

Woven Lines 2015

INTRODUCTION

Woven Lines is the second solo exhibition by this exciting young Northern Territory artist. At the age of 21 Kieren Karritpul is a highly talented emerging painter and designer from Merrepen Arts at Nauiyu Community on the Daly River. In Woven Lines Karritpul continues to explore the minutiae of his line and pattern making with new complex compositional arrangements and bold synchronizations of colour.

Karritpul paints subjects associated with the traditional culture and knowledge of his clan. This exhibition extends his exploration of the woven line in painting and fabric design. Karritpul grew up watching his mother and grandmother collecting, dyeing and weaving pandanus and sand palm (merrepen) fibre. As they worked he would listen to the stories they told about the traditional culture and heritage of his people.

As a young contemporary artist Karritpul has transformed his knowledge of weaving and dyeing into intricate and colourful paintings. His images incorporate the pattern of pandanus bundles, woven baskets, coolamon and fish traps, while the colours of his paintings emulate rich and beautiful natural fibre dyes. The works pay homage to his culture and heritage, yet extend its boundaries as contemporary visual expression.

In 2014 Karritpul won the Youth Award for his screenprint on linen titled Yerrgi, at the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory. In 2015 was a finalist for the Northern Territory Young Achiever, Charles Darwin University Arts Award.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

I have grown up watching my grandmother, mother and aunties all collect yerrgi (pandanus) for weaving of baskets and mats. We search for many different plants, roots and berries which we use to dye the yerrgi to create beautiful colours.

The yerrgi is bunched as it is in my painting after the dyeing process and ready to use by the women for weaving. The inspiration for my painting has come from the many bundles of yerrgi I watched being made by my mother and grandmother as a young child. This was always a time when my elders would pass on old stories and teach me important knowledge about my Aboriginal culture.

My love of painting and textile design comes from being able to tell really old stories passed down to me from my elders and telling these stories in a whole new way by placing these on textiles and paintings.

Kieren Karritpul



CATALOGUE ESSAY

One of the casualties of the recent cyclones (Lam and Nathan) to hit northern Arnhem Land communities has been the devastation of natural resources used for weaving. The palms providing the leaves which are stripped, dried and then dyed for weaving were either flattened or water-damaged by the cyclones, leaving several communities of artist weavers at a standstill. It's not the sort of cyclone fallout detail that generally makes the news but it does give us pause to consider the very central place of weaving in Top End Aboriginal artistic and cultural expression and how the medium itself has become so potently manifest through other mediums – painting, printmaking, installation, glass – and across cultural lines.

In Daly River artist Kieren Karritpul's art there is no escaping the woven lines of inspiration. The woven form is both subject and metaphor in his work, and also to some extent part of their process. In his first solo exhibition, Karritpul, at Nomad Art last May, the titles of his paintings, prints and textile-based work all indicated a particular woven form including the yerrgi which is actually a pre-woven form, yerrgi being the Daly River word (Ngan'gikurrungurr language) for the ubiquitous pandanus plant, the Screw Palm, *Pandanus spiralis* which together with the Sand Palm (*Merrepen*, *Livistona humilis*) are the main sources of fibre for Top End weavers.

Kieren's art introduces yerrgi in a very specific state – in the form of bundled-up strips that have been dyed and are ready for weaving. For the artist they are a reminder of a childhood spent with his mother and grandmother weaving, the communal process of gathering and preparing the pandanus fibres also an opportunity for passing on 'old stories' and cultural knowledge.

As a visual motif, Kieren's yerrgi bundles take on a variety of appearances. They can appear cocoon or candy-like with their fantails forming where they are each tied at one end. Sometimes they are elongated and sometimes more squat; sometimes they are naturalistic in their colouring (in tune with local dyes) and other times adopt a more heightened colour pitch. Perhaps their only uniform characteristic is the pattern of their alternating fantail ends.

