ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ART: THE UNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA COLLECTION

Sue Smith
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Kate Oates, CQU Creates Indigenous Art Award 2017 winner, with *Tipping the scales* 2017

Llewellyn Swallow, CQU Creates Indigenous Art Award 2018 winner, with *Salute to Gai-I* 2018
PREFACE

CQUnderstanding respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work and learn, and pays respect to the First Nations Peoples and elders, past, present and future.

We also gratefully acknowledge the permission of artists and licensing agencies to reproduce artworks from the CQUnderstanding Art Collection.

The CQUnderstanding collection of art created by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists is significant as a tribute to the knowledge and culture of Australia’s First Nations Peoples and confirms the University’s commitment to social inclusiveness and reconciliation. Part of that visionary commitment is a dedication to building reciprocal respectful partnerships with Indigenous peoples in the communities where the University has a presence and conducts business.

The Indigenous art collection, held across the University’s many campuses and study hubs, also stimulates reflection, offering viewers fresh understandings of First Nations’ viewpoints and the position of Indigenous creative expressions in contemporary Australian society. Not the least of these insights are a significantly alternative view of the locations where Indigenous people study and work along with perceptions of Traditional Owners’ sense of place and connections to land and sea.

CQUnderstanding is committed to sustainably expanding and displaying the collection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artworks. This book reflects the collection as it currently stands in 2018. Over time, updates on this collection will be available via our CQUnderstanding website.

Viewing the work of contemporary artists can kindle empathy and connects humans in an inexplicable way that often trumps intellectual exchange and may swiftly bridge cultural differences. CQUnderstanding invites everyone to enjoy the art of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples held in its collection and in this book. May it evoke an appreciation for the complexity and richly diverse society that we enjoy and live in today.

Professor Adrian Miller
Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Engagement
and BHP Chair of Indigenous Engagement
FOREWORD

CQUniversity is delighted to present this book, presenting a selection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artworks from the CQUniversity Art Collection.

The University’s collecting of Australian Indigenous art began in the 1980s and in recent years the University has made a commitment to acquire more Aboriginal and Islander art from the communities we serve and to give that art a greater presence in the public areas on our campuses and study centres.

It is also timely to present a wider audience with this celebration of Australian Indigenous art as CQUniversity progresses the goals and actions outlined in our inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan 2016 – 2018.

CQUniversity gratefully acknowledges the support and cooperation of artists in the preparation of this book and special appreciation is extended to CQUniversity staff members who have worked on this volume, including the book’s author, Art Collection Manager, Sue Smith.

Professor Nick Klomp
Vice-Chancellor and President
CQUniversity Australia
INTRODUCTION

The powerful tiger shark circles swiftly around a turtle, closing relentlessly and heart-stoppingly on his target. He is printed in black ink on white paper. The intricate, sinuously rhythmic linear composition was first carved into a vinyl block and is partly inspired by the centuries-old decorative patterning on Torres Strait Islander wooden artefacts transformed as innovative contemporary art. The maker of the print, Cairns-based artist Glen Mackie, once said the hunting tiger shark’s swift manoeuvres look like he is dancing through the water.

This arresting image of astonishing grace and fearful menace may be found at the CQUniversity Cairns Campus. Like so many of the other works of art on view at the University’s various campuses and sites across Australia and brought together in this book, Glen Mackie’s linocut prints reveal contemporary Australian Indigenous art at its best: driven by talent in design, dexterous craftsmanship, absorbing ideas and narratives, and a compulsion to create. It is often said that art represents a pinnacle of human achievement. We are pleased to share with you in this volume a number of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander artworks that we consider are works of distinction and which also reveal creative endeavour in many guises: as a repository of cultural value; as a statement of political identity; as a vehicle of personal expression.

One of the artists featured in these pages, Ken Thaiday, once said: ‘my stories and dances are my truth. I can tell no other stories’. His stories and artwork and many others in this book showcase another important feature of great artworks: they invite us into different worlds, taking us out of our routines and away from preconceptions, making us look with fresh eyes at ourselves, and at our relationships with other peoples and to the natural world. It is a true joy to be invited into and breathe the air in these marvellous worlds.
A BRIEF HISTORY OF CQUNIVERSITY

Originally founded in Rockhampton in 1967, as the Queensland Institute of Technology (QIT) Capricornia, and later known as the Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education (CIAE), the institution was granted full university status in 1992 and was named the University of Central Queensland and later the Central Queensland University. The University rebranded to CQUniversity in 2009 and is now one of the largest universities based in regional Australia, with more than 20 delivery sites across the nation and more than 30,000 students. In 2014, CQUniversity merged with CQ TAFE, establishing Queensland’s first comprehensive dual sector university. In 2018, CQUniversity was delivering more than 300 education and training offerings, in areas such as Accounting, Business and Law, Creative, Performing and Visual Arts, Education and Humanities, Engineering and Built Environment, Health, Information Technology and Digital Media, and Science and Environment. CQUniversity is now a renowned research institution in several key disciplines, such as mathematical sciences, medical and health science and mechanical engineering.

CQUniversity is also proud to be recognised as Australia’s most inclusive university with the highest ratio of students from disadvantaged, mature age, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and first-in-family backgrounds. As well, CQUniversity places a strong emphasis on social innovation and global outreach and fosters a number of key partnerships with communities, industry and government, both in Australia and overseas. This commitment to engagement and social advancement has led to CQUniversity being recognised as Australia’s first and only Changemaker Campus by Ashoka U, an exclusive global social innovation group made up of only 40 other educational institutions across the world, who work with stakeholders to overcome social disadvantage.
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ART COLLECTION

The CIAE began collecting artworks in 1973, in step with the development of an Arts Department in 1974 and strong growth in the 1970s in music, drama and visual arts teaching and in workshops, seminars, concerts and art exhibitions to which the community was invited. By 1977 the CIAE had an Art Works Acquisition Committee which developed an art collecting policy, adopted by the Institute’s Council that year. The guiding principles for collecting, the 1977 report stated, were for the CIAE ‘to be seen as a patron of the visual arts’ and to take a leadership role in the community by acquiring modern art and craft reflecting ‘contemporary art movements in Australia’ created by ‘living and active artists’. It was envisaged that the acquisition and display on campus of cutting-edge artworks (a ‘Museum of Modern Art’ within the CIAE) was an important way to engage with and inspire regional communities, allowing audiences ‘access to works which would otherwise be unavailable except in capital city collections’. The report acknowledged that the acquisition of (expensive) ‘historically significant works’ was unachievable for the CIAE, and prophesised quite correctly that ‘wise buying of the works of living and active artists’ would ‘in time develop into a collection of historic significance’.

This strong emphasis on taking a leadership role in the community by supporting living artists and collecting advanced contemporary art is an approach and commitment that the institution has adhered to in the ensuing 40 years.

By the end of the 1970s, the Art Collection, though quite small, had range, and comprised Australian prints, the first official portrait (of Council Chairman, Jim Goldston), an abstract sculpture and craft works, and a few paintings, including impressive works by John Coburn and Gordon Shepherdson, the latter piece donated by the North Rockhampton Lions Club, the first of many donations that would enrich the art collection in years to come.
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ART COLLECTING IN CONTEXT

Corporate art collecting is always impacted by changing public interests and attitudes, and this was the case in the 1980s and 90s at the Institute / University, as Australian society responded to the voices of women’s liberation, gay rights, Indigenous claims and multiculturalism. In the early years, the institution had been overwhelmingly male and Anglo-Australian.

