

# **PAST LEGACY**

## **PRESENT TENSE**

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## ***Past Legacy: Present Tense***

*Past Legacy: Present Tense* looks at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists from city and bush studios who have made their mark by reinterpreting and transforming customary signs and objects into daringly different and modern works of art. Contemporary Indigenous artists make innovative works in organic and new media that memorialise and interrogate history, honour customary practices and forms of material culture and reference systems of shared signs and symbols.

This exhibition begins with the visionary paintings of Tiger Palpatja, one of the great colourists of the twenty-first century, and concludes with works of materiality and expansiveness by outstanding artists of the East Kimberley and Great Sandy Deserts of Western Australia. In between these rooms *Past Legacy: Present Tense* includes a selection of paintings and sculptures from the Torres Strait and Far North Queensland, which includes the NGV's newly acquired pack of Aurukun dogs and Jimmy Thaiday's haunting flock of black frigate birds. This display also explores the way Aboriginal artists remember and re-enact customary rituals in painting, printmaking and sculpture, and the memorable work of photographers Ricky Maynard and Michael Cook.

## Tiger Palpatja, *Wanampi Tjukurpa*, 2004–14

Tiger Palpatja's paintings narrate his *tjukurpa*, the creation story of Piltati, which concerns reciprocal relationships of food gathering, nurturing and labour between men and women. Embedded in the body of the land, in its rock holes, vegetation and subterranean depths, is the escalating conflict between *wati kutjara* (two brothers) and their wives, *minyma kutjara* (two sisters). Every day the women would go hunting, returning with bush food and meat for their husbands who were totally absorbed with performing *inma* (ceremonies). The wives, incensed by what they perceived as their husbands' laziness, decided to eat all the food they had gathered rather than share it. Angered by their wives' actions, the two men transformed themselves into *wanampi* (giant water serpents) and travelled beneath the ground. In vain pursuit of the *wanampi*, the women started digging into the ground, creating the rocky gorge at Piltati and its manifold water sources. Eventually the elder sister cut one of the *wanampi* with her digging stick, and the two *wanampi* came out of their burrows and devoured their wives. The artist's iconography of gigantic meanders and multiple circles renders heroic this epic narrative of misdemeanour, transformation and retribution, and portrays his identity in the land.

# **Tiger Palpatja**

Pitjantjatjara c. 1920–2012

# **Wanampi Tjukurpa**

2004 Amata, South Australia

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Gift of James Irvine through the Australian Government's  
Cultural Gifts Program, 2009

2009.164

# **Tiger Palpatja**

Pitjantjatjara c. 1920–2012

# **Wanampi Tjukurpa**

2007 Amata, South Australia

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Gift of Michael Moon, 2008

2008.278

# **Tiger Palpatja**

Pitjantjatjara c. 1920–2012

# **Wanampi Tjukurpa**

2007 Amata, South Australia

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Purchased, NGV Supporters of Indigenous Art, 2007

2007.455

# **Tiger Palpatja**

Pitjantjatjara c. 1920–2012

# **Wati Wanampi Tjukurpa**

2011 Amata, South Australia

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Purchased in memory of Graeme Marshall with funds donated by  
Harriet and Richard England and Anne and Ian McLean, 2011

2011.334

# **Tiger Palpatja**

Pitjantjatjara c. 1920–2012

# **Piltati Tjukurpa**

2010 Nyapari, South Australia  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Gift of Wayne McGeoch through the Australian  
Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2013

2013.304



# **Tiger Palpatja**

Pitjantjatjara c. 1920–2012

# **Wanampi Tjukurpa**

2010 Nyapari, South Australia  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Gift of Kean Ooi through the Australian Government's  
Cultural Gifts Program, 2014

2014.342

# **Tiger Palpatja**

Pitjantjatjara c. 1920–2012

# **Wanampi Tjukurpa**

2009 Amata South Australia

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Felton Bequest, 2011

2011.212

# **Tiger Palpatja**

Pitjantjatjara c. 1920–2012

# **Piltatingu**

2009 Amata South Australia

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Felton Bequest, 2011

2011.213

# **Tiger Palpatja**

Pitjantjatjara c. 1920–2012

# **Wanampi Tjukurpa**

2009 Amata, South Australia

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Felton Bequest, 2011

2011.211

## For kids

This painting tells how two sisters created a giant water hole when they were digging for food. Their husbands played a trick on them by transforming into giant water snakes and burying themselves deep down in the ground. The sisters could smell the snakes and tried to dig them out, but they were so deep underground that all their digging created Piltati, a place where there is always water.

Have you ever been tricked by a brother or sister into looking for something that is not there?

# Reko Rennie

Kamilaroi born 1974

## Regalia

2013 Melbourne

opaque synthetic polymer resin, neon

Purchased Victorian Foundation for  
Living Australian Artists, 2015

2015.178.a-c

‘Three hand-drawn symbols – the crown, the diamond and the Aboriginal flag – are presented as an emblematic statement about the original royalty of Australia.

The crown symbol pays homage to my graffiti roots and to Jean-Michel Basquiat, but most importantly reminds us that Aboriginal people are the original sovereigns of this country. The diamond symbol is emblematic of my connection to the Kamilaroi/Gamilaroi people: like a family crest, it is a part of me. The hand-drawn Aboriginal flag in the form of a graffiti tag pays respect to all Aboriginal people, from environments both urban and remote, and anywhere in between.’

**REKO RENNIE, 2013**

## For kids

Artist Reko Rennie is a Kamilaroi man who grew up in Footscray, in Melbourne's western suburbs. In this work, the neon symbols express Reko's identity. The crown relates to an artist whom he admires, the diamond shape refers to the Kamilaroi people, and the symbol at the bottom is the Aboriginal flag. Together they become a kind of self-portrait of the artist.

If you look at more of Reko's works, you will see these symbols appear again and again in different ways.

# Richard Bell

Jiman/Kooman/Kamilaroi/Gurang Gurang born 1965

## Little Johnny

2001 Brisbane

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Purchased Victorian Foundation for  
Living Australian Artists, 2008

2008.210

Richard Bell appropriates the layered multi-dot style of popular forms of 'real and authentic' Aboriginal art which are mocked by the words 'I am not sorry', which refer to then prime minister John Howard's refusal to apologise to the Stolen Generations. Bell states, 'A million people marched on Sorry Day 2000, but not little Johnny: this painting was a response to his "deep regret"'. Stylistically the painting also echoes the Ishihara tests for colour blindness, where digits or figures are embedded in a picture composed of dots differentiated only by colour. Bell's allusion to colour blindness imagines a world without racism.



