



# SALTWATER FRESHWATER ARTS 2023

ABORIGINAL ART AWARD  
& CONTEMPORARY  
CULTURAL OBJECTS



The art award is proudly supported by the Saltwater Freshwater Arts Alliance Aboriginal Corporation: the touring exhibition and public program are proudly funded by the NSW Government through Create NSW, and in collaboration with our gallery partners; Boomalli Aboriginal Art Gallery, Wadjar Regional Indigenous Gallery, Manning Regional Gallery, Glasshouse Regional Gallery and Yarrila Arts and Museum.

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Front cover image

"Naalgan-da" (at the beach) Moon Wreath 2020 by Lilly Clegg

Image by And the trees photography



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Saltwater Freshwater Arts 2023 is a touring exhibition combining the Saltwater Freshwater Aboriginal Art Award and contemporary cultural objects exhibition. Established in 2017, the exhibition features artists from the Worimi, Biripi, Dungutti and Gumbaynggirr Nations on the Mid North Coast of NSW.

This year's exhibition is curated by proud Wiradjuri woman Catherine Croll from the Riverina Region of NSW, now living on Awabakal Country in Mulubinba (Newcastle). Artist, curator, writer and lecturer in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies at TAFE NSW and Founding Director of Cultural Partnerships Australia.

*"I'm delighted by the diversity of artwork and the breadth of the stories submitted. Artists from across the Saltwater Freshwater footprint have created pieces which reflect their personal journeys, connection to country, language, culture and family. Many of the works specifically reference the colour of the artist's saltwater/freshwater country and their connections to the ancestral knowledge and lore passed down over millennia."*

CATHERINE CROLL, CURATOR SALTWATER FRESHWATER ARTS 2023

Alison Williams

### ***Sticks 'n' Stones* 2022**

Mixed media on linen

Sticks 'n' Stones will break my bones, but words will never help me! On 10 August 1987 Prime Minister Hawke announced the formation of a Royal Commission to investigate the causes of deaths of Aboriginal people who were held in state and territory gaols. The Royal Commission was established in response to a growing public concern that deaths in custody of Aboriginal people were too common and poorly explained. 500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have died in custody in Australia since the royal commission and the average has increased from 10.5 to 15.1 deaths each year. Many of the recommendations from the royal commission have not been adopted and some partially, and many remain just words on paper. The 15 and ½ sticks are the tally marks used to record the deaths whilst the stones represent the various acts or neglect and abuse in the criminal justice system.





Angela Marr

***Captured in Ink* 2023**

Collection | Collage of framed ink drawings

'Captured in Ink' is a truth telling illustration of the history of colonisation/invasion. The pieces speak to invasion, stolen land, genocide, dispossession, massacres and intergenerational trauma. The artwork also reflects resilience, survival, resistance and that sovereignty was never ceded. It honours, pays respect to and acknowledges our ancestors who fought, died and pathed the way. Wanyimbuwanyimbu Ganyila Wanyimbuwanyimbu Ganyiy 'Always was Always will be' Aboriginal land.

Antwinette Dunn

***Ocean meets River* 2023**

Acrylic on canvas

Ocean meets the river, tide is coming in. People living off the land are hunting and bringing food back to the campsite, People hunting and living off the ocean as well. People travelling along side the whitewash water looking for food.





Antwinette Dunn  
*Under the Stars* 2023

Acrylic on canvas

Different tribes from different places coming together to learn, teach and live under the stars together.

April Bulmer McDonald  
*Represent Biripi Tea For Our Elders* 2023

Vinyl sculpt

'Represent Biripi Tea for Our Elders' is to represent that we are all born in all shades like a cup of tea and still will be Descendants from our Elders, it's in our blood and our culture is within our Instincts, we are Biripi Koories and always will be, Let's Represent for our Elders!





Corina Latimore

***Saltwater Ancestors* 2023**

Acrylic on canvas

The original painting of this print was created to donate and support Waminda birthing centre down the south coast with their birthing on Country program. I am very passionate about birthing on country after two births off country which were not pleasant experiences and then my last birth on country which was the most connecting and beautiful experience. This piece speaks of my experience birthing on country, the connection to country, to my People and to my matriarchal Ancestors that birthed here before me. The gift to birth our next generation on country.

Danielle Burford

***Unearthed* 2023**

Acrylic on canvas

Unearthed. A death adder exposing the raw elements of its anatomy. Disturbed from its leafy hiding place, where it rests in wait to ambush its prey. With its uniquely designed tail, compressed with tiny scales that wiggle and wave attracting unknowing and most often outwitted victims, of frogs, lizards, and birds. As frogs are a desired option, the Cane Toad whose toxin kills upon consumption has caused a decline in the Death adder by up to 90%. This artwork is a reflection on the Death Adder, another one of Australia's beautiful animals displaying its anatomy true to form and wearing nature's design of patterned scales.