By 1998, the genders were more evenly balanced and the student body was more culturally diverse, with the University operating metropolitan campuses in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne to cater specifically to large numbers of international students. \(^{(10)}\)

Up until the early 1980s there had been few Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at the Institute, but there was an upsurge in Indigenous enrolments from 1985 onwards after the establishment of a new Aboriginal Education Unit to provide student support. \(^{(11)}\) It became known as CAITEC (Capricornia Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tertiary Education Centre) in 1987 \(^{(12)}\) and in the 1990s was renamed Nuloo Yumbah (meaning ‘Our Place’ in Darumbal, the language of traditional owners of the Rockhampton region). \(^{(13)}\) In late 2012, Nuloo Yumbah was restructured and in 2015 the Indigenous Support Unit became the Office of Indigenous Engagement. \(^{(14)}\) By 2017, CQUniversity had some 993 Indigenous students. \(^{(15)}\)
COLLECTING PATTERNS OVER THE DECADES

In the 1980s, the increasing cultural diversity of the Institution was reflected in art collecting patterns. The first small group of Aboriginal art acquisitions was acquired from 1984 to 1989 — prints, a ceramic piece and paintings, by artists from south-east and north Queensland, central Australia and Western Australia — and included notably a Western Desert ‘dot and circle’ acrylic painting by one of the Papunya Tula artists, Lionel Kantawarra Tjupurrula.

In the 1990s, Australian Indigenous art acquisitions included a large group of artefacts (barks, small wood carvings, boomerangs, spears, clap and fire sticks, baskets) from northern Australia, acquired by Nuloo Yumbah to support teaching — these included small bark paintings by Arnhem Land artists George Garrawun, Djunmal and Ngulabyn. Also added to the Art Collection were linocut prints by Torres Strait Islander artists Shaun Edwards, Anne Gela and Brian Robinson, paintings by Bundaberg artist Clinton Cross and the Rockhampton-based artists Anne Gela and Alan Hatfield (a Darumbal elder), a dance artefact by the acclaimed Torres Strait Islander artist Ken Thaiday Senior and another ‘dot and circle’ Western Desert painting by Nola Napangardi Fisher (Wilson).

Since the 2000s, the pace and scope of Indigenous art acquisitions has been greatly enhanced. A special initiative in 2002 was the commissioning of an artwork by Rockhampton-based artist, Kate Oates, in conjunction with a Reconciliation Statement.

As well, in recent years there has been a particular focus on acquiring artworks by artists living in the cities and regions the University serves, including artists who are traditional owners of those areas. Another recent initiative has been the CQU Indigenous Art Award (won by Kate Oates in 2017 and Llewellyn Swallow in 2018) presented in conjunction with its annual CQU Creates Awards, an annual art competition and touring exhibition founded in 2014 and open to current and past students and staff of CQUniversity.
AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS ART ON DISPLAY ACROSS OUR CAMPUSES

In the 2010s, we have focused on developing displays of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art at the University’s sites around Australia.

In north Queensland, we are pleased to be able to present at our Cairns Campus a group of prints by Torres Strait Islander artists Glen Mackie and Daniel O’Shane, acquired in 2015; and at CQUiversity Townsville, artworks on view include a group of works by Torres Strait Islander artist Gail Mabo and a painting by Aboriginal artist Scott Walker, acquired from 2016 – 2017.

In central Queensland, a large group of Indigenous art is held at CQUiversity’s home campus, Rockhampton North, including works by Pamela CroftWarcon, Howard Butler and Lockhart River artists Evelyn Omeenyo and Irene Namok.

Works at CQUiversity Mackay, Gladstone and Bundaberg Campuses include paintings by Luke Mallie, Coral Craigie, Belynda Waugh, Nicole Wone and Llewellyn Swallow, acquired from 2000 to 2018.

CQUiversity Sydney has a large group of paintings by women artists of the Central Desert (including Peggy Purvis Mpetyane, Lena Pwerle and Jennie Long Petyarre), acquired in 2012. Most recently, in 2018 the University acquired for the Sydney campus six paintings by Newcastle-based artist Nicole Chaffey, a Biripai/Gadigal woman.

Also in 2018, the University has commissioned for its Melbourne campus a painting by Melbourne-based Mandy Nicholson, a well-known Wurundjeri artist.

CQUiversity Adelaide has two paintings acquired in 2017 by a Narrunga man, the late Colin Weetra, an educator and artist.

In Western Australia, the University has paintings by Selina Shepherd and Molly Malungka Yates (Western Desert artists), Djarliny and Kimitha Coppin, acquired from 2016 to 2017 for its Perth campus and sites at Busselton and Karratha.
LOOKING AT AND APPRECIATING ART

That is a brief synopsis of the how and why of the development of CQUniversity’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art collection, a collection that in 2018 may be relatively small in number but is much enjoyed by the CQUniversity community. Now it is time to look more closely at some of the individual artworks and to consider your enjoyment of these works.

When you look at a work of art, have you ever wondered why some works are more appealing to you than others? While there is no right or wrong way to look at art and to come to conclusions about its significance, it is certainly true that you will enjoy and gain more from your viewing experience if you have some understanding of what the artist was trying to achieve and are also informed about how its making (the size of the work, the story or subject and place of origin, how and why the artist has used pigments, inks and paints, bark, wood, canvas, paper, shapes and lines, viewpoint and composition) has contributed to the final work. We hope in the pages that follow to present some useful information that will enhance your enjoyment and understanding of the artworks.

As well, we hope that the diversity of artworks and artists presented here may also extend non-Indigenous viewers’ perceptions of Australian Indigenous art. In the 2010s, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is more than dance headdresses, bark paintings and ‘dot and circle’ canvases from the desert. Today’s Australian Indigenous art is made in remote and regional communities, in small towns and big cities and is as dynamic and varied as the people who make it, embracing a huge range of media, styles and themes. Art has always been carried down the generations to the present day as a way of communicating beliefs, histories, information and ideas, often drawing on links to the sacred lands in which people have traditionally lived. But as well, Indigenous art today also addresses a wide variety of contemporary issues, including environmental conservation, racial identity and tensions, and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.
References:


(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid.

(4) The first documented acquisition was a landscape painting, Derwentside (1973) by Australian artist Basil Hadley (1940-2006), purchased on 3 July 1973 from the Rockhampton City Council, presumably from an exhibition or competition at the Rockhampton Art Gallery.


(7) Ibid.

(8) Ibid.

(9) Ibid.


(11) Cryle, p. 88.

(12) Ibid.


SELECTED ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ARTWORKS FROM THE CQUNIVERSITY ART COLLECTION
**Artist UNKNOWN**  
North-east Arnhem Land,  
Northern Territory, Australia  

*Bird and spirit figures*  
c. 1990s

**PLACE MADE:** Yirrkala (possibly), north-east Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, Australia

**MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE:** sculpture, natural earth pigments on carved and incised softwood

**DIMENSIONS:** 560 x 65 x 55

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** Purchased 1990s, by Nulloo Yumbah Indigenous Learning, Spirituality and Research Centre, Central Queensland University.

**ACCESSION NO:** ART-A00435

Arnhem Land is a vast, largely unspoiled wilderness area of some 150 000 square kilometres in the north-east of the Northern Territory. The Indigenous people of central and eastern Arnhem Land, who call themselves Yolngu, produce striking artworks which reflect both the abundant wildlife of the region and their strong living culture, stretching back more than 40 000 years. This small double-figure wooden sculpture by an unknown Yolngu artist has been made for sale to the tourist market. Its decoration with red and black painted colours and fine cut-back incised line patterning, as well as the pointed chin of the ancestral being, are all characteristic features of art from Yirrkala, a settlement on the coast of north-east Arnhem Land that has been important since the 1960s for the production of bark paintings and wooden sculptures.

