



Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre

PO BOX 570, NHULUNBUY NT 0881
tel: 08 8987 1701 fax: 08 8987 2701
art@yirrkala.com
www.yirrkala.com



Djambawa Marawili AM

Date of Birth: 13/04/1953

Country:

Homeland: Bäniyala / Yilpara

Biography

Djambawa Marawili is an artist who has experienced mainstream success but for whom the production of art is a small part of a much bigger picture. Djambawa's principal role is as a leader of the Madarrpa clan. He is a caretaker for the spiritual well-being of his own and other related clans, and an activist and administrator in the interface between non-Aboriginal people and the Yolŋu (Aboriginal) people of North East Arnhem Land. First and foremost a leader, art is one of the tools Djambawa Marawili uses to lead.

He was involved in the production of the Barunga Statement (1988), which led to Bob Hawke's promise of a treaty; the Royal Commission into Black Deaths in Custody; and the formation of ATSIC. Djambawa was appointed to the Prime Minister's Indigenous Advisory Council in 2013. In 1997, Djambawa was one of the elders at Timber Creek who burned the Prime Minister's 10-point plan.

In the push for Sea Rights he is the focus of a Northern Land Council video called 'Terry Djambawa Marawili – My Native Title'. This was made to explain the concepts of Yolŋu ownership of undersea lands and, as before, he uses his painting to show the sacred designs that embody his right to speak as a part of the land (although this time the land is under sea). He was instrumental in the initiation of the Saltwater exhibition. He co-ordinated the eventual Federal Court Sea claim in 2004, which eventuated in the High Court's determination in the 2008 Blue Mud Bay case that Yolŋu did indeed own the land between high and low water mark. In these political engagements, Djambawa draws on the sacred foundation of his people to represent the power of Yolŋu and educate outsiders in the justice of his people's struggle for recognition.

Away from the spotlight of activism, Djambawa must fulfill several other leadership roles. The principal ones are: as a ceremonial leader; as an administrator of several mainstream Yolŋu organisations; as the leader of a 200-strong remote homeland community; and as a family man with three wives, and many children and grand children. In recent years he has been very successful in advocating for his and other homelands against the anti-homeland movement championed by urban policymakers. This included a televised demonstration against the NT Government's Homelands policy at the anniversary of the Sea Rights victory at Yilpara in 2009. He has recently secured a new school building and permanent teachers for Yilpara.

Somehow art is integral to each of these roles as well. Obviously the sacred designs figure to some (secret) extent in the countless circumcision, burial, memorial and other ceremonies that he is required to assist or lead. As a Director and later Chairperson of the Association of Northern and Kimberley Aboriginal Artists Association (ANKAA) from 1997, and Chairperson of Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre from 1994-2000, art is never far away from consideration. In 2004, he was appointed to the Australia Council ATSI Board. He was granted a two year Fellowship from the Australia Council in 2003. He has been at various times a member of the Northern Land Council.

In 1996, Djambawa won the Best Bark Painting Prize Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art award. He is represented in most major Australian institutional collections as well as several important overseas public and private collections. In addition to sculpture and bark painting, this senior artist has also produced linocut images and notably the first screenprint image for the Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Printspace in 1996. Other highlights of Djambawa's artistic career include Buwayak-Invisibility (2003) and his solo Source of Fire (2005) shows at Annandale Galleries; The Wukidi Installation at The Supreme Court of the NT; his solo show at the Sydney Biennale in 2006 and the one man show to launch the 2006 Asia Pacific Triennial and the new Gallery of Modern Art in Brisbane in the same year. In 2009 he travelled to the 3rd Moscow Biennale in Russia and sang open his installation of bark paintings there. He also opened the exhibition Larrakitj featuring 110 memorial poles from the Kerry Stokes Collection at the Art Gallery of Western Australia in 2009. This show featured in the Sydney Biennale in 2010 at the MCA.

