

Manme Mayh:

Gardens of the Stone Country



Education Kit - Project Notes

Manme Mayh: Gardens of the Stone Country explores the links between Indigenous cultural heritage, environment and aesthetic traditions of artists from the dramatic and diverse landscapes of western Arnhem Land and Kakadu National Park through food and plants (manme) and animals (mayh).



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In Memoriam

Kodjok Namarnyilk (circa 1940 – 23 June 2012)

It is with profound sadness we acknowledge the passing of the artist Kodjok Namarnyilk during the development of this exhibition. In doing so we thank the family for allowing the exhibition to continue. It is the wish of the family to celebrate the legacy of this significant Australian artist and ceremonial leader by sharing his art and stories through the exhibition of his work.

In observing and respecting cultural protocol in all contexts other than the exhibition and associated publications the family requests that, at this time, the artist's 'sorry name' or subsection name Kodjok be used.

Cover Image

Allan Nadjamerrek, *Barrk and Worlerrk*, acrylic and ochre on paper, 76 x 51cm

Introduction

Manme Mayh: Gardens of the Stone Country explores the links between Indigenous cultural heritage, environment and aesthetic traditions of artists from the Stone Country of western Arnhem Land through food and plants (manme) and animals (mayh).

Presented by artists from Injalak Arts in western Arnhem Land in the memory of renowned artist and clan leader Bardayal Nadjamerrek AO (dec).

The artists selected for this project represent a small and unique group of senior and emerging artists who are actively maintaining the distinctive practise associated with the traditions of rock art painting in western Arnhem Land and the knowledge it purveys.

The artists are:

Kalariya Jimmy Namarnyilk (dec)

Don Namundja

Allan Nadjamerrek

Maralngurra (Maath) Nadjamerrek

Namarnyilk (Gavin) Nadjamerrek

Ray Nadjamerrek

Manme Mayh: Gardens of the Stone Country is presented by Nomad Art Gallery in collaboration with Injalak Arts and the Nadjamerrek Family as part of the Darwin Festival.

August 2012



In the Djabidj Bakoluy waterhole lays a sacred Wild Honey Log guarded by Ngalyod the Rainbow Snake and other spirit beings that inhabit the Mok clan estate. Image courtesy of the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory.

Foreword

The Stone Country of Western Arnhem Land is a unique, remote and richly diverse landscape. It encompasses a vast sandstone plateau escarpment, which rises out of low lying alluvial plains and wetlands. The plateau extends towards the coast in the northwest and gradually merges with the inland plains in the south.

Over millions of years water has shaped the sandstone into a rugged mosaic of rivers, gorges, waterfalls and ravines. In contrast, wide valleys provide habitats for a vast array of plants and animals. According to Kunwinjku traditional knowledge, water from the nagudji andjeuk (one rain) arrives over a composite cycle of six seasons and not only sculpts the contours of the plateau, but forms the landscape of the lowlands. The six seasons are indicated by the presence of certain flora and fauna that respond to the changing conditions. This cycle is captured by the mythology and knowledge of the Kunwinjku culture.

Kurrung is the time when the clouds and humidity start to build and the first rains arrive. A new flush of green grass stirs insects into life and fruits like mankurndal (black plum) appear. As the rains increase namarnkol (barramundi) are flushed out of waterholes, streams are transformed from isolated bead-like pools into rapidly flowing waterways.

Kudjewk (the wet season) follows as the monsoon delivers relentless rain, cyclones, winds and lightning. The plateau is saturated and the water cascades off the escarpment into waterholes, swamps and waterways. As the lowlands fill, a massive inland reservoir is created with sandstone islands that stretch beyond the horizon. It is the appearance of karrbarda, (long yam), manimunak (magpie geese) and the many fruits, that make this a season of plenty.

At the height of kudjewk these deeply mysterious wetlands erupt with life and become one of the most important tropical habitats in the world. Soon after ngalkordow (brolgas) and the djilikuybi (whistling ducks) hatch. The young chicks signal the beginning of the transition from turbulent water to the stillness of an inland freshwater sea. The water levels drop on the plains and rivers. It is the time to find ngalmangiyi (fresh water turtles) that live in the mud, feeding on the insects first stirred up by kurrung. This is bankerreng the last of the storms. The temperatures and the humidity are still high, while the water now trickles from the sandstone aquifer. Slowly the nights become cooler, the winds swing to the south-east as yekke (the early dry season) approaches.

It is a good time for hunting kunj (kangaroos), fat and easy to get to after the abundance of 'The Wet'. The andjamko (grevilleas), mandjoh (acacias), manbidubidu (eucalypts

flower) and mandem (water lilies) are everywhere. Western Arnhem Land burns as manwurrk (hunting fires) and mosaic burning spread across the drying land.

Wurrkeng is the heart of the dry season and there is still plenty of food around. Mankung (sugar bag) is abundant and the ankong (stringy bark) is harvested to make string bags. Slowly the wetlands become dry and cracked, the ngalmangiyi (turtles) dig deeper into the moist earth and the water birds flock around the remaining water holes. Later thunderclouds build again, signaling the cyclic return of kurrung.

Western Arnhem Land is also the home to the Mok Clan of the Kunwinjku people who have inhabited these lands for an uninterrupted period extending beyond 40,000 years. Their connection to the country is deeply ingrained in every aspect of life.

Kunwinjku people believe ancestral beings travelled through the country creating landmarks and places in which they continue to dwell, known as Djang (Dreaming). Accordingly the Kunwinjku people maintain a profound and ancient visual tradition. Paintings on rock, bark and (more recently) paper connect with ancient rituals, stories and spiritual associations. Rendered simply and directly with white on red ochre, these paintings narrate the soul and spirit of the Stone Country and its inhabitants.

Manme Mayh: Gardens of the Stone Country is a tribute to the life and work of the highly respected and influential statesman Bardayal Nadjamerrek AO (dec). The artists in this exhibition carry on the time honoured style taught to them by this great man (their grandfather). Some of the artists are also rangers who manage the land on the principles and knowledge passed down over countless generations.

Manme Mayh: Gardens of the Stone Country also honors a continuing cross-cultural dialogue, where cultural traditions intersect in a spirit of respect and sharing. Where the passing of knowledge from one generation to the next is combined with the sharing of knowledge from one cultural tradition to another, culminating in the preservation of our shared national heritage.

The exhibition celebrates a legacy articulated by these works. *Manme Mayh: Gardens of the Stone Country* expresses the resilience and connections between people, stories, place, plants and animals that live and thrive in the Stone Country of Western Arnhem Land.

Angus Cameron and Lorna Martin

The Nadjamerrek Family

Our father was the last of the Nawarddeken, (stone country) artists who painted on rock. Like the artists in this exhibition, he also painted on bark and fine art paper. When our family looks at these paintings we are reminded of my father and how he taught us and his grandchildren and his nephews to paint our country. His fellow countrymen Jimmy Kalarriya and Don Namundja, who painted alongside my father, also paint in the style given to them by their spiritual ancestors. It was their belief that this is the only way to paint. The family is happy that we, (and you) can look to these paintings and see and hear some things about our country.

Don Namundja is the only senior artists who painted with our father still painting today in Kunbarllanjja (Gunbalanya) for ceremonies that are no longer practised. These artists give us the story only in their paintings and this is very important. It is good for us that we see the elders sharing this opportunity with our young artists. While they are making paintings of traditional knowledge, our people can continue to learn. Let us stop and think with respect for them.

Let us tell you about our country, Ankung Kunred (Honey Country.) This country has close ancestral ties with sugar bag Dreaming. It is on the Arnhem Land plateau and our clan name is Mok. Our country Ankung Kunred is home to many plants and animals and ancestral spirits that are important to us. When we look closely at these paintings we can see some things sacred to us. The bees, the plants, the honey, the sacred honey (hollow) log and the honey trees that are protected by spiritual ancestors and powerful Ngalyod.

Gavin, Allan, Maath and Ray are painting some of the stories of our ancestral lands and through these paintings we can learn what the stories tell us about the spirits, the plants and the animals and sometimes ceremonies. While these young people are painting we keep hearing the names, the knowledge and remember that we must continue to care for the land and the Dreaming sites and also continue to return there with our young people.

We share the love our father had for our country, Ankung Kunred by learning from the stories of our ancestors, and of the spirits living in our ancestral lands. My family and my mother are proud, as we know that some of our young people have listened well and still live on country and are caring for it.

Look at these images and you will see the things my father believed in all of his life, the things he protected through ceremony and ritual.

Knowledge is important as it helps us care for our family and our country properly. If you look carefully at the work in this exhibition and open your minds and hearts to what you see, you will take away some knowledge about our country and its people and our culture. Like my father these artists put their knowledge into their art.

Donna and Lois Nadjamerrek on behalf of their family



The ceiling of a rock shelter with a human group painted in the post-dynamic figures style. Duluburreni locality, Mok clan estate. Image courtesy of the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory.

Bardayal Nadjamerrek AO (dec)

Bardayal Nadjamerrek AO was a distinguished Aboriginal artist, leader, traditional knowledge holder and conservationist from Western Arnhem Land. He was the last great master painter of his generation to create artworks within the rock art galleries of the Arnhem Land plateau. He started painting commercially in 1969 and produced many important bark paintings and prints.