# Alick Tipoti

Kala Lagaw Ya born 1975

## Poenipaniya (Masks)

2015 Cairns, Queensland

fibreglass, resin, cassowary feathers, pearl shell,  
synthetic polymer paint

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for  
Living Australian Artists, 2016

2016.22.a-p

These small *Mawa* masks, or *Poenipaniya*, are associated with the *baywa* (whirlwind). The different masks represent spirits that the old people see in the *baywa*. The masks are decorated with *samubaba* (cassowary feathers) because they make different whistling, spiritual sounds within the *baywa*. This ancient whistling phenomenon is also associated with the *samul wap* (dugong and turtle spear). The pearl-shell eyes show that the *baywa* walk from the sea to the land, providing the village with abundant quantities of seafood, including fish, dugong and turtles during sorry business. These customary practices involve *muruygal* (old people of the past).

## For kids

These masks represent different wind spirits named *Baywa*. The artist who made them is from an island right at the top of Australia called Badu. On Badu men would wear masks like this to help them to talk with spirits. The masks are decorated with cassowary feathers because they make different whistling sounds like a wind. The eyes are made from pearl shell and the story goes that when a spirit walks from the sea to the land they sometimes drop pearl shells along the beach.

Have you ever worn a mask or had your face painted?

# Brook Andrew

born Australia 1970

## The Island IV

2008 Melbourne

synthetic polymer paint and screenprint on blue metallic foil and cotton, ed. 3/3

Gift of Michael Schwarz and David Clouston through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2017

*The Island IV* reimagines, magnifies and renders fantastical a previously little-known photographic reproduction of an etching by Wilhelm von Blandowski of a men's ceremony of the Nyeri Nyeri people of the Murray Darling region of southern New South Wales. Andrew's gigantic screenprint parodies Blandowski's misunderstanding of the customary ritual of tooth extraction as a lurid blue reflective myth-scape invaded by crudely drawn 'savages' whom Blandowski described as 'writhing and convulsing in the dust'.

### New acquisition

# **Tony Albert**

Girramay/Yidinji/Kuku-Yalanji born 1981

## **Mid Century Modern**

**Smoking a Pipe**

**On Country**

**Man from Lithgow**

**Ceremony**

2016 Sydney

inkjet prints, ed. 1/2

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2017

These works feature ceramic and metal ashtrays found in op shops set against kitsch images of Aboriginal people, material culture and ceremony featured on tablecloths of the 1950s and 1960s. Each work offers a different perspective on how Aboriginal people and culture have been perceived, depicted and commodified by non-Indigenous people. When juxtaposed against mass-produced images of Aboriginal people and customary culture, these seemingly innocuous ashtrays allude to the misuse of images of Aboriginal people and cultural objects.

**New acquisition**

# Mirdidingkingathi Juwarnda Sally Gabori

Kaialdilt c. 1924–2015

## Thundi

2008 Mornington Island, Queensland  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Gift of Ben and Helen Korman through the Australian Government's  
Cultural Gifts Program, 2017

'Thundi is my father's Country on Bentinck Island. I have painted the big river that runs through it. We used to camp here as it was a safe place to shelter from bad weather.'

**SALLY GABORI, 2008**

**New acquisition**

# Mirdidingkingathi Juwarnda Sally Gabori

Kaialdilt c. 1924–2015

## Thundi

2011 Mornington Island, Queensland  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Gift of Terry Cutler, 2017

**New acquisition**

# **Birmuyingathi Maali Netta Loogatha**

Kaiadilt born 1942

# **Dibirdibi Elsie Gabori**

Kaiadilt born c. 1947

# **Grace Lilian Lee** collaborator

Meriam Mir born 1988

## **Burkunda, dress**

2017

painted cotton

'In the old days our mob made *burrkunda* (permanent markings on our body) to connect us to *kandu*, our blood relations, our family. Today we continue to make markings on paper, canvas and now fabric. Together we make these markings, strengthening our connections to family and Country. Today we can share this with a bigger world.'

ARTISTS' STATEMENT, 2017

## **Proposed acquisition**

**Helena Gabori**

Kaiadilt born 1963

**Agnes Kohler**

Kaiadilt born 1952

**Birmuyingathi Maali Netta Loogatha**

Kaiadilt born 1942

**Grace Lilian Lee** collaborator

Meriam Mir born 1988

**Burkunda, dress**

2017

painted cotton

**Proposed acquisition**



**Rayarriwarrtharrbayingathi  
Mingungurra Amy Loogatha**

Kaiadilt born 1946

**Alison Kirstin Goongarra**

Kaiadilt born 1984

**Dibirdibi Amanda Jane Gabori**

Kaiadilt born 1966

**Helena Gabori**

Kaiadilt born 1963

**Grace Lilian Lee** collaborator

Meriam Mir born 1988

**Burkunda, dress**

2017

painted cotton

**Proposed acquisition**

**Warthadangathi Bijarra Ethel Thomas**

Kaiadilt born 1946

**Birmuyingathi Maali Netta Loogatha**

Kaiadilt born 1942

**Agnes Kohler**

Kaiadilt born 1952

**Grace Lilian Lee** collaborator

Meriam Mir born 1988

**Burkunda, dress**

2017

painted cotton

**Proposed acquisition**

**Warthadangathi Bijarra Ethel Thomas**

Kaiadilt born 1946

**Dolly Thunduyingathui Bangaa**

**Loogatha**

Kaiadilt born c. 1946

**Grace Lilian Lee** collaborator

Meriam Mir born 1988

**Burkunda, dress**

2017

painted cotton

**Proposed acquisition**

**Warthadangathi Bijarra Ethel Thomas**

Kaiadilt born 1946

**Dibirdibi Amanda Jane Gabori**

Kaiadilt born 1966

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Kaiadilt born 1942

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Meriam Mir born 1988

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2017

painted cotton

**Proposed acquisition**

# **Thunduyingathui Bangaa Dolly Loogatha**

Kaiadilt born c. 1946

# **Dibirdibi Amanda Jane Gabori**

Kaiadilt born 1966

# **Helena Gabori**

Kaiadilt born 1963

# **Dibirdibi Elsie Gabori**

Kaiadilt born c. 1947

# **Grace Lilian Lee** collaborator

Meriam Mir born 1988

# **Burkunda, dress**

2017

painted cotton

**Proposed acquisition**



# **Warthadangathi Bijarra Ethel Thomas**

Kaiadilt born 1946

# **Dolly Thunduyingathui Bangaa**

# **Loogatha**

Kaiadilt born c. 1946

# **Dibirdibi Elsie Gabori**

Kaiadilt born c. 1947

# **Grace Lilian Lee** collaborator

Meriam Mir born 1988

# **Burkunda, dress**

2017

painted cotton

**Proposed acquisition**

# Jimmy John Thaiday

Meriam Mir born 1978

## Waumer, pirates of the air

2015 Erub, Torres Strait, Queensland  
ghostnet and twine

Purchased NGV Foundation, 2016

2016.690

‘When I watch the *waumer* (frigate birds), I can tell what the weather is going to do. When they fly high in the sky you know the weather is fine – they fly in spirals with their wings stretched out riding the thermals, hardly flapping at all. When they come over and land at coconut tree height you know there is strong wind coming. I like to watch them as they glide through the air. I call them pirates of the air because they are quite lazy, often stealing fish from other birds. The frigate bird with red under its neck is my totem.’

