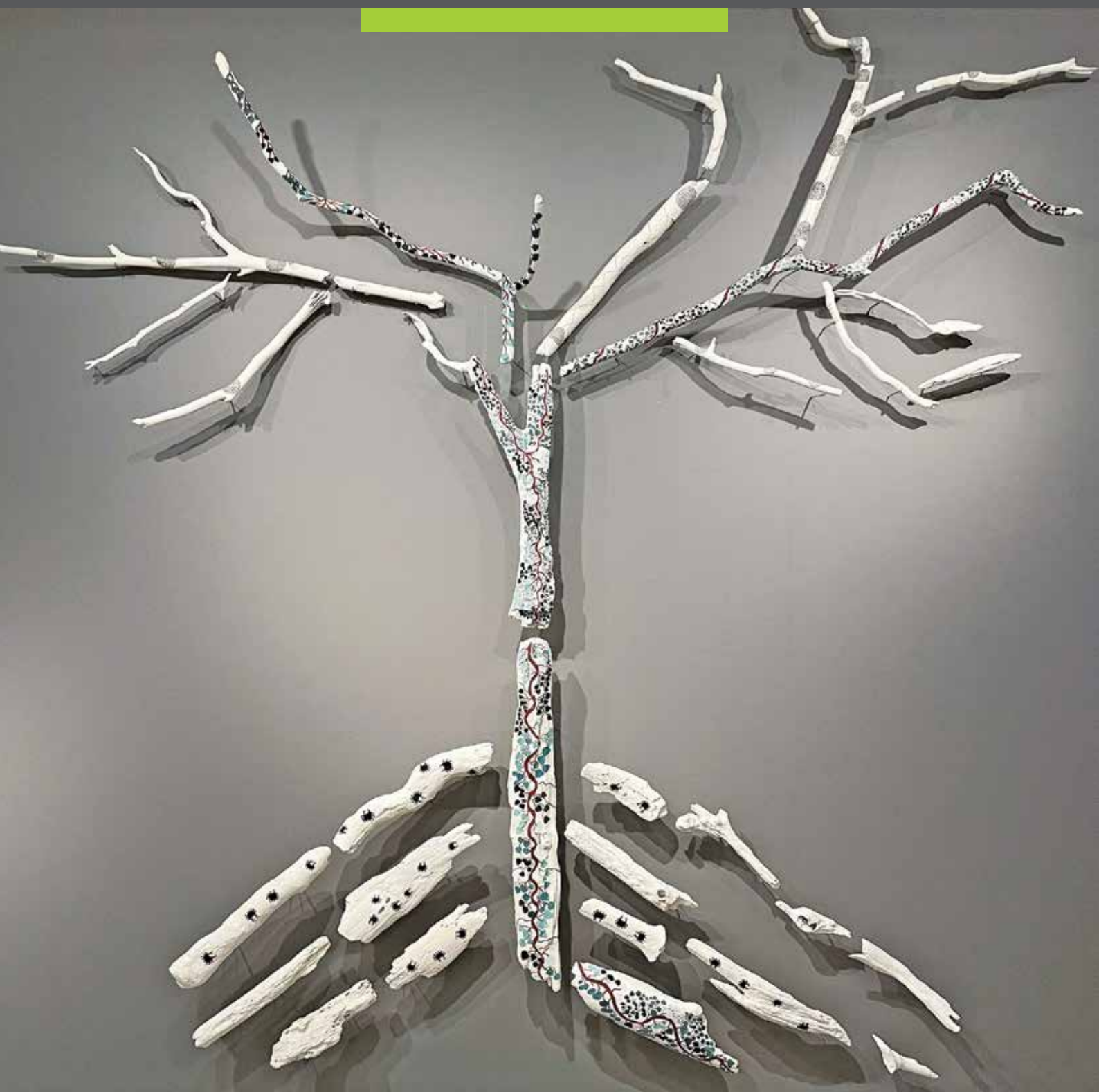


INDIGENOUS
ART CENTRE
ALLIANCE

IACA

May 2023
Volume 12 Issue 1

NEWS



IACA
INDIGENOUS ART CENTRE ALLIANCE

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Cover image: Sonya Creek, Mangkurru Mili, 2022,
earth & dry pigment on driftwood. Courtesy of the
artist and Bana Yirriji Art Centre (@banayirrijiart)

Image above: Lorna Shuan, Clay pinch
pots, engobe and sgraffito on clay, 2022.
Image: Yalanji Arts.