A highly respected elder and senior ceremony man, he was custodian of ancestral country and major cultural sites within his Mok clan estate until his death in October 2009, when he was honoured with a state funeral. Nadjamerrek was made an Officer of the Order of Australia, one of only two Aboriginal Northern Territorians to receive this honour.

He was born around 1926 in the Mann River region of Western Arnhem Land, in Kukkurlumurl, in the Wurrbbarn clan estate. He had a traditional upbringing and underwent initiation in the stone country of the Arnhem Land escarpment. In his early teens he left Arnhem Land and worked initially as a labourer around the tin mines at Maranboy and subsequently as a stockman. During the Second World War, he received unrecognised service when drafted into a forced labour camp near Mataranka, where he had to work as a timber cutter for the Army. He was given the nickname 'Lofty' as a young man because of his imposing height.

After returning to Arnhem Land, Nadjamerrek settled at Oenpelli with his promised wife, Mary Kalkkiwarra, a Dangbon woman. They went on to have eight children. At Oenpelli he worked as a buffalo hunter, timber cutter and road worker until, encouraged by Peter Carroll, a linguist, he took up painting full time. In 1989, the Injalak Art and Crafts Centre was established at Gunbalanya (Oenpelli), where the work of local artists was nurtured, created and sold.

From the early 1970s, many Aboriginal people began returning to their country and setting up 'outstations', which are small to medium sized remote Aboriginal communities. During this time, Nadjamerrek helped the Northern Land Council survey the region not only for outstation suitability, but also to map and record Ancestral sites during the development of the Narbarlek uranium mine site to the east of Gunbalanya (Oenpelli).

In 2002 Nadjamerrek was able to establish his own outstation, this time at Kabulwarnamyo near the headwaters of the Liverpool River, in his father's Mok clan estate. This became an important centre for land management and ecological study, where Nadjamerrek worked with many researchers, botanists, linguists,

anthropologists and rangers to develop the Western Arnhem Land Fire Abatement (WALFA) Project, in association with the Northern Territory Government.

Nadjamerrek was a celebrated rock art practitioner as well as a painter on bark, paper and print media, known for his mastery of figurative painting. As a prominent elder, he was a senior custodian of important cultural sites. He was involved in the conservation of the rock art of his forebears, as well as the ongoing expression and teaching of his culture and Ankung Djang, native honey bee Dreaming.

He painted in the Mimi style of his forebears. This typically involves the depiction of spirit beings and the animals and plants of his country, painted on plain ochre ground. Animals are either painted in solid white form or else in the x-ray style, with their internal physiology on display. Spirit beings on the other hand are decorated with the single parallel hatching or rarrk (fine line work) characteristic of the art of his clan and in contrast to the cross hatching style adopted by artists from other areas in the region, such as Maningrida. Nadjamerrek's work is celebrated for its fine representation of people and animals in movement.

In 1999, Nadjamerrek won the Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award for his work on paper. In addition, the eight metre commissioned mural depicting Ngalyod, the Rainbow Serpent, on permanent display at Darwin International Airport is based on his work.

Injalak Arts



Bardayal Nadjamerrek, Kunbid Nuye, etching 2009

People and Place

The People

Western Arnhem Land has been home to Indigenous people for tens of thousands of years and the rock paintings found throughout the region represent one of the longest continuous records of human culture anywhere in the world.

The Arnhem Land rock art galleries have been described as some of the greatest art galleries in the world! But they also reflect the economic, cultural and spiritual life of the artists and communities that created them. These multi-layered galleries are like a continuous record of the way people interacted with physical and spiritual world that extends back thousands of years.

Ref: http://savanna.org.au/al/al_people.html

Clans

Kunwinjku society is closely focused on family and clan associations and maintains traditional kinship and marriage systems. A clan usually consists of two or more family groups that share an area of land that they own. Clan boundaries are passed from one generation to the next, generally through the father. Before the arrival of non-Aboriginal people there were over 20 clan groups in the west Arnhem region.

Kinship

The kinship system of the Aboriginal people in the west Arnhem area is complex. All people, plants, animals, songs, dances, ceremonies and land are divided into two groups known as moieties. Moiety is a Latin word that means of two equal parts. Everyone and everything belong to either the Dhuwa moiety or the Yirritja moiety. Each moiety is subdivided into eight 'skin' groups. A child's skin group is determined by their mother's skin group but they take the same moiety as their father. A person usually marries someone of the opposite moiety and is forbidden to marry into his or her own moiety. Moiety groups also determine the organisation and performance of ritual and ceremony

Kinship is a system that defines how people relate to each other. Through the use of 'skin' names people identify others around them as mothers, fathers, uncles, aunts, cousins, potential marriage partners etc and behave accordingly. Kinship relationships govern almost every aspect of day-to-day communication with other Aboriginal people.

Language

Before European colonisation 12 languages were spoken in the western Arnhem Land region. The main languages now spoken are Gun-djeihmi, Kunwinjku and Jawoyn. Many Aboriginal people still however speak two or more languages, often a consequence of spending time with relatives who belong to a different clan and language group. Aboriginal English, (or Kriol) is a recognised dialect of English and is also widely spoken.

The Kunwinjku language is spoken by about two and a half thousand Aboriginal people who live throughout western Arnhem Land and Kakadu National Park. The language has survived despite nearly a century of contact with the English speaking Australian population.

Ref: <http://www.environment.gov.au/parks/kakadu/culture-history/culture/clans-kinship-language>.

htmlEncyclopedia of Aboriginal Australia



Image courtesy Injalak Arts

Gunbalanya Community

Gunbalanya has a population of approximately 1,500 people. The language spoken is Kunwinjku with English as a second or third language. Gunbalanya is located about 480 kms to the east of Darwin in Western Arnhem Land. It is a remote community located just over the border with Kakadu National Park and is the home of Injalak Arts and the artists in this project. A permit is required to visit the community.

Gunbalanya can be accessed by road in the dry season only, and involves crossing of the crocodile infested East Alligator River (Cahill's Crossing). The crossing is in the tidal zone so at times the fast flowing water can be over a metre deep. Beyond the crossing the road to Gunbalanya follows the edge of the Oenpelli flood plains at the meeting point of the Arnhem Land escarpment.

The community is surrounded by the Oenpelli floodplain and a permanent billabong, which is thriving with life, crocodiles, turtles, fish, frogs and countless species of birds. Across the billabong stands Injalak Hill.

Most people in Gunbalanya live conventional houses with electricity, water and sewerage, however these houses are usually overcrowded with up to 20 or more people living in one house. This is often because of the cultural imperatives that decide how people support families and kinsmen.

Gunbalanya has a school (pre school to middle school), tertiary education centre, early childhood centre, health clinic, aged & disability centre, Mission Australia and Red Cross programs, police station, Centre link agency, airstrip, post office, garage, general store, art centre, ranger programs, radio station, meat processing business, local council and a social club.

The Gunbalanya community store has a wide variety of processed and frozen foods. Fresh fruit and vegetables are also available but are expensive, limited in range and not always very fresh. Gunbalanya also has a meat processing enterprise, which employs local people so there is a ready supply of fresh locally grown meat.

The regular supply of food has meant the traditional diet has been mostly displaced. Hunting and food gathering are now weekend leisure pursuits and carried out using four wheel drive vehicles, rifles and fishing equipment from the shop. Most houses have TV and videos. There are football and other sporting competitions and other aspects of western lifestyle.

East of Gunbalanya and spreading as far as the Mann River in Arnhem Land are active outstations where several hundred people live a more traditional existence. The outstations have developed from very sparsely equipped seasonal campsites to small communities with their own power and water supplies, with medical and food flown in weekly. People like to live on their country so that they are able to care for the country and their ancestors through ritual and ceremonies.

Ref: <http://www.westarnhem.nt.gov.au/>

Learning To Be Kunwinjku by Steven J Etherington, 2006

Arnhem Land and Kakadu National Park

The Arnhem Land region covers an area of 97,000 km², which includes Kakadu National Park. Arnhem Land is located East of Kakadu National Park and is one of the last great-unspoiled areas in the world; its small population is predominately Aboriginal people whose traditional culture remains largely intact. The region contains about 1600 plant species, 280 bird species and 10,000 insect species.

Arnhem Land was declared an Aboriginal Reserve in 1931 and is mostly Aboriginal land, but some areas leased for other purposes such as national parks and mining. The region was named by Matthew Flinders after the Dutch ship Arnhem, which was used to explore the coast in 1623. Ref: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arnhem_Land



Image courtesy Injalak Arts

History

Introduction

Indigenous Australian people have been making art in western Arnhem Land for about 40,000 years, which is the estimated time of their arrival in Australia. The rock paintings found throughout the region are thought to represent one of the longest continuous records of human culture anywhere in the world.

Thousands of rock art sites are located within the rocky escarpment, which extends for hundreds of kilometers across the Arnhem plateau. The sites, still being uncovered and recorded today, tell us about the economic, cultural and spiritual life of the artists and communities that created them.

