

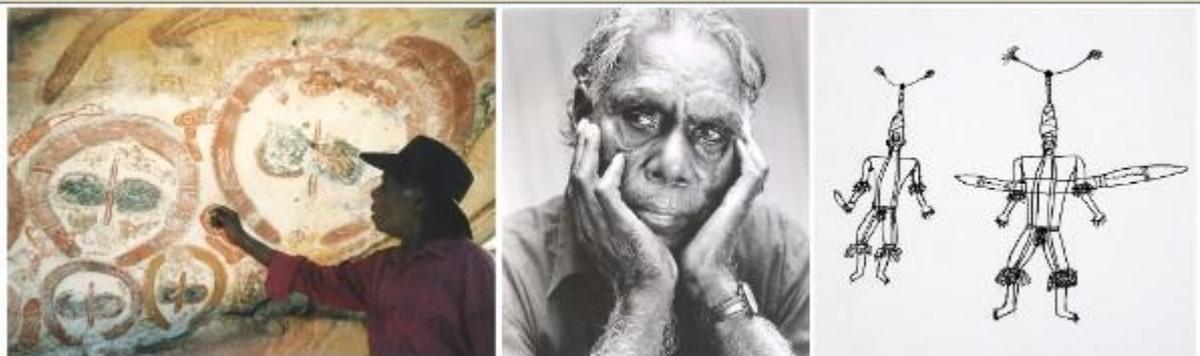


May 09, 2016

Dear Friends,

Here is the latest Kimberley art news from Broome - Enjoy!

Philippa & Geraldine



See full image credits below.

Exhibition: Mowaljarlai Vision and Voice: Legacy of a Bush Professor

The Berndt Museum at the University of Western Australia in Perth has mounted a comprehensive exhibition of the life and work of Kimberley man David Banggal Mowaljarlai, currently on show at the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery. Such recognition is long overdue and we hope the brief biographical overview of Mowaljarlai offered here will provide an incentive to view the exhibition.

A Ngarinyin man, Mowaljarlai was born in 1925 at the Kunmunya Presbyterian mission in the northwest Kimberley and raised in both Ngarinyin and Christian religious traditions. He was a member of the Brrejirad (Pink Hibiscus) sub-group whose traditional country is in the Roe River area of the west Kimberley. Mowaljarlai's life was always marked by a facility for walking in two worlds. An arresting photograph taken by German anthropologists in 1939 shows Mowaljarlai as a young boy, even then noticed for his engaging personality. In his young adult years he spent time at the leprosarium in Derby, where he learnt to play violin in the community orchestra. He assisted in the translation of the Bible into Ngarinyin, as well as in the development of a Ngarinyin language

dictionary and during WWII helped locate Japanese airmen who had been shot down over the Kimberley.

In later life Mowaljarlai, along with three other senior men, worked to establish the Bush University, to facilitate the education of non-Aboriginal people on traditional Ngarinyin Law, art and spiritual orientation to the natural and unseen worlds. *If we share the stories of our country with gudia (whitefella), then they will have our country in their hearts as we do, and they will understand and love it, and never damage it.*[\[i\]](#)

The roll-call of researchers, law-makers, authors and film-makers who benefitted from his status as a north-west Kimberley cultural authority and his willingness to engage in national and international political and academic arenas include Andreas Lommel, A.P. Elkin, Ronald and Catherine Berndt, Howard Coate, Arthur Capell, Peter Lucich, Michael Edols, Jutta Malnic and Jeff Doring amongst others.

Mowaljarlai was a founding voice of Kamali Land Council, Kimberley Language Resource Centre, Ngarinyin Aboriginal Corporation, and Kimberley Land Council. He was also on the Aboriginal Cultural Material Committee of the West Australian Museum, as well as a member of the Aboriginal Arts Board of the Australia Council and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs. Further mainstream acknowledgment arrived in the form of an Aboriginal of the Year Award in 1991 and he was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 1993.

From around the 1990s, Mowaljarlai produced many paintings on canvas and drawings recording the evolution of Ngarinyin law from Creation Time to the present. He is also known to have painted on bark in the 1970s. Much of this work has not been seen by the public, so the current exhibition offers a rare opportunity to view examples of his artistic output alongside audio-visual material, photographs and other material bequeathed by the late researcher Hannah Rachel Bell.

