

ANKAAA

Association of Northern, Kimberley
and Arnhem Aboriginal Artists

ARTS BACKBONE

Volume 5 Issue 3: September 2005



Gunbittiji Dancers from Milingimbi Arts & Craft Centre
at the Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Arts Awards Presentation

© Milingimbi Arts & Craft Centre

INSIDE • Warlayirti Artists • NT Expo 2005 • Launch
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Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Awards • Garma
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• Artist Gary Mura Lee • Back Page - "Aboriginal art –
Tourist Art and Fine Art" • Events & Exhibitions Calendar

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Australian Government

Department of Communications,
Information Technology and the Arts



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Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination



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Over the past two years, the NT Government has been working closely with ANKAAA on the development of a usable and sustainable Indigenous export strategy model. This has been done in collaboration with DBIRD, ArtsNT, Austrade and DESART and is part of the NT Government's Indigenous Arts Strategy *Building Strong Arts Business* launched in 2003.

A few months ago Austrade Darwin hosted a visit by Silke Hachmeyer, Business Development Officer for Austrade in Germany, who is interested in promoting emerging artists in the German market. This progressed through to the development of an action plan and this pilot export model identified that a key to success is the forging of relationships with overseas buyers, dealers and galleries and that means getting them to Australia. Part of this involved pre-trip education relating to the role of Art Centres, Indigenous artists and cultural links with country and the uniqueness of each art work.

DBIRD and Arts NT have supported the 'export model' and ANKAAA was recently invited to attend meetings with Austrade in Frankfurt and the Australian Embassy in Paris where Djambawa Marawili, was invited to open Reconciliation Week and to close the Austrade Indigenous Art Exhibition that had been held at the Embassy

throughout April and June 2005. The preliminary trip occurred over 10 days and one of the outcomes was a "German Client Trip" which took place in the Top End and Central Desert in July, coinciding with NT Expo & some Art Centre staff, artists & Artworkers visiting Darwin.

ANKAAA has had the opportunity to identify the needs and visions of the German clients to inform the Art Centres about the German market. The Art Centres will then be able to establish their own exhibitions, sales and networks with the German market after their visit to NT.

Another result of the trip has been the translation of the new ANKAAA Consumer Awareness Brochure into German.

The main aim was to seek potential export opportunities through dealers and galleries that have been sourced and identified by Austrade Frankfurt and the Australian Embassy in Paris. ANKAAA is now looking to involve French participation in future projects based on the pilot with the German market.

A second trip, as part of this same strategy, will occur in September 2005.

Image below - Napuwarri Marawili, Stephanie Hawkins, Wayne Fan DBIRD Darwin, Djambawa Marawili, Silke Hachmeyer - Austrade Frankfurt with visitors Thomas Koch Silvia Weiss Werner Liebchen Manuel Dittmers Eva Mossbrugger Susanne Stadler at Buku Larrnggay Mulka, Yirrkala



Warlayirti Artists Wirrimanu Community, Balgo Hills Western Australia

Story by Stephen Williamson & Samantha Togni

L-R Christine Yukenbarri, Helicopter Tjungurrayi and Carmel Yukenbarri at their exhibition opening, Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne, July 2005 © Warlayirti Artists



Warlayirti Artists has long been recognised as a leading Indigenous art centre, implementing best business practice. Since July 2002, Warlayirti Artists has self-funded the operations of the Art Centre and over the last three years the organisation has strengthened its position by adopting a community development framework.

A program of governance training delivered by Little Fish has been implemented enabling the Warlayirti Artists Committee, made up of senior and mid career artists, to develop further their capacity to manage the organisation and increase their understanding of its operations. This increased capacity and understanding has resulted in a significant increase in the Committee's active participation in planning and decision making.

The Committee has developed its vision for Warlayirti Artists, which incorporates both the Art and Culture Centres, with the completion of the Warlayirti Artists Business Plan 2005-2008. The vision that will guide the implementation of the Business Plan over the next three years is underpinned by three guiding principles developed by the Committee: kinti kinti – artists, Committee and staff working side by side; purrka purrka – working slowly and carefully; and marrka wangka – strong and clear talk.

