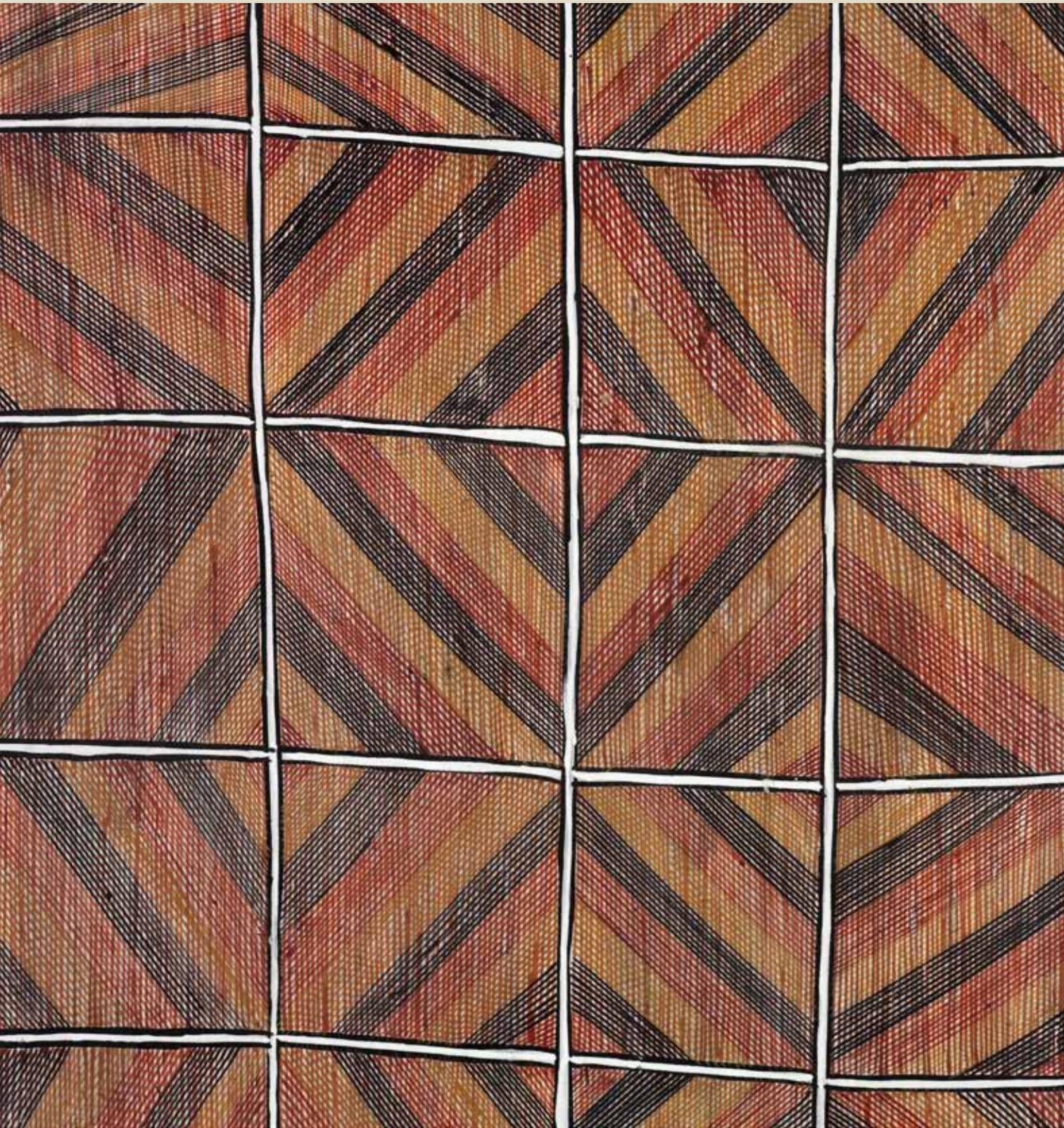




Elyssa Cameron
Bark Painting 2006
170 x 82 cm (detail opposite)