Yolngu creation stories tell of Ancestral beings, Wangarr, who travelled from the east with the sun across the region and created the known world – all the features of the land and sea, the flora and fauna and the people with their languages and laws. Narratives of these epic journeys connect Yolngu people and tracts of country across Arnhem Land, mapping the region through networks of songs and designs connected to story.

This sculpture probably depicts two clan ancestral beings, Guwark and Nyapililngu, who are important to the Yirrritja moiety Manggalili clan group of eastern Arnhem Land. Nyapililngu was a spirit woman who set out from Ambakamba (Groote Eylandt) in a paper bark canoe and travelled across to the mainland and then as far as the central Arnhem Land coast. She travelled with Guwark (the nightbird) making Manggalili totems, giving the people sacred objects and ceremony, and using her digging stick to make water holes.

**References:**

4. Moiety is a social anthropology term used to denote a fundamental two part division in a society. In Arnhem Land, Dhuwa and Yirritja are the Yolngu terms for the two halves of their moiety structure. Michael A O’Ferrall, Keepers of the secrets. Aboriginal art from Arnhemland in the collection of the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, AGWA, 1991, pp. 93 -129, 131.
Artist UNKNOWN
Eastern Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, Australia

*Saltwater crocodile*  c. 1990s

**PLACE MADE:** Eastern Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, Australia

**MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE:** sculpture, natural earth pigments on carved and incised wood

**DIMENSIONS:** 714 x 60

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** Purchased 1990s, by Nulloo Yumbah Indigenous Learning, Spirituality and Research Centre, Central Queensland University.

**ACCESSION NO:** ART-A00436

Fire was brought to the Yolgnu homelands in Arnhem Land by Baru, the ancestral crocodile man. As the fire spread across the land, Baru himself became badly burnt and slid into the sea. He found the salt water so soothing to his burns that he transformed himself into a crocodile and stayed there forever. (1) The fire made scars on Baru’s back, visible here in the diamond shapes carved into and painted on the wood carving.

The decorative red and yellow diamond patterns on the side of the sculpture are also sacred clan designs for the Madarrpa clan. The prescribed designs which identify clans were handed down by the ancestors for use in various circumstances, from the making of art in the public domain to ceremonial body painting. The patterning is referred to as rarrk in the western half of Arnhem Land and as miny’tji and dhułang towards the east. (2)

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**References:**


George GARRAWUN
Djadiwitjibi Djinang people
Arnhem Land, Northern Territory,
Australia, 1945 – 1993

*Untitled (two file snakes and waterlilies)* c. 1980s

**PLACE MADE:** Maningrida, central Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, Australia

**MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE:** painting, natural earth pigments on Stringybark (Eucalyptus sp.)

**DIMENSIONS:** 714 x 60

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** Purchased 1990s, by Nuloo Yumbah Indigenous Learning, Spirituality and Research Centre, Central Queensland University.

**ACCESSION NO:** ART-A00437

**IMAGE RIGHTS:** © the estate of the artist, licensed by Aboriginal Artists Agency Ltd.

George Garrawun was a renowned Aboriginal artist in the 1980s, his status emphasised by his presentation to Queen Elizabeth II at the opening of the National Gallery of Australia on 12 October 1982. He discussed Aboriginal art with her and later recounted to a reporter, ‘I told the Queen how my father taught me the old art’. (1) As Garrawun’s remark to the Queen indicated, in the traditional context, Aboriginal artists were taught painting by family members and worked within local traditions, which prescribed how and the style in which a certain subject was to be portrayed. In CQUniversity’s painting, within the forms of the snakes and waterlilies, Garrawun used an infill pattern of cross-hatching or rarrk identifying his Djardawitjibi clan. (2)

The Djardawitjibi are the traditional owners of land around the Murwangi billabong in the middle of the vast Arafura Swamp, south of Ramingining in central Arnhem Land. (3) The Arafura Swamp, known as Gurruwiling to the Yolngu people, is a pristine wetland lush with vegetation and teeming with birds and crocodiles, fish, turtles and snakes. These wetlands encompass an area of 700 km² in the dry season between May and November, but in the Wet spread to engulf up to 1300 km². Murwangi and the wider Arafura Swamp was, and remains, not only an important hunting area for the Yolngu, but is a region of deep cultural significance for the clans who have occupied and managed the land virtually uninterrupted for thousands of years. (4, 5)

While George Garrawun chose to live at Maningrida, an Aboriginal community at the mouth of the Liverpool River on the north central coast Arnhem Land coast, the subjects of his art always were drawn from his memories of his homeland at Murwangi, located some 120 km south and east. CQUniversity’s bark painting depicts file snakes and waterlilies at Murwangi, symbolic totems of sites sacred to the Djardawitjibi. (6)

**References:**


Glen MACKIE  
(Kei Kelak)
Gudumadh-Kulkalgal people
Iama (Yam Island), Torres Strait, Queensland, Australia, born 1975

Baidam (tiger shark)  2011

PLACE MADE: Cairns, Queensland, Australia

MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE: print, relief print, cut from one vinyl block and printed in black ink, on cream Arches BFK paper

DIMENSIONS: 390 x 535

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Purchased by CQUniversity, 2015.

ACCESSION NO: ART-A00842

IMAGE RIGHTS: © Glen Mackie. Licensed by the artist.

Glen Mackie (Kei Kelak) lives in Cairns and has been a leading Torres Strait Islander printmaker since the 1990s. Mackie is originally from Iama (Yam Island) and was taught to carve and paint by members of his extended family. His father is from Iama and his mother is from Masig (Yorke Island). As an elected storyteller for Iama today, Mackie’s mission is to keep alive the sacred stories and traditions of the central and Eastern Torres Strait Islands. He is also inspired by the natural world of the Torres Strait. (1)

Glen Mackie is renowned for his sinuous, rhythmic designs. As shown in Baidam (tiger shark), his prints incorporate a bold infill patterning (called minar) which draws on family totemic designs as well as Mackie’s own invented geometric repeating water pattern. (2)

The artist has explained that this print depicts the tiger shark hunting its favourite food, the green turtle (waru): ‘If you see this take place in the ocean you’re very lucky as I’ve only witnessed it once. It’s like they’re dancing, with their swift manoeuvres through the water. I am trying to capture their movements in this image.’ (3)

References:
Glen MACKIE  
(Kei Kelak)
Gudumadh-Kulkalgal people
Iama (Yam Island), Torres Strait, Queensland, Australia, born 1975

Kara (turtle shell mask ceremony) 2009

PLACE MADE: Cairns, Queensland, Australia

MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE: print, relief print, cut from one vinyl block and printed in black ink, on cream Arches BFK paper

DIMENSIONS: 585 x 455

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Purchased by CQU, 2015.

ACCESSION NO: ART-A00843

IMAGE RIGHTS: © Glen Mackie. Licensed by the artist.

In this print, Glen Mackie turns his attention to the green turtle (waru) and ceremonies employing the turtle shell mask (kara), a distinctive art form unique to the Torres Strait Islanders. The creation of masks from turtle shell was a centuries-old tradition that was first witnessed and recorded by Spanish explorers in 1606 and which continued until the end of the nineteenth century. The masks were designed to be worn over a man’s head and were made to represent ancestors with an associated animal totem. The masks were worn in various ceremonies such as funerary rituals, initiation of adolescents or fertility ceremonies to induce trees to fruit and to increase a crop harvest. 