In essence, Kieren's yerrgi bundles symbolise the potency of weaving and the woven form and become a metaphor for the very idea of potency. Perhaps this is an

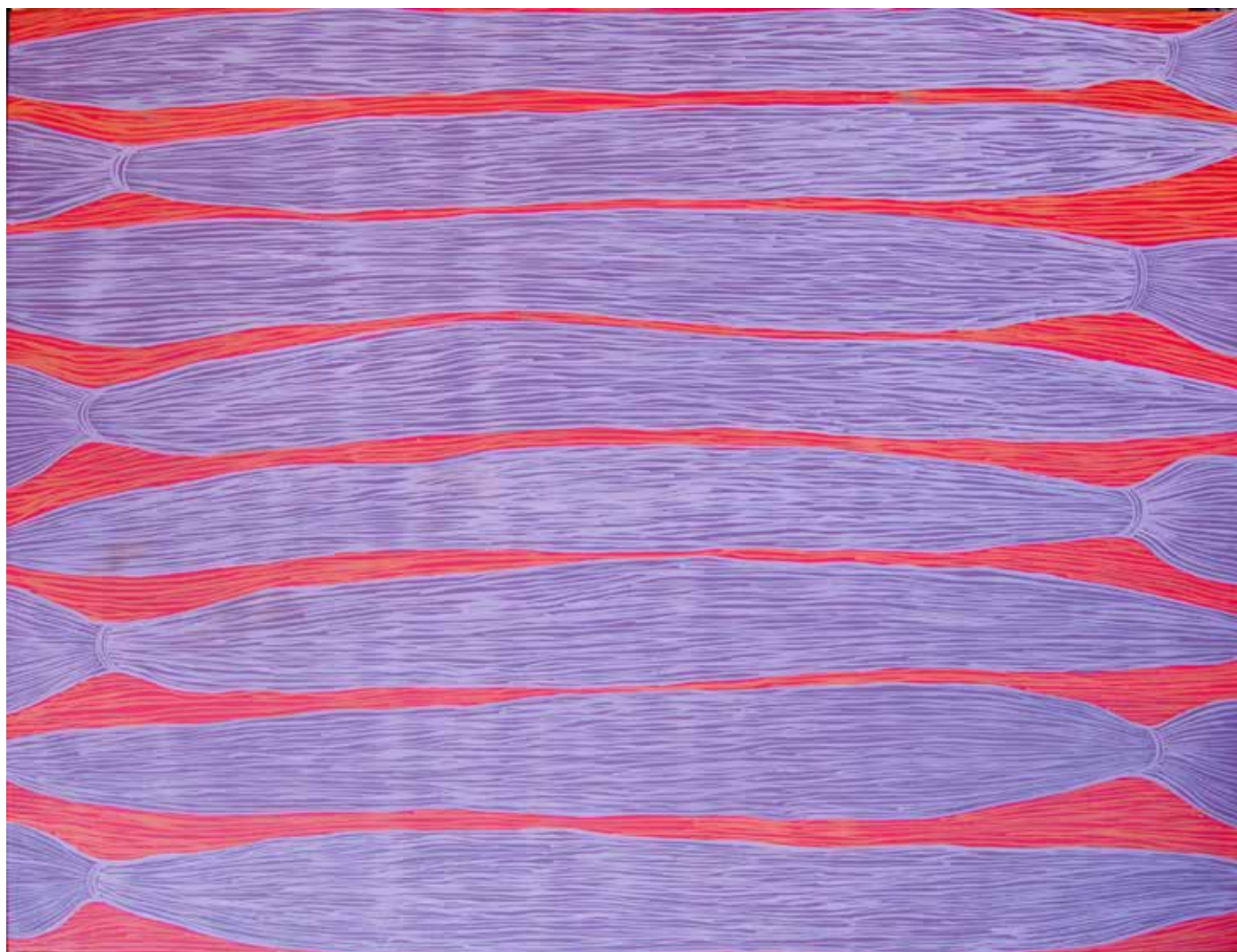
autobiographical touch from someone so young who is in the early formative stages of realising his own potential as an artist. And yet there is a delightful and seasoned ingenuity in Kieren's choice and varied rendering of the yerrgi bundle. Like Monet's haystacks – vehicles for the study and celebration of light, Kieren's yerrgi-'stacks' are a meditation on and celebration of Aboriginal culture.