A key part of the vision articulated by the Committee is the development of the careers of the young and mid career artists who up until recent years have been over-shadowed by the senior recognised artists. The Committee recognises the

importance of the development of the younger artists for the future of Warlayirti Artists. The already strong exhibition program has been broadened to include shows consisting of works by senior, young and mid career artists. This strategy enables the full spectrum of Balgo art to be viewed in specifically curated exhibitions. This approach could not be possible without the guidance and support of the Warlayirti Artists Committee and senior artists and has been enhanced through the implementation of community development principles into the day-to-day operations of the Art Centre. These principles include adopting transparent and inclusive processes, valuing the knowledge of all participants and providing genuine opportunities for people to participate and develop.

The most notable example of this approach is Balgo 4-04 an exhibition held on site at Warlayirti Artists during Easter 2004. This landmark exhibition, curated over a 2-year period, featured artists ranging in age from mid 20s to mid 80s and generated enormous energy and excitement among the artists and their families. While the staging of a major exhibition in a remote community like Balgo was extremely difficult, the positive outcomes far outweighed the challenges. Balgo 4-04 enabled all artists to experience and participate in the exhibition process, including painting for the exhibition, installation, the exhibition opening and the interaction with art enthusiasts – something that previously had only been experienced by the senior artists.

The exhibition was a great success and generated enormous interest in the full spectrum of paintings being produced through Warlayirti Artists, in addition to being an inspiration for the artists.

The success of Balgo 4-04 has continued through the many successful exhibitions held featuring senior and young artists or solely young artists. During July this year an exhibition featuring Helicopter Tjungurrayi and his two youngest daughters Christine and Carmel Yukenbarri, opened at Alcaston Gallery in Melbourne. This was the first exhibition for the Christine and Carmel and painting toward the exhibition over almost 12 months generated great enthusiasm and creativity for all three artists. All three artists attended the opening in Melbourne and were able to engage with art collectors and proudly talk about their work. Following on from this exhibition, a work by Christine Yukenbarri was selected for the 22nd National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award.

Although working in a community based art centre is constantly demanding and at times extremely challenging, the rewards are many including experiencing the creative energy of the artists, the array of exciting paintings produced on a daily basis and the regular interactions with artists. By adopting a community development framework Warlayirti Artists has increased the level of Indigenous participation in the organisation which is the key to the stability and sustainability of Warlayirti Artists.

ANKAAA Stall at the NT Expo Funded by Arts NT



Marcus Didjerama Pascoe, Maningrida Arts & Culture, Joey Djalaka, Milingimbi Art & Craft, Chief Minister Clare Martin & Jonathan Roy, Milingimbi Art & Craft with the Best NT Region Exhibit Award.

In the first week of July Art Centre staff began to arrive in Darwin to participate in NT Expo 2005 & associated events.

Milingimbi Arts & Crafts Rachelle Burke, Manager, Joey Djalaka, Assistant Manager & Jonathan Roy, Artist & Artswoker

Maningrida Arts & Culture Marcus Didjerama Pascoe, Artswoker

Buku-Larrnggay Mulka, Yirrkala Whaiora Tukaki & Barayuwa Mununggurr, Artswokers

Mimi Arts & Crafts, Katherine Barbara Ambjerg Pedersen, Manager & Artists Sarah Daniels, Jeannie Daniels, Marilyn Nakamarra

Richard Haigh lent his set design skills & provided training to Artswokers on dressing the stall & visual display.

On Wednesday 6th July we all attended the Chief Minister's NT Expo reception at Parliament House. On Thursday 7th July we attended the opening of the annual Tiwi Art Network Exhibition at the Darwin Entertainment Centre (see next page)

Thursday 7th & Friday 9th we collected artworks from Tiwi Art Network, Maningrida Arts & Culture, Darwin Store & along with artwork & promotional materials from Tiwi, Kimberley, Katherine, Darwin & Arnhem Land, we set about dressing the stall under Richard's guidance. The weekend was spent manning the stall & talking with 1000's of visitors;

providing Marcus, Jonathan, Whaiora & Barayuwa with an opportunity to talk with people interested in their Art Centres & the Artwork of their regions, meet with the Chief Minister & other high profile visitors & to be interviewed & filmed for the ABC News. Art Centre Managers had the opportunity to meet with Government Agencies, Galleries, Collectors & organisations such as Viscopy & Desart.

It was a great success in terms of improved skills in public relations, customer service, visual display & enhanced Artswokers confidence in talking about their Art Centres.