References:
Brian ROBINSON
Maluyligal/Wuthathi/Dayak peoples
Waiben (Thursday Island), Torres Strait, Queensland, Australia, born 1973

Primitive life 1994

PLACE MADE: Cairns, Queensland, Australia

MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE: print, linocut, hand-coloured a la coupe (wet on wet technique) on paper

DIMENSIONS: 367 x 445

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Purchased by Central Queensland University, 1995.

ACCESSION NO: ART-A00296

IMAGE RIGHTS: © Brian Robinson, licensed by the artist.

Brian Robinson is originally from Waiben (Thursday Island) in the Torres Strait and has Indigenous heritage from the Maluyligal people of the western islands and the Wuthathi people of eastern Cape York. He also has Asian heritage from the Dayak people of Borneo and the Villaflor family in the Philippines. (1)

Robinson was interested in art from a young age and after graduating from the Tropical North Queensland College of TAFE in Cairns in 1996, he settled in Cairns and worked as a curator and museum professional, retiring at the end of 2010 to work full-time on his art. His art has developed from printmaking and painting to encompass sculpture, public art installations and design and he is best known today for his five stainless steel woven fish sculptures and fountain installed on the Cairns Esplanade Lagoon in 2003 and as the 2013 recipient of the prestigious Western Australian Indigenous Art Award. (2, 3)

Primitive life is an early print, drawing on the customs and traditions of the Torres Strait Islander people. Created while Robinson was still an art student, it already shows the compositional adroitness and interest in narrative that have become hallmarks of his mature art.

References:
(2) Queensland Government. Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Deadly Stories Gallery/ Far North Queensland/Brian Robinson.
Ken THAIDAY Senior
Meriam Mir people
Erub (Darnley Island), Eastern Islands of the
Torres Strait, Queensland, Australia, born 1950

*Butterfly clapper* c. 1994

**PLACE MADE:** Cairns, Queensland, Australia

**MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE:** dance accessory, balsawood, bamboo, feathers, synthetic polymer paint

**DIMENSIONS:** 420 x 870 x 550

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** Purchased by Central Queensland University, 1994.

**ACCESSION NO:** ART-A00161

**IMAGE RIGHTS:** Ken Thaiday. Licensed by the artist

Evoking a sculptural tradition that has long flourished in the islands of the Torres Strait, this late 20th century ‘dance machine’ (mechanical moving dance accessory) has evolved far beyond the earlier artefacts that inspired it. Ken Thaiday’s dance artworks are highly sought after museum and collector’s pieces which delight viewers with their complexity, inventive use of modern products such as balsawood, acrylic paint and nylon fishing line, and fusion of Islander culture and Christian symbolism.

The artist grew up on Erub (Darnley Island), which is well known as the first hearth of missionary Christianity in the Torres Strait — the ‘coming of the light’. Ken Thaiday’s father, Tat, was an important dancer, and as a young man Ken performed at weddings, feasts and tombstone unveilings. At the age of 15, Ken Thaiday moved with his family to the Queensland mainland. He became a skilled technician and craftsman while working in the railways and in construction in Queensland and Western Australia, and then settled down in Cairns with his wife and children. (1, 2)

The University’s Butterfly clapper exhibits Thaiday’s skilled artistry and his memories of the sky, landscape, storms and butterflies of Erub which he depicts as bathed in holy light — from a yellow sun and in the sheen of reflected stars (the penumbra of pink and white feather work). ‘The Lord gives me skill and talent and what I do is from Erub,’ Thaiday has said. ‘Erub is small and my stories and dances are my truth. I can tell no other stories.’ (3, 4)

**References:**


(3) Ibid.

Gail MABO
Piadram Meriam/Malanbarra peoples
Townsville, Queensland, Australia, born 1965

*Changing seasons* 2016

**PLACE MADE:** Townsville, Queensland, Australia

**MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE:** print, colour monoprint on paper

**DIMENSIONS:** 300 x 450

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** Purchased by CQUniversity, 2017.

**ACCESSION NO:** ART-A00970

**IMAGE RIGHTS:** © Gail Mabo/Licensed by Viscopy, 2017

Gail Mabo is an artist, performer, choreographer and cultural advisor, who was born and lives in Townsville, Queensland. (1) She is the middle daughter of the Torres Strait Islander land rights campaigner, Eddie Koiki Mabo, a Piadram man from Mer (Murray Island), celebrated for his role in a landmark decision of the High Court of Australia on 3 June 1992 which inserted a new legal doctrine of native title into Australian law. (2) Gail’s mother is the reconciliation activist, Bonita Mabo AO, a Malanbarra woman and traditional owner of Palm Island, Queensland, and a descendant of South Sea Islanders from Vanuatu who were brought to work in substandard conditions clearing and cutting cane. (3) Today, Gail Mabo is a cultural advisor in schools and the spokesperson for the Mabo family. She says: ‘My father inspired me to dance, and encouraged me to share our culture with all Australians. He is my role model. Through his strength and determination he taught me to be a stronger person, and to stand up for what I believe in.’ (4)

While Gail Mabo began as a dancer and choreographer (she is recognised for her work with Jimmy Chi and Tracey Moffatt and her direction of the 2005 stage show Koiki, a performance based on the life of her father), since 2004 she has had a number of successful exhibitions of her acrylic paintings and prints. Her art is inspired by her spiritual connection to the land and invites the viewer to reflect on their own lives and experiences within this land. (5) *Changing seasons* is a typically colourful and exuberant image by the artist. It evokes both the reds and oranges of the shimmering summer sun and turbulent skies of the wet season and has a roundel motif traditionally symbolising a resting place.

**References:**

4. Townsville City Council, Gail Mabo, op.cit.
Scott William Bute WALKER
Townsville, Queensland, Australia, born 1970

Brolga dreaming, wet season  2017

PLACE MADE: Townsville, Queensland, Australia

MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE: painting, synthetic polymer paint on canvas

DIMENSIONS: 1000 x 1000

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Purchased by CQUniversity, 2017.

ACCESSION NO: ART-A00994

IMAGE RIGHTS: © Scott Walker. Licensed by the artist.

Traditional in subject matter and motifs while employing contemporary colours, the paintings of Scott Walker demonstrate that for many Aboriginal artists today the timeless themes of Australian Aboriginal art are as pertinent now as they have been for thousands of years. Scott Walker was born and continues to live in the north Queensland city of Townsville, where he is a well-known Aboriginal artist.

In this painting, the artist features a pair of mating brolgas, a common sight at the Townsville Town Common Conservation Park, which is only six kilometres north of the city centre. Up to 280 bird species have been recorded in the area, which features deep-water lagoons and wetlands in the wet summer months. (1)

The artist says of the picture: ‘Male and female brolga. Man style up to win the heart of the woman brolga. She is so in love with his corroboree that they become married and be together for the rest of their life.’ (2)

References:
(2) Scott Walker, Artist’s statement, personal communication, 16 October 2017.
Howard BUTLER  
*(Joe BUTLER)*  
Gureng Gureng/Gangulu Yiman peoples  
Rockhampton, Queensland, Australia, born 1961  

*Creation 2  2012*  

**PLACE MADE:** Rockhampton, Queensland, Australia  
**MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE:** painting, synthetic polymer paint on canvas  
**DIMENSIONS:** 830 x 1140  
**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** Purchased by CQUniversity, 2012.  
**ACCESSION NO:** ART-A00591  
**IMAGE RIGHTS:** © Howard ‘Joe’ Butler. Licensed by the artist.