JIMMY JOHN THAIDAY, 2016

**New acquisition**

## For kids

Jimmy John Thaiday is from Erub – one of 133 islands located in the Torres Strait, between the tip of Queensland and Papua New Guinea. Jimmy has used old fishing nets washed up on the shore to create these sculptures of the sea bird named the frigate bird, which is Jimmy's totem. The feathers of another bird, the Torres Strait pigeon, are traditionally used in the making of headdresses called *dhari*.

Next time you see the Torres Strait Islander flag, look for the white *dhari* in the centre.

## For kids

Trevor Turbo Brown spent most of his life homeless. He got his nickname 'Turbo' because he was a breakdancer and once acted in a movie about breakdancing. When he was asked why he painted animals, he said that it was because when he was a teenager living on the streets in Mildura and along the banks of the Murray River, animals were his only friends. Here he paints birds that live at the lake at RMIT Bundoora, where he was at art school.

What birds and animals have you seen in the bush or near where you live?

# Trevor 'Turbo' Brown

Latje Latje 1967–2017

## The birds of the lake

2004 Bundoora, Melbourne, Victoria  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Purchased through the NGV Foundation with the assistance of Jacqueline Healy, 2005 2005.58

'This is a painting of the pelicans and birds that live at the lake at RMIT Bundoora. In the background, I have painted Uncle Herb driving Jemma the puppy to our home at Mill Park ... When I paint I feel like I'm in the Dreamtime and can see all the animals and birds that live there.'

TREVOR 'TURBO' BROWN, 2004

# **Peggy Napangardi Jones**

Warlpiri 1951–2014

## **Three lizards and nail tail wallaby**

1999, Tennant Creek, Northern Territory  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Gift of Cath Bowdler through the Australian Government's  
Cultural Gifts Program, 2013

2013.283

# **Peggy Napangardi Jones**

Warlpiri 1951–2014

## **Goanna, soakage and birds**

1999, Tennant Creek, Northern Territory  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Gift of James Cousins AO and Libby Cousins through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2017

**New acquisition**

## **Bevan Namponan**

Wik-Alkan/Wik-Ngathan born 1963

## **Bruce Bell**

Wik-Mungkan born c.1961

## **Lex Namponan**

Wik-Alkan/Wik-Ngathan born c.1961

## **Leigh Namponan**

Wik-Alkan/Wik-Ngathan born c.1961

## **Kenneth Bruce Wolmby**

Wik-Alkan/Wik-Ngathan born 1999

## **David Marpoondin**

Wik-Ngathan/Wik'en born 1968

## **Vernon Marbendinar**

Wik Alkan/Wik Mah'an born 1966

## **Suite of Ku (Camp dogs)**

2015–16 Aurukun, Queensland

synthetic polymer paint on Milkwood (*Alstonia sp.*)

Purchased Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2016

continued overleaf



The artists have sculpted a suite of *Ku* (camp dogs) – great and small – in different poses and sizes and with individual facial expressions. The Apelech brothers established the Story Place of the Dingo (Wild Dog) at Eeremangk in the mouth of the Knox River, Cape York, Queensland. It is a story of transformation, which links the land and the sea. When the Dingo left the land and entered the river or the sea, he became Nyiingkuchen, the Freshwater Shark. In ritual performances, such as those in which dingo and other sculptures are used, dancers re-enact the dramatic events that occurred when sacred totemic sites were being created.

## **New acquisition**

# Bevan Namponan

Wik-Alkan/Wik-Ngathan born 1963

## Starlight Ku

2015 Aurukun, Queensland

synthetic polymer paint on Milkwood (*Alstonia actinophylla*)

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2016

# Bevan Namponan

Wik-Alkan/Wik-Ngathan born 1963

## Black Ku

2016 Aurukun, Queensland

synthetic polymer paint on Milkwood (*Alstonia actinophylla*)

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2016

# Lex Namponan

Wik-Alkan/Wik-Ngathan c. 1961

## Smiley Blue Eye

2016 Aurukun, Queensland

synthetic polymer paint on Milkwood (*Alstonia actinophylla*)

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2016

# Lex Namponan

Wik-Alkan/Wik-Ngathan c. 1961

## Three legged Ku

2016 Aurukun, Queensland

synthetic polymer paint on Milkwood (*Alstonia actinophylla*)

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2016

# Lex Namponan

Wik-Alkan/Wik-Ngathan c. 1961

## Ancient Ku

2016 Aurukun, Queensland

synthetic polymer paint on Milkwood (*Alstonia actinophylla*)

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2016

# Bruce Bell

Wik-Mungkan born c. 1961

## Laughing Ku

2015 Aurukun, Queensland

synthetic polymer paint on Milkwood (*Alstonia actinophylla*)

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2016

# Leigh Namponan

Wik-Alkan/Wik-Ngathan born c.1961

## Brutus Ku

2015 Aurukun, Queensland

synthetic polymer paint on Milkwood (*Alstonia actinophylla*)

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2016



# **Leigh Namponan**

Wik-Alkan/Wik-Ngathan born c.1961

## **Shadow Ku**

2016 Aurukun, Queensland

synthetic polymer paint on Milkwood (*Alstonia actinophylla*)

**Proposed acquisition**

# Kenneth Bruce Wolmby

Wik-Alkan/Wik-Ngathan born 1999

## Black Ku

2016 Aurukun, Queensland

synthetic polymer paint on Milkwood (*Alstonia actinophylla*)

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2016

# Vernon Marbendinar

Wik-Alkan/Wik Mah'an born 1966

## Mr Lion (Dingo story Ku)

2016 Aurukun, Queensland

synthetic polymer paint on Milkwood (*Alstonia actinophylla*)

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2016

# David Marpoondin

Wik-Alkan/Wik'en born 1968

## Big Ku

2016 Aurukun, Queensland

synthetic polymer paint on Milkwood (*Alstonia actinophylla*)

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2016

# David Marpoondin

Wik-Alkan/Wik'en born 1968

## Ochre Ku

2016 Aurukun, Queensland

synthetic polymer paint on Milkwood (*Alstonia actinophylla*)

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2016

# Bruce Bell

Wik-Mungkan born c. 1961

## Ku – Camp dog

2015 Aurukun, Queensland

synthetic polymer paint on Milkwood (*Alstonia actinophylla*)

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2016

# Garry Namponan

Wik-Alkan/Wik-Ngathan born 1960

## Baby blossom Ku

2016 Aurukun, Queensland

earth pigments and synthetic polymer paint on Milkwood  
(*Alstonia actinophylla*)

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2016

# Garry Namponan

Wik-Alkan/Wik-Ngathan born 1960

## Champ Ku

2016 Aurukun, Queensland

earth pigments and synthetic polymer paint on Milkwood  
(*Alstonia actinophylla*)

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for  
Living Australian Artists, 2016

2016.667



# Garry Namponan

Wik-Alkan/Wik-Ngathan born 1960

## Ku (Camp dog)

2004 Aurukun, Queensland

earth pigments and synthetic polymer paint on milkwood  
(*Alstonia sp.*)

Gift of Anthony Stolarek through the  
Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2014

2014.689

**Pitcha Makin Fellaz, Ballarat, Victoria**  
art collective  
est. 2013

## **Aboriginal dog**

2014 Ballarat, Victoria

synthetic polymer paint on polyvinyl chloride foamboard

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for  
Living Australian Artists, 2014

2014.662

A power pole near where one of the Pitcha Makin Fellaz lives was tagged with the abusive sign 'Black dog', which prompted the artists to create a positive response. Their idea was to point out the strong connection that Aboriginal people have had with dingoes for a very long time.