Irenie Ngalinba
Wak Wak 2007
78 x 42 cm





Samuel Namunjaja
Gungura With Kalawan Tracks 2006
188 x 23 cm



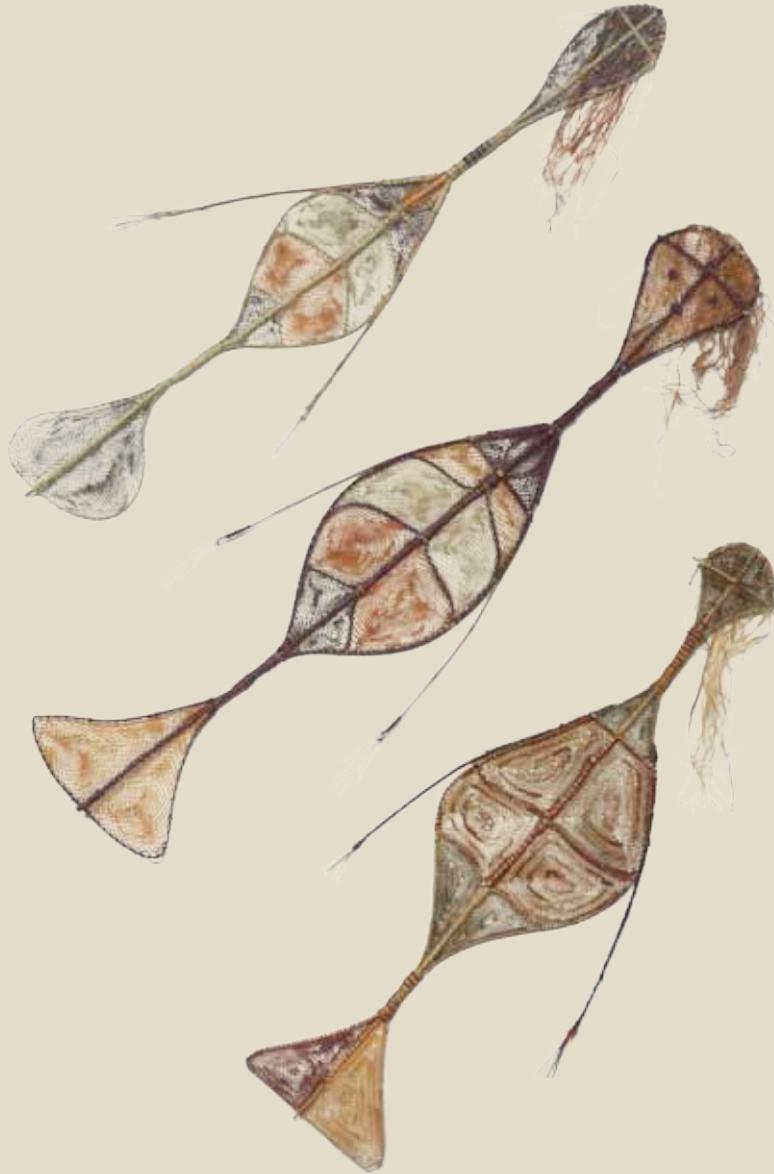
Joy Garlbin
Untitled Lorrkon 2007
132 x 15 cm



Aileena Lamanga
Lorrkon 2007
166 x 16 cm



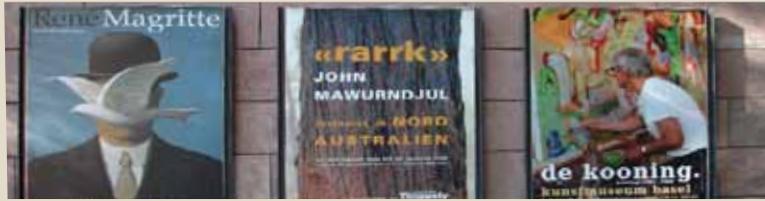
Irenie Ngalinba
Lorrkon 2005
188 x 21 cm



