



Nomad Art in conjunction with Maningrida Arts and Culture present

The Seasons Folio

A suite of nine silkscreen prints, \$3,000

**Sandra Milmilkama, Susan Marwarr, Leah Rostron
Annie Mulunwanga, Jay Rostron, Barbara Kurrawalwal,
Vicky Brown, Helen Lanyinwanga and Lena Kuriniya.**

This series of nine silkscreen prints is inspired by the cycle of six seasons in the tropical climate of north central Arnhem Land where the artists live. The prints are depictions of specific places at specific times of year, showing the vegetation and animals which are associated with that time and place.

Mary Ellen Jordan, 1999.



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The dry season, *yekke*, lasting from about May to August, is the coolest time of year, and the time associated with the cool *djimurru* easterly winds. Within the dry season is a time known as *wurluwurlhme* when fires are lit for hunting drives. Later in the dry, the weather is hotter and fires abound; this time is called *wurrkeng*.

Butterflies, or *merlemerle*, are associated with the change in season from wet to dry. They thrive in the areas where yams grow, as the caterpillars eat the leaves of the yam while the tuber grows during the wet. When the tuber is ready for harvesting, in the dry season, the caterpillars have grown into butterflies. The butterflies and yam plants shown in **Sandra Milmilkama's** print depict this time of year, when many bush foods are ready for harvesting.

Susan Marwarr's print shows her parents and older brother hunting for mud crabs at Koringkarri, a billabong in her country near Mumeka. Once again, the butterflies indicate that it is the dry season. This is also a good time of year for mud crabs (*barnkabarra*), and the best time of year for using the *milil* vine (shown in the front of the picture) for making fish nets. The *milil* vine needs to be dry to be processed into fibre. The transition from dry to wet is indicated not by butterflies, but by rain clouds. This time of year is known as the 'build up', or *kurrung*. The heat and humidity mount up until the weather finally breaks with the monsoon storms.

Leah Rostron's print shows the rock country during *kunemeleng*, the early wet season. This country, dusty and somewhat bare after the fires of the dry season, is shown with the growth associated with the rains. The wet season itself, *kudjewk*, is depicted in six of the prints. **Annie Mulunwanga** shows a place called Dilebang — a series of billabongs with yam flowers growing near them.

For more information please call
Nomad Art Gallery
Parap, NT
08 89816383
gallery@nomadart.com.au



The Seasons Folio Continued

Annie Mulunwanga is Susan Marawarr's sister; although Dilebang is close to Koringkarri, Annie has shown it at the opposite time of year when plants associated with the wet season appear and grass is abundant covering the red soil.

Jay Rostron's print is also set in her own country, at a place called Benebenemdi. Like her sister Leah Rostron, she has shown rocky country which is wet and fertile at this time of year. The plants depicted are all wet season plants: kundayarr (pandanus), wayuk (water lily) man-burre (bush potato vine) and badja (bush radish). Like Annie Mulunwanga, Jay Rostron has used grass as a symbol of the time of year: the creek in the left of the picture is shown surrounding a patch of grass and a tree.

Barbara Kurrawalwal's print also evokes the season through rich green foliage and grass growing alongside a billabong. Heavy blue rainclouds are an overt reference to the dramatic weather which is responsible for the lush growth and replenished billabongs, creeks and rivers.

Water lilies and pandanus are again associated with the wet season in **Vicky Brown's** print. Unlike the other artists, who speak Kune or Kuninjku and come from the western side of central Arnhem Land, Vicky Brown is a Burarra speaker from the eastern side.

This print shows a billabong in her husband's country at Ji-malawa. The pandanus trees (gun-menema) are shown here in fruit; the bright orange nut is called jingga and is best eaten during the wet season. The three large lilies in the front are called mu-jigarlawurra, and are a good source of food — both the roots (jirrcha) and the stem are eaten. The small plant at the back, gulach, has small black and red berries which only appear at this time of year.

Helen Lanyinwanga and **Lena Kuriniya** both use the yam plant to evoke the season. In Helen Lanyinwanga's print, the yam flower is shown, with the small orange fruit; once again, the abundance of green grass is a sign of the wet.

Lena Kuriniya's print shows the fish poison plant and the yam flower, with the tuber attached. After nakurl, the end of the wet season, a time of storms known as 'knockem downs', the butterflies will arrive, signaling that the tuber is ready to be harvested and the dry season, yekke, will have arrived again.

Mary Ellen Jordan Cultural Research Officer Maningrida Arts and Culture. Witten with the assistance of Murray Garde, Kuninjku Dictionary Copyright a Maningrida Arts and Culture.



Sandra Milmilkama, Kun-red Merlemerle Karralkan (bush with butterflies), screen print, 50 x 68 cm.



Susan Marawarr, Koringkarri (place name), screen print, 50 x 68 cm.



Leah Dambo Rostron, Kunbadwarken (rock plants), screen print, 50 x 68 cm.



Annie Mulunwanga, Kun-ngad (billabong), screen print, 50 x 68 cm.



Jay Jurrupula Rostron, *Kun-red (bush)*, screen print, 50 x 68 cm.



Barbara Kurrawalwal, Kun-djule (shade), screen print 50 x 68 cm.



Vicki Brown, *Burba (waterlily)*, screen print, 50 x 68 cm.



Helen Lanyinwanga, Man-badbirri (rock country tree, *Melodorum Sp.*), screen print, 50 x 68 cm.



Lena Kurriniya Karrbarda, Kolhbun (yam, fish poison plant), screen print, 50 x 68 cm.



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The Seasons Folio was printed at Northern Editions (Charles Darwin University) in 1999. Collaborative printmakers and staff included Leon Stainer, Monique Auricchio, Jo Diggins, Gilbert Herrada, Basil Hall, Rose Cameron, Erica Izett and Jo Ashby who assisted with the production and development of the prints at Maningrida and Northern Editions over three years. The Seasons Folio was part of an exhibition entitled *Bush Colour: Works on paper by female artists from the Maningrida region*, curated by Judy Watson, which was exhibited at 24 HR Art Darwin in 1998. *Bush Colour* then toured the United States of America and Australia with ArtBack NT from 2000 – 2003.

Website: www.nomadart.com.au, Phone: +61 8 8981 6382, Email: gallery@nomadart.com.au