Djambawa's artistic influence since the mid 1990's has been monumental. As well as pioneering a path and an aesthetic for other artists he has inspired a new generation of 'Young Guns' through example, encouragement and direct mentorship. A whole generation of artists took inspiration from his muscular engagement with his own law to produce new aesthetics that were at once visually dynamic and spiritually powerful. He bent the formal compositions and moulded them onto fluid representations of the water they signified. He was the main activist in shaking off conventions that had been entrenched since the 1950's about how painting for the outside world should be composed. He argued for a freeing up of these restrictions as long as the spirit of the Law was honoured. This was part of his own

natural creativity and instinct to challenge the status quo responsibly. He found it difficult to be criticised by his elders for encouraging them to reveal deeply held Law in the course of the sea rights claim. He understood their objections but felt that a proactive stance was required. A younger generation of artists took as a given the innovations that he had fought hard for.

Amongst the notable artists who acknowledge their debt to Djambawa are his kinsmen Wanyubi Marika, Wukun Wanambi, Yilpirr Wanambi and Gunybi Ganambarr. There are countless others who he has encouraged directly and indirectly to take on greater authority in ceremony and art. This encouragement extends beyond his region through his leadership of ANKAAA. He applies his generosity, sense of Indigenous unity and belief in the power of art to all artists. In 2010 Djambawa was awarded an Australia Medal for his services to the arts, homelands and sea rights. He was also accorded the honour of being appointed as a judge of the Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award. In this year he also hosted a groundbreaking project between 4 prominent non-Yolŋu artists (Fiona Hall, Judy Watson, Jorg Schmeisser and John Wolesley) at his homeland in Yilpara. The resultant exhibition Djalkiri was shown in Darwin and Yirrkala before touring nationally.

During his ascent to leadership in the mainstream world as a leader in land and sea rights, arts administration, homeland policy and general Indigenous governance, Djambawa also became increasingly important ceremonially. He now holds a rank within the Yolŋu spiritual world that is the equal of any. His knowledge is deferred to by all who seek it. Typically he exerts that influence within the narrowest zone required of him but is often called upon to assist or adjudicate elsewhere which he invariably honours. It is this role as Dalkarra which is the foundation of his leadership and for which he has been groomed since childhood. In 2013 he was chosen as a member of the Prime Minister's 12 person Indigenous Advisory Council. In 2015 he was invited by Carolyn Christov-Bakagiev to play a role in the Istanbul Biennale. His art was shown with seminal Yirrkala political art and moved Bakagiev to declare that perhaps this region provides the first activist art.

Mediums

Print Making

Earth pigments on Stringybark

Earth pigments on native hibiscus

Earth pigments on Stringybark hollow pole

Etching

Solo Exhibitions

2015 Djambawa Marawili - Artist Residency at Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection - University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA, USA

2013 Djambawa - Vivien Anderson Gallery

2006 Solo exhibition - Sydney Biennale, Sydney NSW

2005 Source of Fire - Annandale Galleries Sydney

Group Exhibitions

2022 Maḍayin; Eight Decades of Aboriginal Australian Bark Painting from Yirrkala - Hood Museum of Art, Hanover, New Hampshire

2022 Our Blue Planet: Global Visions of Water - Seattle Art Museum

2019 Tarnanthi 2019 - Art Gallery of South Australia

2019 Balnnhdhurr - A Lasting Impression - Touring Exhibition - Whitlam Institute Gallery UWS NSW

2019 Balnnhdhurr - A Lasting Impression - Touring Exhibition - Cowra Regional Art Gallery, Cowra NSW

2019 Balnnhdhurr - A Lasting Impression - Touring Exhibition - Wollongong Art Gallery, Wollongong NSW

2018 Balnnhdhurr - A Lasting Impression - Touring Exhibition - Warwick Art Gallery, Warwick QLD

2018 water+wisdom / Australia India - RMIT Gallery, Melbourne VIC

2018 Balnnhdhurr - A Lasting Impression - Touring Exhibition - Caboolture Regional Art Gallery, Caboolture, QLD

2018 Balnnhdhurr - A Lasting Impression - Touring Exhibition - Griffith Regional Art Gallery, Griffith NSW

2017 Balnnhdhurr - A Lasting Impression - Touring Exhibition - Tasmanian Museum And Art Gallery, Hobart TAS

2017 Gapu-Moŋuk: Saltwater Journey to Sea Country - National Australian Maritime Museum

2017 Earth Matters: Aboriginal artwork from the Kimberley and Arnhem Land - FORM - The Goods Shed, Perth WA

2017 Balnnhdhurr - A Lasting Impression - Touring Exhibition - Bayside Arts and Cultural Centre Gallery, Brighton Victoria.