Danielle Burford

***Instinctual Belonging* 2023**

Acrylic and PVA on canvas

Instinctual Belonging, the natural connection to Nature, to the land from that we are birthed. An imprinted pattern of life that is built within our core, an ancestral line that tethers the soul. An unconditional belonging to Earth, disjoining social belonging that starts with self-acceptance and enforces

expectations of rules and regulations, requiring performance over the natural space of existence. This connection is represented by transparent patterns in the background and are mirrored on the shells of the turtles emerging over a detailed structure of coral, as they follow their instinctual directions through life.

Dimity Sinclair

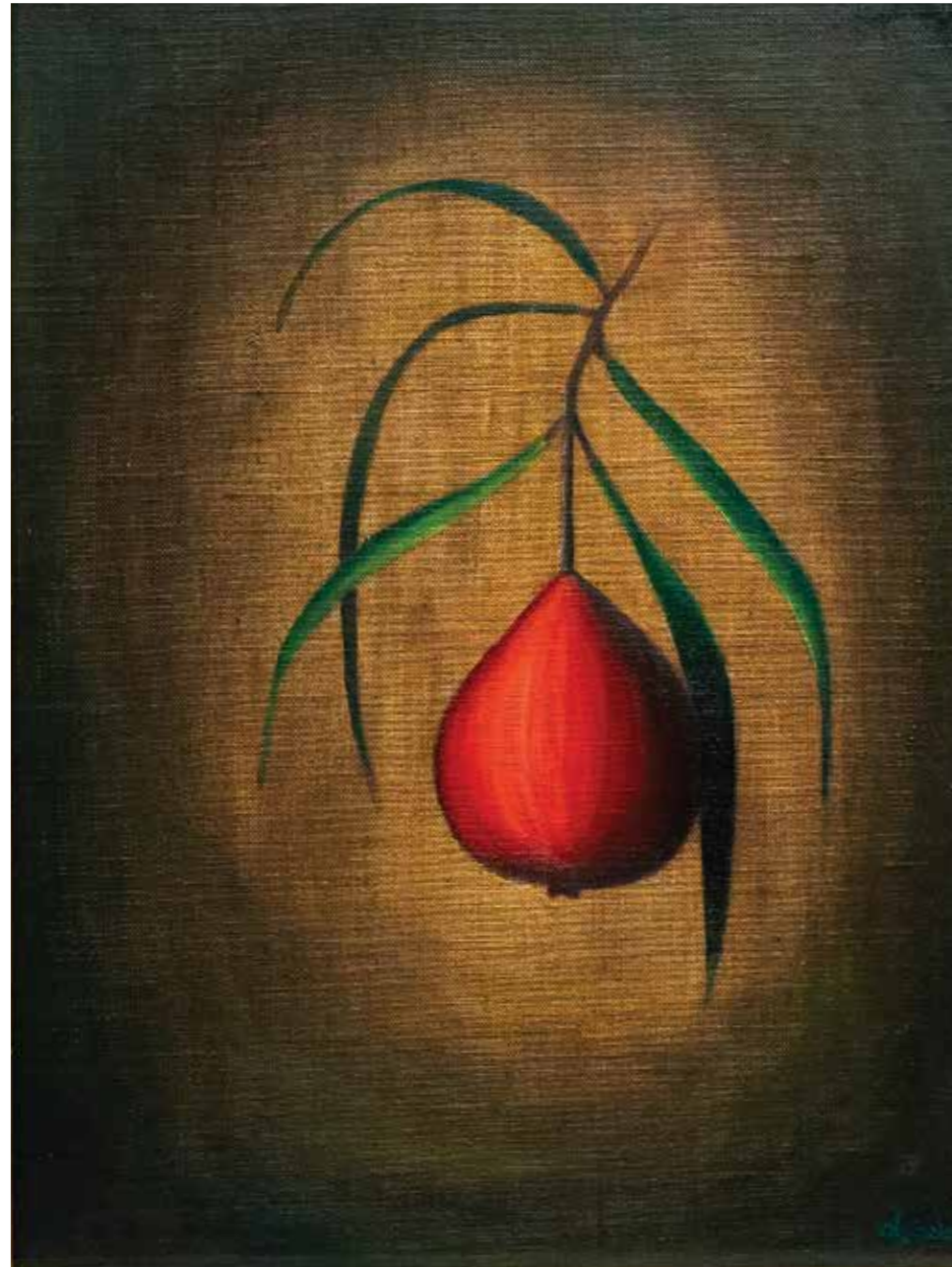
***Falling Rain* 2023**

Acrylic on canvas

This piece was inspired by the flood rains, it washes away all and brings a season of unexpected change and new life as much as it devastates; it cannot be controlled and we must surrender to its will.