We were rewarded for our efforts with the Best NT Regional Stall.

"I like to tell you about the NT EXPO - I am so happy that I was working hard at the ANKAAA stall, we displayed mimih spirits and fibre works from Maningrida Arts & Culture, Yirrkala and Tiwi Islands. The stall was looking beautiful and lots of visitors came to see it. My job was to install the display with Richard Haigh, Michelle Culpitt, Barayuwa, Whaiora, Rachelle Burke & Jonathan Roy. During the NT Expo, I had to talk to visitors about Art Centres and artworks. Clare Martin (NT Chief Minister) came to see us at the stall. The ANKAAA Stall won best stall. The NT EXPO was really good for me because we won the NT EXPO best stall."

Marcus Didjerama Pascoe, Maningrida Arts & Culture

Joey Djalaka, Rachelle Burke & Jonathan Roy from Milingimbi Art & Craft. Richard Haigh, Stall Designer. Marcus Didjerama Pascoe from Maningrida Arts & Culture & Michelle Culpitt from ANKAAA.



Whaiora Tukaki, Barayuwa Mununggurr & Kaya from Buku Larrnggay Mulka, Yirrkala



Barbara Ambjerg Pedersen from Mimi Arts & Crafts with a visitor Eva Moosbrugger to the stall Sarah Daniels, Jeannie Daniels, Marilyn Nakamarra from Mimi Arts & Crafts.



Tiwi Art Network Annual Exhibition & Website Launch

Kellie Austin

In July the Tiwi Art Network held a show at the Darwin Entertainment Centre Gallery representing 3 Art Centres from the Tiwi Islands; Jilamara Arts & Crafts, Milikapiti, Melville Island, Munupi Arts & Crafts, Pirlangimpi, Melville Island & Tiwi Design, Nguuu, Bathurst Island.

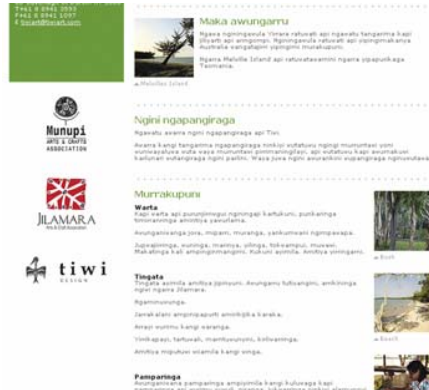
Traditionally Munupi and Tiwi Design have held successful Christmas shows at the Entertainment Centre venue, so this year we decided to hold a combined show in the school holiday period. The show ran from July 7th to the 9th and featured the work of many successful Tiwi Artists including: Lydia Burak, Theresa Burak, Jean Baptiste Apuatimi, Timothy Cook, Brian Farmer, Dymphna Kerninauia, Janice Murray, Nina Puruntatameri, Susan

Wanji Wanji, Pedro Wonaemirri. Types of work sold ranged from ochre paintings on canvas and paper, paintings in acrylic, small carvings, limited edition prints, printed fabrics and the Tiwi Art silver jewellery range.

The highlight of the event was the opening of the show and the launch of the new Tiwi Art website on Thursday night. Tiwi Art Network Chairman, Regis Pangiraminni opened the show and launched the website. The new Tiwi Art website was funded by the Department of Communications, Information Technology and Arts under the Indigenous Communities Online Program. The aim of the program is to encourage community members to access the internet.

To that end the Tiwi Art Network decided to translate much of the existing website into Tiwi as well as take the opportunity to give the site fresh look and improve download time.

Tiwi Art Network would like to thank the following people for their support for the Tiwi Art Show and website: TAN Executive Committee Regis Pangiriminni, Brian Farmer, John Bennette Pilakui (Manblue), Declan Apuatimi for their commitment, effort and support for the show. Jilamara, Munupi and Tiwi Design Art Centres. Marius Puruntatameri and Pauline (Jedda) Puruntatameri for translation. ANKAAA staff & members.



www.tiwiart.com

Pedro Wonaemirri

Jilamara Arts & Craft Association, Milikapiti, Melville Island

Tiwi artist Pedro Wonaemirri, president of Jilamara Arts & Craft Association on Melville Island has been selected to exhibit at this year's prestigious Museum of Contemporary Art Primavera Exhibition with eight other artists from around Australia under 35. This year's theme title is 'The Lie of the Land'. Pedro has been painting since 1991 exploring the possibilities of inherited family designs on canvas using ochres

culminating in large vibrant paintings. His meticulous technique utilises the Kayimwagakimi comb used to make Pwoja or body design motifs. Along with a solo exhibition at Alcaston in Sydney in November and inclusion in NATSIAA, this year is proving to be full of highlights for this young veteran of the art scene!