IACA programs and events receive financial assistance from the Queensland Government through the Arts Queensland Backing Indigenous Arts initiative, from the Federal Government's Ministry for the Arts through the Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support program, the Australia Council for the Arts and Restart Investment to Sustain and Expand (RISE) Fund - an Australian Government initiative. IACA supports the Indigenous Art Code.

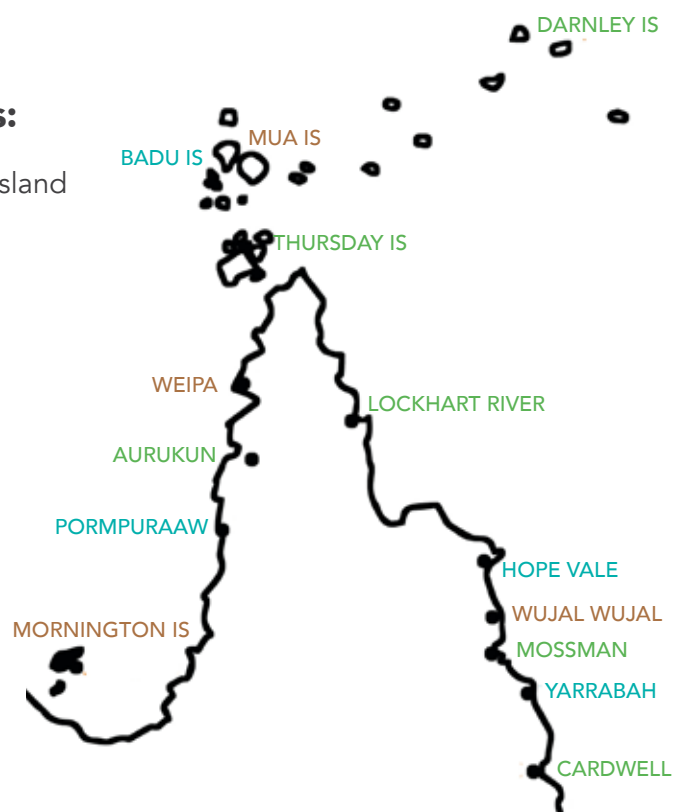
About IACA

IACA, the Indigenous Art Centre Alliance, is the peak body that supports and advocates for the community-based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and cultural centres of Far North Queensland.

IACA works under the guidance and direction of a majority Indigenous Management Committee and is a not-for-profit organisation. There are currently 13 member art centres spread across the islands of the Torres Strait, the Gulf of Carpentaria, Cape York and the tropical rainforest and coastal regions of Far North Queensland.

Indigenous Art Centre Alliance members:

Badu Art Centre / Badhulgaw Kuthinaw Mudh - Badu Island
Bana Yirriji Art Centre - Wujal Wujal
Erub Arts - Darnley Island
Girringun Aboriginal Art Centre - Cardwell
Gab Titui Cultural Centre - Thursday Island
HopeVale Arts and Culture Centre
Lockhart River Art Centre
Mornington Island Art
Moa Arts / Ngalmun Lagau Minaral - Mua Island
Pormpuraaw Art and Culture Centre
Wei'num Arts - Western Cape York
Wik and Kugu Art Centre - Aurukun
Yalanji Arts - Mossman Gorge
Yarrabah Arts and Cultural Precinct



2023 - 2024 IACA Management Committee:

Solomon Booth - (President) Moa Arts / Ngalmun Lagau Minaral, Mua Island
Adam Boyd - (Treasurer) Manager Moa Arts / Ngalmun Lagau Minaral, Mua Island
Bereline Loogatha - (Secretary) MIArt, Mornington Island
John Armstrong - (Committee Member) MIArt, Mornington Island
Florence Gutchen - (Committee Member) Erub Arts, Darnley Island

Word from the President



Welcome to another edition of IACA News. I am the current President of IACA, and for those who don't know me, my name is Solomon Booth, and I am a Mualgal man of the Ilkigau tribe from Mua Island in the Torres Strait. I have been on the IACA Management Committee for the last 13 years and was the inaugural President in 2010-11. I am honoured to step back into this role and lead IACA into its next exciting chapter.