Even by the standards of the many remote Aboriginal community and cultural leaders who work so tirelessly for Aboriginal advancement, Mowaljarlai is a remarkable figure. This list of accomplishments gives only a one-dimensional impression of the man himself however, who managed to achieve all this while carrying heavy personal burdens and deep concern for the future of his people. He died in 1997 after a life devoted not only to the maintenance of his people's *Wanjina Wunggurr* culture, but also to the cross-cultural teaching so necessary for developing settler understanding of the integrity and continuity of Ngarinyin heritage and Law.

*When I'm on a high mountain looking out over country
my Unggurr (life-force) flows out from inside my body
and I fall open with happiness.*[\[ii\]](#)

Mowaljarlai Vision and Voice: Legacy of a Bush Professor, April 23 to September 17, Berndt Museum, University of Western Australia, Perth.

Image credits

IMG.1. David Mowaljarlai at Wandjina site, Bush University 1996. Photo: Susanna Lobe, 1996
The estate of David Mowaljarlai, held at the Berndt Museum, UWA.

IMG.2. David Banggal Mowaljarlai. Photo: Jutta Malnic, 1991, courtesy Jutta Malnic. From:
Mowaljarlai, D. B. & Malnic, J, 2001, *Yorro Yorro : everything standing up alive : spirit of the
Kimberley*, Magabala Books Broome, W.A

IMG. 3. David Mowaljarlai *Brolga dance*, c. 1995, black ink on paper. The estate of David
Mowaljarlai, held at the Berndt Museum, UWA. Intellectual and cultural copyright the artist and
artist's family. Photo: Lyle Branson.

[i] <http://www.kimberleyfoundation.org.au/about-us/> accessed 27/04/2016

[ii] 1997, Mowaljarlai quoted in Obituary, *Australian Archaeology*, no 45, p.58.



Image credit: (L to R) Bobbie Ruben working with artist Gabby Baxter on the screen printing process, Bobbie Ruben with artist Rowena Morgan working on a new design © Nagula Jarndu 2016

Material Changes at Nagula Jarndu

A 10 day screen-printing workshop has recently finished at Nagula Jarndu in Broome. The artists here, already highly skilled in hand-cut block printing, are eager to expand their printing repertoire to include large scale screen-printing. Aside from being quicker, this process offers enhanced production potential including the manufacture of printed fabric lengths up to 20m long. This is currently not possible in Broome – a large-scale screen-printing studio demands specific practical considerations such as ample floor space for long tables and adequate washing facilities to maintain screens. The artists are not letting the limitations of their studio space restrict them though; open to the possibility

of future large commissions they are experimenting with outsourcing printing to a Sydney studio which can print the large designs to order, by hand.

Facilitating the workshop is printmaker, screen printer and textile artist, Bobbie Ruben. Bobbie has previously conducted workshops with a number of art centres and women's centres known for their successful textile operations including Maningrida, Daly River and far north Queensland. The workshop comes at a great time, according to Bobbie the Indigenous textile scene is really flourishing at the moment.

Gabby Baxter, Maxine Charlie, Rowena Morgan, Mangana Chiguna, Martha Lee & Rosina Charlie are taking part in the workshop. The screen-printing process is more complex than block-printing, as additional factors come into play. Compositions require constant adjustment and the outcomes are more difficult to predict; Bobbie advises artists that they need to take a few leaps of faith and trust in the process. The new designs will ultimately be printed in 2 or 3 colours although the screen-making dictates that artists will only see the final outcome at the post-production stage. At the design phase artists paint various layers in black or rust colours (these colours best block the light from coming through when fashioning the screen) in the meantime they are photographing their designs and using Photoshop to experiment with colour options, the process described by artist Maxine Charlie as *'mucking around on the computer first'*, ideally for her to the point where she can *'see it and say wow!'*

Now working on a much larger scale than usual, a quick glance at the designs in progress reveals how strikingly individual each artist's approach and subsequently how distinctive each screen design already is, not only from each other's work but their own block printing styles as well. Rowena was working on a detailed pattern she calls *The Ranges*, more reminiscent of her canvas painting style than her intricate smaller block designs. Mangana had almost finished a design balancing depictions of seed, nuts and shells with an interlocking linear background pattern where playful portrayals of grasshoppers and bush turkeys dominated the composition. After having experimented with four different patterns on the one sheet, Maxine had decided to distil her design to one stylized crocodile skin pattern. She had refined and abstracted the pattern as she expressly wanted to trick the viewer's eye: *'I want to make the pattern move!'* Maxine was adamant that despite the change in approach to printing the most important thing is still to represent Broome, and to keep their own style and culture.