2017 Saltwater: A Collection of Bark Paintings & Carved Objects - Yaama Ganu Gallery, Moree NSW

2017 Salon des Refuse 2017 - Charles Darwin University Art Gallery, Darwin NT

2017 Balnhdhurr - A Lasting Impression - Touring Exhibition - Castlemaine State Festival, Castlemaine Market Building VIC
2017 Environmental Defenders Office NT Fundraising Auction - Outstation - art from art centres, Darwin NT
2017 Balnhdhurr - A Lasting Impression - Touring Exhibition - University of Newcastle Gallery, Newcastle NSW
2017 Legends and Lore - Artitja Fine Art, Perth WA
2016 Gapan Gallery, Darwin - Nomad Art, Darwin NT
2016 Gapan Gallery in the Past - Nomad Art Productions, Darwin NT
2016 Buku-Larrnggay Mulka - Yirrkala Printspace Exhibition - Gapan Gallery, Garma Festival, Gulkula, Northeast Arnhem Land NT
2016 Djambawa Marawili, Liywaday Wirrpanda and Nawurapu Wunungmurra - Annandale Galleries, Sydney NSW
2016 Ancestral Modern Australian Aboriginal Art - Kaplan and Levi Collection, Seattle Art Museum USA
2016 LORE: visual language of cultural identity - RAFT south, Hobart
2016 Balnhdhurr - A Lasting Impression - Charles Darwin University Gallery, Darwin NT
2016 Aboriginal Signature - Aboriginal Signature Gallery Brussels, Belgium
2015 Lundumirringu - Annandale Galleries, Sydney NSW
2015 Balnhdhurr: A Lasting Impression – Tarnanthi 2015 - Adelaide College of the Arts, Adelaide SA
2015 Tuslusu Saltwater Istanbul Modern Istanbul Biennial Turkey - Istanbul Modern, Turkey
2015 Yirrkala Mob - Bangarra Boards - RAFT artspace
2015 Kluge Ruhe - University of Virginia USA
2015 Lumggurma/North - Brumby Ute, USA
2015 Lumggurma - Brumby Ute Aspen, Colorado USA
2014 The world is not a foreign land- new perspectives on contemporary Indigenous art; Timothy Cook, Djambawa Marawili, Ngarra, Rusty peters, Freda Warlapinni and Nyapanyapa Yunupingu - Ian Potter Museum of Art, Melbourne VIC
2014 Exhibition - Chirascuro Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA
2013 Djalkiri, we are standing on their names, Blue Mud Bay - Wagga Wagga art Gallery, NSW
2013 Prized - Nomad Art, Darwin, NT
2011 BARRKU, Treasures from a Distant Land - RobyKing Gallery, Seattle in association with Harvey Art Projects USA
2011 BARRKU! - Harvey Arts Project, Idaho USA
2011 28th Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award - Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin NT
2010 17th Biennale of Sydney - Larrakitj, the Kerry Stokes Collection - Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney NSW
2010 Djalkiri; We are standing on their names - Nomad Art, 24-Hour Art, Darwin Festival NT
2009 3rd Moscow Biennale - The Garage, Moscow, Russia
2009 Menagerie; Contemporary Indigenous Sculpture - Australian Museum and touring
2009 Larrakitj, The Kerry Stokes Collection, - Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, WA
2009 'After Berndt - Etchings from the Drawings - Mossenson Gallery, Perth, WA
2008 Etched in the Sun, Prints made by Indigenous artists in collaboration with Basil Hall & Printers - Drill Hall Gallery, Australian National University, Canberra ACT
2008 25th National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards - Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin NT
2008 Galuku Gallery (Nomad Art Productions) - Darwin Festival, Darwin Botanical Gardens, NT
2008 Buku-Larrnggay Mulka - Bernt Etchings - Gapan Gallery, Garma Festival, Gulkula, Northeast Arnhem Land NT
2008 Melbourne Art Fair - Larrakitj - Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
2008 Some Men I Have Met - Mogo Raw Art, Mogo, NSW
2008 Outside Inside - Bark and Hollow Logs from Yirrkala - Bett Gallery Hobart, TAS
2008 Ochre - Menzies Auction, Melbourne VIC
2008 Bitpit Yirrkala Sculpture - RAFT Artspace, Darwin NT
2008 A Few Real Gems I Have Come Across - Mogo Raw Art and Blues, Mogo, NSW
2007 Bukulungthunmi - Coming Together, One Place - Raft Artspace, Darwin NT