In *Woven Lines* Kieren also celebrates the form of other woven objects such as the fishnet. This also undergoes varying levels of representation and abstraction, from a literal rendition in which the upright conical form of the fishnet is depicted (each painted line echoing the woven line), to more fragmented or close-up views of the net as though peering into its opening. In these abstracted views, the woven form almost becomes mandala-like with the imagery built up from radiating bands of short parallel lines. In this sense the line can be seen as a faithful transposition of the coil weave technique rather than the traditionally longer, looser stitches though it is in effect more about Kieren's visual-poetic licence in the process of translating one form into another to become something much more than what it represents; to transcend.

Kieren is certainly not the first Top End artist to give form to woven objects through a two-dimensional medium. Such translations have a strong lineage in Daly River and nearby Peppimenarti in particular, to some extent pioneered by artists such as Regina Wilson and the late Patsy Marrfura. Artists from Arnhem Land such as Kate Miwulku (Maningrida) and Robyn Djunginy (Ramingining) have likewise merged mediums, along with Darwin-based artist Karen Mills minimalist musings on this theme through painterly abstraction. Such a lineage might faze a lesser artist in their quest to make an original mark. One feels that for Kieren it's simply part of an endless reservoir of inspiration. His mark with this second solo exhibition is already made; may his line continue to unravel and delight.

Maurice O'Riordan

Director Northern Centre for Contemporary Art 2015



Yerrgi, acrylic on linen, 95 x 125.5 cm, Woven Lines exhibition, 2015.



Yerrgi-Pandanus, acrylic on linen 103 x 124 cm, Woven Lines exhibition, 2015.



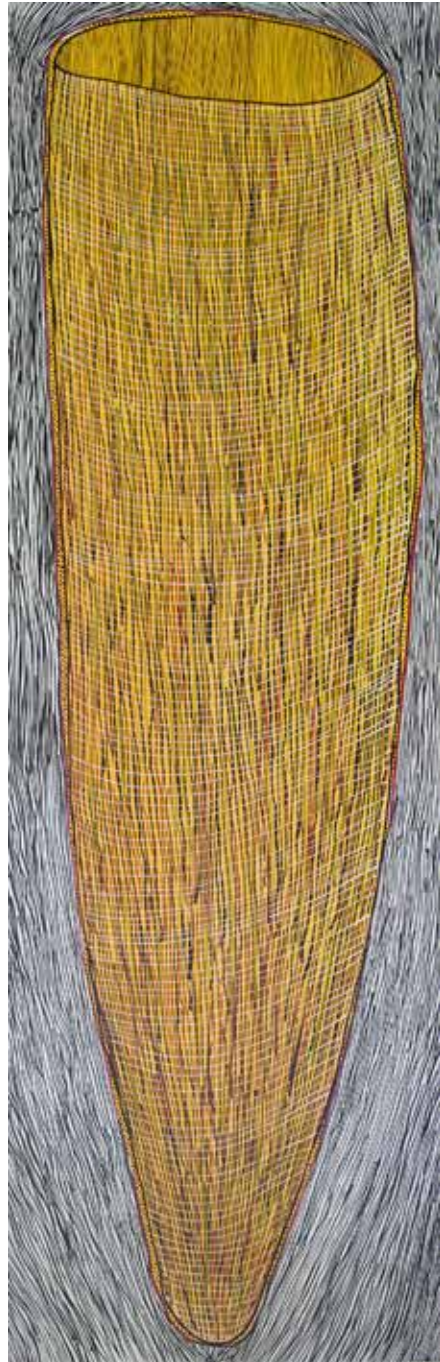
Walipan, acrylic on linen, 70 x 33 cm, Woven Lines exhibition, 2015.



Yerr kerre walipan, acrylic on linen, 70 x 33 cm, Woven Lines exhibition, 2015.



Pandanus strips, acrylic on linen, 140 x 45 cm, Woven Lines exhibition, 2015.



Syaw, acrylic on linen, 140 x 45 cm, Woven Lines exhibition, 2015.



Woven Lines, acrylic on linen, 135 x 35 cm, Woven Lines exhibition, 2015.