Pedro Wonaemirri *Pwoja Pukamani Body Paint Design* 2004 (detail, natural ochres on linen)
© Jilamara Arts & Crafts



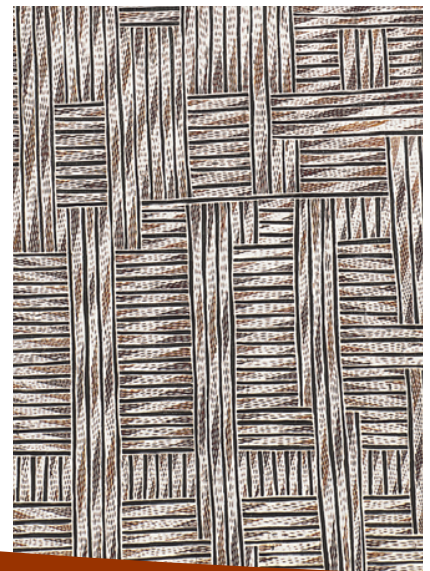
Australia's richest Indigenous art prize, the 22nd Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award, was presented to the Blackstone Tjanpi Weavers. The coveted \$40,000 TELSTRA FIRST PRIZE was announced by Mr Lawrie Mortimer, General Manager, National Indigenous Directorate, Telstra Country Wide, at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT) in Darwin for the work Tjanpi Grass Toyota. The Award exhibition was officially opened by Northern Territory The Hon Chief Minister Clare Martin MLA. In addition to the Telstra First Prize winner, prizes were awarded in four other categories: The \$4,000 Telstra General Painting Award, was awarded to artist Evelyn Pultara from Utopia NT for her work Yam Dreaming The \$4,000 Telstra Bark Painting Award was awarded to artist Banduk Marika from Yirrkala NT for her work Yalangbara. The \$4,000 Telstra Works on Paper, was awarded to artist Gayle Maddigan from Mandurang Victoria for her work Remembered Ritual. The \$4,000 Wandjuk Marika Three-Dimensional Memorial Award, sponsored by Telstra was awarded to artist Naminapu Maymuru-White from Yirrkala NT for her work Milngiyawuy. The Award judges were Mr Doug Hall, Director, Queensland Art Gallery and Ms Destiny Deacon, an artist from Melbourne. Both judges commented on the diversity and high quality of the works entered this year. "The aim of the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory was to establish an Award, that recognised the important contribution made by Indigenous artists nationally, and to promote a better appreciation and understanding of contemporary Indigenous art" said MAGNT Director Anna Malgorzewicz. The 22nd Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award will be on display at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory in Darwin from Saturday 13 August until Sunday 23 October 2005.

Two winners! Yirrkala's artists have again been very successful in Australia's premier annual showcase of indigenous art, the Telstra Award. Winners in two of the five categories announced on Friday evening at the Museum in Darwin were from Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre at Yirrkala. Banduk Marika (Best Bark Painting) and Naminapu Maymuru-White (Wandjuk Marika Memorial Award for Three Dimensional art) were both in Darwin to receive their prizes. The ceremony included two groups of Yolngu dancers, a Macassan dance troupe, Chief Minister Clare Martin and the Saltwater Band. It was attended by many art collectors and curators from all over Australia. Banduk Marika is a senior Rirratjingu clan elder who has been an established artist for over 20 years. She is a pioneer of both indigenous printmaking and land care. In 2000 she was awarded the annual Red Ochre Award for a lifetime of achievement as an artist. In Monday's

Australian newspaper critic Nicholas Rothwell described her winning work as "precise and self contained, full of sheen and compressed light". Naminapu Maymuru-White is also a long established artist with a history as a printmaker who has previously won the 1996 Best Work on Paper in Telstra and also been runner up in the National Indigenous Heritage Art Award. In Monday's NT News the Sotheby's director Tim Klingenden singled Naminapu's memorial pole out for mention and said that "the quality of work out of Yirrkala and Maningrida is fantastic." It is great to see two people who have worked so hard for so long get such a richly deserved reward. Anyone who knows them knows they are not just great artists but great people who tirelessly support many others. We are grateful that the excellence of Yolngu artists is being recognised at this level." said art co-ordinator Will Stubbs.