The artists have grand plans for unveiling the new prints. As part of the Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair 10th anniversary this year in August DAAF is programming a fashion parade to showcase the current interest in textile design being shown right across the Top End of Australia. DAAF has invited Nagula Jarndu to present their designs in this event and the women's centre will soon be teaming up with a designer to make garments using the new screen-printed fabrics.



Image credit: Yarliyil Art Centre artist Maggie Long at work on *Yiyilkan* 2016, Acrylic on Canvas 101 cm x 101 cm © Yarliyil Art Centre 2016

Feature Artwork – Maggie Long, *Yiyilkan*

Maggie Long lives in Halls Creek and is one of the dedicated artists painting regularly at the Yarliyil Art Centre. She was born in the 1940s in Jaru country on Sturt Creek Station, where she grew up on the marginal desert country in the vicinity of *Paruku* (Lake Gregory). Here she learned a great deal from her family about traditional life, maintaining ceremonial, hunting and food-gathering practices alongside station responsibilities. Maggie's paintings convey the stories that were told to her by her grandmother and the life she experienced growing up in the bush. In the painting *Yiyilkan* Maggie depicts her country and also explains;

This one is about lots of worms - no you can't eat that one - big mobs of worms after rain around my country, towards Lake Gregory. They cheeky ones! They (leeches) come up quick in the water and bite us - That cheeky one!

For enquiries about this and other artworks by Maggie Long please contact Yarliyil Art Centre on (08) 9168 6723

Click [here](#) for more information and video of Maggie talking about her artworks.



Stamps: (L to R) Jan Billycan Kirriwirri 2009, Patrick Mung Mung Gawarre 2011 (detail), Tommy Mitchell, Peter Lewis, Clifford Mitchell and Valerie Mitchell Ngaturn Tingari [Wati] Tjukurrpa, not dated (detail) & Jimmy Pike Pirnini country 1988

AGWA Putting a Kimberley Stamp on Things

In 2015 the Art Gallery of Western Australia was approached by Australia Post's philatelic team with a request to develop a four stamp issue based on Indigenous works held in the state art collection. Third in the ongoing 'Gallery Series' of stamp issues featuring works from major public galleries, AGWA's works are included alongside a selection of botanical paintings from the National Gallery of Victoria and landscapes from the National Gallery of Australia.

The intention was to show a representative range of AGWA's collection of two-dimensional Indigenous art; curators Dunja Rmandić and Carly Lane along with Gallery Director Stefano Carboni made a selection based on this criteria. Rmandić was enthusiastic about the process; *'My first project at the Gallery was working closely with our collection of Kimberley art for a Desert River Sea display, which introduced me to an incredible array of techniques, stories and places that feature in the art of the Kimberley. The Gallery's holdings of this collection are substantial and varied which gave us plenty to work from.'*

As not all works translate well into the tiny scale of a postage stamp, we had to make some hard decisions based on graphic impact but with a variety representative of the collection in mind. We worked closely with the graphic and philatelic team at Australia Post on the selection of the works and also facilitated contact with the artists and their representatives to ensure artists were involved and appropriately acknowledged. The result is a beautiful range of key paintings from our collection printed on pre-paid international envelopes and aerogrammes. Bon voyage!'

The Kimberley artworks selected are Patrick Mung Mung, *Gawarre* 2011, Jan Billycan, *Kirriwirri*, 2009 and Jimmy Pike, *Pirini Country* 1988.

Revealed 2016 Update

This was the fifth year for emerging Aboriginal artists' event Revealed and the first time it was hosted by the Fremantle Arts Centre. The change in venue appeared to have a positive impact on the success of the event, particularly the art market, as it attracted an engaged local audience already familiar with this historic arts venue.

Before the public event components of Revealed, artists and art centre staff came together for the skills development program. With workshops in ceramics, weaving, life drawing, play animation and photography offered over two days the feedback from art centres was enthusiastic. According to Sheryl Anderson of Warlayirti Artists, the program was particularly embraced by Ribnga Green,

Clifton Gugaman and Azman Manguri from Balgo. They so relished the life drawing and clay stop-motion animation workshops that they asked the trainer to return for additional one-on-one tuition.