The universe comes into being in dramatic fashion in this distinctive gestural painting by Howard Butler, also known as Joe, who was born and continues to live in Rockhampton, Queensland. A descendant of the Gureng Gureng people from the Bundaberg region and Gangulu and Yiman peoples of central west Queensland, Butler was brought up with strong cultural knowledge and experiences and was influenced by his grandparents and parents. His father had worked as a stockman and his mother as a station cook. The most important cultural knowledge was passed on by his mother. *(1)*

Howard Butler began making art at a young age, but was inhibited by Queensland government ‘protection’ and assimilation policies which meant that up until the 1970s-80s, speaking Aboriginal languages and practising traditional customs and culture were officially suppressed. *(2, 3, 4)* As an adult, Butler has worked as a labourer and also began in the 1990s to exhibit his artworks. He has made the most of increased opportunities in recent decades for Aboriginal people to express, reclaim and maintain cultural knowledge through his art making and by working with communities locally, nationally and internationally. He continues to teach and deliver cultural talks, and mentors and helps people in need by donating artwork. He has had a number of exhibitions in galleries locally, statewide, nationally and internationally, and has also participated in public art projects and artwork commissions. *(5, 6)*

**References:**  
*(2)* Ibid.  
Pamela CROFTWARCON
Kooma Yuwaalaraay people
Cooma, New South Wales, Australia, born 1955

Mud map (no. 22 from the series Watermarks and landlines) 2007

PLACE MADE: Keppel Sands, Queensland, Australia

MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE: print and mixed media, monoprint on black rag paper; clay impression taken from a muddy creek bank, overpainted with pink ochre

DIMENSIONS: 760 x 568

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Purchased by CQUniversity, 2012.

ACCESSION NO: ART-A00590


Dr Pamela CroftWarcon is an artist, educator and cultural facilitator who lives and works from her studio workshop near Keppel Sands on the Capricorn Coast in Central Queensland, Australia. Dr CroftWarcon was born in Cooma, New South Wales, a descendant of the Kooma clan of the Yuwaalaraay people of south west Queensland and north west New South Wales. She trained in both Aboriginal and Western traditional art forms and was the first Australian Indigenous person to attain a Doctorate of Visual Arts. Dr CroftWarcon has also worked as an academic at CQUniversity and other institutions in Queensland and the Northern Territory, Australia. She has exhibited widely and worked on community and public art projects in Australia, the Netherlands and the United States. (1)

Dr CroftWarcon’s practice since the mid-1980s includes works on paper and artist’s books, paintings, assemblages, installations and fibre art. She has described her work as acknowledging history and culture, a sense of place and a strong connection to family and community. (2)

Mud map no. 22 gives a tactile sense of the environment of saltwater mangrove creeks near the artist’s home (Pumpkin and Coorooman Creeks at Keppel Sands). The print was made by impressing heavy paper on a muddy creek bank, recording the patterns caused by tides and animals. It was later overpainted by the artist with traditional symbols for travelling and a resting place. As the artist has explained, the colloquial Australian term ‘mud map’ refers to simply drawn directions to a place. (3) Her own artistic ‘mud maps’ go further: poetically imagining through the tracks of animals and people, long connections and relationships to this place, which encompasses the mainland country of the Darumbal people and the waters of the Woppaburra clan.

References:
(2) Ibid.
Kate OATES
Wiradjuri people
Penrith, New South Wales, Australia, born 1961

Reconciliation 2002

PLACE MADE: Rockhampton, Queensland, Australia

MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE: painting, synthetic polymer paint on canvas

DIMENSIONS: 600 x 900

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Commissioned by CQUniversity, 2002.

ACCESSION NO: ART-A00046

IMAGE RIGHTS: © Kate Oates. Licensed by the artist.

Born of Aboriginal and European heritage in Penrith, New South Wales, Kate Oates was raised in Penrith and Armidale with a strong sense of pride about being Aboriginal. She drew and painted from an early age and began selling her paintings while still in high school, prior to undertaking a Bachelor of Communication Design, majoring in illustration, in Townsville. Oates has been exhibiting and winning art prizes since 2002 and is also currently studying law at CQUniversity in Rockhampton. (1, 2)

This painting was commissioned to accompany Central Queensland University’s Reconciliation Statement, which was jointly developed with Indigenous people and launched on 11 August 2002. The artist has explained: ‘The figures represent Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people moving together in partnership, learning together. [The] background of animals [local to the area] represents traditional owners of the land. Representation of CQUniversity’s parrot [emblem] shows the University’s commitment to learning.’ (3)

References:
(3) Kate Oates, personal communication, 2002.
Kate OATES
Wiradjuri people
Penrith, New South Wales, Australia, born 1961

*Tipping the scales* 2017

**PLACE MADE:** Rockhampton, Queensland, Australia

**MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE:** painting, synthetic polymer paint on canvas

**DIMENSIONS:** 645 x 795

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** Purchased by CQUniversity, 2017. CQU Creates Indigenous Art Award 2017 winner.

**ACCESSION NO:** ART-A00983

**IMAGE RIGHTS:** © Kate Oates. Licensed by the artist.

Working in a finely detailed, contemporary narrative style, Kate Oates draws on Western figurative painting and Aboriginal dotting. The Rockhampton-based artist’s paintings often have a political edge, encountering what it means to be both white and Aboriginal in post-colonial Australian society and questioning superficial perceptions of Aboriginal identity defined by skin colour rather than familial and cultural ties. (1, 2)

Tipping the scales is an enigmatic and unsettling work. A Victorian-era man of Aboriginal and European descent, wearing ceremonial white clay face paint as well as a white collar and black broadcloth suit, draws back a curtain to partially reveal a cosmic collision of European and Aboriginal cultures. These collisions, the artist seems to suggest, may be as relevant today as they were long ago when this unknown young man stared resignedly into an uncertain future.

Tipping the scales won the CQU Creates 2017 Indigenous Art Award. The artist’s statement reads: ‘A terrible journey, I still see and feel my nightmare, the scales of justice tipping backwards and forwards this way and that’. (3)

**References:**


(3) Kate Oates, 2017 CQU Creates entry form.
Coral SOUTHEE  
(Coral CRAIGIE)
Birri Gubba people
Mackay, Queensland, Australia, born 1972

Sacred waterholes  c. 1995

PLACE MADE: Gladstone, Queensland, Australia

MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE: painting, synthetic polymer paint on canvas

DIMENSIONS: 395 x 495 mm

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Acquired by CQUniversity, c. 1995.

ACCESSION NO: ART-A00365

IMAGE RIGHTS: © Coral Southee. Licensed by the artist.

Sacred waterholes depicts a waterhole of spiritual significance with two guardian spirits. The painting incorporates symbolism (concentric circles and meandering lines representing waterholes and running water) and infill patterning with dots drawn from Aboriginal art traditions in Coral Southee’s own invented composition.

Coral Southee and her partner Allen Craigie are well-known artists in Gladstone, central Queensland. In 2004, the two artists were selected by the Gladstone-Saiki Sister City Advisory Committee to represent Gladstone as artistic ambassadors to Saiki in Japan. Together they prepared two Aboriginal story poles depicting Australian wildlife in a traditional manner. A third pole was painted in Japan where the two Australian artists worked with Saiki city residents during their visit. The three poles stand in Kangaroo Garden, Saiki.

References:
(1) Coral Southee, Sacred waterholes artwork label, CQUniversity Art Collection.
Llewellyn SWALLOW
Innisfail, Queensland, Australia, born 1952

Sun, sea and the Earth  2016

PLACE MADE: Bundaberg, Queensland, Australia

MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE: painting, synthetic polymer paint on canvas

DIMENSIONS: 910 x 600 mm

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Purchased by CQUniversity, 2016. From the CQU Creates 2016 exhibition.

ACCESSION NO: ART-A00905

IMAGE RIGHTS: © Llewellyn Swallow. Licensed by the artist.