Frewa Bardaluna 176 x 89 cm
Marina Murdilnga 212 x 72 cm
Marina Murdilnga 200 x 90 cm

from top to bottom
woven forms
Yawkyawk Spirit Figures 2007





clockwise from top Rark Poster June 2005 Johnny Mawurndjul & Bill Gregory at Guggenheim Museum Venice June 2006 Mawurndjul ceiling installation at Quay Branly Museum Paris June 2005 Mawurndjul with pole at Quay Branly Museum May 2005 Mawurndjul retrospective - interior entrance Tinguely Museum Basel Switzerland June 2005

RARRK-LONDON

RARRK-LONDON
21st September - 7th October



clockwise from top Rarrk - London Exhibition gallery entrance John Mawurndjul outside British Museum Samuel Namundja Kevin Spacey & John Mawurndjul London opening Samuel Namundja Apolline Kohen & John Mawurndjul with sculpture - Old Bond Street Samuel Namundja Zadok Ben-David & John Mawurndjul at Ben-David Studio Hampstead

Short biographies

Frewa Bardaluna (b. 1954)

Established traditional Kuninjku weaver, she has started this year to make woven yawkyawk spirit figures, using the same technique as Marina Murdilnga. Her use of colours and intricate patterns is putting her at the forefront of contemporary fibre sculpture.

Samson Bonson (b.1968)

Gurgonni sculptor, Bonson was taught in the late 1990s by senior carver Crusoe Kurddal. He exclusively concentrates on the representation of mimih spirit figures. He is now an established sculptor and has participated in many group shows since 2002. The British Museum has recently acquired one of his works.

Bonny Burarn.garra (b.1959)

Burarra weaver, she is recognised as one of the best traditional weavers of the Maningrida region. She was taught how to make fish traps by her husband Jack Maranbarra in the early 2000s and is now one of the senior fish trap makers. Her work is represented in many Museum collections including the National Gallery of Australia.

Elyssa Cameron (b.1981)

Rembarnga bark painter and sculptor, Cameron was taught how to paint by his wife Irenie Ngalinba. He has been a practising artist since 2003 and has started to exhibit in 2006.

George Ganyjibala (b.1935)

Burarra painter, sculptor and weaver, Ganyjibala is now almost exclusively concentrating on making fish traps. He was one of the key people involved in the revival of making fish traps in 2002. His work is represented in major Australian collections.

Joy Garlbin (b.1960)

Kuninjku sculptor, she started to make mimih spirit figures under the apprenticeship of Crusoe Kurddal in the 2000s. She has developed her own style with her white dotted mimih spirits. Her work was recently included in rarrk-London, a major survey show held at Bargehouse gallery, London.

Tommy Gondorra Steele (b.1940)

Senior Burarra painter and fish trap maker, he is living at Wurdeja outstation with fellow artist John Bulunbulun. His work is in major collections and he has exhibited all over the world, including France and the UK. He has taught his daughter Fiona Jin-majinggal Mason how to paint in recent years. His work was included in the 2002 and 2004 NATSIAA.

James Iyuna (b.1959)

Senior Kuninjku painter and sculptor, Iyuna is the younger brother of John Mawurndjul. He has been painting for more than 20 years and is today one of the leaders of the Kuninjku art movement. He is now teaching many young artists living at Mumeka outstation. His work is represented in all major Australian public and private collections.

Fiona Jin-majinggal Mason (b.1977)

Burarra painter and weaver, she was taught how to paint by her father Tommy Gondorra Steele around 2004. She has started to exhibit her work last year.

Hamish Karrkarrhba (b.1968)

Kuninjku painter and sculptor, Karrkarrhba started to paint regularly in the mid 1990s and is now of the rising stars of Maningrida. He is well known for his slender mimih spirit figures covered in fine crosshatching. He has been exhibiting regularly since 2000.

Bronwyn Kelly (b.1974)

Kuninjku painter and sculptor, Kelly has started to work for Maningrida Arts & Culture in 2004 after moving from Oenpelle where she was an occasional painter. She is now regularly exhibiting in group shows.

