



March 11, 2015

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the first ever edition of the *Desert River Sea; Kimberley Art
Then & Now* Newsletter!



Artist Churchill Cann being interviewed at Warmun Art Centre

Lights, Camera, Action in the East Kimberley

Late last year Desert River Sea teamed up with Indigenous Community Stories for a jam-packed 2 week field trip to the spectacular East Kimberley region. With the aim of researching and recording current and emerging Kimberley Aboriginal art practices on film, the partnership saw Desert River Sea Project Support Officer, Geraldine Henrici and the Indigenous Community Stories film crew, led by the very talented Indigenous Director, Jub Clerc, interview artists from Waringarri Aboriginal Arts, Warmun Art Centre and Yarliyil Art Centre. Artists recalled their lives, the stories of their art, artistic careers and their relationship with the art centres profiled. We were truly privileged to

be welcomed so warmly on country by the artists in Kununurra, Warmun & Halls Creek and to hear and record these captivating, powerful, sometimes tragic, sometimes hilarious and always significant stories.

The filming project partnership was born when The Art Gallery of Western Australia (AGWA) and The Film & Television Institute (FTI) decided to team up as both arts institutions currently run programs designed to assist WA's Indigenous people preserve and maintain ownership of their culture.

FTI's Indigenous Community Stories is supported by founding partner ScreenWest, principal partner Rio Tinto and partner Leighton Contracting and uses high-definition digital video technology and professional film crews to create and preserve detailed records of the cultural practices and important historical accounts of WA's Indigenous people.

Both the *Desert River Sea* program and *Indigenous Community Stories* are significant in that they employ strict cultural protocols, copyright and IP management principles to ensure the Indigenous artists / story owners retain all rights to their work or recordings. The separate projects also share the intent to archive the cultural collateral for the use of future generations. Each interview collection will create 8-10 hours of footage, which will be archived at AITSIS in Canberra, FTI in the State Library of WA, and copies sent to the artist's community.

FTI CEO, Paul Bodlovich said the partnership would help increase the profile of both Indigenous initiatives and bring many benefits to the participants.

"Since its inception in 2008, ICS has recorded 65 stories, and is on track to reach a benchmark of 100 stories by the end of 2016. Through this partnership, FTI will be able to connect with more Indigenous communities in the Kimberly region to record their stories to be passed onto future generations'.

Lynne Hargreaves, AGWA Director of Exhibitions & Collections, agreed that the pilot program would bring together the two institutions with different organisational strengths and common goals.

"*Desert River Sea* is the most significant Indigenous visual arts and cultural project undertaken by AGWA. The project's present focus is on documenting the region's current and emerging arts practice for sharing through desertriversea.com.au. This pilot program will enable AGWA to capture and celebrate the region's culture in a very accessible, high quality visual format."

There will be a screening in Perth of three of the short films at this years Revealed event in April, followed by a Q & A session. You can also view the films along with shorter edits on the Desert River Sea website on the [Warmun Art Centre profile page](#) and the [Waringarri Aboriginal Arts page](#).



Alec Mingelmanganu
Wandjina c 1972-c 1974
ochre on bark
140.0 x 58.0 x 6.0 cm
Purchased 1975, AGWA
State Art Collection
© Alec Mingelmanganu
1972 – 1974

Explore the Kimberley artworks in the State Art Collection

As part of the Desert River Sea Project, in an effort to promote and celebrate the remarkable Indigenous art of the Kimberley, staff at AGWA have recently finished photographing and uploading all of the Kimberley artworks in the State Art Collection to www.desertrivensea.com.au for your viewing.

The holdings of Indigenous art from the Kimberley region currently numbers more than 360 works including representations from each of the four *Desert River Seaproject* areas. Comprised of artifacts and historical and contemporary works of art – each documents the rich visual languages and traditions of the region's Indigenous peoples, while highlighting and celebrating the emergence of significant art movements within the region over the last 40 years. The collection is continually growing and as an ongoing process we will be continually updating State Art Collection records to the Desert River Sea website.

Some of the celebrated artists represented within the Collection include; Paddy Bedford, Hughie Bent, Jan Billycan, Jack Britten, Butcher Cherel, Peggy Griffiths, Paddy Jaminji, Spider Kalbybidi, Lily Karadada, Queenie McKenzie, Alec Mingelmanganu, Eubena Nampitjin, Patrick Mung Mung, George Mung Mung, Butcher Joe Nangan, Peter Newry, Lena Nyadbi, Peter Skipper, Wakartu Cory Surprise, Phyllis Thomas, Rover Thomas and Daniel Walbidi.

We hope that exhibiting this rich and inspiring resource of works in this way will promote appreciation, research and discussion about the future of the collection. Whether you live in remote WA, Australia or the rest of the world, we hope you have as much fun exploring and admiring these artworks as we have, check them out [here](http://www.desertrivensea.com.au) on the Desert River Sea website!