Telstra Bark Painting Award

Banduk Marika assisted by Boliny Wanambi and Ralwurrandji Wanambi *Yalangbara* 2005
Natural pigments on bark © Buku-Larrnggay Mulka & The Artist



**22nd Telstra National
Torres Strait Islander
Museum & Art Gallery**

"Retracing Tracks Arubunna Country" - Kathy Arbon

The painting is about a place of great significance in Arubunna Country, where my great Grandmother roamed and lived.

In September 2004, I went back to this country with my mother and saw the places where she, her mother and Grandmother had come from. I visited my great great grandmothers' burial place at Finnis Springs, as well as other places of significance.

"Curdi Murka" (the Bubbler) is in an area where there are many Mound Springs, some of which I have depicted in the painting. The springs have warm water, which bubbles to the surface and others are only mounds which have closed over, or run dry over time. The areas between the mounds are the patterns of the coloured sands and clays which have spilled over many years.

Some areas have small patches of flowers as well polished gibber pebbles.

The "Bubbler" as it is called, has a story to it, and I will tell a short version about how a giant Rainbow Serpent was killed and the body was thrown into the main springs and the head thrown a short distance away thus forming another spring.

The "Bubbler" randomly gives off a huge bubble, which looks almost like a monster's head. This formation represents the body, which has been thrown in the springs, after a few seconds, the form/bubble, subsides a little, and then seems to writhe and swirl around the pool at a great speed, with smaller bubbles coming from it. It is quite frightening to watch. The swirling movement leaves rings of several colours on the bottom of the springs once it settles.



"Retracing Tracks Arubunna Country" (detail)
Kathy Arbon © Kathy Arbon



First Prize

Blackstone Tjanpi Weavers Kantjupayi Benson, Nuniwa Donegan (dec'd), Angaliya Mitchell, Margaret Donegan, Melissa Donegan, Mary Smith, Freda Lane, Diedre Lane, Elaine Lane, Wendy Lane, Janet Lane, Janet Forbes, Shirley Bennet, Gail, Angela Lyon, Sarkaway Lyon, Ruby Forbes, Jean Lane Ngaanyatjarra language Blackstone WA *Tjanpi Grass Toyota* 2005 Raffia, grass, jute string, chicken wire, steel
© The Artists & Tjanpi Weavers

Warmun Art Centre had five artists represented in the 2005 NATSIA Art Awards. Pictured with their paintings at the Awards opening night are Charlene Carrington, Patrick Mung Mung and Betty Carrington and children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. The Art Awards are viewed by the Art Centre as an important opportunity for the future artists of Warmun to see the artwork of their

own family members in the prestigious setting of the Darwin Gallery. It was a long bus trip (12 hours) for the 19 people who attended the art awards. After three days lounging by the pool: two trips to the Gallery to see the Warmun paintings and Shirley Purdie's beautiful owl carving (as well as the very popular grass Toyota); a trip to the movies and lots of exploring Darwin in our own chartered bus, the long trip home didn't seem too bad.



National Aboriginal & Islander Art Awards
ry of the Northern Territory

ANKAAA AT GARMA FESTIVAL 2005

In early August ANKAAA organised a large group of artists to travel to East Arnhem Land and participate in the Garma Festival 2005 including artists from Bula'Bula Arts, Darwin, Injalak Arts & Crafts, Jilamara Arts, Marawuddi Gallery, Mimi Arts & Crafts, Ngukurr Arts, Tiwi Art Network and Warlayirti Artists.

Un-seasonal rain showers during the first couple of days made camping at Gulkula a bit more challenging but everyone enjoyed the cloudy cooler weather while making the most of the unique Garma experience.

The theme for this year's festival was Indigenous Cultural Livelihoods, which involved looking at ways to increase employment and business opportunities for Indigenous people. The Visual Arts workshop program presented a series of panel sessions over three days in which many different aspects of Indigenous art and culture were discussed including stories and experiences from Indigenous artists and arts organisations about how they are marketing and creating income from art production and cultural tourism, ideas for development of a proposed National Indigenous Art School, education and training, then ending with a strong discourse on the infrastructure and resources needed to provide for the future sustainability of the Indigenous arts sector.