So much has happened at IACA since our last newsletter, including the resignation of Joann Russo from the Management Committee and President. Joann has gone on to work with Arts Queensland and we wish her well for the future. Thankfully COVID is behind us now and we are slowly returning to normal operations. In this edition of the IACA newsletter you'll see how much amazing work has been happening in our Art Centres, following the lifting of restrictions. It is a credit to all the artists and arts workers, managers, workshop facilitators and consultants that we have achieved so much.

For IACA members, the next six months will be a very important time as we get together to talk about our peak body; where we are now, where we need to go next and how we will get there. The needs and aspirations of each Art Centre is the most important thing. We look forward to seeing everyone at this year's conference, ready to plan a future that will be best for all of us.

In November I was privileged to attend *Purrumpa* – a national gathering and celebration of First Nations arts and culture. Coordinated by the Australia Council for the Arts and presented in Adelaide, it was an important national thinktank for the issues facing First Nations arts now and into the future. This gathering provided inspiration and ideas for IACA to build its profile alongside that of Far North Queensland's art centre network.

We look forward to strong growth and development in the future – not just for IACA, but for all our Art Centres and an Indigenous-led art sector as a whole. We hope to see all our art centres and industry partners at the conference planned for later this year – and we also hope you enjoy this edition of the IACA newsletter.

Solomon Booth

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Sonya Creek wins Artist Fellowship Award

Sonya Creek was one of three artists to be awarded a 2022 Artist Fellowship from the Cairns Art Gallery. Fellowships were selected by Ellie Buttrose, Curator of Contemporary Australian Art, QAGOMA, with each winner receiving \$7,500 to develop a new body of work for a future exhibition. The Artist Fellowship is made possible with the support of the Cairns RSL Club.

Sonya's artwork was featured in Cairns Art Gallery's ARTNOW FNO 2022 exhibition, held from December 2022 to February 2023. Her work was commended as an exemplary sculpture, made from found driftwood and painted with white ochre and earth pigments.



Sonya Creek, earth & dry pigment on driftwood. Courtesy of the artist and Bana Yirriji Art Centre (@banayirrijiart)



Sonya Creek creating her artwork. Image: Edwina Circuit and Bana Yiriji Art

Dikal, Mili and Kiju:

Bana Yirriji's first Sydney exhibition



L to R Josie Olbar, Lila Creek, Anne Nunn, Image: Aboriginal Contemporary



Lila Creek Bulnja, dry earth pigment on linen, 76.2 x 76.2cm, Image: Aboriginal Contemporary

Bana Yirriji enjoyed their first Sydney exhibition, presented in partnership with Aboriginal Contemporary in Waverley at the end of 2022. The exhibition showcased the work of four artists: Lila Creek is a senior artist with 21 grandchildren and 39 great grandchildren. Lila's work captures the camouflaged subtlety of rainforest owls in gestural, enigmatic portraits. Anne Nunns' work tells the ancient stories of the birds from the wetlands, such as the statuesque kupal (brolga). Josie Olbar is a Jalaji saltwater woman whose work tells the tales of Mili, the stinging jellyfish of the reefs of Far North Queensland; these are the stories passed down from her ancestors. And Doreen Collins, who learnt traditional weaving from her mother, captured the very essence of the simple dilly bag, so central to Bama life.

Dikal, Mili and Kiju is a sublime narration of life in Wujal Wujal. Cultural threads are woven into renderings of local wildlife carrying ancient and profound knowledge of Country. This unique collection of works celebrates the customs of Wujal Wujal with a mesmerising palette and pictorial playfulness, each artist leaving a lasting impression of life on the Bloomfield River.

Excerpt from exhibition catalogue.



Doreen Collins painting at Bana
Yirriji Art. Image Edwina Circuit
Bana Yirriji Art

Hopevale Arts and Mornington Island Art feature in Paris fashion exhibition



Grace Rosendale, *Seedpods dress* 2019.
Silk organza, elastic, sequinned fabric.
Courtesy of the artist, Hopevale Arts and
Cultural Centre and Queensland University
of Technology. Model: Magnolia Maymuru.
Image: Bronwyn Kidd.