This year Revealed are offering the opportunity to build on the skills introduced during this program. Tutors will travel to art centres to deliver week-long workshops where more artists will have the opportunity to participate and learn. A great initiative, we look forward to seeing which art forms the Kimberley art centres choose and the outcomes of these follow-up sessions.

The Revealed Symposium was held at the Fremantle Town Hall and kicked off with a fascinating and all too brief discussion between curator Glenn Iseger-Pilkington and photographic artist Michael Cook about his life and arts practise. This was followed by a presentation by Dr Mathew Trinca, Director of the National Museum of Australia, on the recent Encounters exhibition in Canberra. During the presentation Dr Trinca only briefly touched on the topic of artefact repatriation, but audience interest in this topic prompted further discussion during the public question time.

The second half of the symposium was a panel discussion moderated by Duncan Ord, Director General of the Department of Culture & the Arts. Included on the panel were private gallerists Julianne Penny & Ian Plunkett; Adam Jarvis, representative of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission; Curator Helen Carroll; Independent Nyoongar artist Sandra Hill and Kimberley artist Mervyn Street. Panel members seemed in agreement on most subjects raised during the two hour discussion. Some contested topics were raised by the audience at question time however, particularly on the authenticity of traditional methods of collaborative/instructional art-making as perceived in the commercial art sector. The absence of Indigenous curator representation on the panel was also called into question and the topic of Indigenous voices in the Aboriginal Art field was emphatically raised leaving the audience with the impression that although time had run out on proceedings there was a great deal still to discuss.

The Revealed Exhibition opening at Fremantle Arts Centre proved to be a popular event. Over 850 people packed the exhibition spaces where an impressive number of sales were made on this night alone. There was an atmosphere of celebration as artists and arts workers mingled with buyers and proudly viewed their own works on display; for some of these emerging artists it was the first time they had seen their works displayed in an exhibition context.

In total thirty-one artists from the Kimberley were represented in the exhibition with artworks varying in form from textiles, soft toys, woven baskets, carved boab nuts, hand-made knives and didjeridus, to two-dimensional works on canvas and paper. A short film about East Kimberley artists that Desert River Sea produced in partnership with Indigenous Community Stories was screened in the entrance to the exhibition - particularly attractive to exhausted exhibition-goers enjoying the couch in the viewing area.

The somewhat confined layout of the adjoining galleries was resolved by the transformation of these spaces by the exhibition design. Lengths of hand printed fabric up to 5ms long from Nagula Jarndu worked to elongate the ceiling heights, Waringarri Arts' didjeridus hung from the ceiling at varying heights encouraging viewers to appreciate their aesthetic qualities and boab nuts from Mowanjum,

suspended in a glass vitrine appeared to be floating in space. Visitors enjoyed the makeshift studio in the exhibiting space which, complete with brushes, paints and mixing trays, was used by Mangkaja artist Mervyn Street to complete one of his bull-riding stockman paintings.

This year's Marketplace was held within the walls of the front garden area. Over twenty-two WA Aboriginal art and culture centres were represented with eight of these coming all the way from the Kimberley. It was a great venue with live music, a generous choice of food outlets and plenty of shady trees and places to take time out, talk with friends and admire new artworks. A constant throng of visitors moved through the stalls, the atmosphere was overwhelmingly energetic; despite a brief spell of rain most stall holders were kept busy selling artworks and talking to crowds of people wanting to know about their artists. Art Centre feedback was positive with some selling a great deal more than the previous year.

Nagula Jarndu Women's Resource Centre was experiencing its second Revealed. Their stand was adorned with a new range of hand-printed textiles and there was extensive interest in the four artists whose fabrics appeared in the exhibition. A great opportunity also arose to sell a suite of twenty works on paper now destined for exhibition at a prestigious venue elsewhere, a wonderful outcome for these emerging artists.

The Marnin Studio stall seemed to be permanently packed with visitors to the point that there was no room left for Brooke, Amanda and April to stand inside to process sales. By the second half of the day they looked to be selling out of stock, ensuring their return trip to Fitzroy Crossing would be much lighter! Warlayirti Artists happily reported that at one point people were lining up to their stall patiently waiting to purchase their favourite pieces.