*Philippa Jahn, Desert River
Sea Indigenous Community
Liaison & Project
Coordinator*

New team member joins Desert River Sea

We are thrilled to announce that Philippa Jahn has recently joined the Desert River Sea team as the Indigenous Community Liaison & Project Coordinator. We are very excited about the new skills, creative ideas and vision that Philippa brings to the project.

Based in the East Kimberley for the past nine years, prior to this appointment she has managed art centres at the remote Kalumburu and Ringer Soak communities. A passionate advocate for Indigenous art, she has spent the past three years engaged in doctoral research into historical and contemporary art practice of the north Kimberley region. Prior studies have included post-settlement art practice of the east Kimberley, as well as investigations in rock art, material culture and social history.

Philippa loves the challenges of remote life in the Kimberley's unique landscape and has enjoyed the warm generosity of many friendships forged during her time there. In regards to her approach to the new position, she relishes the opportunity to facilitate the partnership between artists and the State Gallery, she says "In order that the diversity of contemporary Kimberley art and the stories behind its production receive the broader recognition and understanding it deserves."

Philippa commences on the 9th March and can be reached in the Broome office.



Interior view of gallery space, exterior view of Art Centre & interior view of artist studio space.

New Art Centre Building for Halls Creek

The Directors and artists of Yarliyil Art Centre in Halls Creek are excited to be relocating to a new building in March 2015. The new facility was built by the Shire of Halls Creek with funding from Royalties for Regions and Lotterywest. Since construction began in mid-2014 residents have watched with interest as the building began to take shape.

The new art centre has a dedicated Gallery as well as an artists' workshop. For the last 5 years Yarliyil Artists have mostly painted from home due to lack of permanent workshop space in their current location. It is hoped that the senior artists in particular will enjoy use of the workshop, where younger generations will be able to learn from them.

Yarliyil Art Centre intends for the new building to become an artistic and social hub for Halls Creek as well as a visitor attraction.

The Western Australian Indigenous Art Awards at AGWA

The Desert River Sea team are very excited and looking forward to The *Western Australian Indigenous Art Awards* being held at AGWA again this year during the 4th July – 12th October.

Recognised as one of the richest Indigenous arts prizes in the country, this national award celebrates the scope, diversity and excellence of art from all corners of Indigenous Australia. The awards acknowledge the significant and ongoing contribution Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists make to Australian art, culture and society.

This year's selection panel consists of Amy Barrett-Lennard, Kimberley Moulton & Clotilde Bullen, three very talented women who bring to the role a diverse range of talents and experiences in Aboriginal Culture and the arts.

The fourteen finalists who have been invited to participate in the awards exhibition have the opportunity to share in \$65,000 in prizes. The awards comprise a group exhibition of outstanding art and three non-acquisitive awards totalling \$65,000: the *Western Australian Indigenous Art Award* of \$50,000; the *Western Australian Artist Award* of \$10,000; and the *People's Choice Award* of \$5,000.

We are delighted that Kimberley artist, John Prince Siddon has been recognised for his talented work and has been announced among the finalists. John lives and works in Fitzroy Crossing and is represented by Mangkaja Arts Resource Agency. The other 13 artists selected to exhibit are:

Billy Yunkura Atkins who lives and works in Jigalong, WA

Megan Cope who lives and works in Melbourne, VIC

Stephan Paton who lives and works in Melbourne, VIC

Betty Kuntiwa Pumani who lives and works in Mimili, north-west SA

Archie Moore who lives and works in Brisbane, QLD

Carlene West who lives and works in Tjuntjuntjara, WA

Simon Hogan who lives and works in Tjuntjuntjara, WA

Sandra Hill who lives and works in Balingup, WA

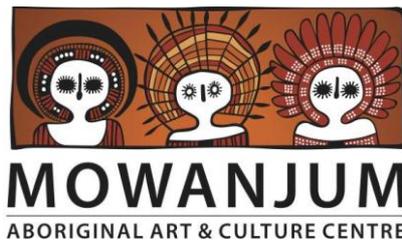
Vincent Namaŋjira who lives and works in Indulkana, NT

Karla Dickens who lives and works in Sydney, NSW

Tjala Collaborative who live and work in Amata, SA

Eunice Porter who lives and works in Warakurna, WA

Nongirrnga Marawili who lives and works in Yirrkala, NT



Employment opportunity in the West Kimberley

Would you like to manage one of Australia's most dynamic Aboriginal Art Centres in one of Australia's iconic locations? Mowanjum Art and Culture Centre, located on the Gibb River Rd in the Kimberley region of WA, is offering an exceptional opportunity for the right person.

Position Manager/CEO
Type of Employment Full time permanent
Application Closes COB Friday 10 April 2015

Contact manager@mowanjumarts.com for further enquiries.



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