These multi-layered rock art galleries are like a visual record of the physical and spiritual world that extends back thousands of years, the people, the tools and materials they used, the animals and plants they hunted and gathered, beliefs, stories, relationships, changes in culture and the changes that occurred in the environment.

The following descriptions are based on the research of Dr. George Chaloupka OAM (dec), as described in his book *A Journey in Time*. Dr. Chaloupka was Emeritus Curator of Rock Art at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, specialising in Arnhem Land Plateau region in the Northern Territory of Australia.

Pre Estuarine Period

Scientists are able to date paintings by testing near by ochre excavations with a process called Thermo-luminescence and testing the silcrete skin that occur on some rock surfaces. Many of the oldest rock art images are painted with red ochre which bonds with the rock whereas other ochres flake off.

The Pre Estuarine Period Begins about 40,000 – 60,000 years ago when the sea level was 150 meters lower than it is today. Northern Australia was joined to New Guinea and the coast was up to 300-km further north than it is today.

There is evidence that people migrated this country around this time. The lower seas would have allowed people to come into this country from land bridges linked to northern parts of Australia.

During this period the land was much cooler and drier, while the human population was relatively small. The vegetation of Kakadu was low open woodland and shrub land like inland Australia is now.

The first recorded art was through the direct print of hands by placing the hand in wet pigment, string & fiber images were also printed in the same way this art may be up to 50,000 years old.

From about 20,000 years ago naturalistic images of (now extinct) animals were painted, species such as Thylacine, Tasmanian devils, extinct mega fauna and people appear on the rock walls, which give us a clue of when the art was made. Simple stick figures depict people and activities, these figures are known as dynamic figures as they show people partaking in activities like hunting or fighting, the figures are shown wearing headdresses, skirts and body adornment.

Images were often superimposed over earlier designs; a single rock site may have animal figures and activities from different times and styles. About 15,000 years ago the earth began to slowly warm and sea level rose with the melting of the ice caps, people were pushed inland.

Reference

George Chaloupka, *Journey in Time: The World's Longest Continuing Art Tradition* (Chatswood: Reed, 1993)



Djurrih Kawokbebme, the southernmost waterfall on the Liverpool River. The Mok clan estate, Ankung Kunred – Wild Honey Country – ends some ten kilometres upstream. Photo courtesy of the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory.

Estuarine System

The sea rose rapidly at the end of the last Ice Age, which is around 7000 years ago, submerging the land and finally separating Australia from New Guinea. When the sea reached its present level, the valleys and riverbeds were filled with estuarine clays, creating the salty marshlands, which extend to the edge of the escarpment plateau. Mangrove forests also developed during this time. The coast was now only a few tens of kilometers from the northern edge of the Arnhem plateau and the north-flowing rivers became surrounded by salt marshes and then mangroves as an estuarine landscape formed on the lowlands.

The rising seas were accompanied by climatic change as monsoonal rains intensified and cyclonic depressions developed over the warm shallow seas. As the estuarine environment developed, the population increased and spread. Changes in cultural practice occurred as people adapted to the different environments and cultural diversity increased. These changes in cultural patterns are represented in the different styles of rock art found in Arnhem Land.

With the increased rainfall the freshwater flood plains formed and new estuarine animals evolved or migrated such as catfish, barramundi, mullet and salt water crocodile. These animals are often recorded in X-Ray style, which not only depicted the external form but showed detailed internal features and decorative design.

Freshwater Period

Gradually the more intense wet seasons associated with the raised sea levels in the region caused the mangroves to retreat and by 1500-1000 years ago, the freshwater wetlands we know today with billabongs and paper bark swamps became established.

The freshwater billabongs, lagoons, seasonally flooded plains, and paper bark swamps became a major habitat for a host of new species such as magpie geese, ducks, swamp hens, file snakes, freshwater turtle, mussels, grasses, wild rice and water lilies.

These wetlands also provided lots of food and materials for people. Plentiful with fish, birds and plants the freshwater habitat provided an abundance of bush tucker and weaving material. At this time paintings of water lilies and magpie geese appear in the shelters along with depictions of more advanced hunting tools like complex spear-throwers.

Contact

The Contact period began with the first visit by Macassans fishermen to the northern coast in the 17th C. It was then that Aboriginal people became subject to continuous, ever increasing influences from the outside world.

The history of European settlement had far reaching effects on local populations, which are reflected in a dramatic change in subject matter as Macassan and European images are introduced. The earliest images are of boats and ships that sailed along the coastline, seeking safe harbours and assessing the value of the land. These vessels were followed by other craft bringing colonists and their exotic animals. Other subjects include decorated hands, written language and structures such as the Darwin Wharf and guns.

Reference

George Chaloupka, *Journey in Time: The World's Longest Continuing Art Tradition* (Chatswood: Reed, 1993)



Two Tasmanian devils *Sarcophilus harrisii* with simple x-ray style features superimpose earlier rock paintings. Duluburreni locality, Mok clan estate. Photo courtesy of the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory.

Explorers and Researchers

Ludwig Leichhardt was the first European explorer to visit the West Arnhem plateau in 1845. Leichhardt followed a creek down from the Arnhem Land escarpment before crossing the South and East Alligator Rivers and on to Port Essington. John McDougall Stuart also visited the area in 1862.

In 1912 anthropologist Sir Walter Baldwin Spencer (1869–1929) travelled to Kunbarllanjja (Oenpelli) to study the art of the region. Together with Paddy Cahill, Spencer commissioned over 200 bark paintings for the Melbourne Museum in exchange for sticks of tobacco. These works were the first bark paintings to be collected and speak directly to the region's rock art tradition, with strongly graphic figures created with a bold use of white ochre on a plain background.

Ref: www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/education

European Settlement

European people started to move into the 'Top End' of the Northern Territory in the 19th century. Initially explorers like Ludwig Leichhardt travelled to the region in the 1840s followed later by cattlemen, buffalo and crocodile hunters.

By the early 20th century Europeans had established cattle stations, mining camps and buffalo hunting operations in the lowlands surrounding the Arnhem Land Plateau.

The life of Kunwinjku people has changed significantly since contact with the European world. People lived without permanent housing or money. They began to receive mission rations of flour sugar and tobacco as a supplement to traditional foods. Clothing was introduced, along with diseases (for which Aboriginal people had little natural defense). Disputes over land ownership, led to deaths of Aboriginal people at the hands of the new settlers.

With the introduction of the new economy, many groups of Aboriginal people moved away from traditional homelands during the early 20th century to move to places like Oenpelli to take advantage of these new resources.

By the mid to late twentieth century most Aboriginal people had moved into the new settlements. With the relative depopulation of the Arnhem Plateau, traditional land management practice was also reduced. The patchy mosaic fire management system faded away and wildfires entering the plateau had unbroken expanses of grassy fuel to burn.

In the early 21st C Arnhem Land has a population of around 16,000 people. People have begun to reestablish communities in remote homelands, known as outstations. Along with the outstations have come ranger programs and the reintroduction of traditional land management practices.

Ref: http://savanna.org.au/al/al_people.html

The Establishment of Gunbalanya

Paddy Cahill established permanent settlement at Kunbarllanjja in 1906 when he took up a pastoral lease to run a dairy herd there. Cahill named his property Oenpelli.

The region also became a centre for water buffalo and crocodile hunting enterprises.

(Water buffalo is not native to Australia but was introduced to northern Australia in the early nineteenth century to supply meat to the early settlements and by the late nineteenth century it could be found in significant numbers on the floodplains northwest of the Arnhem Plateau.)

In 1916 the Australian Government bought the station, but it stopped operating in 1919 because of industrial unrest and the closure of the Vestey Brothers meat works in Darwin.

The Oenpelli Mission began in 1925, when the Church of England Missionary Society accepted an offer from the Northern Territory Administration to take over the former dairy farm. The Oenpelli Mission operated for 45 years and in 1975 responsibility for Oenpelli was transferred to an Aboriginal town council.

Oenpelli Reserve was proclaimed in 1920, and the Arnhem Land Reserve in 1931. These and other reserves in the area were combined as Arnhem Land Reserve in 1963.

In 1995 the Kunbarllanjja Community Government Council was formed. In 2008 it became a part of the West Arnhem Shire Council, which now provides local government to the region.

In 2001, following a request from the Council the name Oenpelli was changed to Gunbalanya, a name the council considered easier to pronounce than the more traditional Kunbarllanjja.

Ref: http://savanna.org.au/al/al_people.html

The Art

Injalak Arts

Injalak Arts is located at Gunbalanya (also known as Oenpelli) about 480 kms east of Darwin. The Art Centre is situated in the most beautiful of sites in the heart of the rugged Arnhem Land escarpment of deep plunging gorges, huge boulders and wide overhanging rock platforms known as the 'Stone Country'.

The escarpment rises forebodingly to the east of the Art Centre, which sits just below Injalak Hill, a site extensively rich in rock art paintings and the source of much inspiration for the artists.

Gunbalanya is surrounded by rich black soil floodplains, which extend from the base of the escarpment. Billabongs and swamps provided a natural habitat for a variety of fish birds and game such as emu, waterfowl, turtle, wallabies, possums, flying foxes, echidnas and goannas.