- 2006** Galuku Gallery - Darwin Festival, Darwin Botanical Gardens, NT
- 2006** Buku-Larrnggay Mulka - Yirrkala Print Space Exhibition - Gapan Gallery, Garma Festival, Gulkula, Northeast Arnhem Land NT
- 2006** Asia Pacific Triennale - Queensland Gallery of Modern Art opening Brisbane, QLD
- 2006** 'Walking together to aid Aboriginal Health' - Shalom College, University of New South Wales, Sydney NSW
- 2006** 'Bulayi- Small Gems' - Suzanne O'Connell Gallery, Brisbane QLD
- 2005** 'Yâkumirri' - Holmes a Court Gallery , Perth
- 2005** Buku-Larrnggay Mulka - Yirrkala Print Space Exhibition - Gapan Gallery, Garma Festival, Gulkula, Northeast Arnhem Land NT
- 2005** 'Yâkumirri' - Raft Artspace, Darwin NT
- 2005** Kaplan Collection exhibition - Seattle Museum, USA
- 2004** 21st Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award - Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin NT
- 2004** Binocular: Looking closely at country - Ivan Dougherty Gallery UNSW, NSW
- 2003** Wukidi Installation - Supreme Court Darwin NT
- 2003** <abstractions> - Drill Hall Gallery, Canberra ACT
- 2003** Buwayak - Annandale Galleries, Sydney NSW
- 2002** Buku-Larrnggay Mulka - Larrakitj Installation - Gapan Gallery, Garma Festival, Gulkula, Northeast Arnhem Land NT
- 2002** Larrakitj Installation - Sydney Opera House, Sydney NSW
- 2001** 18th National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award - Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT), Darwin NT
- 2001** Yolngu Bark - Ben Grady Gallery, Canberra ACT
- 2000** 'Saltwater Country - Bark Paintings from Yirrkala' - A National Tour - John Curtin Gallery, Curtin University, Perth WA
- 2000** Art Fair 2000 - Alcaston House Gallery, Melbourne VIC
- 2000** Group show with Galuma and Dhukal Wirrpanda - Annandale Galleries, Sydney, NSW
- 2000** Fifth National Indigenous Heritage Art Awards - Old Parliament House, Canberra, ACT
- 1999** 'Saltwater Country - Bark Paintings from Yirrkala' - A National Tour - Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane QLD
- 1999** 'Saltwater Country - Bark Paintings from Yirrkala' - A National Tour - Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs NT
- 1999** 'Saltwater Country - Bark Paintings from Yirrkala' - A National Tour - Museum of Modern Art at Heide, Melbourne VIC
- 1999** 16th National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award - Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT), Darwin NT
- 1999** 'Saltwater Country - Bark Paintings from Yirrkala' - A National Tour - The National Maritime Museum, Sydney NSW
- 1999** Carvings by Djambawa Marawili - Alcaston House Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
- 1999** Gapu Minytji: sacred water designs of the Australian Aboriginals of north east Arnhem Land - Crafts Museum, New Delhi, India
- 1999** 'Saltwater Country - Bark Paintings from Yirrkala' - A National Tour - Drill Hall Gallery, Australian National University, Canberra ACT
- 1998** 15th National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award - Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT), Darwin NT
- 1998** Hollow Logs from Yirrkala - Annandale Gallery, Sydney, NSW
- 1997** 14th National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award - Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT), Darwin NT
- 1997** Native Title - Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
- 1997** Djambawa - William Mora Gallery, Melbourne VIC
- 1996** Big Barks - Annandale Galleries, Sydney NSW
- 1995** 12th National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award - Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT), Darwin NT
- 1995** Minytji Buku-Larrnggay, Paintings from the East - National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne VIC
- 1994** The 11th National Aboriginal Art Awards Exhibition - Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin NT
- 1990** Keepers of the Secrets, Aboriginal Art From Arnhem Land - Art Gallery of WA, Perth, WA
- 1990** Aboriginal Art, The Continuing Tradition - National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, ACT