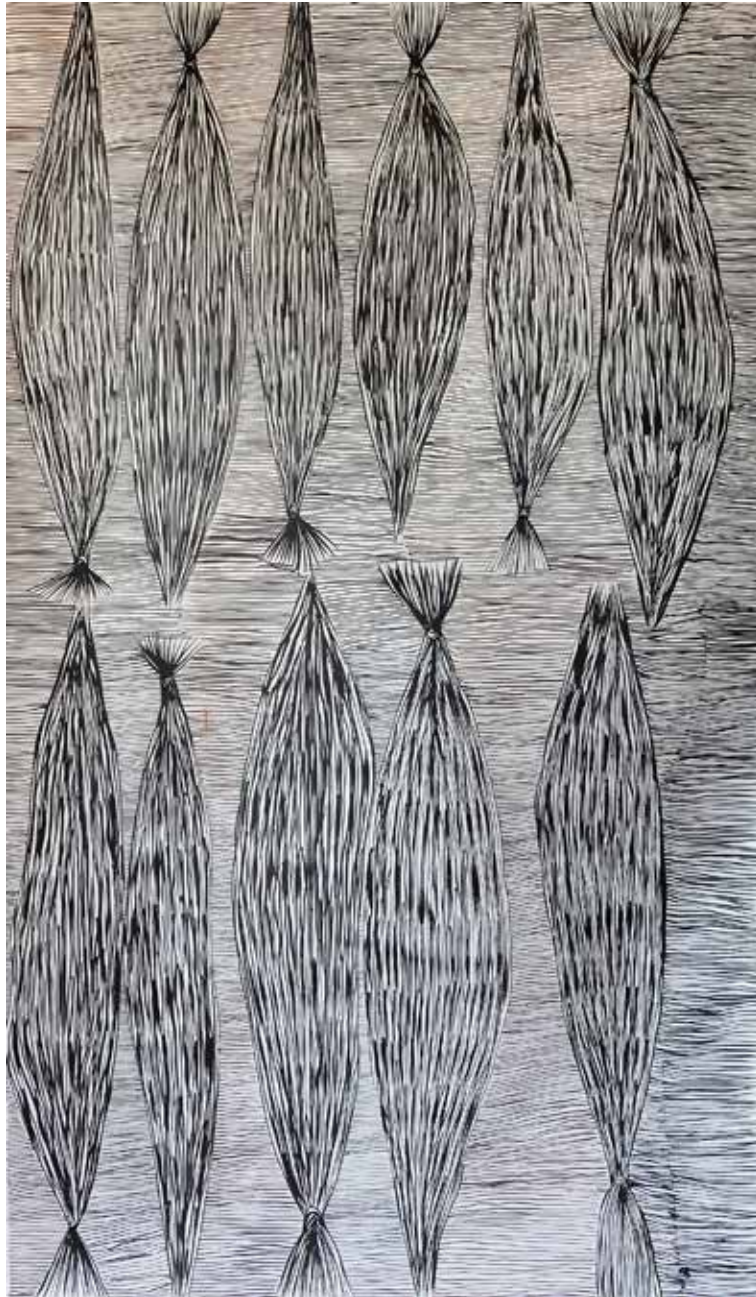
Yerr weti walipan, acrylic on linen, 135 x 35 cm, Woven Lines exhibition, 2015.



Merrepen, acrylic on linen, 75 x 135 cm, Woven Lines exhibition, 2015.

PREVIOUS WORKS: 2012 -2014

paintings, fabric design and prints



Yerrgi 1, acrylic on linen, 126 x 75 cm, Karritpul exhibition, 2014.



Coolamon, acrylic on linen, 124 x 125 cm, Karritpul exhibition, 2014.