Crusoe Kurddal (b. 1961)

Senior Kuninjku sculptor, actor and dancer, Kurddal was taught how to carve by his father Crusoe Kuningbal, the inventor of the representation of mimih spirits in wooden sculptural form. He started to carve in the early 1980s and is now one of the senior carvers of Maningrida. He has inspired and tutored many artists including Samson Bonson and Joy Garlbin in recent years. His work is represented in all major Australian public institutions.

Aileena Lamanga (b.1981)

Kuninjku painter, she is the daughter of the late Jimmy Njiminjuma. She is under the apprenticeship of her sister Irenie Ngalinba. Her work is very reminiscent of her father's and she is concentrating on the representation of wak wak 'crow dreaming'. She has started to exhibit in 2005 and her work was recently included in 'Rarrk - London'.

Kay Lindjuwanga (b.1957)

Senior Kuninjku painter and weaver, she is the daughter of Peter Marralwanga and wife of John Mawurndjul. She started to paint in the 1990s under the apprenticeship of her husband. They co-signed works for years prior she became an independent painter in the 2000s. In 2004, she won the bark painting prize at the 21st NATSIAA and held her first solo show. Her work is represented in all major Australian public and private collections.

John Mawurndjul (b.1952)

Senior Kuninjku painter and sculptor, Mawurndjul started his career in the late 1970s under the apprenticeship of his elder brother Jimmy Njiminjuma and uncle Peter Marralwanga. He is today the driving force of the Kuninjku contemporary art movement, having won many prestigious prizes over the years, including the Clemenger Contemporary Art prize in 2003. He is the ambassador of Maningrida art overseas. He has also inspired and taught many Kuninjku artists in recent years.

Ivan Namirrkki (b.1960)

Senior Kuninjku painter and sculptor, Namirrkki is the son of Peter Marralwanga who taught him to paint in the early 1980s. He stopped painting in the late 1980s when his father passed away as pressure to produce was too great. He resumed painting in 1998 and has his first solo show at Annandale galleries in 1999. His work was included in the 2006 Clemenger Contemporary Art Prize. His work is represented in major Australian collections.

Samuel Naminjdja (b.1965)

Senior Kuninjku painter, Naminjdja is another son of Peter Marralwanga who started to paint in the late 1980s. He is today of the senior Maningrida artists along with John Mawurndjul. In 2006, he has won the bark painting prize at the 23rd NATSIAA. He has been exhibiting overseas since 2001 and his work is represented in all major Australian public and private collections.

Irenie Naglinba (b. 1979)

Kuninjku painter, she is the daughter of the late Jimmy Njiminjuma, one of the founders of the modern Kuninjku art movement. She has been on a trajectory with her career since 2004 and held her first solo show in 2006. In 2007, she was selected for the Xstrata Coal Emerging Artist Award held at the Queensland Art Gallery. She is also teaching her brother Seymour Wulida, sister Aileena Lamanga and husband Elyssa Cameron how to paint. She is one of the rising stars of Maningrida.

Anna Wurrkidj (b.1975)

Kuninjku painter and sculptor, Wurrkidj is the daughter of John Mawurndjul. She was taught how to paint by her father in the late 1990s and rapidly became an independent painter. She stopped painting in 2004 / 05 when she had her babies but is now back working full time. Her work is represented in major private collections.

Emmanuel Wurrkidj (b. 1982)

Kuninjku painter and sculptor, he is the nephew of John Mawurndjul. He learned how to paint by watching Mawurndjul from a distance and brought his first works to Maningrida Arts & Culture in late 2004. He is one of the promising talents of Maningrida. His work was recently included in Rarrk ^London.

Owen Yalandja (b. 1960)

Senior Kuninjku carver, Yalandja is another son of Crusoe Kuningbal who taught him how to carve in the early 1980s. Yalandja invented the representation of yawkyawk spirit figures in the mid 1990s. He is one of the senior Kuninjku artists and his work is included in the prestigious inaugural triennial of Indigenous Art at the National Gallery of Australia which opened in October 2007. He has participated in many exhibitions both in Australia and overseas.



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