# Guykuda Mununggurr

Djapu born 1966

## Wolfman

2016 Yirrkala, Northern Territory

earth pigments on Kapok (*Bombax ceiba sp.*) and Stringybark (*Eucalyptus sp.*)

Purchased with funds donated by Professor John Hay AC and Barbara Hay, 2016

Guykuda has carved a wolfman – a fantastical being, half man and half beast – inspired by his viewing of the film *An American Werewolf in London* (1981), on a DVD player powered by a generator, by the fire at Garrthalala in the Northern Territory. In Yolngu law, Bäru the man transforms into Bäru the Crocodile through fire, and transformation is a keynote of the Yolngu mindset. In this case, the wolfman has no tail because he has not fully transformed. Guykuda has distinguished himself as an innovative sculptor who pioneers the use of new materials and techniques.

## New acquisition

## For kids

This is a carving of a made-up creature known as the wolfman. The artist who carved this sculpture is from a place called Arnhem Land, up in the North of Australia. This sculpture is inspired by his viewing of a Hollywood movie. If you look closely, you will see that the Wolfman doesn't have a tail. This is because he is still in the process of transforming from a man into a wolf.

Can you think of any other made-up creatures that you have read about or seen in movies or cartoons?

**Pitcha Makin Fellaz, Ballarat, Victoria**  
art collective  
est. 2013

**We know where you eat (Koala)**

2013 Ballarat, Victoria

synthetic polymer paint on polyvinyl chloride foamboard

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for  
Living Australian Artists, 2014

2014.663

**Pitcha Makin Fellaz, Ballarat, Victoria**  
art collective  
est. 2013

## **Me 'n' You (Me n u) number 2**

2014 Ballarat, Victoria

synthetic polymer paint on polyvinyl chloride foamboard

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for  
Living Australian Artists, 2015

2015.177

The Pitcha Makin Fellaz have painted a huge work in which two growling grass frogs of different colour face each other, in a radical interpretation of 'I see you: you see me!' Below the giant amphibians are a myriad of tadpoles, and behind the frogs are innumerable insects. The frog depicted is sometimes named the Southern Bell Frog or Warty Swamp Frog and is local to Ballarat. It is struggling to survive in this urbanised landscape.

# **Peggy Napangardi Jones**

Warlpiri 1951–2014

## **White cocky, black cocky and goanna**

2001 Melbourne

synthetic polymer paint on corrugated iron on  
composition board

Presented through the NGV Foundation by  
Lance Hammond, Member, 2002

2002.193

# Unknown

Warlpiri/Warumungu/Warlmanpa/Kaytej active 1980s

## Wakulpu, shield

## Kanturpa, shield

## Miyikampi, shield

## Kanturpa, shield

## Pawurinji, shield

## Miyikampi, shield

## Ngunuluru, shield

1981 Ali-Curung, Northern Territory

earth pigments on beanwood (*Erythrina vespertilio*)

Gift of Ross Howie, 2013

2013.288, 2013.287, 2013.290, 2013.289,  
2013.291, 2013.293, 2013.292



## Shields for the 1981 Native Title Land Claim

These seven fluted and painted Central Australian shields are made from beanwood (*Erythrina vespertilio*). They are painted on the front with totemic designs in red ochre against a background of white dots and bear customary deep lug handles on the verso.

Each shield is specific to a particular Country and bears designs that signify an ancestral being associated with one of the seven Countries that formed the 1981 Kaytej, Warlpiri and Walmanpa Land Claim. In December 1981 the shields were presented to Ross Howie, who represented the claimants at the hearing in Ali-Curung. The Land Claim was made pursuant to the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* and heard by Mr Justice Toohey, the Aboriginal Land Commissioner, in December 1981. An area of 14,420 square kilometres of Crown land south-west of Tennant Creek was claimed, comprising the Country of seven land-holding groups.

The seven shields represent five of these Countries: Pawurinji, Miyikampi, Ngunulurru, Kanturru and Wakulpu. The direct association of these shields with the 1981 Native Title claim gives this body of work immense historical, political and cultural significance.

# Paddy Compass Namadbara

Iwaidja c. 1890–1973

## Namarnday spirits

early 1960s Minjilang, Croker Island, Northern Territory  
earth pigments on Stringybark (*Eucalyptus sp.*)

Presented through The Art Foundation of Victoria by  
Ian Rogers, Member, 2000

2000.220

# Paddy Compass Namadbara

Iwaidja c. 1890–1973

## Namarnday spirits

early 1960s Minjilang, Croker Island, Northern Territory  
earth pigments on Stringybark (*Eucalyptus sp.*)

Gerstl Bequest, 2000

2000.224

Namarnday spirits are malignant or profane spirits of the human dead, associated with love magic and acts of sorcery used as a punishment for sexual misconduct. The male and female spirits are particularly animated and have prominent genitalia common to sorcery paintings found on cave walls. One painting represents male and female spirits in an erotic rather than malevolent act. The other shows male Namarnday with limbs and genitals abnormally long and twisted, symbolic of evil or retributive intent.

# **Paddy Compass Namadbara**

Iwaidja c. 1890–1973

## **Male and female Mimih**

c. 1960 Minjilang, Croker Island, Northern Territory  
earth pigments on Stringybark (*Eucalyptus sp.*)

Gift of Margaret Bullen through the Australian Government's  
Cultural Gifts Program, 2014

2014.365

# Paddy Compass Namadbara

Iwaidja c. 1890–1973

## Mimih spirit

c. 1960 Minjilang, Croker Island, Northern Territory  
earth pigments on Stringybark (*Eucalyptus sp.*)

Gift of Margaret Bullen through the Australian Government's  
Cultural Gifts Program, 2014

2014.364

# Jimmy Midjawmidjaw

Kunwinjku 1897–1985

## Three female dancing Mimih spirits

1950s Minjilang, Croker Island, Northern Territory  
earth pigments on Stringybark (*Eucalyptus sp.*)

Gift of Margaret Bullen through the Australian Government's  
Cultural Gifts Program, 2014

2014.366

Jimmy Midjawmidjaw represents slender female Mimih spirits of the Stone Country engaging in a lithesome ceremonial dance. The faces, limbs and torsos of these beings credited with teaching Kunwinjku people how to hunt, make love, dance, sing and paint, are lightly embellished with crisscross and horizontal markings that allude to customary ritual. The positioning of the figures' arms and feet suggests uninhibited movement, and the clear delineation of their ample breasts accentuates their femaleness. They are painted in the old East Alligator River style, exemplified by rock paintings from Deaf Adder Creek and Nourlangie Rock in Western Arnhem Land.