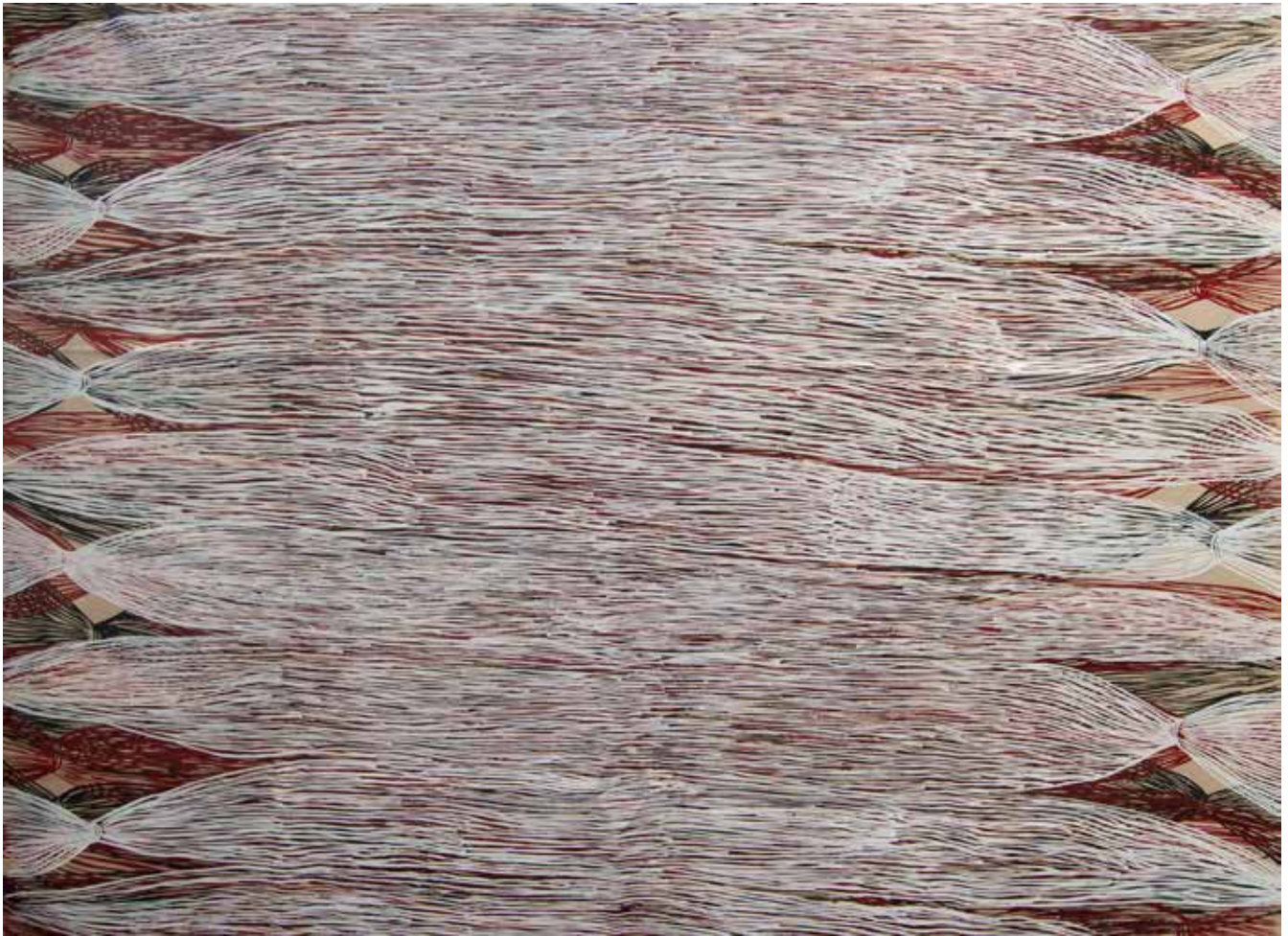
Fish Net, acrylic on linen, 130 x 70 cm, Karritpul exhibition, 2014.



Yerrgi 2, acrylic on linen, 140 x 45 cm, Karritpul exhibition, 2014.



Yerrgi 3, acrylic on linen, 140 x 45 cm, Karripul exhibition, 2014.