- 1986** Painted objects from Arnhem Land - University Drill Hall Gallery (Pod), Canberra ACT
- 1984** Banyala Artworks - Crafts Council Gallery, Sydney NSW
- 1984** Banyala Artworks - Collectors Gallery, Sydney NSW
- 1984** Aboriginal Art, an Exhibition presented by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies - Canberra, ACT

Collections

- Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney NSW
- Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide SA
- Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth WA
- Artbank, Sydney NSW
- Australian Capital Equity Collection, Perth WA
- British Open University Art Museum, Milton Keynes UK
- Crafts Museum, New Delhi, India
- Holmes a Court Collection
- JW Kluge Collection, Virginia USA
- Kerry Stokes Larrakitj Collection, WA
- National Gallery of Australia, Canberra ACT
- National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne VIC
- National Maritime Museum, Darling Harbour, Sydney NSW
- President of India Art Collection, New Delhi, India
- Queensland Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane QLD
- Queensland University of Technology Art Collection, Brisbane QLD
- RMIT University Art Collection
- Sydney Opera House, Sydney NSW
- Woodside Energy Ltd. Art Collection

Bibliography

- 1990** Aboriginal Arts Management Association, Contemporary Aboriginal Art 1990 - from Australia (presented by the Aboriginal Arts Committee, Australia Council and Third Eye Centre, Glasgow), exhibition cat.
- 2012** Ancestral Modern Australian Aboriginal Art, Kaplan and Levi Collection, catalogue Seattle Art Museum USA. Catalogue
- 1987** Caruana W, Australian Aboriginal Art, a Souvenir Book of Aboriginal art at the Australian National Gallery, The Australian National Gallery, Parkes, ACT. (C)
- 2009** Catalogue - 3rd Moscow Biennale - Against Exclusion - the Garage Centre for Contemporary Culture.
- 2010** Catalogue, 17th Biennale of Sydney - The Beauty of Distance, Songs of Survival, in a Precarious Age. ISBN 978 0 64652 794 9
- 2010** Catalogue, Djalkiri; We are standing on their names. Nomad Art, 24-Hour Art, Darwin Festival.
- 2011** Djambawa Marawili, Liywaday Wirrpanda and Nawurapu Wunungmurra, Annandale Galleries catalogue
- 2008** Etched in the Sun: Prints Made by Indigenous Artists in Collaboration with Basil Hall and Printers 1997-2007, ANU Drill Hall Gallery, Canberra
- 1984** Fox S., Banyala Artworks, exhibition catalogue, Yirrkala Literature Production Centre, Yirrkala NT
- 2015** Lundumirringu. Annandale Gallery Exhibition Catalogue
- 1996** O'Ferrall M., Keepers of the Secrets, Art from Arnhem Land in the Collection of the Art Gallery of WA, Perth. (C)
- 2008** Ochre, Menzies Auction, Melbourne
- 1984** Saltwater - Yirrkala Bark Paintings of Sea Country. ISBN 0 646 37702 7 pp 14, 15, 34, 35, 50, 51, 54, 55, 93, 99, 100, back flap, back cover.
- 2011** Telstra NATSIAA, MAGNT Darwin NT
- 2008** The Makers and Making of Indigenous Australian Museum Collections, edited by Nicolas Peterson, Lindy Allen, Louise Hamby, Melbourne University Press
- 2015** Tuzlusu Saltwater: 14th Istanbul Bienal. Catalogue
- 2006** Zones of Contact - Catalogue 2006 Biennale of Sydney

Awards

- 2019** 36th Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards, Darwin NT - Winner - Art Award
- 2010** Order of Australia Award - appointment as a Member in the General Division of the Order of Australia, Banyala Homeland, NT
- 1996** Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Awards, Darwin NT - Winner - Best bark Painting

Commissions

- 2016** Djambawa Marawili & Gunybi Ganambarr collaboration with Seattle-based Native American Glass artist Preston Singletary
- 1999** President of India Art Collection, a collaborative work with JS Shyam and B Bai, presented to the President by the Australia India Council in New Dhelhi 1999
- 1999** Crafts Museum, New Delhi, India. A collaborative canvas 16' x 4' with artists Liawaday Marawili (wife) and Indian 'tribal' artists Jangarh Singh Shyam and Bhuri Bai. New Delhi India