# Jimmy Midjawmidjaw

Kunwinjku 1897–1985

## Male and female Mimih spirits

1959 Minjilang, Croker Island, Northern Territory  
earth pigments on Stringybark (*Eucalyptus* sp.)

Gift of Dr Margaret Bullen, 2007

2007.429

# Wanyubi Marika

Rirratjingu born 1967

## Djang'kawu at Gumararra

Matalatj, Djang'kawu younger sister

Djanda

Rangga

Walu

Bitjiwurruurru, Djang'kawu elder  
sister

2012–13 Yirrkala, Northern Territory  
earth pigments on Stringybark (*Eucalyptus sp.*)

Purchased, NGV Supporters of Indigenous Art, 2015

2013.380.a-e

continued overleaf



'The design of these feathered barks signifies the coastal place of Gumararra on the sunset side of the Yalangbara peninsula, which is the landing site of the Djang'kawu Sisters – the major creator beings for everything associated with the Dhuwa moiety. Mawalan is the name given to the sacred staff the Sisters use to create springs and rocks and other features in their later journeys through the land of other Dhuwa clans. The Sisters prepare for the first birth, a self-fertilised act of creation. The design shows salt water drying off on the skin. The sun has risen on the birth of a nation; the Rirratjingu clan.'

**WANYUBI MARIKA, 2013**

# Shorty Lungkata Tjungurrayi

Pintupi c. 1920–87

## Waterhole in a cave

1972 Papunya, Northern Territory

synthetic polymer paint on composition board

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with  
the assistance of ICI Australia Ltd, Fellow, 1988

O.11-1988

Through the act of painting, Shorty Lungkata was also dancing and singing and embodying his spiritual identity in the land. The reiterative circles, compulsive stippling, rhythmical mark-making and linear patterning of his paintings on board suggest the kinetic dance movements and percussive rhythms of ceremony. This work represents a cleared ceremonial ground in the interior of a cave at an unnamed place. A rocky outcrop or escarpment is indicated by the layered angular designs which open out towards the left. The subtle variations in dotting and linear patterning evoke both ritual designs and the way water drains into this cave site.

# Shorty Lungkata Tjungurrayi

Pintupi c. 1920–87

## Tingarri story at Pirmalynga

1972 Papunya, Northern Territory

enamel paint on composition board

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with  
the assistance of ICI Australia Ltd, Fellow, 1988

O.55-1987

This work represents a story involving fire at Pirmalynga, a site of revelation in the Tingarri cycle. At this place, burning sparks and embers were thrown over the Tingarri novices who were 'put into the fire' as they came into camp from seclusion, under the guidance and direction of older men. The central circle may represent the cleared ceremonial ground, and the surrounding interconnected circles may indicate the men painting each other, and also refer to their body designs. The bold meander to the left indicates a sandhill, characteristic of the topography of the site.

# Shorty Lungkata Tjungurrayi

Pintupi c. 1920–87

## Untitled

1972 Papunya, Northern Territory

synthetic polymer paint on composition board

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with  
the assistance of ICI Australia Ltd, Fellow, 1988

O.10-1988

# Shorty Lungkata Tjungurrayi

Pintupi c. 1920–87

## Untitled

1972 Papunya, Northern Territory

synthetic polymer paint on composition board

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with  
the assistance of ICI Australia Ltd, Fellow, 1988

O.86-1989

# Shorty Lungkata Tjungurrayi

Pintupi c. 1920–87

## Old man's Dreaming

1972 Papunya, Northern Territory

synthetic polymer paint on composition board

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with  
the assistance of ICI Australia Ltd, Fellow, 1988

2009.5

# Inyuwa Nampitjinpa

Pintupi c. 1922–99

## Women's Dreaming at Punkilpirri

1997 Kintore, Northern Territory

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Gift of Marina Strocchi and Wayne Eager through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2016

2016.1066

In these five paintings Inyuwa Nampitjinpa has depicted a Women's Dreaming at her birthplace, Punkilpirri, a large permanent water site south of the Tjukurla community. This block of the artist's Country includes other significant sites of Pulkata, Pukulanya, Yumari and Wintjintjarra. A large group of women camped at Punkilpirri and gathered the *mangata* (fruit of the quandong tree) which is widespread in the Country. They also gathered the edible berry *kampurarrpa*, or bush raisin (*Solanum centrale*), which is ground into a paste and made into damper. The clustering of rock holes is Inyuwa's way of remembering a place of abundant water and plant life.

### New acquisition

# **Inyuwa Nampitjinpa**

Pintupi c. 1922–99

# **Women's Dreaming at Punkilpirri**

1997 Kintore, Northern Territory

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Gift of Marina Strocchi and Wayne Eager through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2016

2016.1065

**New acquisition**



# **Inyuwa Nampitjinpa**

Pintupi c. 1922–99

# **Women's Dreaming at Punkilpirri**

1997 Kintore, Northern Territory

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Gift of Marina Strocchi and Wayne Eager through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2016

2016.1064

**New acquisition**

# Inyuwa Nampitjinpa

Pintupi c. 1922–99

# Women's Dreaming at Punkilpirri

1998 Kintore, Northern Territory

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Purchased, 1998

1998.287

# Inyuwa Nampitjinpa

Pintupi c. 1922–99

# Women's Dreaming at Punkilpirri

1999 Kintore, Northern Territory

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Gift of Marina Strocchi and Wayne Eager through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2009

2009.169

# Inyuwa Nampitjinpa

Pintupi c. 1922–99

## Women's Dreaming at Punkilpirri

1996 Kintore, Northern Territory

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Gift of Marina Strocchi and Wayne Eager through the  
Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2016

2016.1063

# Paddy Japaljarri Stewart

Warlpiri born c. 1940

# Paddy Japaljarri Sims

Warlpiri born c. 1940

## Yuendumu Doors

2000 Yuendumu, Northern Territory

colour etchings, ed. 32/5

Gift of Alison and Tony Kelly, 2001

2001.833.1-30

This series of Warlpiri *kuruwarri* (ancestral designs) is based on the Yuendumu Doors of 1983, when Paddy Stewart, Paddy Sims and three other Warlpiri elders painted their Jukurrpa (Dreamings) on thirty Yuendumu school doors. The Yuendumu Doors signalled the origin of painting with modern materials in the community. The etching medium has been brilliantly used to enable the ancestral signs and symbols that comprise the Warlpiri visual language to be easily read against a range of plain backgrounds. Owing to the small scale of the plates, the artists decided just to paint the *kuruwarri*, the symbols that tell each *jukurrpa*, and not the background dots present in the Doors.