Artists from both Hopevale Arts and Cultural Centre and Mornington Island Art Centre feature in *Piinpi: Contemporary Australian Indigenous Fashion* which recently travelled to the Australian Embassy in Paris.

The exhibition was curated by Bendigo Art Gallery's First Nations Curator, Kaantju woman Shonae Hobson, and brings together around 90 works by creators including Hopevale Arts and Mornington Island Art Centre. The *Piinpi* exhibition showcases First Nation designed garments and textiles. *Piinpi*, an Indigenous word commonly used across the east coast of Cape York Peninsula, refers to seasonal changes and the regeneration of Country.

Hopevale's Grace Rosendale featured her Seedpods Dress, while Mornington Island artists Amy Loogatha, Alison Kirstin Goongarra, Dorothy Gabori, and Agnes Kohler painted directly onto garments and dresses. *Piinpi* is a travelling exhibition, beginning at the Bendigo Art Gallery, then onto the National Museum of Australia and finally at the Australian Embassy in Paris.



Burrkunda (dress) 2017 by Amy Loogatha, Alison Kirstin Goongarra, Dorothy Gabori, Agnes Kohler and Grace Lilian Lee (collaborator). Synthetic polymer paint on cotton. Collection National Gallery of Victoria. Image: Leon Schoots.

Mornington Island artists head to Canberra



MIArt artists at the National Museum of Australia shop. Image MIArt



MIArt artists standing with their works at National Museum of Australia. Image MIArt

Artists from Mornington Island Art (MI Art) undertook a professional development trip to Canberra in January 2023. Artists Agnes Kohler, Elsie Gabori, Amanda Gabori, Dorothy Gabori, Joeline Roughsey, Coralie Thompson, Bereline Loogatha, and MI Art Manager John Armstrong travelled to Canberra, supported by Arts Queensland's Indigenous Regional Arts Development Fund.



MI Art artists at AIATSIS. Image MI Art

The artists had a busy schedule, which included visiting the *Belonging - Stories From Far North Queensland* exhibition at the National Museum of Australia. MI Art is featured in this exhibition, which was developed by the Indigenous Art Centre Alliance. The *Belonging* artist-led project started out as an exercise in professional development and evolved into one of the most important museum acquisitions in the country. It was valuable for the artists to see their work installed in a museum environment. The artists also visited the National Gallery of Australia, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and the Tent Embassy on Invasion Day.



MI Art artists at National Museum of Australia. Image MI Art



Sonya Creek painting 2022
Image: Edwina Circuit
and Bana Yirijji Art

Moa Arts bounces back after COVID

Moa Arts spent lockdown undertaking development work, and we jumped straight out of the gates when COVID restrictions lifted last year. We had strong growth at the three art fairs – DAAF, CIAF and Tarnanthi, generating lots of interest in our new works. Two of our senior artists, Fiona Mosby and Paula Savage held the art centre's first commercial gallery exhibition since 2018, at Onespace in Brisbane. The exhibition was a very successful show of prints and paintings.

In further good news, Coral Expeditions have restarted their art-themed cruises through Far North Queensland, stopping at Moa. This is a great chance for artists to talk about and sell their prints and weavings.



Fiona Mosby speaking at Onespace. Image Moa Arts



Paula Savage at DAAF. Image Moa Arts

A recent highlight was a fundraising exhibition held at the offices of our key partners and pro-bono lawyers, King and Wood Mallesons (KWM). KWM held a fundraising exhibition in support of the Art Centres they represent in the Torres Strait, Northern Territory and Western Australia. The exhibition sold very well and showed us there is a lot of interest and support for First Nations art and culture.

Ngalmun Lagau Minaral TSI Corporation (Moa Arts) Board and artists travelled to Melbourne in November 2022 to attend the KWM exhibition and to join in the governance training workshops that were held over a couple of days. The workshops left Moa Arts' Board and artists feeling stronger and clearer about the importance of the work they do to keep Moa Arts and the communities of Kubin and St Pauls strong. The work they do has real value in the world.