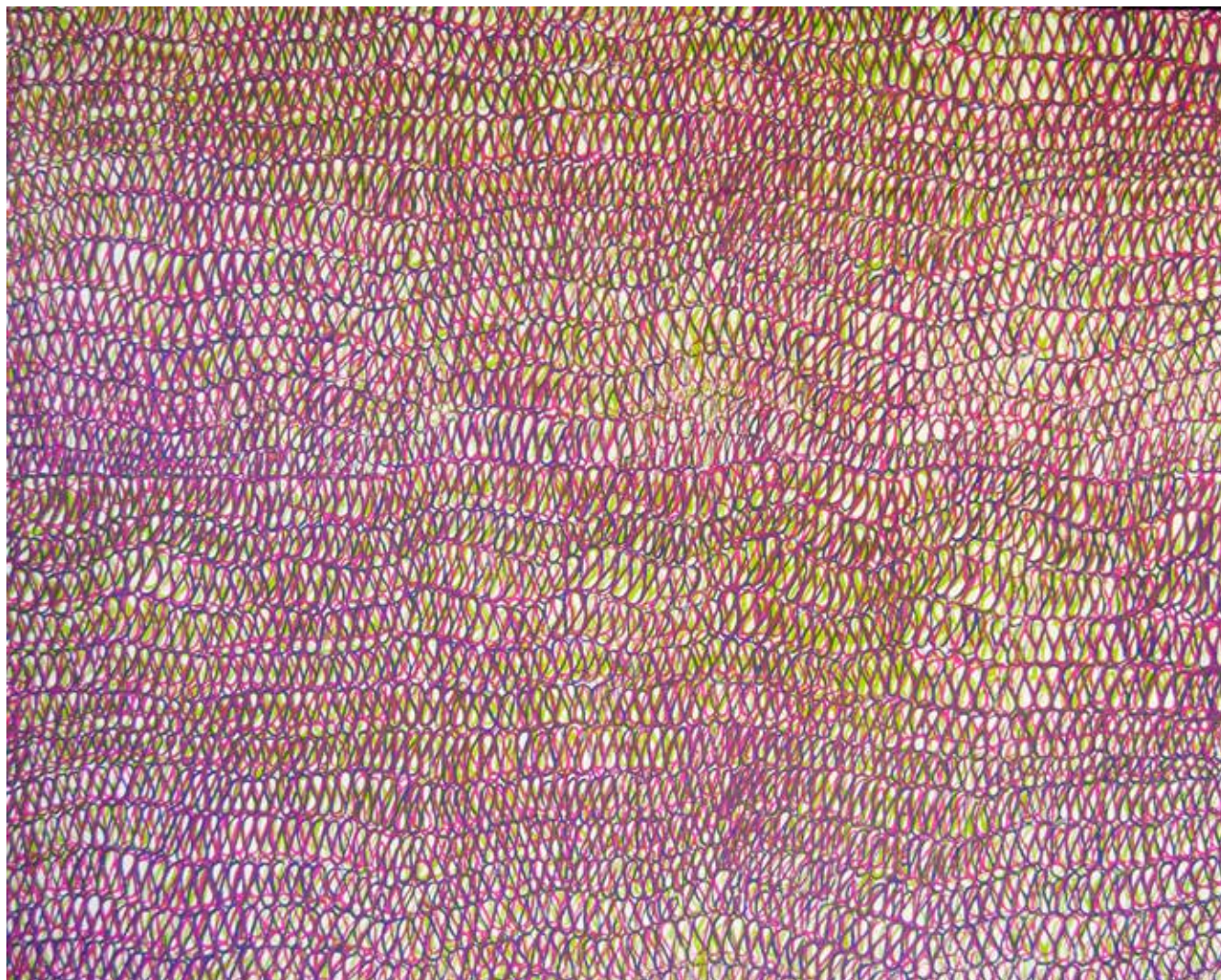
Fabric design
Yerrgi, screenprint on linen, 145cm wide, 2014.



Fabric design
Yerrgi, screenprint on linen, 145cm wide, 2014.