# Frank Djekula Birrkali 1

Gupapuyngu c. 1943–2001

## Djurrpun (Evening Star Pole)

1993 Burrum'ngur, Northern Territory

*Garayurru* (Stringybark) (*Eucalyptus sp.*), *butju* (feathers),  
*raki* (fibre string), earth pigments

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with  
the assistance of the Alcoa Foundation, Governor 1994

O.122-1994

# David Lakarriny

Galpu born 1956

## **Bänumbirr (Morning star pole)**

1993 Ngaypinya, Northern Territory

*Malwan* (Hibiscus) (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*), *butju* (feathers),  
earth pigments, *raki* (fibre string)

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with  
the assistance of the Alcoa Foundation, Governor 1994

O.120-1994

# Wilson Lanydjura

Malarra born c. 1955

## Bänumbirr (Morning star pole)

1993 Gunbirrdji, Northern Territory

*Malwan* (Hibiscus) (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*), *butju* (feathers),  
earth pigments, *raki* (fibre string)

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with  
the assistance of the Alcoa Foundation, Governor 1994

O.116-1994



# Wilson Lanydjura

Malarra born c. 1955

## Bänumbirr (Morning star pole)

1993 Gunbirrdji, Northern Territory

*Malwan* (Hibiscus) (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*), *butju* (feathers),  
earth pigments, *raki* (fibre string)

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the  
assistance of the Alcoa Foundation, Governor 1994

O.116-1994

# Gali Yalkarriwuy

Galpu born c. 1948

## Bänumbirr (Morning star pole)

1993 Ngurruyurrtjurr, Northern Territory

*Malwan* (Hibiscus) (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*), *butju* (feathers),  
earth pigments, *raki* (fibre string),

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of  
the Alcoa Foundation, Governor, 1994

O.121-1994

# Henry Nupurra

Djambarrpuyngu born 1932

**Bänumbirr (Morning star poles)**

**Bänumbirr (Morning star poles)**

**Bänumbirr (Morning star poles)**

**Bänumbirr (Morning star poles)**

1993 Ngurruyurrtjurr, Northern Territory

*Malwan* (Hibiscus) (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*), *butju* (feathers),  
earth pigments, *raki* (fibre string),

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with  
the assistance of the Alcoa Foundation, Governor, 1994

O.114-1994, O.115-1994, O.117-1994,  
O.118-994

# Henry Nupurra

Djambarrpuyngu born 1932

## Bänumbirr (Morning star poles)

1997 Ngurruyurrtjurr, Northern Territory

*Malwan* (Hibiscus) (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*), *butju* (feathers),  
earth pigments, *raki* (fibre string), honey ant wax, cotton

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance  
of the Marjory and Alexander Lynch Endowment, Governors 1997

1997.336

# Gali Yalkarriwuy

Galpu born c. 1948

## Ganguri (Long yams)

## Ganguri (Long yams)

1993 Ngaypinya, Northern Territory

*Malwan* (Hibiscus) (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*), *butju* (feathers),  
earth pigments, *raki* (fibre string)

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the  
assistance of the Alcoa Foundation, Governor 1994

O.119-1994, O.121-1994

# Gali Yalkarriwuy

Galpu born c. 1948

## Bänumbirr (Morning star pole)

1997 Ngaypinya, Northern Territory

*Malwan* (Hibiscus) (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*), *butju* (feathers),  
earth pigments, *raki* (fibre string), cotton

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance  
of the Marjory and Alexander Lynch Endowment, Governors 1997

1997.337

# Henry Nupurra

Djambarrpuyngu born 1932

## Bänumbirr (Morning star pole)

1993 Ngurruyurtjurr, Northern Territory

*Malwan* (Hibiscus) (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*), *butju* (feathers),  
earth pigments, *raki* (fibre string),

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of  
the Alcoa Foundation, Governor, 1994

O.114-1994

# Henry Nupurra

Djambarrpuyngu born 1932

## **Bänumbirr (Morning star pole)**

1993 Ngurruyurtjurr, Northern Territory

*Malwan* (Hibiscus) (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*), *butju* (feathers),  
earth pigments, *raki* (fibre string),

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of  
the Alcoa Foundation, Governor, 1994

O.115-1994



# Henry Nupurra

Djambarrpuyngu born 1932

## Bänumbirr (Morning star pole)

1993 Ngurruyurrtjurr, Northern Territory

*Malwan* (Hibiscus) (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*), *butju* (feathers),  
earth pigments, *raki* (fibre string),

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of  
the Alcoa Foundation, Governor, 1994

O.117-994

# Henry Nupurra

Djambarrpuyngu born 1932

## **Bänumbirr (Morning star pole)**

1993 Ngurruyurrtjurr, Northern Territory

*Malwan* (Hibiscus) (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*), *butju* (feathers),  
earth pigments, *raki* (fibre string),

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of  
the Alcoa Foundation, Governor, 1994

O.118-1994

# Ian Wuruwul

Ganalbingu born 1950

## Wurramu figure

1994 Galiwin'ku, Elcho Island, Northern Territory  
earth pigments on wood (*dedi*) (*Canarium australianum*),  
hand-spun string, feathers (*butju*), human hair

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with  
the assistance of the Alcoa Foundation, Governor 1994

O.113-1994

# Gali Yalkarriwuy

Galpu born c. 1948

## Ganguri (Long yam)

1993 Ngaypinya, Northern Territory

*Malwan* (Hibiscus) (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*), *butju* (feathers),  
earth pigments, *raki* (fibre string)

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of  
the Alcoa Foundation, Governor 1994

O.119-1994

# Gali Yalkarriwuy

Galpu born c. 1948

## Ganguri (Long yam)

1993 Ngaypinya, Northern Territory

*Malwan* (Hibiscus) (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*), *butju* (feathers),  
earth pigments, *raki* (fibre string)

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of  
the Alcoa Foundation, Governor 1994

O.121-1994

# Gali Yalkarriwuy

Galpu born c. 1948

**Bänumbirr (Morning star pole)**

**Bänumbirr (Morning star pole)**

**Bänumbirr (Morning star pole)**

**Bänumbirr (Morning star pole)**

**Bänumbirr (Morning star pole)**

2011 Ngaypinya, Northern Territory

*Malwan* (Hibiscus) (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*), *butju* (feathers), earth pigments, *raki* (fibre string), cotton

Purchased, NGV Supporters of Indigenous Art 2011

2011.417 – 2011.421

Bänumbirr (Morning Star poles) such as these are made for the Bänumbirr ceremony by members of Dhuwa moiety clans. This exchange ceremony is used to establish connections between different peoples and to commemorate deceased relatives. Feathers at the top of the poles represent the Morning Star, Venus, and feathered strings represent individual clans and their link to the Bänumbirr. Morning Star poles are statements of cultural identity: they represent specific stretches of Country and the people to whom they belong. In the eyes of their Yolngu makers, the poles also promote cross-cultural dialogue and transmit knowledge to their descendants.