The Chair of Moa Arts, Solomon Booth, who is also the President of IACA, was accompanied by Moa Arts Manager Adam Boyd to the Australia Council's *Purrumpa* conference in Adelaide in October. This was the first national gathering of First Nations arts industry organisations in 25 years and it was a great moment of learning, reconnecting with old friends, sharing stories and experiences and helping create a new vision for an Indigenous-led arts sector.



Moa Arts Board attend KWM exhibition. Image Moa Arts



Fiona Mosby and Paula Savage Oncespace. Image Moa Arts

Everyone left the gathering feeling proud of their achievements and with a much stronger sense of pride in the many achievements of our brothers and sisters over the years.

What we have learned from each of these opportunities is that strong, First Nations-led governance is the true foundation for our hopes and aspirations. Strong governance allows everyone to understand the issues and that their views are heard and valued. When people put their differences aside and step into leadership roles, speaking up for the whole community, real benefits come.

Pormpuraaw's ghostnet sculptures feature at Cairns Airport

In July 2019, Pormpuraaw Art and Culture Centre won a major public art commission for Cairns Airport. The seven large ghostnet fish sculptures for the commission took over five months to produce. Ghostnet is retrieved, discarded fishing nets that artists reuse to make evocative weavings sculptures.

The project was a shared initiative between Pormpuraaw Art and Culture Centre, the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair (CIAF) and Cairns Airport.

The artworks were due to launch in 2020, and then came COVID and the project was put on hold indefinitely. By the beginning of 2022 the airport was ready to plan and install works. Installing such large-scale works was challenging; it had to happen after 9pm, to minimise airport disruption and there was a need to hire a scissor lift and two extra tradespeople to mount the works.

The installation highlights the vital role First Nation artists play across North Queensland in addressing issues facing our marine life and the Great Barrier Reef. The sculptures represent barramundi, coral trout, red lionfish, potato cod, surgeon fish and Moorish idol.

The installation was opened with a gathering of traditional owners, artists, CIAF, airport staff, and media, with Sid Brue ShortJoe representing Pormpuraaw's artists. The works are now a permanent feature in the domestic terminal of Cairns Airport.



Installation at Cairns
Airport, sculptures, 2020.
Image Pormpuraaw Art



Sid Brue ShortJoe with his Potato Cod,
Ghostnet sculpture, 2020.
Image Pormpuraaw Art

Pompuraaw

A select group of Pompuraaw artists including Meredith Arkwookerum, Katherine Ngallametta, Mylene Holroyd and Jillian Holroyd have gained recent acclaim for their work, winning awards and generating interest for their artmaking and joyful approach to sharing traditional stories.

Delighting in free play with colour and form, these painters have created their own visual language to express their unique identity and place in the world.

"Our talented women tell their stories with vibrant colours. Their paintings make you feel

good, like going to a birthday party and seeing colourful decorations", Paul Jakubowski, Art Centre Manager.

Meredith Arkwookerum expresses her joy in painting as a reminder of her youth and culture, "Art brings me happiness. It is my cultural identity; where I belong."

Complementing these paintings was an immersive installation of ghost net sculptures by additional Pompuraaw Art & Culture Centre artists, housed from 23 March-29 April at the Cairns Court House Gallery.

Colourful Parrot Family, Meredith Arkwookerum, Acrylic on Canvas. Image & Credits courtesy of Pompuraaw Art & Culture Centre.



Yalanji Artist Lorna Shuan

uses pottery to connect with her totems

Lorna Shuan has been a member for Yalanji Arts for many years and has only recently discovered pottery. This has given Lorna a new medium with which to share her stories and illustrations.

Born in 1965, Lorna is a traditional custodian for the Kubirri Warra area, and grew up in the Mossman Gorge Community with her family. In 2008 she completed her studies in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Arts.

Yalanji Arts recently embarked on a new artistic development program, which, provides professional support to ceramic artists for three days a week throughout year. The program began with facilitator Alan Terrell, a Port Douglas-based ceramic artist. The Art Centre has kept exploring ceramics and skills and Lorna Shuan in particular has found an affinity with the medium. Lorna has created a regular art practice, allowing her to learn a variety of different ceramic techniques and develop a distinctive style .



Lorna Shuan, totems, pinch pots, engobe and sgraffito on clay, 2022. Image: Yalanji Arts.

Lorna has been using clay to tell stories about her totem, culturally significant ancestral beings to her family. Lorna says of her inspiration.