A highlight of the festival was the presence of a group of Macassan visitors as special honoured guests of the Yolgnu people to re-emphasise the centuries old trade and cultural exchange relationships that took place between the Indigenous peoples of northern Australia and the Macassans from the islands to the north.

Karen Mills



Patrick, Freddy, Puruntatameri from Jilamara Arts & Crafts presenting at the Visual Arts Forum. Eva Nagomara, Marie Mudgedell & Patrick Smith from Warlayirti Artists.



Peter Garrett, Stephanie Hawkins & Djambawa Marawili

The Yothu Yindi Four Culture Gulkula, v



Roy Harrington & Duncan Bero from Mimi Arts & Crafts



Kathy Arbon presenting in the Visual Arts Forum



Karen Mills, Erica Luchich & Gary Lee



Regis Pangiraminni, Aden Ridgeway, Rick Freddy & Pedro Wonaemirri



Patrick Smith & Marie Mudgebell in the Northern Editions Printmaking studio



Regis Pangiraminni presenting in the Toursim Forum

Garma Festival 2005

Foundation's Garma Festival of Traditional
Arnhem Land, Australia
5th - 9th August 2005

Larrakia Nation, Karawa Park, Darwin NT

Yvonne Odegaard, Coordinator



Larrakia Nation's six Larrakia artists and eight "Youth At Risk", from Knuckey's Lagoon have just finished a mammoth Art Project at the water tank at East Arm, Darwin.

The six Larrakia artists worked with John Moriarty from Balarinji Designs, to design their own art works for the water tank at East Arm. The Art work on the water tank tells a Larrakia story.

The art project took six weeks to complete with the help of Nicole, from Sign Tech and the opening ceremony was at the Vopak Water Tank at 10.00am on the 18th August 18, 2005. The eight "Youth At Risk", gained skills and confidence by being involved with this historical project.

The six Larrakia artists are, Jocelyn Archer, Dorothea Fejo, Pauline Baban, Danny Raymond, Denise Quall and Yvonne Odegaard.

'Yakumirri' - An Exhibition from North East Arnhem Land

Buku-Larrnggay Mulka

The 'Yakumirri' exhibition has been bought by one of Australia's richest women. Janet Holmes a Court and her husband started collecting Aboriginal art in the 1980s. She has continued to manage their business empire and art collection since his death.

Janet Holmes a Court flew to Darwin to see a preview of the Yakumirri exhibition at Raft artspace in Parap before it opened and decided to buy all 15 bark paintings in the show priced

between \$11,500 and 18,500.

'Yakumirri' describes people who have a 'name'. This exhibition consisted of a large bark painting from each of the fifteen Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre artists who have won a major Australian art award or had a successful solo exhibition.

In the last twelve months alone the following artists have had solo exhibitions in Melbourne, Sydney or Darwin which have been completely sold out;

Djambawa Marawili, Wukun Wanambi, Naminapu Maymuru-White, Galuma Maymuru, Gulumbu Yunupingu.

Other artists included in the show are Gawirrin Gumana, Marrnyula Mununggurr, Wolpa Wanambi, Nawurapu Wunungmurra, Wanyubi Marika, Mulkun Wirrpanda, Banduk Marika, Yananyumul Mununggurr, Waturr Gumana and Napuwarri Marawili.

Gary Lee

Larrakia Artist, Curator, Author

My name is Gary Mura Lee and I am a Larrakia artist whose art practice involves mainly photography. I was born and live in Larrakia country - Darwin.

In the early seventies I travelled around overseas to Europe, the Middle East, South and South East Asia for four years including living in India for two and a half of those years. I started taking photos during those four years but they were all destroyed in Cyclone Tracy. I didn't do any photography for a long time as I had other things to do.

I worked at Mimi Arts and Crafts for three years in the early eighties before going to the Australian National University to study anthropology. I graduated with honours in 1990 and since that time I have

worked as an anthropologist, curator, writer and designer.