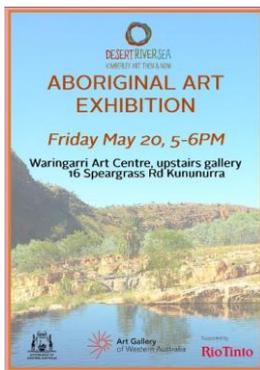
Waringarri Aboriginal Arts and Kira Kiro Art Centre shared a market stall. Kalumburu artist Margaret Peurmora assisted with sales and voiced her excitement that her series of framed ochre artworks on paper were on display and had sold at the exhibition opening. She was keen to explain their meanings and was definitely inspired to get home and continue painting. Margaret was a great spokeswoman for Kira Kiro and enthusiastically chatted about her plans to improve and expand the art centre mentioning how keen she was to help encourage younger and emerging artists to join in.

Aside from their involvement with the other aspects of the Revealed program, Mangkaja Arts, in conjunction with Fremantle Arts Centre, also presented an outdoor screening of the acclaimed film Putuparri and the Rainmakers. As elsewhere this powerful film was really well received.

DRS had a display stall this year and we were kept flat out talking to visitors about the project and Kimberley art in general - the Art Trail Map was a useful tool in discussion with people keen to locate the art centres which had travelled all the way down from the far north. We were quite overwhelmed at the interest shown by visitors and ran out of art trail maps, art centre brochures and AGWA programs long before the day was over. Our posters of State Art Collection artworks juxtaposing the different art styles of the Kimberley proved to be of great interest, as many visitors were not aware of

the diversity to be found within the region. People were also enthused about the major Kimberley exhibition scheduled for October 2018 at the state gallery.

The high level of art centre and audience interest in Revealed is a positive sign for the Aboriginal art industry. Certainly the constructive and celebratory nature of these meetings adds to their success, and is partly why Revealed is regarded by many as one of the annual highlights of the WA Aboriginal Art calendar of events.



Upcoming VALP in Kununurra

The Desert River Sea Visual Arts Leadership Program (VALP) was initially conceived as a means of both supporting Kimberley-wide art practice and forging links with individuals capable of being conduits for engagement between AGWA and remote artists. The program does not provide baseline arts worker training already provided by other organisations; the intention is to build on and support identified strengths by equipping participants with skills which can be of direct use to both independent artists and those working in art centres and, more broadly, their communities.

The 2016 VALP workshop will be the third program event to be held since Desert River Sea began. The inaugural event was held in Perth in 2013, enabling an introduction to the workings of the Gallery. Last year's workshop in Broome focused on the theme of 'Storytelling' and incorporated a range of training interests expressed by participants after the 2013 Symposium. The program underwent a name change in 2015 (formerly known as the Emerging Leaders Program) to reflect the fact that the majority of program participants were already established leaders to some degree rather than emergent artists and arts workers.

The 2016 VALP will be held in May at the Waringarri Aboriginal Arts Centre in Kununurra. The event focuses on the following objectives:

To build on the outcomes of the 2015 workshop.

To offer professional development of real value to participants in their own arts practice and employment in the field of curating and exhibitions.

To provide participants with a network of supportive Kimberley colleagues within their own region as well as with AGWA staff, and to give participants the opportunity to learn from and support each other.

The workshop will have a curatorial focus, with hands on experience in developing a collaborative exhibition in Kununurra organised by the participants themselves. If time allows additional multi-media content to be screened during the exhibition will be generated, using iMovie editing skills acquired during the 2015 workshop. Training will be delivered by Carly Lane, the AGWA Curator of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art. The program will cover the nature of curating, the role of the curator and the basic steps and tools involved in the exhibition development process.

Including a wide range of artwork media, participants will select and contribute artworks from across the Kimberley making the exhibition as broadly representative of current Kimberley arts practice as possible. Designed as a regional celebratory event the 2016 VALP is timed to take advantage of the high visitor numbers and widespread media attention focused on the annual Kununurra Argyle Diamonds Ord Valley Muster festival, with the exhibition opening is listed as an official event in the [Muster Program](#).

The Exhibition opening will be at 5pm Friday 20th May at the Waringarri Aboriginal Arts Dawang Gallery (upstairs). The VAL participants alongside AGWA Director, Stefano Carboni and Lynne Hargreaves, AGWA Director of Exhibitions and Collections, will be in attendance at the exhibition opening. The exhibition will also be open for viewing Saturday 21st between 10am and 2pm. If you are lucky enough to be in Kununurra at this exciting time of the year we invite you to come along to enjoy the artwork and meet us all!

Admittance to the exhibition opening is open to all and free, RSVP to: desertriversea@artgallery.wa.gov.au

For more information on the Visual Arts Leadership participants click [here](#).



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