The rainforest is big part of my world, it gives me inspiration in my artwork. Mostly I enjoy making birds. They represent my totems and spiritual messages and remind me of my family. The cockatoo and cassowary are my totems. The Kuranji Cassowary is the Madja Boss. When I paint Kuranji, I have a connection to the rainforest. He looks after the land, cultivating the land and has a lovely natural colour. He is the leader of all birds in the rainforest. Parrot's rainbow colours make me feel happy and think about family that have passed. My artworks are connected with traditional ways, connected to the ancestors and my family, especially my grandmother and my grandfather; they give me life and strength.

Lorna has explored the techniques of engobe and sgraffito that allows her to engrave her designs on the ceramics. She has been making pinch pots, coolamons, tiles, and vessels. These works are then fired at low-fire and mid-fire kiln temperatures to achieve a specific colour palette and highlight the sgraffito details.



Lorna Shuan, totems, clay tile, engobe and sgraffito on clay, 2022. Image: Yalanji Arts.

Silky Oaks Lodge commissions Yalanji Artists

Silky Oaks Lodge a luxury resort, located in the World Heritage-listed Daintree Rainforest, partnered with Yalanji Arts to showcase Yalanji artworks within their property. The artists involved were Vanessa Cannon, Lorna Shuan and Karen Shuan.

The commission is made up of 55 circular ceramic tiles of varying size, with 15 of these having a woven edge. 45 of the tiles are placed in the Lodge's new reception area. The tiles depict animals and plants corresponding to the names of the 45 lodge rooms. These tiles are shown together as one continuous work spread across the wall. An additional ten tiles are used in other areas of the Lodge.

The tiles are made from refined and coarse earthenware with engobe and sgraffito. Engobe is a liquid clay that is brushed on the surface. Sgraffito is a form of mark making whereby the artists scratches through a surface to reveal a lower layer of clay.



Artworks by Yalanji artists Vanessa Cannon, Lorna Shuan and Karen Shuan at Silky Oaks Lodge.
Image: Silky Oaks Lodge.



Yalanji artworks
showcased at Silky
Oaks Lodge.
Image: Yalanji Arts

Janet Koongotema

Congratulations to Janet Koongotema of Wik & Kugu Arts Centre, of Aurukun (Cape York Peninsula) on being accepted as a finalist in the Wynne Prize at the Art Gallery of New South Wales.



Mo'iam – Archer River, Janet Koongotema 2023, Acrylic on Lonen, 159 x 158.5 cm. Image courtesy of the artist and Wik & Kugu Art Centre.

About the artwork: Mo'iam is a sacred Aak Puulwuy (story place) for Wik people of the Winchanam clan, as well as a very important location for the artist's family. Due to its significance, Koongotema regularly paints Mo'iam, along with her family's other aak puulwuy. It is integral to Koongotema that she helps to keep this location healthy, so that the knowledge of Country can be passed on to her grandchildren. She says, 'I want to teach people about our culture and to share the wonderful stories we have been taught, which [explain] how to respect the land.'

www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/prizes/wynne/2023/30586/

Belonging

On show now: Belonging / Stories from North Queensland

Belonging is the Indigenous Art Centre Alliance's and the National Museum of Australia's seminal survey exhibition of the recent history of the Indigenous art movement from northern Queensland. Boasting 415 artworks, 'Belonging' encapsulates the visual storytelling and cultural importance of art as a means of cultural practice and expression for Indigenous artists.

Want to learn more about the history of the Indigenous art movement of Queensland and the 'Belonging' exhibition series? You can order a copy of the exhibition catalogue here: <https://bit.ly/41Re3v0>

The second (and current) of the 'Belonging' series features works by artists from Girringun Aboriginal Art Centre + Badu Art Centre + Wik & Kugu Arts Centre/Aurukun Shire Council.





Amanda Gabori and
Dorothy Gabori at NMA.
Image: MIArt



Donate Now

IACA is a small organisation that punches above its weight to support culturally strong best practice Indigenous art enterprises. To make a big difference to Australia's most remote Indigenous artists. **You can now donate to specific projects** via our **DONATE NOW** button on the IACA website www.iaca.com.au or email the manager manager@iaca.com.au. Donations are tax deductible.