Injalak is a non-profit, community enterprise. It has over 200 members made up of artists and weavers from Gunbalanya and surrounding outstations. All artists are paid up front for their work.

Injalak Arts is managed by a local Aboriginal incorporated Association with a Chairperson and Board. Art Centre members are the artists and community. The Association has a number of objectives, with the major emphasis being cultural maintenance and economic self-determination. In its constitution the Association aims to "support and enrich the culture of the people in this area" and provide economic benefits for the residents of Gunbalanya and its outstations while being non-profit making.

Indigenous community art centres play an important role in the artistic and cultural life of traditional Aboriginal artists living in remote communities.

Ref: www.injalak.com/



Image courtesy Injalak Arts

Nomad Art

Located in Darwin Nomad Art Productions is an art gallery specialising in limited edition prints from the Top End, Central Australia.

Nomad Art is well known for facilitating cross-cultural projects with artists from remote Indigenous communities and interstate. Resulting exhibitions promote collaboration, reconciliation and understanding through an educational focus. Recent projects include *Replant: a new generation of botanical art*, which has been touring Australia since 2006, and *Djalkiri: We are standing on their names*. *Djalkiri: we are standing on their names - Blue Mud Bay* - the culmination of a vibrant and intensive cross-cultural exchange between five highly respected Yithuwa Madarrpa artists and four renowned artists from across Australia.

Nomad Art was established in Darwin in 2005 by Angus & Rose Cameron who have many years experience in art, art education and arts management and have worked extensively in the Australian Indigenous arts industry. Angus & Rose Cameron strongly believe that the integrity, sustainability and success of community arts organisations are important to the health and economic well being of remote Indigenous communities in Australia.

www.nomadart.com.au



Image courtesy Injalak Arts

Materials and Techniques

Natural pigments provide the four basic colours commonly used for rock painting and bark painting. These colours are -

- White, from white clay, and mineral deposits,
- Yellow and red ochre, from iron oxide stained clays, and
- Black made from charcoal or magnesium oxide.

Pigments were traditionally ground into a powder then mixed with water and fixative made from orchid bulbs, blood wood or green plum leaves, sap from the milk wood tree, birds egg yolks, honey and bees wax.

Brushes were, and are still made from a variety of grasses and barks, fine brushes are made from sedge grasses, pandanus leaves, feathers or human hair, wider brushes are made from the bark of the cotton tree, stringy bark and water pandanus, sticks are used for dots.

Rarrk is a term given to the fine decorative hatched lines used in X Ray style art. It includes parallel line hatching, cross-hatching, herringbone, zigzag and other fine line in fill. Pigment sprayed from the mouth was mainly used when using stencils, usually handprints as a kind of artist's signature.

Bark Painting and European Influences

In the past bark slabs were commonly used to make wet season dwellings in Arnhem Land. These barks were often decorated with designs similar to rock art. At the beginning of the 19th century anthropologists like Baldwin Spencer began visiting Arnhem Land to study Aboriginal culture and collect bark paintings and other artifacts. Aboriginal art was not considered fine art at this time and was collected by museums as an example of ritual and ceremony of exotic people in exotic places.

Exhibiting and collecting art was not part of Aboriginal culture; Arnhem Land barks were popular because they could be hung on walls, even though they were already walls. The first exhibition of Australian Aboriginal art titled "Dawn of Art" was held at Fannie Bay Gaol in Palmerston (now Darwin) in the 1880s.

In the 1920s and 30s missionaries encouraged the making and sale of craft and bark paintings. This provided collections for Museums in Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney.

Despite the increased interest in Aboriginal art it was not until the 1950s that Art Galleries began to collect it as opposed to Museums.

The bark used for bark paintings is cut from the stringybark tree (*Eucalyptus tetrodonta*). The bark is stripped from the tree in one sheet during the wet season when the sap is rising and the bark is soft. It is flattened by being dried out under logs or hot sand, or over hot coals.

Reference

George Chaloupka

Chaloupka, G. (1993). *Journey in Time*. Reed, Sydney.

http://savanna.org.au/al/al_people.html



Artist using ochres and natural fibre brush at Injalak Arts. Image courtesy Injalak Arts

Land and Spiritual Ancestors

A strong and intimate bond exists between Aboriginal people and the land. Aboriginal people believe that natural features of the land and all that live in it, including themselves and their laws were created by mythic figures.

These are the "First People" created in the Dreamtime or Djang. The stories of the Djang are passed down via song, legend and ritual dance. Some spirit figures formed the land, planted foods and left people, or spirit children directing them as to what language they should speak. Some created animals or turned themselves into animals, while others taught how to prepare foods, teach moral conduct or set systems of social organisation.

They also made laws and brought ceremonies. Most creative beings completed their creative deeds during the Djang, but there are others, such as the Rainbow Snake, Lightening Man and the many spirit people who exist in the environment today.

Rainbow Serpent

The Rainbow Serpent is one of the most universal of the spirit beings and holds an important place in mythological and ritual life for many Aboriginal people. The origin, activities, stories and appearance vary from group to group. The earliest rock art images of the Rainbow Serpent are about 8000 years old.

The Rainbow Snake has life giving powers and is associated with rain, growth and fertility. It is also responsible for storms and floods when it punishes those who break the law, or fail to uphold ritual responsibilities. The Rainbow Snake can transform into any number of forms or combinations of animals including kangaroo, crocodile and snake, the barbs attached to the face and chin are used to hook and sweep people into its body.

The Rainbow Snake usually lives in large deep waterholes and in pools below waterfalls, where its presence is indicated by the rainbow spectrum created as the sun strikes the spray. It can also travel long distances under the ground and is associated with the didjeridu.

Reference: George Chaloupka

Chaloupka, G. (1993). *Journey in Time*. Reed, Sydney.

http://savanna.org.au/al/al_people.html



Maralngurra (Maath) Nadjamerrek - Wakewaken (Sugar Bag Spirit)



Namarnyilk (Gavin) Nadjamerrek - Ngalyod (Rainbow Serpent)

Namarrgon the Lightning Man

Lightening Man is thought to have entered the land from the north coast with his wife and their children. They came with the rising sea levels, increasing rainfall and tropical storm activity.

Lightening Man formed natural formations and left parts of his potent force on various prominent locations as they journeyed through Arnhem Land. On his return he sent his children to parts of the plateau where they are now active during the wet season. Namarrgon is usually shown with stone axes attached from his head, elbows and knees. An antennae extends on each side of his body from head to toe, representing the lightening.

The stone axes are used to split the dark clouds when he shakes the earth with lightening and thunder. He is capable of causing damage and even death to people and Mimi Spirits who bury their own axes and hide during a lightening storm.

Mimi Spirits

The Mimi are tall and slender like the fine-leafed fan palm (*Livistona inermis*), which grows in Arnhem Land. The Mimi live in the escarpment amongst the rocks, their necks are so thin that they would break if they left their rock shelters in a strong wind. They have excellent eyesight and hearing, when they detect people they enter the rocks via cracks or magic openings.

When people move through the stone country they call out to the Mimi to let them know who they are. Their pets are the animals that live in their stone country like rock wallabies and rock possum but they will hunt the wild versions of these animals. They also eat the fruits of pandanus, bush potato and other bush foods.

The Mimi taught Aboriginal people many skills like how to hunt, prepare animals to eat and they composed songs and dances for ceremony. They are also thought to have painted the first images of people and animals on the rock shelters, especially the paintings that are high up in the rocks out of the reach of people. The Mimi can also enter the artist's dreams to tell them what to paint.

Reference: George Chaloupka

Chaloupka, G. (1993). *Journey in Time*. Reed, Sydney.

http://savanna.org.au/al/al_people.html



Peter Nabarlambarl (dec) Namarrgon, Lightning Man, lithograph, circa 1999.



Graham Badari, Hunting Mimi Spirit, etching 2010

Climate and Environment

Seasons

The 'Top End' of Australia has two main seasons, a relatively cool dry period from May to September and a hot, humid wet season from October to April. Some Aboriginal groups recognise a calendar of six seasons from the monsoon time of lush vegetation and growth, through periods of flowering and fruiting to 'knock em down' storms and woodland grass fires. Later the floodplains become parched and waterholes disappear, the weather grows hotter and more humid and the landscape withers in the sun, awaiting the first rains to come again.

The six seasons or Nagudjii Andjeuk (One Rain)

For Aboriginal people of the Stone Country of Western Arnhem Land, the year does not start or end on a fixed date but is a composite cycle of seasons, unhindered by a given number of days. This is known as Nagudjii Andjeuk (One Rain), which exists over six seasons.

Kudjewk

Monsoon or wet season - December to March

Kudjewk is a time when hot, moist monsoonal northwest winds bring high humidity and lots of rain. Western Arnhem Land can record up to 1500 mm of rain during this time. There is often cyclonic activity, tropical depressions with heavy rain or scattered thunderstorms. By March the rivers become raging torrents and the plains flood. It is a dramatic time of growth and renewal. The heat and humidity generate an explosion of plant and animal life.