The preciousness of existence and the world upon which we depend is the timeless theme here, in a work which also impresses with its compositional and textural skill. The artist said in her statement: 'Without these vital elements (sun, sea, Earth) there would be little chance of life as we know it. The state of the environment is a topical issue that affects us all. My work depicts these vital elements as I visualise them at the time man first inhabited the Earth. Pure without pollution or over population.'  

Born of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage in Innisfail, north Queensland, the artist lives in Bundaberg. Llewellyn Swallow attended CQUniversity as a mature age student and graduated with a dual degree in Accounting and Information Systems in 2004. After working for the Department of Defence in Canberra, she retired in 2014. In January 2015, in her own words, Swallow ‘commenced dabbling in acrylics’ and has since been quite active producing a number of paintings and entering Sun, sea and the Earth into the CQU Creates 2016 Awards.

References:
(1) Llewellyn Swallow, 2016 CQU Creates entry form.
(2) Ibid.
Nicole WONE
Gureng Gureng/Yidinji peoples
Mount Isa, Queensland, Australia, born 1984

Connection to country, connection to spirit 2010

PLACE MADE: Bundaberg, Queensland, Australia

MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE: painting, synthetic polymer paint on canvas

DIMENSIONS: 910 x 600

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Purchased by CQUniversity, 2016. From the CQU Creates 2016 exhibition.

ACCESSION NO: ART-A00581

IMAGE RIGHTS: © Nicole Wone. Licensed by the artist.

While her art may be quintessentially quiet and meditative, as in this painting with its central mandala-like image focusing reflection upon country and the spiritual, the Bundaberg-based Nicole Wone is an artistic whirlwind in her local community. She completed a Bachelor of Contemporary Indigenous Art in Brisbane and since 2008 in the Bundaberg region has organised art exhibitions, an Aboriginal art festival and competition, participated in a store specialising in Indigenous art and collaborated with other artists on public artworks. Her energy and accomplishments were recognised in 2017 when she was named the Bundaberg and District NAIDOC Artist of the Year.

Nicole Wone first started painting in high school and combines traditional themes and methods with modern art approaches. She has described her art as ‘intuitive’ and contemporary. ‘Most of my work is about the empowerment of cultures and how they relate,’ she has said. (1)

References:
Vincent (Vinnie) CONLON
Kullilli people
Cherbourg, Queensland, Australia, 1953 – 2017

White man’s destruction 1993

PLACE MADE: Possibly Cherbourg, Queensland, Australia

MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE: painting, synthetic polymer paint on bark

DIMENSIONS: 1010 x 585 mm

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Purchased by the University of Central Queensland, 1993.

ACCESSION NO: ART-A00153

IMAGE RIGHTS: © Vincent Conlon.Licensed by the estate of Vincent Conlon.

Combining both traditional Aboriginal and Western forms and patterning, this painting is by Vincent (Vinnie) Conlon, a descendant of the Kullilli people of south-west Queensland and a well-known artist at Cherbourg, an Aboriginal township of about 2000 residents in Queensland’s South Burnett (south-east Queensland) region, approximately 250 km north-west of Brisbane.

Cherbourg is today a thriving Aboriginal community, but White man’s destruction, its title a cry of protest, is a poignant reminder of the loss of culture and terrible displacement and treatment of Aboriginal people in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Under the ‘protection acts’, legislation introduced in this period in Australian mainland states and the Northern Territory, governments had extensive control over the lives of Indigenous Australians, including the power to forcibly remove people to live on reserves.

Cherbourg (originally founded in 1900 as the Barambah Aboriginal Reserve, a Salvation Army Aboriginal mission, and later taken over by the Queensland Government and renamed Cherbourg) became the model for other settlements in Queensland and typified life on the reserves in the State. Peter Bird, a Cherbourg resident in the 1940s, recalled the iniquities of earlier reserve life:

“Everything that related to a concentration camp was there in [Cherbourg]. You could not move without getting a permit … [If you came back late], you would be put in jail for, maybe, a weekend … If you were found out after dark or after the lights had gone out, you were put in jail. They even put searchlights on the vehicles — the police, the superintendent — and chased black fellas everywhere, hither and thither, throughout the night hours.

During the mid-forties, they took away our corroborees, they took away our culture. Our ancestors were not allowed to teach us our language; most of us know nothing of our language.”

References:
Nicole CHAFFEY
Biripai/Gadigal peoples
Butterworth, Malaysia, born 1980

Bones II 2017

PLACE MADE: Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia

MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE: painting, oil on archival mount board

DIMENSIONS: 820 x 1020 mm

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Purchased by CQUniversity, 2018.

ACCESSION NO: ART-A01032

IMAGE RIGHTS: © Nicole Chaffey. Licensed by the artist.

Nicole Chaffey’s artistic personality has been formed by a deep connection to Country through her Biripai/Gadigal heritage as well as formal training in Western painting. In the romantic manner of Constable or Turner, Chaffey suggests powerful sensations of the natural elements — rolling mist and clouds, winter storms unleashed over dark hills — and uses vigorous brushwork and subtle, shifting paint layers to achieve this. Yet to read her images literally or formally is to lose their power of association. The vistas Chaffey unveils are in the realm of the spiritual. In her words, she 'seeks to describe her relationship to the Australian landscape by occupying a space between representation and abstraction, where the visible, known world can diffuse into one of spirituality and old knowledge'. (1)

Born in Butterworth, Malaysia, the artist lives in Newcastle. Since 2007, Nicole Chaffey has won awards and a travelling scholarship and exhibited in solo and group exhibitions, mainly in New South Wales. Her formal education began at the Newcastle Art School and she completed her training with Bachelor and Masters degrees in Fine Art and Aboriginal Studies at the University of Newcastle.

Reference:
(1) Personal communication from the artist, May 2018.
Nicole CHAFFEY  
Biripai/Gadigal peoples  
Butterworth, Malaysia, born 1980  

*Sister hills* 2017  

**PLACE MADE:** Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia  

**MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE:** painting, oil  
on archival mount board  

**DIMENSIONS:** 820 x 1020 mm  

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** Purchased by CQUniversity, 2018.  

**ACCESSION NO:** ART-A01035  

**IMAGE RIGHTS:** © Nicole Chaffey.  
Licensed by the artist.  

In 2018, CQUniversity acquired six works by Nicole Chaffey (including Bones II and Sister hills), which were part of a series first shown publicly in an exhibition entitled Yarn, Chaffey held with her studio mate/fellow painter, Sally Bourke, in 2017.  

In an artist’s statement, Chaffey says the Yarn works are in part informed by stories inherited from her Biripai grandfather which coalesce with lived experience in intimate and intuitive abstractions. Painting, says the artist, ‘is a campaign to challenge the limits of the painted surface interlaced with questions of personal identity, connectivity, history and human nature’. (1)  

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(1)  
YARN, Nicole Chaffey & Sally Bourke, University of Newcastle Art Gallery, 2017, exhibition catalogue.
Paola BALLA
Wemba-Wemba/Gunditjmara peoples
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, born 1974

Katen boy 2010

PLACE MADE: Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE: photograph, colour digital iPhone print on paper

DIMENSIONS: 1000 x 700 mm

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Purchased by CQUniversity, 2015.