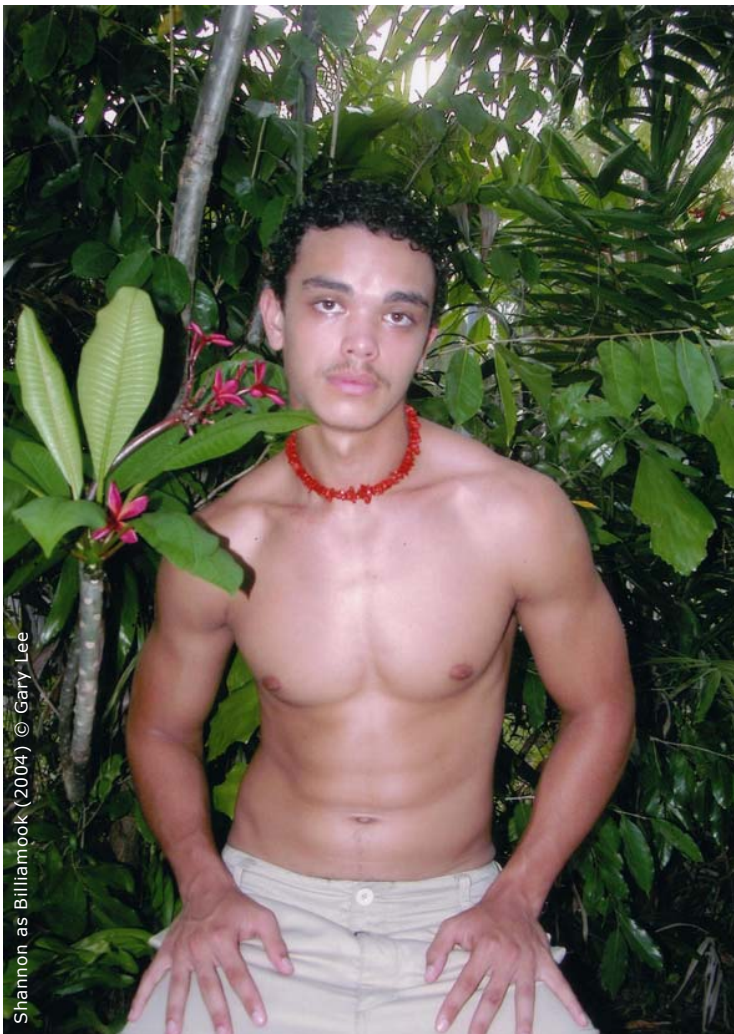
In 1993 I started my ongoing photo series "Nice Coloured Boys" in India and Nepal in which I have been documenting Indigenous and coloured male beauty and body image. I was tired of seeing negative imagery of Aboriginal men and men of colour and wanted to photograph them in situ, as I met or came across them.

Since then my photo making has been focused on re-representing Indigenous and other men of colour in questioning assumptions about identity and race. This direction led me to take my "Self Portrait" (2003) from my "Skin" series where I posed myself as a Hindu and Nepali man in everyday situations. My

most recent series from which the "Shannon as Billiamook" (2004) image is from, involves photographing contemporary Larrakia males in homage to the Paul Foelsche colonial portraits of Larrakia people.

I am going down to the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney in September to speak about my art practice at their new Aboriginal Art Forum series which has as its theme this year "Beauty." I will be talking about the Foelsche images in relation to my contemporary Larrakia male portraits.

Gary Lee is also an ANKAAA Executive Member representing Darwin based independent artists.





www.marrawuddi.com

Aboriginal art – Tourist Art and Fine Art

Andrew Blake, August 2005

Art for tourism is a major component and out front player in the tourism industry. Everywhere, you will see Aboriginal paintings and designs, much of it made generic by both misunderstandings and industry demand. There is a huge amount of Aboriginal art exposed to the tourist – from the top shelf article in our museums and many commercial galleries right through to the sad, pathetic and unlawful in any sort of retail outlet within coo-ee of the tourist trappings. Oh! Dreaming – that gives it credence – Barramundi Dreaming, Mimih Dreaming on plastisized fabric, the 'U' shape is a women sitting and the circles' a campfire. Dots and circles and lines and hatchings and colours from both the earth and tubes and pots – and all strongly identifiable as Aboriginal, not just in our country but overseas as well – this is where the tourist comes from and the wormy debate as to where authenticity fades out of grey but a debate nothing to do with art in its pure sense. Even so you have to assume there is argument in it all including the importance of honest intent. I read from the sessions prospectus sent by Beverly that I was to talk of tourist art and talk of art for the commercial gallery and the importance of both, the difference between the two was to be discussed later in the session. I'll have a convoluted stab at it now for it's a valid observation and one easily seen by those in the industry but a difference not as easily recognised I'd say by those that ricochet off it, the tourist and the artist who has not had the opportunity to really enter the fold that is perceived to be higher, through perhaps a lack of adventure and desire to go there. What I don't want to do is wade through the old and grey seeking the line where tourist art ceases to be the other, for what shade is grey and debate has been seen to flounder in this fog – the authenticity thing of course – we know what's authentic and what is not but