- Spear grass grows to over two metres tall throughout the woodlands.
- Magpie geese nest in the wetland sedge grass.
- Saltwater crocodiles nest
- Flooding may cause goannas, snakes and rats to seek refuge in the trees

Bankerreng

After the rains - April

Banggerreng is the transition from wet to dry season. The last of the fierce thunderstorms occur, the rain clouds begin to disperse and the skies start to clear. The vast expanses of floodwater slowly recede and streams start to run clear. At the start of the season the winds come from an easterly direction, but turn to gusty south-east winds which flatten the spear grass; known as 'knock 'em down' storms.

- The spear grass 'goes to seed'
- Fish are plentiful in the rivers and billabongs as they feed in the run-off from the floodplains
- It is a busy time for harvesting yams and other roots
- Most plants are fruiting and animals are caring for their young

Yekke

The early dry season - May to June

Yekke is relatively cool with low humidity. The days remain warm but nights become cooler, the prevailing winds swing to the southeast bringing cold air from the southern inland. Early morning mists hang low over the plains and waterholes. The increasingly shallow wetlands and billabongs are carpeted with water lilies.

It is time to start burning the woodlands in patches to 'clean the country' and encourage new growth for grazing animals. Burning early in the season also creates a 'cool burn' with green grasses and moist conditions prevailing, thus preventing wild fires from occurring later in the season when the grass is tinder dry.

Seed-eating birds move south and kites become more numerous as they chase the insects and lizards in front of the bushfires. The early fires stir the animals, marking the beginning of the hunting season.

- The water lily begin to bloom in the receding waters of lagoons
- The bush is starting to fill with wildflowers
- Native birds like Magpie Geese, Jacanas and Brolgas are laying their eggs
- The bush bees are busy making honey from the many flowering plants.

Wurrkeng

Cold weather season - June to August

Wurrkeng is the heart of the dry season, humidity is low, daytime temperatures are around 30°C and nighttime temperatures are around 17°C. Most creeks stop flowing and the floodplains begin to dry out. Patch or mosaic burning continues. By day, birds of prey patrol the fire lines as insects and small animals try to escape the flames.

- A myriad of other water birds crowd the shrinking billabongs
- Long necked turtles dig deeper seeking moisture within the drying swamp lands

Kurrung

Late dry season

August to October

Kurrung is the time when the clouds and humidity start to increase before the first storms come. The winds continue to blow from the southeast, however, the days grow hotter and the humidity rises once again. This is the season when soft white clouds appear on the horizon and drift across the sky.

- It is still 'goose time' but also time for people to hunt file snakes and long-necked turtles
- Sea turtles lay their eggs on the sandy coastal beaches
- White-breasted wood swallows arrive
- The fruit bats, or flying foxes, feast on the nectar of the flowering trees
- Salt water crocodiles begin to hatch



Savannah dry land at the beginning of Yekke, Dry Season

Gunumeleng

Build up - Pre-monsoon storm season

October to December

This period may last from a few weeks to several months. It is the pre-monsoon season of hot weather that becomes more and more humid. Later in the season thunderstorms build and spectacular electrical storms are common. Loud rolling thunder and dramatic lightning flashes light up the night sky. Showers bring green shoots of new grass to the dry land; the streams begin to run with acidic water that washes from the floodplains, which can cause fish to die in billabongs with low oxygen levels.

- Water birds begin to spread out as surface water and new growth become more widespread.
- Barramundi move from the waterholes downstream to the estuaries to breed.
- Many bush fruits such as wild plum and grape ripen
- Many Bird species begin to nest

Reference: <http://www.environment.gov.au/>

Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities

<http://kakadu.com.au/seasons/index.html>

National Parks, Australia Kakadu National Park

<http://www.savanna.org.au/al/>

The Tropical Savannas Cooperative Research Centres (CRC)



Wet lands at the beginning of Yekke, Dry Season

Ethno-biology in the Northern Territory

Ethno-biology is the study of the way plants, animals and micro organisms are used by humans. In the Northern Territory the Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts has been working with Aboriginal peoples to document plant and animal use and language names since 1986. This work is done at the request of Aboriginal elders and aims to assist people to record and conserve traditional plant knowledge for future generations.

Over the years a series of booklets relating to individual language groups has been published. These booklets are based on the results of fieldwork with elders of various communities. The publications record traditional plant knowledge and present it in a format that is suitable for Aboriginal people to learn about traditional culture. Other Educational materials produced include plant use posters and illustrated plant identification kits on desert bush tucker and bush medicine. These are available at <http://www.nt.gov.au/nreta/publications/nreta/index.html> or tel 08 89994795.

How plants are named

Taxonomy is the science of classification. Every plant species on Earth has a single scientific name by which it is known. Having a standard method of naming plants means scientists can communicate clearly and understand which species they are referring to no matter what language they speak. The scientific way of naming plants is called binomial system because it has two words, the genus name and a species name. The genus is like the family name, while the species name often describes a characteristic of the plant.

Species often have other variations such as a different flower color, leaf shape or height. This variation may be sufficient to name a new species, but if the variation is minor or there is lots of overlapping features; a subspecies may be named.

Aboriginal knowledge and plant use

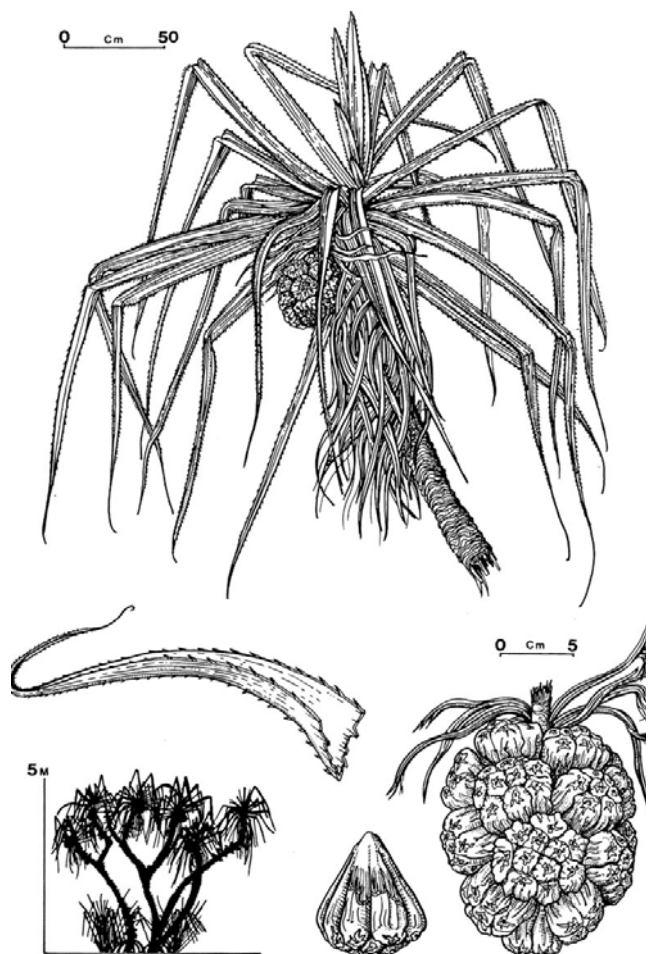
The accumulated knowledge of plant use has sustained thousands of generations of Australian Indigenous people. Many plant species have various uses, including food, medicine, utensils, tools, musical instruments and weapons.

In 1788 European colonisation brought a revolution of social change to Australian Indigenous people. As Europeans settled, traditional Aboriginal customs began to change, people were forced off their traditional lands or modified traditional practices. As the impact of new

settlers grew, the handing down of traditional knowledge, culture, spiritualism, art, language, flora and fauna began to decline in many parts of Australia.

Despite the impact of Europeans, Aboriginal culture remains central to the land. The land is regarded as the relationship between ancestors, living things and living earth. Aboriginal people believe the land is the origin of life; mythical creative spirits came from the earth to create landmarks, animals and plants then sank back into the earth where they remain.

Traditional Indigenous practice remains strong in many parts of the Northern Territory, for example gathering bush tucker is still common across the 'Top End' and Central Desert and is a vitally important aspect of maintaining a healthy and spiritual life. Collecting of plant food was traditionally women's business. Now families go into the bush together to gather food, enjoy the environment and pass on traditional knowledge. In Replant the gathering of six female artists reflects the traditional role of women as gatherers of food and holders of this knowledge.



Pandanus sparrallii. Image courtesy Northern Territory Herbarium

Warddeken Rangers

Warddeken Land Management operates out of Kabulwarnamyo an outstation located between the headwaters of the Mann and Liverpool Rivers in western Arnhem Land. The Land Management group was established in 2007 to protect and manage the country and have about 12 Indigenous rangers working in its programs, depending on the season. The following notes are a summary of the Warddeken Land Management activities from annual reports 2009-2010 and 2010-2011.

The Warddeken Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) comprises approximately 1,400 square kilometers of spectacular stone and gorge country on the western Arnhem Land plateau, which adjoins Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory.

The Warddeken Rangers work on a variety of projects including weed and feral animal control and traditional fire management. Passing on traditional ecological knowledge to younger generations is an important ranger role.

Warddeken's traditional owners (the Kunwinjku and Kunwok people) have inhabited these lands for an uninterrupted period for more than 40,000 years. Their connection to the country is deeply ingrained in every aspect of life and is maintained through their relationship to their country and traditional land management.