# Bob Burruwal

Rembarrnga born 1952

## Buya Male

2011 Gochan Jiny-jirra, Northern Territory  
earth pigments, Kurrajong (*Brachychiton diversifolus*),  
bush wax and feathers

Purchased with funds donated by Lou and Mary Senini, 2011

2011.12

The artist has made a Buya Male ceremonial pole decorated with masses of orange lorikeet feathers. Buya Male ceremonial poles are used in the initiation ceremonies of young men and can only be made by two knowledgeable men in the Maningrida region – Rembarrnga artists Bob Burruwal and his brother, Jackie Nawilil.

# Michael Cook

Bidjara born 1968

## Object

**Lamp**

**Table**

**Footstool**

**Ashtray**

**Vase**

2015 St Kilda, Melbourne  
inkjet print

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for  
Living Australian Artists, 2015

2015.469.1-5

In this photographic tableau, set in an opulent nineteenth-century drawing room, Michael Cook stages a role reversal to address the global experience of slavery, as he states: 'It's the first body of work I've tried to get outside of Australia to relate to other colonised countries ... but Australians shouldn't forget the black-birding practices of Queensland's sugar cane industry'.



# **Ricky Maynard**

Ben Lomond/Big River born 1953

# **Wik Elder, Gladys**

from the *Returning to places that name us* series

2000 Aurukun, Queensland

gelatin silver photograph

Gift of Milton and Penny Harris, 2007

2007.542

# Ricky Maynard

Ben Lomond/Big River born 1953

# Wik Elder, Arthur

from the *Returning to places that name us* series

2000 Aurukun, Queensland

gelatin silver photograph

Purchased with funds donated by Carolyn Poignant Berger  
in memory of Axel Poignant, 2008

2008.24

'We need to understand and learn from history because if we repeat history we head for tragedy... I wanted a presence and portraits that spoke, and through this process to present an idea, rather than preach messages.'

RICKY MAYNARD, 2001

In 2004 the NGV filmed two cultural warriors of the Aurukun community, in consultation with the Wik & Kugu Art Centre. With the permission of the community, we are screening these historic interviews with Arthur Koo'ekka Pambegan Jnr, an outstanding sculptor and cultural leader, and Gladys Tybingoompa (1946–2006), the woman who danced outside the High Court in Canberra after the court ruled in favour of the Wik native title claim in burkunda 1996.

# Carlene West

Pitjantjatjara born c. 1945

## Tjitjiti

2015 Tjuntjuntjara, Western Australia  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Purchased with funds donated by Judith and Leon Gorr, 2016

Carlene West represents her birthplace, Tjitjiti, a vast, white salt lake ringed by uneven sand hills. Two women were walking across the lake with a child when a stranger, Wati Kinika (the Native Cat man) asked them to hand over the child. The women tried to escape, but Wati Kinika released a hail of spears, one of which impaled the two women and the child together. A rocky outcrop rising at one end of the lake represents the women and child standing where they were murdered – a protruding seam of reddish brown and white signifies the Wati Kinika's spears.

# Paddy Bedford

Gija c. 1922–2007

## Cockatoo – Jawoorraban

2004 Kununurra, Western Australia

earth pigments on composition board

Purchased with funds from the Victorian Foundation for  
Living Australian Artists, 2004

2004.629

‘Ngayilanyji, the white cockatoo, was an important law man in Dreamtime. He sat up on a hill on one side of a gorge and called out to a group of men who were travelling south to Lansdowne during law time for young men. “Why do you want to go that way? That is Gooniyandi Country. You should stay here in Gija Country.” They all became part of the land at a place named Jawoorraban by Gija people.’

PADDY BEDFORD, 2004

# Paddy Bedford

Gija c. 1922–2007

## Lightning Creek

2004 Kununurra, Western Australia

earth pigments on composition board

Purchased with funds from the Victorian Foundation for  
Living Australian Artists, 2004

2004.630

'The emu wanted to keep walking night and day, never stopping, never resting, but the bush turkey wanted to stop. She went away from the emu and gathered lots of small bush fruit in the area, shown by the pink circle. She made camp and cooked them in the fire in the place shown by the red circle, called Lightning Creek by Europeans. When she did this, night fell and the emu became stuck in the rock at Mount King.'

**PADDY BEDFORD, 2004**

# Paddy Bedford

Gija c. 1922–2007

## Thoowoonggonarrin

2004 Kununurra, Western Australia

earth pigments on composition board

Purchased with funds from the Victorian Foundation for  
Living Australian Artists, 2004

2004.632

Thoowoonggonarrin is a place in the artist's mother's country on Bedford Downs in the East Kimberley. It is the Dreaming place for a tree named *Thoowoonggoony* – a large tree with dark leaves that is related to fig trees. The artist's mother's sister died and is buried in this Country. There are two big hills with the river and a little creek shown going around the edge of the painting.

# Paddy Bedford

Gija c. 1922–2007

## Mt King – Emu Dreaming

2004 Kununurra, Western Australia

earth pigments on composition board

Purchased with funds from the Victorian Foundation for  
Living Australian Artists, 2004

2004.631

The painting is about Karnanganyjel, the Emu Dreaming at Mount King to the west of Bedford Downs Station. Mount King is in an area with a line of high rocky cliffs. The emu, poised on the rock, is seen in the centre left. The black circle in the lower right indicates the area where a large number of the artist's relations were poisoned in about 1920, in retaliation for the killing of a bullock.



# Rover Thomas

Kukatja/Wangkajunga c. 1926–98

## Dreamtime story of the willy willy

1989 Warmun, Western Australia

earth pigments and natural binder on canvas

Felton Bequest, 1990

O.1-1990

This painting shows the ancestral path of *miowin*, a willy willy or spiralling dust storm, indicated by the swirling red-ochre design unleashed on the matt, white surface of the land and rising into the sky. The storm began as a murmur, in the upper right, and kept increasing in size and velocity as it moved through Jaru Country until it reached *badangu ngapa* (the main waterhole), shown enclosed by the spiral. Here the willy willy was consumed by Garagi, the Rainbow Serpent, who is associated with storms in the Kimberley region.

# Rover Thomas

Kukatja/Wangkajunga c. 1926–98

## Yari country

1989 Warmun, Western Australia

earth pigments and natural binder on canvas

Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of Pacific Dunlop Limited, Fellow, 1990 O.7-1990

An old spirit man was dying in *wala* (desert) Country ravaged by drought, shown by the red-ochre section. This *wala* (desert) section is bordered on two sides by white expanses representing *yari* (milky water billabongs) where the old man bent to drink to excess. Then, finding that the water was poisonous, he retreated to light a fire, shown in blackened rectangle that represents *junpa* (charcoal fire). The fire raged out of control and the old man, unable to escape from the force of the flames, was burnt to death. At this place, the old man's spirit entered and became the land.

# Rover Thomas

Kukatja/Wangkajunga c. 1926–98

## Railway bridge, Katherine

1984 Warmun, Western Australia

earth pigments and natural binder on composition board

Purchased from admission funds, 1990

O.160-1990

The artist represents the railway bridge at Katherine, the third largest town in the Northern Territory, reducing the bridge to its barest essentials.