ACCESSION NO: ART-A00857

IMAGE RIGHTS: Paola Balla. Licensed by the artist

Paola Balla is an artist, writer, curator and educator and is also completing a PhD at Victoria University. Balla was born in the Kulin territory of Footscray, Melbourne with Wemba-Wemba and Gunditjmara and Chinese and Italian origins. She was one of 80 artists from across Australia included in a major exhibition of 300 Indigenous artworks, titled Dreamtime. Lo spirit dell’arte aborigena, shown at the MAN museum, Nuoro, Sardinia, Italy from 11 February to 28 August 2011. (1, 2)

Balla draws upon her family and Indigenous identity for artistic inspiration. Katen boy was created in the aftermath of an emotional funeral for her uncle and Balla has recalled that she felt she was visited by her Indigenous ancestors as she captured this shadow image on her iPhone:

My six-year-old son was playing in the afternoon sun, picking up sticks and watching his shadow play out on the wall of a building. For an instant he took on the appearance of a young warrior, the stick became a spear and he became something else. On seeing the photograph for the first time, my mother pointed out to me that an old man spirit appeared on the wall looking over my son like a guardian. (3)

References:
Glennys BRIGGS
Taungurung/Yorta peoples
Moooroopna, Victoria, Australia, born 1948

**Bunjil** 2012

**PLACE MADE:** Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia

**MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE:** painting, synthetic polymer paint on canvas

**DIMENSIONS:** 1210 x 910

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** Purchased by CQUniversity, 2015.

**ACCESSION NO:** ART-A00858

**IMAGE RIGHTS:** Glennys Briggs. Licensed by the artist

Born at Moooroopna, Victoria, a descendant of the Yorta Yorta and Taungurung peoples, Glennys Briggs was raised on the Cummeragunja Aboriginal Reserve on the banks of the Murray River in New South Wales until she was 14 years old. Briggs later lived in Melbourne and Shepparton, Victoria, and worked as a foster care worker, Aboriginal liaison officer and legal field officer, as well as a flag maker, only beginning to paint in her 50s in 2002, the year she moved to Queensland. She draws inspiration from the creative activities of other family members, including her mother, who began to write short stories at the age of 72. Many of Glennys Briggs’ bold and colourful paintings are based on the creation beings in stories told to her by her brother. Briggs’ artworks have been exhibited in Brisbane and Melbourne and in an Aboriginal Art Exhibition at the College of Hospitality in Nice, France.¹

Bunjil, a creator deity, culture hero and ancestral being, appears in many of the creation stories of the Aboriginal people of south eastern Australia as the maker of the land, the people, the plants and animals, religion and laws by which people live. There is an ancient depiction of Bunjil and two dingos (his helpers) in a rock painting in a shelter in the Black Range Scenic Reserve, near Sawell, just east of the Grampians National Park — the Bunjil Shelter is unique in Victoria and is considered one of the State’s most important Aboriginal rock art sites.²,³

**References:**


Glennys BRIGGS
Taungurung/Yorta peoples
Mooroopna, Victoria, Australia, born 1948

*The great Lawman* 2012

**PLACE MADE:** Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia

**MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE:** painting, synthetic polymer paint on canvas

**DIMENSIONS:** 1210 x 910 mm

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** Purchased by CQUniversity, 2015.

**ACCESSION NO:** ART-A00859

**IMAGE RIGHTS:** © Glennys Briggs. Licensed by the artist

Many Aboriginal groups have stories about the ‘Coalsack’, as astronomers call the famous dark cloud of interstellar dust next to the Southern Cross. Aborigines tell stories of a great emu whose head is the Coalsack, and whose neck, body and legs are formed from dust lanes stretching across the Milky Way. There is in Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park an engraving of an emu, which appears to be oriented to line up with the Emu in the Sky, in the correct orientation, at just the time of year when real-life emus are laying their eggs.  

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**Reference:**

Lisa KENNEDY
Trawwoolway people
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, born 1963

*The gift* 2014

**PLACE MADE:** South Gippsland, Victoria, Australia

**MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE:** painting, synthetic polymer paint on canvas

**DIMENSIONS:** triptych: 610 x 1340

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** Purchased by CQUniversity, 2015.

**ACCESSION NO:** ART-A00860

**IMAGE RIGHTS:** © Lisa Kennedy. Licensed by the artist.

Lisa Kennedy is a visual artist, community arts project facilitator, children’s book author and illustrator and a descendant of Woretemoeteyenner, a Trawwoolway woman from north-east Tasmania. Kennedy’s colourful and visionary paintings are related to her sense of her Tasmanian ancestors and connection to the country of the Bratuaulong near the coast in South Gippsland, Victoria, where she lives. She has said that she weaves together inner and outer worlds through her paintings and stories and believes that all of us have songs and stories of healing within us. A challenge for her is to find a way of showing a continuous spiritual and physical living connection to country and ancestors, using imagery that is accessible to a wide audience.  

Reference:
Colin Wayne WEETRA
Narrunga people
Wallaroo/Adelaide, South Australia, Australia, 1953 – 2017

Community gathering 2016

PLACE MADE: Adelaide, South Australia, Australia

MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE: painting, synthetic polymer paint on canvas

DIMENSIONS: 1270 x 750

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Purchased by CQUniversity, 2017.

ACCESSION NO: ART-A00982

IMAGE RIGHTS: Licensed by the estate of Colin Weetra.

Confident, colourful and energetically painted with broad wet strokes, this work by Colin Weetra is a modern expression of a timeless theme: people gathered around a camp site. Weetra was an artist, health researcher and lecturer who worked at the University of South Australia and Tauondi College. He was born at Wallaroo, South Australia, a descendant of the Narrunga people of Yorke Peninsula. His family was removed from their homeland to Pooindi and then onto Point Pearce Aboriginal Community on Yorke Peninsula. Weetra travelled and worked throughout Australia, particularly within traditional lands, including the APY lands of central Australia, and maintained links with community members and extended family from there. (1, 2)

Education colleagues remembered Colin Weetra as a generous and talented artist. His ‘enthusiasm for life’ and, importantly, his stories, helped students and staff ‘see the world through an Aboriginal perspective.’ (3)

Like many elders, Weetra used storytelling not only to entertain but to keep alive the traditions and heritage of Aboriginal Australia within both Aboriginal communities and the wider community. One Narrunga creation story, passed down from generation to generation over thousands of years, concerns rising sea levels after the ice ages. The Narrunga recall the distant time when there was no Spencer Gulf, until one day when the sea came in:

There was once low-lying, swampy country covered with numerous lagoons. Disagreements amongst Ancestral Beings belonging to the bird, animal and reptile families caused great concern to leaders of the willy-wagtail, emu and kangaroo families. After a night of prophetic dreams, a giant kangaroo bone was found which proved to be magic. When the wise and respected kangaroo pointed the bone at the swampy land, the earth opened up and the sea gradually flooded the low land. (4)

This Creation Story describes the inundation of the central part of Spencer Gulf (forming what we now call the Yorke and Eyre Peninsulas) an event scientists estimate occurred between 15 000 and 8000 years ago. (5)

References:
(5) Ibid.
Lionel KANTAWARRA TJUPURRULA (Lolortja KUKATJA)
Kukatja/Western Arrernte peoples
Ikuntji (Haasts Bluff), Northern Territory, Australia, 1932 - 1988

Untitled 1985

PLACE MADE: Ikuntji (Haasts Bluff), Northern Territory, Australia

MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE: painting, synthetic polymer paint on canvas

DIMENSIONS: 1210 x 910


ACCESSION NO: ART-A00295

IMAGE RIGHTS: © the estate of the artist, licensed by Aboriginal Artists Agency Ltd.

The Desert ‘dot and circle’ style, now internationally acclaimed, was a striking new art movement when it emerged in the 1970s from the remote Aboriginal community of Papunya in central Australia. The movement was led by a small group of senior men who were among the first Aboriginal artists to transpose ceremonial body- and ground-painting symbolic motifs to an acrylic on canvas medium.