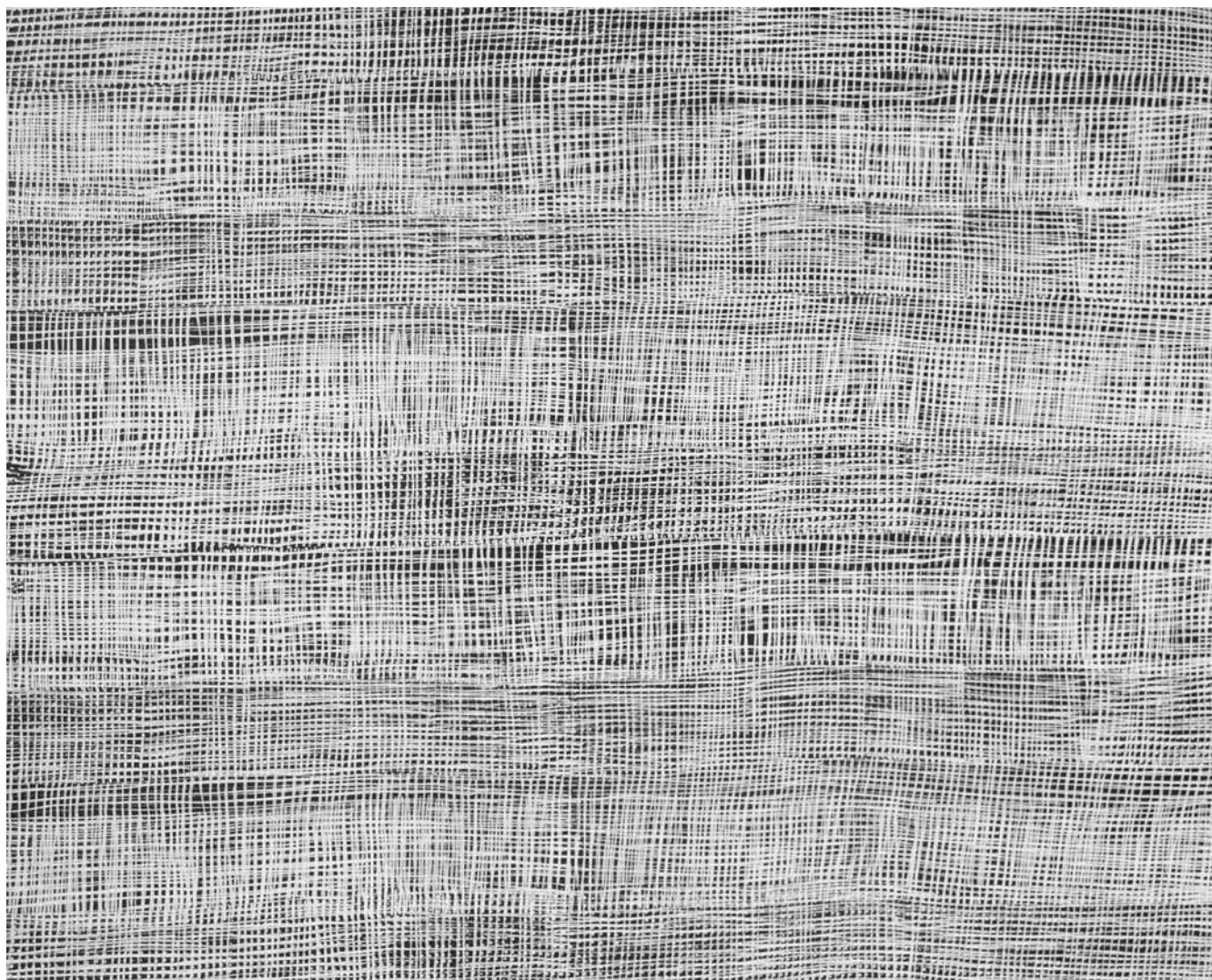


Fabric design
Fish Trap (red), screenprint on linen, 145cm wide, 2013.



Fabric design

Dilly bag, screenprint on linen, 145cm wide, 2013.