# Rover Thomas

Kukatja/Wangkajunga c. 1926–98

## Yunurr (Spring Creek)

1991 Warmun, Western Australia

earth pigments and natural binder on canvas

Felton Bequest, 2010

2010.360

Thomas has painted Yunurr, near Spring Creek junction in Gija Country, on Texas Downs Station where he worked as a stockman, mustering cattle. There is a long hill at Yunurr where an ancestral snake travelled in the *ngarrangkani* (Dreaming) and made a spring by urinating. In the centre of the work, Thomas represents Red Fire or Kilfoyle Hill as a rounded, squarish shape bearing loose yellow dotting that stands out on a black ground. The red-ochre angular section in the bottom left corner indicates the road for cars near the hill.

# Sonia Kurarra

Wamajarri born c. 1952

## Martuwarra

2016 Noonkanbah, Western Australia  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Gift of Judith and Leon Gorr, 2017

'Martuwarra is my river country. This painting is all about the Fitzroy River which flows down through Noonkanbah where I live and is surrounded by *wakiri* (pandanus trees) and rocks. All kinds of fish live in the water: we catch *parlka* (barramundi), catfish bream, *nganku* (shark), *wirritunany* (swordfish) and stingray. When the barramundi tire, they go back into the rock holes. Kalpurthu (creator serpent beings) also inhabit these rock holes and swim along the *palma* (creeks) and all around the pandanus that grows in the river.'

SONIA KURARRA, 2016

## New acquisition

# Lena Nyadbi

Gija born c. 1936

## Starry night in Jimbirla country

2000 Warmun, Western Australia

earth pigments on canvas

Purchased through the NGV Foundation with the assistance of the Joan Clemenger Endowment, Governor, 2001

DC16-2001

Working with an austere monochrome palette, matt texture and an emphatic repetition of simple designs over large surfaces, Nyadbi has formulated an ascetic visual language that conceptualises her innermost feeling for Country. The graphic vertical signs represent *jimbirla* (spearheads) made from razor-sharp stones that abound in Nyadbi's father's Jimbirla Country, which lies north of Warmun. *Jimbirla* were often produced for ritual exchange and hunting and were also used to make cicatrices on initiates' bodies in ceremony. As a dramatic counterpoint to this formal gravitas, stars float and shimmer elusively in the smoky grey night sky, an allusion to the infinite beyond.

**New acquisition**

# Ronnie Jakamarra Lawson

Warlpiri/Pintupi c. 1930–2012

## Bush onion

1990 Lajamanu, Northern Territory  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Purchased with funds donated by Supporters and Patrons of  
Aboriginal Art, 2002

2002.13

Two Napurrurla ancestral women are searching for bush onions, equipped with digging sticks and coolamons. The women dig up lots of bush onions, which grow in stony areas and carry them home in their coolamons. The cone-shaped motifs represent the onions; the horseshoe shapes indicate the women and the short lines represent their digging sticks. The small round circles represent the base of the onions beneath the stony ground, and the long straight lines represent the roots of the bush onions spreading underground. This Dreaming story took place at Winki Winki, north west of Tanami Downs.

## For kids

Ronnie Jakamarra Lawson is from Lajamanu – a small community in the Tanami Desert of the Northern Territory. His paintings are his Dreaming – his story. The symbols and stories were passed on to him by his father and Ronnie has passed them on to his son, like a family heirloom. He painted this work to represent women digging for bush onions, which are one of many foods found in the Australian outback. Native Australian food is often called 'bush tucker'. Some other foods that Ronnie likes to paint are bush beans and bush potatoes.



# Jackie Kurljunyintja Giles

Manyjilyjarra c. 1935–2010

## Tjamu Tjamu

2005 Patjarr, Western Australia

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Presented through the NGV Foundation by  
Ian Hicks AM and Dorothy Hicks, Fellows, 2005

2005.540

*Tjamu Tjamu* represents the artist's birthplace, a Kangaroo Dreaming site east of Kiwirrkurra. A male kangaroo ancestor had travelled there from the north and called a group of ancestral women to camp with him at a rock hole. He wanted these women, who were his sisters, aunties, mothers and grandmothers, to become his wives. The women wanted to call him *tjamu tjamu* (grandfather, grandson) but he wanted to be called *kurriil kurriil* (keep as a spouse someone who is ineligible). The Kangaroo ancestor continued his travels to Tjutalpi, Witunkuntja, Warti, Makarra, Millmillpa and Kurryl.

**Jakayu Biljabu**

Manyjilyjarra born c. 1937

**Yikartu Bumba**

Manyjilyjarra born 1940s

**May Chapman**

Manyjilyjarra born 1940s

**Nyanjilpayi Nancy Chapman**

Manyjilyjarra born c. 1941

**Doreen Chapman**

Manyjilyjarra born 1970s

**Linda James**

Manyjilyjarra born 1984

**Donna Loxton**

Kartujarra born 1970s

**Mulyatingki Marney**

Manyjilyjarra born 1941

**Reena Rogers**

Manyjilyjarra born 1950s

**Beatrice Simpson**

Manyjilyjarra born c. 1966

**Ronelle Simpson**

Manyjilyjarra born 1988

**Muntararr Rosie Williams**

Manyjilyjarra born c. 1943

continued overleaf

# Ngayarta Kujarra

2009 Punmu, Western Australia  
synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Felton Bequest, 2011

2011.276

The twelve artists who collaborated on this work live in Punmu community, on the shore of Ngayarta Kujarra (Lake Dora), a vast, glittering white salt lake surrounded by many freshwater sources that are named around the stretching edges of this canvas. The artists are profoundly affectionate and respectful towards the salt lake and the fresh waters that have sustained them and their families for as long as memory can stretch. The women have represented the feeling of the salt lake viscerally: their work conveys its immense scale, extreme whiteness, shimmering light and grounded holiness.

# Philip Gudthaykudthay

Liyagalawumirr born c. 1925

## Warala Warala figures

2003 Ramingining, Northern Territory

earth pigments on paperbark (*Melaleuca* sp.), Stringybark (*Eucalyptus* sp.), nylon

Purchased with funds donated by Supporters and Patrons of  
Indigenous Art, 2004

2004.40.a-l

*Warala Warala* figures are public spirit figures which can be associated with dance and/or mortuary rites. Although it is more likely to hear *Warala Warala* rather than see them, they are nevertheless visible. They are ominous figures which can come out day or night, but it is better not to see them at all, as the artist explains: '*Nhamana* (how many)? One, two, three, four, five, six, seven *Warala Warala*. They are standing up in the tops of hollow logs I cut off. Hanging up. They are toy ones, like from ceremony, but different colour here. Black ... White ... Different, not like the ones I do for ceremony'.

## For kids

Philip Gudthaykudthay lives in Arnhem Land, in the far north of Australia. When he was a young man he worked as a stockman and crocodile hunter. This sculpture shows a group of spirit figures hanging from bush string. These spotted spirits are associated with dances and funerals. Some people think you can hear these scary figures by day or night, but they are rarely seen.

Can you think of something that you can hear but not see?