Maintaining a proper relationship between Warddeken Land Management as managers and the traditional owners is a key aspect of the management plan. Warddeken helps landowners make decisions about conservation issues by increasing understanding and knowledge, particularly about issues like fire, weeds and feral animals. Warddeken and its rangers then provide the resources to implement decisions by landowners.

The Warddeken region is globally significant for its natural and cultural values. The area is home to dozens of plants and animals, including threatened species and (most likely) species new to science. Threatened species include the bustard, northern quoll, black wallaroo, Arnhem Land rock-rat and Oenpelli python.

Warddeken Land Management has developed a carbon abatement partnership and is engaging in collaborative scientific research to position itself for entry into a future biodiversity credit scheme.

Reference:

<http://ourworld.une.edu/en/fighting-carbon-with-fire/>

http://www.nailsma.org.au/nailsma/publications/downloads/kantri_laif5_09.pdf

<http://www.abc.net.au/catalyst/stories/2708783.htm>

Fire Management

One of the most important roles of the Warddeken Rangers is fire management. This was the issue that brought about the establishment of the Warddeken Indigenous Protected area (IPA) in 2007.

The Warddeken Rangers are committed to reducing carbon emissions from the area by a minimum of 100,000 tonnes of CO₂. This is done by increasing early dry season burning when the grasses are still green and moist, which reduces large scale, hot wildfires later in the season. Helicopters are used in early burning to copy traditional patterns of burning. Traditional burning is considered environmentally friendly to flora and fauna as well as moderate in greenhouse gas emissions.

In addition to lighting slow burning fires early in the dry season (May – June) Warddeken Rangers also fight wildfires later in the dry season (July - November). The fires rarely accessible by vehicle and involve flying into remote rocky country by helicopter. The work is hard, hot and at times dangerous.

The dry season burning happens in consultation with each of the 40 indigenous clan estates that comprise the IPA. Each year as the wet season ends consultations begin at outstations within the IPA to determine the extent of burning.



Image courtesy Injalak Arts

Weed Control

The Warddeken Ranger weed management program is mostly concerned with the control of invasive grassy weed species like mission grass and gamba grass. Introduced grasses increase fuel loads leading to more intense and hotter fires.

The grassy weed project involves the reduction of grassy weeds. The widespread infestation of mission grass and gamba grass in particular makes it very difficult to control.

Feral animals

Feral animals impact on both natural and cultural values of the Warddeken Indigenous Protected Area.

Buffalo

Water buffalo (*Bubalus bubalis*) are the most visible invaders. Water buffalos were imported to Australia in the 1800's from Southeast Asia where they are domestic animals used for agriculture. The water buffalo were introduced to supply meat to remote northern Australian communities and were later abandoned to the wild and became feral. By the 1970s, feral buffalo numbers were so high that they were destroying wetlands and harbouring diseases that could affect native animals. Water buffalo are controlled by shooting programs and potential farming.

Reference: <http://www.nqccs.com.au/library/pests/feralanimals/buffalo.htm>

Pigs

Pigs (*Sus scrofa*) were introduced into Australia with the arrival of European settlers. As settlers moved around the country they commonly took pigs along with them. When these animals escaped from captivity they quickly established wild populations.

Feral pigs impact on the environment by digging up vegetation and destroying native ecosystems. This causes soil erosion, weed establishment and the spread of disease. Feral pigs tend to congregate around water, wallowing in wetlands and watercourses, which destroy these finely balanced ecosystems.

Feral pigs also prey on ground dwelling mammals, reptiles and birds, in some cases putting extensive pressure on rare and endangered species, possibly causing local extinctions over time. A case in point is ankodjbang (*Aponogeton elongatus*) a plant, which grows in shallow creeks and an important traditional food source for people of the plateau.

Reference: <http://www.animalcontrol.com.au/pig.htm>

Cats

Feral cats (*Felis catus*) have been on the Arnhem plateau for more than 20 years but are rarely seen. The Warddeken Rangers are now actively looking for and recording cat tracks and initiating spotlighting "cat patrols". Motion sensor cameras with audio lures are also being used in an effort to get some understanding of cat density. Cats are the prime suspects in the dramatic decline of small mammals.

Black rats

The Black Rat (*Rattus rattus*), which is an introduced species and an age-old pest in and near human habitation. Black rats are thought to have arrived in Australia with the First Fleet and subsequently spread to many coastal regions in the country.

Black rats have been found more than 20km from the nearest outstation in the Warddeken Indigenous Protected Area. It is thought they have come overland, rather than being brought in as hitchhikers in vehicle cavities. Rangers monitor regularly for rats at outstations and when found baiting is undertaken.

Feral bees

Feral and managed colonies of honeybees (*Apis mellifera*) have been present in Australia for about 170 years, but their distribution and abundance has increased dramatically over the last 60 years.

Feral bees have been present in western Arnhem Land since 1990. When feral bee nests (usually in hollow trees) are noticed rangers destroy them. Feral bees are classed as a "threatening process" with their aggressive takeover of natural nesting holes used by birds and mammals, making it hard for some species to find shelter or breed, they also eat nectar and pollen which native birds, insects and other animals need to survive, possibly forcing these native species out of an area, they may also affect the pollination of native plant species. Competition with the small sting less bees of the plateau is also an issue.

Cane toads

Cane Toads (*Rhinella marina*) are native to Central and South America. They were first introduced to Australia in 1935 when more than 3000 individuals were released into sugar cane plantations in northern Queensland. They were released as a means of controlling the introduced French's Cane Beetle and the Grey back Cane Beetle, which were causing significant damage to sugar cane crops. Unfortunately, the Cane Toad did not control the insects and went on to become one of Australia's most highly invasive species, currently occupying over 500,000km² of Australian mainland, with densities reaching up to 2,000 toads per hectare when Cane Toads first colonize a new area.

Cane toads arrived in western Arnhem Land in about 2000. In the high sandy areas the habitat is not ideal and numbers are low. Many more are found on dark soils around shallow billabongs at lower elevation. Development of a biological control seems the only hope for management.

Ref: <http://www.nretas.nt.gov.au/plants-and-animals/animals/canetoads>

NT Department Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport (Major Pests - Cane Toads)



Image courtesy Museum of Contemporary Art

Reference:

Warddeken Land Management Limited Annual Report 2009-2010

http://caepr.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/cck_misc_documents/2011/01/Warddeken%20AR%202009-2010%20web.pdf

Warddeken Land Management Limited Annual Report 2010-2011

http://caepr.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/cck_misc_documents/2011/12/WARDDEKENWEB2012.pdf

Feral ants

A story from Kyrin Bulliwana

'There are many types of good ants around the West Arnhem Land area, like green ants. The green ants that bininj (Aboriginal people) call bodbang and scientists call *Oecophylla smaragdina* are very important to the Arnhem Land country and its people.

Green ants tell us when some bush tucker are ready to eat — for example green plum, red apple and white apple. They also act like a doctor for the plants and trees. And they are also very important for Aboriginal people and culture. In West Arnhem Land some of our people are related to the green ants as a totem. Now there are some bad ants coming to Australia from other parts of the world. Bad ants can be a big problem to our local native ant and communities because they reduce their number and diversity. This means there will be more bad ants and less good native ants.

Tramp ants can spread very quickly and easily. In west Arnhem we are worried about two types of ants in particular — African Big Headed Ants *Pheidole* and Fire Ants or Singapore Ants *Monomorium destructor*. The Fire Ants have been a big humbug for the people at Manmoyi for years — chewing out electrical wiring in houses and the public telephones as well as biting everyone from children to adults. We know that African Big Headed Ants from overseas can spread away from houses and into the bush where they can wipe out all the other species near their nests.

We weren't sure whether some ants at Kabulwarnamyo were good ants or bad ants so we made a survey and sent the specimens to ant expert Ben Hoffman. We set up 10 traps to catch different types of ants around the community. After six hours we went back to each site to collect the trap. Then we put the lids back on the jars and put them in a bag. We labeled the bags with the names of the camps, and also we had the GPS location, the dates and the names of the collectors. To preserve the ants we tipped some vinegar into the jar. Then we sent all the jars to Darwin for Ben Hoffman to identify the ants species.

We were very happy when we heard there were no bad ants in our samples. Ben Hoffman said our ants were Australian species, *Monomorium* species (mono ants), *Iridomyrmex* species (tyrant ants), *Melophorus* species (furnace ants), and *Rhytidoponera* species (pony ants).

Although our surveys so far have not found any bad ants, invasive species of ants can have a bad effect on the natural environment. Rangers will continue to survey for bad ants at outstations and places where people go fishing or camping all the time.'

Kyrin Bulliwana

Kodjok Namarnyilk

Circa 1940 – 23 June 2012

Language: Kunwinjku

Clan: Wurrban

Sub-section: Nawamud (Kodjok)

Country: Gamargowan, Manmoyi, western Arnhem Land, NT Spring Peake (Kakadu), Nabarung

Kodjok was born around 1940 at Kukadjdjerre in the stone country of western Arnhem Land. As a child Kodjok camped with his family in the sandstone shelters of his clan estate and at Injalak Hill, which is situated across the lagoon from Injalak Art Centre. As a young man Kodjok contracted leprosy that affected his hands and feet.