to pull something out of the grey and call it one thing or another is quite likely to be the other to another. But perhaps authenticity does not come into it today as we are not debating good and bad and maybe a line can be drawn between the two – tourist art and art art but not by me and I don't think its the intention either of this session. But if demarcation is desired it may be drawn not necessarily only from how the art looks or how it is seen but also of what we know of it. Why it was made – the intent. I try to research or fathom to gauge the intent to which a work of art is made. It is fair to say that a big percentage of the art craft makers of the region I'm now working within, have reasonable concepts of the tourist market and shallow concepts of the fine art market. The art market – it's you white people they'll say, and they're right – it's a Balanda market that tends to bias very heavily, where I am anyway, towards the mainstream. And for many in the 'industry' – rather than the 'market' the best is a distance from mainstream. So it's those of us in the middle, between artist and the beholder, who choose and push what we see is best and to some degree let mainstream look after itself – which it does with a burgeoning success. Tourist art comes in my book under mainstream and is generally good. It is a non-stop entrée that offers an avenue or opportunity for both practitioner and buyer to see more, to understand more and to be more discerning. Attempts are made by us all the time to share the playing field in which we work. We set up exhibitions of art art promoting what we consider good practice and invite people to look to see and hope it all creates some excitement. There is an effort made to have the artist/s attend openings. I do have trouble conveying as to what this evening may be to the artist before hand as it is a scenario that is hoped will suggest that the presentation of their art evokes a sense of pride and worth that rises above the retail shop and differs, but far from a negative way, differs from the known arenas of art centre and country and the difference I suppose between mainstream and better; all according to a western aesthetic sure but I know both our cultures share many values according to quality.

... this is an edited version of the original as presented at Garma 2005

For copy of this article in full please email michelle@ankaaa.org.au

ANKAAA Executive

2005



Chairperson **Terry (Djambawa) Marawili**
Buku-Larrnggay Mulka *Arnhem Land Region*

Vice Chairperson **John Martin Tipungwuti**
Jilamara Arts & Craft Association *Tiwi Islands Region*

Secretary **Peggy Griffith** Waringarri
Aboriginal Arts *Kimberley Region*

Treasurer **Alice Snape** Coomalie Cultural Centre *Katherine Region*

Gary Lee Darwin based artist & curator

Freddie Timms Jirrawun Aboriginal Art Corporation *Kimberley Region*

Tommy May Mangkaja Arts Resource Agency Aboriginal Corporation *Kimberley Region*

Richard Birrinbirrin Bula'bula Arts Aboriginal Corporation *Arnhem Land Region*

John Mawurdjul Maningrida Arts & Culture *Arnhem Land Region*

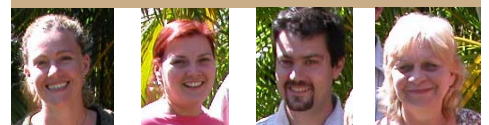
Jeannie Herbert Mimi Arts & Crafts *Katherine Region*

Marita Sambono Merrepen Arts Aboriginal Corporation *Katherine Region*

Regis Pangiraminni Munupi Arts & Crafts Association *Tiwi Islands Region*

ANKAAA Staff

2005



Stephanie Hawkins Manager

Michelle Culpitt Industry Development Officer

Stephen Hutchison I.T Development Officer

Erica Luchich Office Manager & Bookkeeper

ANKAAA will be recruiting for the following positions in the near future;

Business Development Officer

Industry Development Officer Kimberley Region

Industry Development Officer Katherine Region

Please email steph@ankaaa.org.au for further details on these positions