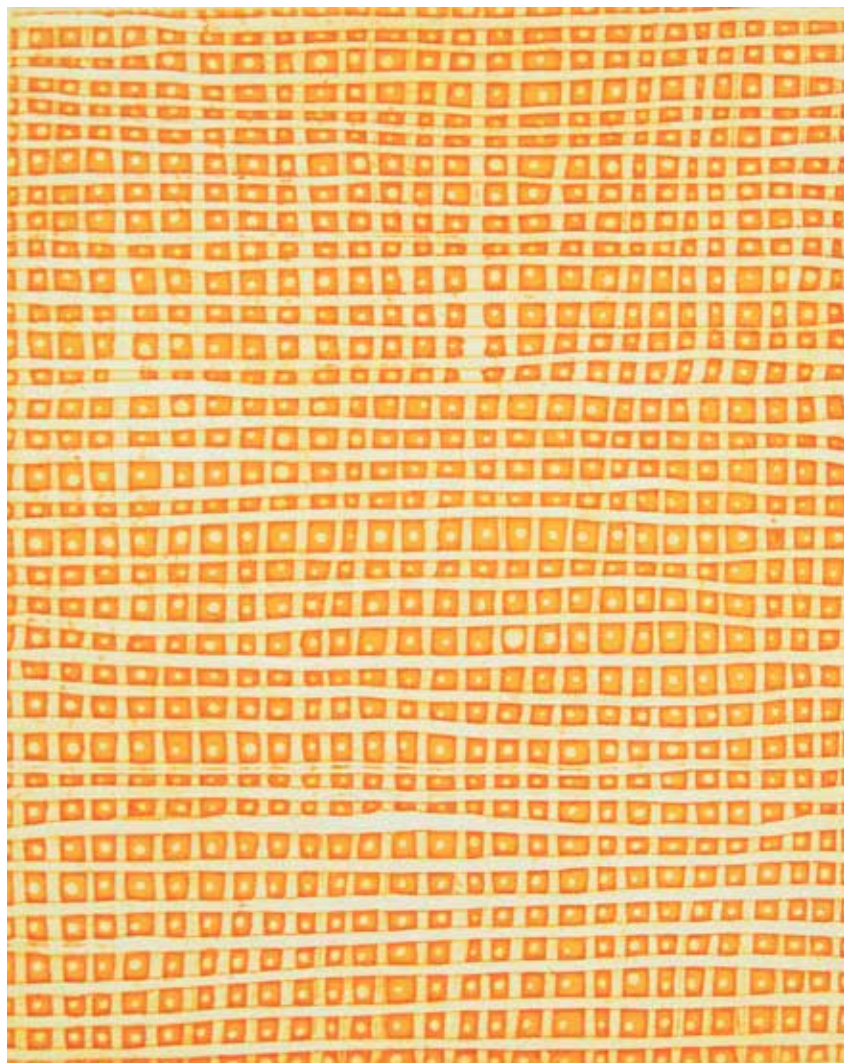
Fabric design
Coolamon, screenprint on linen, 145cm wide, 2013.



Fabric design
Coolamon (3 colours), screenprint on linen, 145cm wide, 2013.



Limited edition print
Coolomon, etching, 49 x 15 cm, 2012.



Limited edition print
Coolomon 2, etching, 19 x 12.5 cm, 2012.



KIEREN KARRITPUL

DOB: 07/06/1994
 Language: Ngen'gi wumirri
 Country: Malfiyin
 Dreaming: Rain, Black Bream, Pelican, Sand frog, Bitten, King Brown Snake
 Medium: Acrylics on canvas and linen, textile design, batik, silk painting, lino printing
 Themes: Billabong scenes, bush tucker, hatching, weaving and Religious themes.

BIOGRAPHY

Kieren Karritpul was born in Darwin and lives at Nauiyu Community, Daly River. Kieren attended lower primary school at St Francis Xavier's in Nauiyu and upper primary at Wooliana School. Kieren comes from a long line of recognised artists with his mother, older brother and aunts all actively working in the field of arts.

Kieren paints at home, but works and trains at Merrepen Arts. He is one of the leading artists in the Art Centre and is a highly talented young, emerging artist.

EXHIBITIONS

2001-04: Merrepen Arts Festival, Nauiyu, Daly River, NT
 2011: Museum of Cultural History, Oslo, Norway
 2011-12: Manresa Gallery, San Francisco, USA
 2013: Fresh: Emerging Talents of Indigenous Art, Melbourne, Victoria
 2014: Karritpul, first solo exhibition Nomad Art Gallery, Darwin, NT
 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award, NT
 2015: Woven Lines, solo exhibition Nomad Art Gallery, Darwin, NT

AWARDS

2014: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award. Youth award winner his screenprint on linen titled Yerrgi.
 2015: Finalist, Northern Territory Young Achiever Awards - Charles Darwin University Arts Award

ACQUISITIONS

Alan and Maria Myers QC
 Museum of Cultural History Norway
 National Gallery of Australia