He is a member of the Wurrban clan whose estate is situated in the upper reaches of the Cadell River. Kodjok was raised by 'Nipper' Kapiirigi, a Gundjeihmi man of the Badmardi clan whose traditional estate was far to the west in the Deaf Adder Creek Valley, now a restricted part of the Kakadu National Park. Kodjok accompanied Kapiirigi when he was engaged in various jobs and took part in social and ritual obligations throughout the Alligator River and Pine Creek-Katherine region.

After the Second World War, Kodjok and Kapiirigi worked alongside Billy Miargu, 'Old' Nabandjole and George Namingum shooting buffalo in the Nourlangie, Deaf Adder Creek and Jim Jim area for Tom Cole.

Due to his association and travels to many parts of the great Arnhem plateau, Kodjok had a sound knowledge of clan territories, sites of significance and associated traditions. Kodjok used to reside at various outstations according to season, family and ritual obligation. They include Manmoyi or Gamargowan on the Mann River in west Arnhem Land and Spring Peake in Kakadu National Park.

Kodjok was considered one of the most important Djungkay (ceremonial leaders) in western Arnhem Land and no major ritual could occur without his participation and advice. As Djungkay he conducted hundreds of youths into regional initiation ceremonies, which constitute the major rites of passage for Indigenous men.

Kodjok displayed a great energy and zest for living and art and created paintings of great strength and deep spirituality late into his life. Bold vigorous marks were a hallmark of his paintings, unique amongst stone country

artists. Kodjok has been included in numerous survey exhibitions and is represented in public and private collections nationally. In 1982 one of Kodjok's images was used on the Australian 65c stamp.

As a peer of the late Bardayal Nadjamerrek AO (dec), Kodjok painted alongside him on the Mok Clan estate and also assisted Bardayal in surveys and mapping of clan estates. Kodjok was regularly sought after by anthropologists, linguists and ecologists and worked extensively with Kakadu National Parks up until his death.

Kodjok Namarnyilk passed away at the Darwin Hospital surrounded by friends and family in June 2012.



Kalarriya (Jimmy) Namarnyilk (dec) - Nadjnem (Black Wallaby)
acrylic and ochre on paper, 62 x 41 cm

Don Nakadilinj Namundja

Date of Birth: 1954

Language: Kunwinjku

Clan: Kardbam

Country: Mankalord, Gunbalanya, western Arnhem Land, NT

Nakadilinj lives in Gunbalanya (Oenpelli) in western Arnhem Land. He has land in the King River area just east of Gunbalanya. His name (Nakadilinj) is made of the male prefix Na and the name kadilinj, for a sacred place of water at Mankorlod.

In the past he would regularly travel to Kapalwarnmyo on the upper reaches of the Mann River to sit down and paint with the late Bardayal Nadjamerrek AO (dec) at his outstation.

Nakadilinj's family style of painting belongs to the same school as the Nadjamerrek family, the foundation of which resides within the rock art of the region.

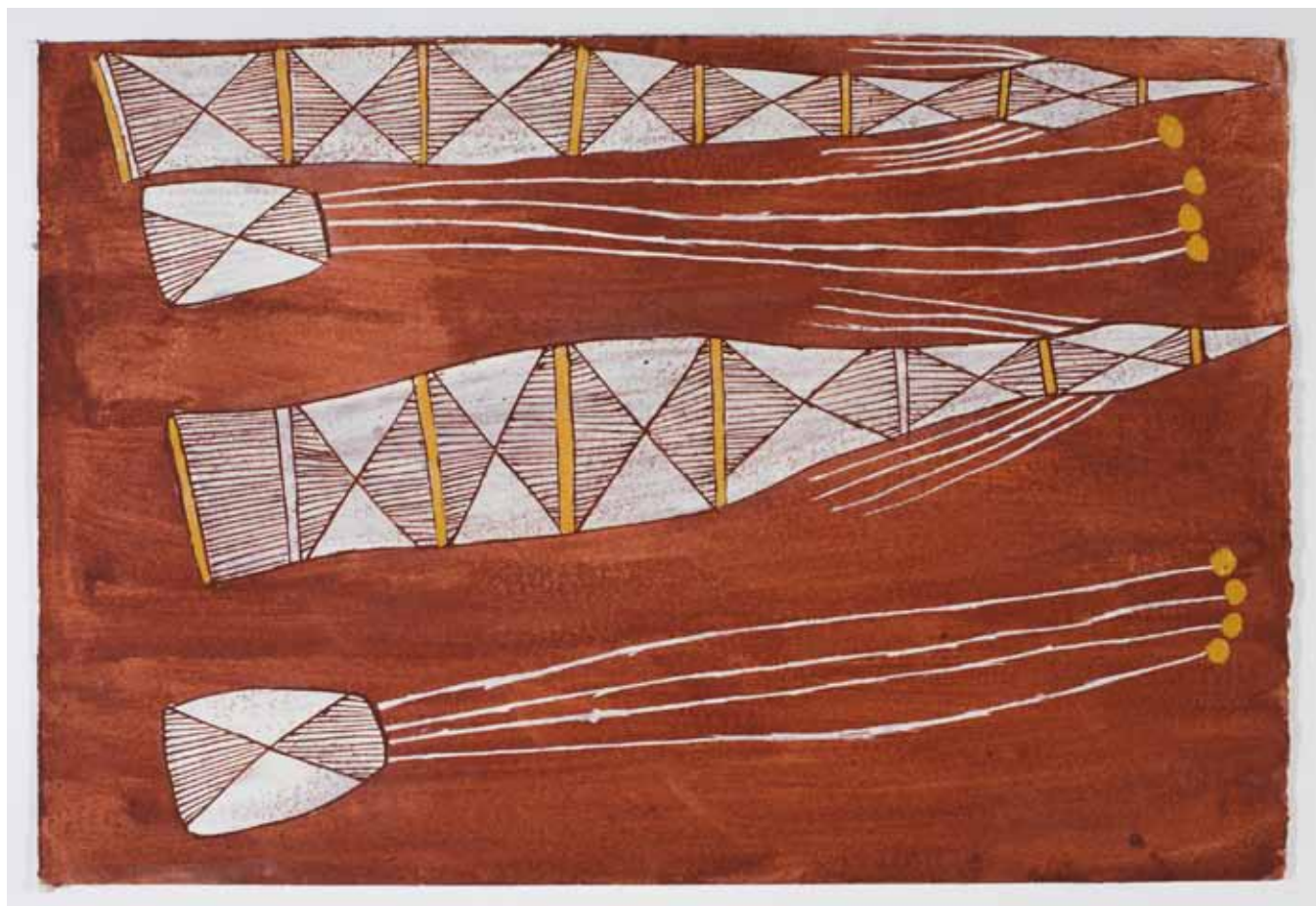
Nakadilinj's work is direct and simple in contrast to the dynamic style of his peers. His paintings focus on

essential shapes and arrangements of plants animals and ritual objects that have relationships with the natural and spiritual world. His paintings identify the ancestors, animals and plants found at his birthplace at Mankorlod. Objects seem to hover above the red ochre ground as if floating in air or water.

Nakadilinj is also well known for his vibrant etchings and in 2011 he began to use a medium new to him, screenprinting. The graphical qualities of his images are well suited to textiles as a substrate.

Nakadilinj's first exhibited at Raft Art Space in Darwin 2004 met with immediate acclaim. The freshness of Nakadilinj's paintings prompted the National Gallery of Australia to acquire two works from the exhibition. He was selected for the prestigious National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards in Darwin in 2003, 2005 and 2006.

Nakadilinj attends to the needs of the many researchers, archeologists, and academics. He often travels on senior ceremonial business now lives at Oenpelli and works at Injalak Arts Centre.



Nakadilinj (Don) Namundja, Bush Foods, Yam, Dilly Bag (top), acrylic and ochre on paper, 30 x 41cm

Allan Nadjamerrek

Date of Birth: 1986

Language: Kunwinjku

Clan: Mok

Country: Kabulwarnamyo Outstation & Gunbalanya Community, western Arnhem Land NT, Australia

Allan was born in 1986. As a child Allan suffered from chronic ear infections leaving him profoundly deaf for much of his adolescent life. After being told he would be remain 90% deaf, he was sent to Melbourne in 2005 for innovative surgery, which restored much of his hearing in both ears. On hearing the stories of his late uncle, Bardayal Nadjamerrek AO, Allan commenced painting in earnest. Allan's style is reminiscent of his uncle's. He utilises the single line rarrk that adorns the rocky caverns and galleries of the 'Stone Country' region.

Allan is also a part time ranger with the Warrdeken Land Management Group, which was formed to assist in the protection and management of the western Arnhem Land environment, combining traditional ecological knowledge with western science. Today Warddeken Land Management operates out of Kabulwarnamyo and has several rangers working in its programs, including weed and feral animal control and traditional fire management.

In 2011 Allan took part in an intensive five-day professional development program at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) in Sydney during the opening week of the exhibition Bardayal Nadjamerrek AO (dec). He also participated in a commission by the MCA to paint a large-scale mural as part of his uncle's landmark exhibition.