Lionel Kantawarra painted intermittently for the Papunya Tula Artists from November 1983 for several years. The Kukatja word ‘kantawarra’ means yellow ochre, which as we see in this work was a feature of Lionel Kantawarra’s palette. His dreamings included the bush onion (yalka). A traditional bush food, the onions are the size of a small shallot and may be eaten raw or cooked.

Lionel Kantawarra was born at Black Hill near Hermannsburg, the son of Roy and Olga. He was baptised by the Hermannsburg missionaries and educated in the mission school at Hermannsburg. He lived at Haasts Bluff from the 1950s, in 1957 marrying Anmanari Napanganka, whom he influenced to take up painting. (Their three daughters also became painters: Nola Nakamarra Kantawarra, Colleen Nakamarra Kantawarra and Daphne Kantawarra.) In 2016, Lionel Kantawarra was acknowledged as a traditional owner of the lands on which Henbury Station is situated (about 130 km south of Alice Springs).

References:
Jeannie LONG PETYARRE
Eastern Anmatyerre people
Atneltanye (Boundary Bore), Utopia homelands, Northern Territory, Australia, born c. 1951

Yam seed Dreaming 1999

PLACE MADE: Utopia, Northern Territory, Australia
MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE: painting, synthetic polymer paint on canvas
DIMENSIONS: 1210 x 910
ACCESSION NO: ART-A00735
IMAGE RIGHTS: © the artist, licensed by Aboriginal Artists Agency Ltd.

Jeannie Long Petyarre is a senior woman and established artist of the Eastern Anmatyerre language group from her clan’s country Alhalkere on the Utopia homelands, about 270 kilometres north-east of Alice Springs in central Australia. Jeannie was born around 1951 and comes from a large family of renowned artists. (1)

Utopia was established as a pastoral lease on Anmatyerre and Alywarr lands in 1927 and the land was given back to the traditional owners in 1979. Women were active in the Utopia land claim and also took a lead role in the art movement in the region, which began with making batiks from the late 1970s and then painting in acrylics on canvas from 1988 onwards. (2) Jeannie Petyarre began making batiks from 1981 and was encouraged by her aunt, the celebrated artist Emily Kame Kngwarreye, to paint her family’s Yam Dreaming. Jeannie’s paintings have been exhibited in Australia and internationally since 1989 and her work is in the collections of the National Gallery of Australia and the Holmes a Court Collection. (3)

Yam seed Dreaming makes reference to the Anwelarr (pencil yam), an edible tuber that is both an important food and significant in Anmatyerre Dreaming stories. The dots in the painting suggest flowers of the plant which sometimes cover large areas, while the dark background of meandering lines resembles the network of arterial roots of the plant underground. These lines also symbolise the ancestral connections passed down through the Dreaming. (4)

References:
(2) Beate Neumeier & Kay Schaffer, Decolonizing the landscape: Indigenous cultures in Australia, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2014, pp. 74-75.
(3) Red Rock Gallery, op. cit.
Selina SHEPHERD
Ngaanyatjarra people
Ngaanyatjarra Lands, Western Australia, Australia, born 1980

Untitled c. 2016

PLACE MADE: Warakurna, Western Australia, Australia

MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE: painting, synthetic polymer paint on canvas

DIMENSIONS: 1016 x 508

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Purchased by CQUniversity, 2016.

ACCESSION NO: ART-A00911

IMAGE RIGHTS: © the artist. Licensed by Warakurna Artists Aboriginal Corporation

Selina Shepherd’s home is Warakurna, a remote community situated on Ngaanyatjarra Lands in Western Australia. The Ngaanyatjarra Lands occupy an area the size of the state of Victoria or of the whole of the United Kingdom. They are located in the middle of Australia’s deserts, 1000 kilometres from the two nearest towns: Alice Springs to the east and Kalgoorlie to the west. (1)

The community has a long history of artistic expression and Selina Shepherd is an emerging artist who paints, weaves baskets and creates sculptures using minarri grass. She has exhibited in group exhibitions in Alice Springs, Western Australia and Sydney.

Reference:
Molly Malungka YATES
Tjarurru Ngaanyatjarra people
Ngaanyatjarra Lands, Western Australia, Australia, born 1946

Untitled  c. 2016

PLACE MADE: Warakurna, Western Australia, Australia

MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE: painting, synthetic polymer paint on canvas

DIMENSIONS: 1016 x 508

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Purchased by CQUniversity, 2016.

ACCESSION NO: ART-A00912

IMAGE RIGHTS: © the artist. Licensed by Warakurna Artists Aboriginal Corporation.

Molly Malungka Yates is a senior artist and elder at Warakurna in the Western Desert. She is renowned for her acrylic paintings, weaving, sculpture and wood carving. (1) Her subjects include the Seven Sisters and Two Sisters Dreamings (Kungkarangkalpa Tjukurpa and Minyma Kutjara Tjukurpa), which are associated with her country and are major stories for many desert artists.

The Seven Sisters is a tale with many layers: a chase across the country, a blend of courtship and sexual harassment, and a creation story explaining how the country and the Pleiades constellation came into being. The sisters are pursued by the shape-shifter Wati Nyiru, who turns himself into desirable items (ripe bush tomatoes, grass seeds) to entice the young maidens into his grasp. But the older sister always discerns his disguise and warns her younger sisters in time.

Thwarted, he sings them illness and the older sister starts to bleed, weakens, and unable to escape is raped and dies. Her sisters take her up into the sky and they become the constellation known as the Pleiades. She is the weak, faint star of the cluster. Wati Nyiru’s misshaped footprint, Orion’s belt, follows them forever. (2, 3)

The Two Sisters tells the story of an elder sister bringing her missing younger sister back to her homeland, after a long period of separation. During their travels, they create desert landmarks. Near Irrunytju the sisters sat on two hills with their digging stick making a rockhole. Near the end of their journey, the elder sister gave her tired younger sister a piggy back, forming the mountain on the Irrunytju side of Docker River. (4)

References:
(3) Ann McGrath, Mary Anne Jebb eds., Long history, deep time: Deeping histories of place, Canberra, ANU Press, 2015, p. 42.
DJARLINY
(Natalie Cheri Clark (Jackson))
Bibbulmun Wardandi Noongar peoples
Busselton, Western Australia, Australia, born 1974

*Koondarminy (Dreaming)* 2017

PLACE MADE: Busselton, Western Australia, Australia

MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE: painting, synthetic polymer paint on canvas

DIMENSIONS: 1400 x 1400

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Purchased by CQUniversity, 2017.

ACCESSION NO: ART-A00995

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Natalie Clark (nee Jackson, also known as Djarliny) was born at Busselton, Western Australia, of Bibbulmun Wardandi Noongar heritage. The various clans of the Noongar language group occupied all of south-west Western Australia for at least the last 45 000 years. In colonial times, despite experiencing massacres and introduced diseases, Noongar people retained connections to the lower south-west of Western Australia. Today, Noongar families still maintain their associations with ancestral territories through hunting, fishing and gathering and passing down oral histories. (1)

The artist states that this painting represents the delicate balance and vital connections present upon the Boodja (Country). The painting represents southwest of Western Australia Dreaming, where the land expresses itself through an organised symphony of creative expressions and organised life. (2)

Reference:
(2) Djarliny, personal communication, 27 October 2017.
The CQUUniversity collection of art created by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists is significant as a tribute to the knowledge and culture of Australia’s First Nations peoples and confirms the University’s commitment to social inclusiveness and reconciliation. Part of that visionary commitment is a dedication to building reciprocal respectful partnerships with Indigenous peoples in the communities where the University has a presence and conducts business.

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Sue Smith