Allan is also part of the screenprint design team at Injalak Arts producing screenprinted fabrics as part of the 2011 fabric collection.



Allan Nadjamerrek - Kuluybirr (Saratoga), acrylic and ochre on paper, 51 x 76cm

Namarnyilk (Gavin) Nadjamerrek

Date of Birth: 1987

Language: Kunwinjku

Clan: Bularlhdja

Country: Kabulwarnamyo Outstation & Gunbalanya Community, western Arnhem Land NT, Australia

Gavin has been painting at Injalak Arts since 2006. His style is reminiscent of his grandfather, Bardayal Nadjamerrek AO. Like his grandfather, Gavin utilises the single line rarrk that has adorned the rocky caverns and galleries of the region.

Gavin is a ranger with the Warrdeken Land Management, which operates out of Kabulwarnamyo. As a ranger Gavin is responsible for fire management, feral plant and animal control and a range of environmental programs.

As an artist Gavin has participated in regular group exhibitions at Mossesson Galleries in Melbourne from 2007. In 2011 he created a wall painting with Allan Nadjamerrek, Ray Nadjamerrek, Maath Maralngurra and Lorraine White at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney to celebrate his late grandfather's exhibition Bardayal Nadjamerrek AO.



Namarnyilk (Gavin) Nadjamerrek - Ngalmangiyi (long-necked turtle), acrylic and ochre on paper, 76 x 51cm

Maralngurra (Maath) Nadjamerrek

Date of Birth: 1986

Language: Kunwinjku

Clan: Ngalngbali

Country: Kudjekbinj, Gumaderr, western Arnhem Land, NT

Maath was born in 1986. As a young man Maath has been involved in the Warrdeken Ranger group which plays an integral role in the management of country in western Arnhem Land by controlling invasive animal and plant species and wildfires which pose significant risk to the environment.

In 2009 he was part of a group exhibition titled 30 Under 30: A New Generation of Indigenous Art at Indigenart in Melbourne and Subiaco. In December 2010 he was commissioned to paint a wall painting for Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney as part of exhibition Bardayal Nadjamerrek AO (along with other members of his family

Maath is known for his paintings of Mimi spirits, Ngalyod (Rainbow Serpent), Borlokkko (water python), Namarnkol (Barramundi), Wakewaken (Sugarbag woman), Yawk Yawk (freshwater mermaid) and Karrabarrda (Long yam) amongst other subjects.

He currently lives in Gunbalanya and works at the local pastoral property owned by the Indigenous Land Corporation and paints through Injalak Arts and Crafts.



Maralngurra (Maath) Nadjamerrek - Yawk Yawk (Freshwater Spirit, acrylic and ochre on paper, 76.5 x 51cm

Web links

Aboriginal Art

Aboriginal Art and Culture Resource Pack

<http://www.creativecowboyfilms.com/education/aboriginal-art-and-culture/>

Bardayal Nadjamerrek AO (Dec)

<http://nadjamerrek.mca.com.au/>

Art Centres and Art Galleries

ANKAAA - Association of Northern, Kimberley and Arnhem Aboriginal Artists

<http://www.ankaaa.org.au/>

Injalak Arts

www.injalak.com/

Nomad Art

http://www.nomadart.com.au/?page_id=26

Herbaria and collecting plants

Australian National Botanic Gardens

<http://www.anbg.gov.au>

Centre for Plant Biodiversity Research

<http://www.anbg.gov.au/cpbr/herbarium/collecting/index.html>

Fun Science Gallery USA

Science experiments and other activities

http://www.funsci.com/texts/index_en.htm

Northern Territory Herbarium

http://www.nretas.nt.gov.au/plants-and-animals/plants_herbarium

Top End Environment

Bureau of Meteorology

http://www.bom.gov.au/iwk/climate_culture/Indig_seasons.shtml

Charles Darwin University Learn Line

<http://learnline.cdu.edu.au/units/aht214/topend/kunwinjku.html>

Kakadu National Park Fact Sheet

<http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/education/pubs/factsheets/kakadu-national-park.pdf>

Tropical Savannas CRC

[http://savanna.cdu.edu.au/Tropical Savannas CRC](http://savanna.cdu.edu.au/Tropical%20Savannas%20CRC)

Wetland Habitats Of The Top End - Michael Michie

<http://members.ozemail.com.au/~mmichie/habitat1.htm>

Warddeken Rangers

Warddeken Land Management Limited Annual Report 2009-2010

[http://caepr.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/cck_misc_documents/2011/01/Warddeken AR 2009-2010 web.pdf](http://caepr.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/cck_misc_documents/2011/01/Warddeken%20AR%202009-2010%20web.pdf)

Warddeken Land Management Limited Annual Report 2010-2011

http://caepr.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/cck_misc_documents/2011/12/WARDDEKENWEB2012.pdf

Warddeken and Djelk Indigenous Protected Areas

http://savanna.cdu.edu.au/news/topical_savannas_125.html?tid=670851

Acknowledgements

The *Manme Mayh* Education Kit was developed by Nomad Art Productions for use in schools and at exhibition venues. The activities may be reproduced for teaching purposes. Permission to reproduce images must be obtained from Injalak Arts or the relevant image provider including the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory and the Museum of Contemporary Art.

Angus Cameron, Nomad Art Productions, Darwin

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Curriculum Links

Manme Mayh has strong connections to the first phase of the Australian Curriculum through Science and History.

Science

Year K – 10 Strands
Science Inquiry Skills

- Questioning and predicting
- Investigation methods
- Fair testing
- Using equipment
- Observing and measuring
- Analysing results
- Communicating
- Developing explanations
- Reflecting on methods

Science as a Human Endeavour

- Influence of science
- Nature of science
- Science in the community
- Science and culture
- Contribution of scientists
- Collaboration in science
- Science and culture
- Science careers

Science Understanding

- Grouping living things
- Interactions of living things
- Change at the Earth's surface
- Forces and motion
- Evolution

Year 11 – 12

Biology

Unit 2 – Change and survival

Earth and Environmental Science

Unit 1 - Origins and interactions

Unit 2 – The dynamic Earth

Unit 3 – Life through time

History

Year K – 10 Content Description
Knowledge and Understanding

- First Australians
- The diversity of cultures, beliefs

Languages and social organisation

- Early contacts

Skills

- Historical questions and research
- Analysis and use of sources
- Perspectives and interpretations
- Comprehension and communication

The Arts

Manme Mayh can be used as a starting point to develop investigative themes on:

- How art reflects values, beliefs and traditions
- The role of artists in different societies
- Design considerations and constraints
- Aesthetics
- Relationships to the land as expressed by Indigenous culture
- Media, materials and technologies
- Continuity and change
- Society and culture
- Social dimensions of art

Indigenous Knowledge and Protocols

Protocols, cultural sensitivity and awareness were key elements of the Manme Mayh project. As in the natural world, the sharing of knowledge and cultural exchange can grow only when the elements are right. Aboriginal people have been associated with the Arnhem Land region for tens of thousands of years and have an intimate knowledge of land management which has been passed down through the generations.

Respect

The rights of Indigenous people to own and control their cultures should be respected. Diversity of Indigenous cultures should be acknowledged and encouraged. Indigenous worldviews, lifestyles and customary laws should be respected in contemporary life.

Indigenous Control

Indigenous people have the right to self-determination in their cultural affairs.

Consultation, Communication and Consent

Indigenous people should be consulted on the way in which their history, community, interviews, lives and families are represented and used.

Indigenous people should be consulted on the use and representation of their Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property. Prior to use, Indigenous peoples should be informed on the implications of consent. Consultation should address the communal nature of Indigenous society and cultural expression.

Interpretation, Integrity and Authenticity

Indigenous people should be consulted concerning the integrity and authenticity of the ways in which their history, community, interviews, lives and families are represented. Indigenous people should be consulted concerning the integrity and authenticity of the representation of their cultural and intellectual property.

Secrecy and Confidentiality

The right of Indigenous people to keep secret and sacred their cultural knowledge should be respected. Sacred and secret material refers to information that is restricted under customary law. For instance some information may only be learned or viewed by men or women, or only after initiation.

Indigenous people have the right to maintain confidentiality about their personal and cultural affairs.

Attribution

Indigenous people should be given proper credit and appropriate acknowledgement for their achievements.

Indigenous people should be given proper credit and appropriate acknowledgement for their contributions and roles in the development of stories.

Indigenous people should be given proper credit and appropriate acknowledgement for the use of their cultural material.

Continuing Cultures

Indigenous people have responsibility to ensure that the practice and transmission of Indigenous cultural expression is continued for the benefit of future generations.

Sharing of Benefits

The contribution of Indigenous people should be recognised by payment where appropriate.

Indigenous people have the right to be paid for the use of their Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property.

The issue of copyright ownership of the story, image, music, contributions and artwork should be discussed up front.

Indigenous people should have the right to control exploitation of their cultural and intellectual property. If consent is given Indigenous people have the right to share in the benefits from any commercialisation of their Indigenous cultural material.

Recognition and Protection under the Law

Indigenous people have the right to protection of their cultural and intellectual property.

Reference:

<http://www.abc.net.au/message/proper/ethics.htm>