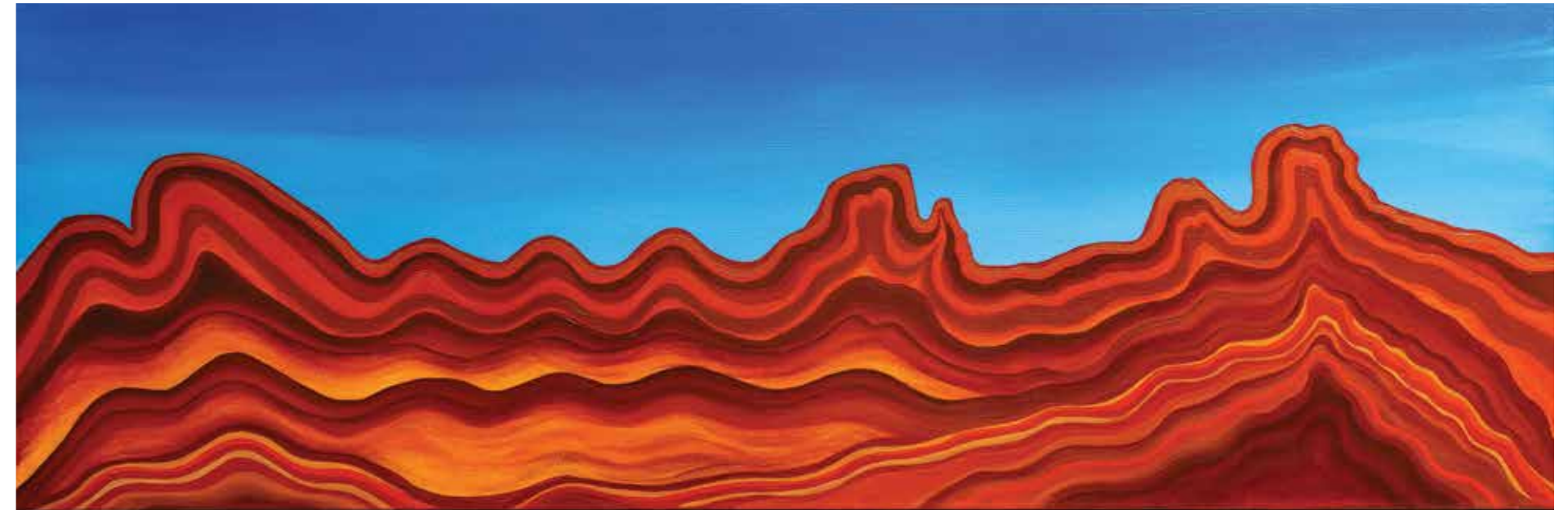


Dimity Sinclair

***Dreaming of Quandongs* 2023**

Oil on linen canvas

The beginnings of my oil painting studies of Indigenous bush tucker and fruit. My desire is to celebrate our native fruit in a traditional style, a blending of two worlds. Our gorgeous and unusual native produce deserves to be celebrated for its beauty and proudly put on display just as much as the classic pear or pomegranate.



Erica Blanch

***The Warrumbungles* 2023**

Acrylic on canvas

As a proud Gomeroi descendent, I chose to create this piece to speak on one of the most distinct landmarks that cross our country – The Warrumbungle Mountain Range, which is Gamilaroi for “Crooked Mountain”. These sandstone rock formations tower over township and grasslands, and can be seen from many kilometres afar. When I think of home, I think of these mountains and the many stories that they hold.



Gai Southwell

***Udder Story*** 2023

Weaving and ceramic

Cloaking Australia's White history in our cultural cloak with Aboriginal history and culture. Features raffia weaving with bush n beach trinkets and emu feathers.

Gai Southwell

***Lomandra Aunts*** 2023

Weaving and ceramic

Aunts gathering tucker Woven on ceramic vase base using native Lomandra Aunt Emu gather features emu feathers, digging stick, emu eggshell Aunt. Possum gather features possum fur cloak, dilly bag, digging stick.





Gus Kelly

***Barranbatayi Minaku (Dreamtime Pelican)* 2023**

Coloured pencil on paper

Barranbatayi Minaku (Dreamtime Pelican) Long ago in the Dreamtime when the Spirits good and bad roamed the land, there lived twin Minaku brothers named Gununghi and Wanghi.

One day, while out flying high above in the sky, they noticed something shimmering on the ground. It was a waterhole which neither one had seen before. Landing on top of the waterhole, the twins began to frolic and splash around and have a great time, not knowing that this was the home of Wunngakun — the Water Spirit. Wunngakun was a mean and spiteful Spirit who slept for most of the time and did not like to be disturbed. But on hearing the twins she awoke and said with a roar: “Who dares to disturb my slumber?” The twins, on hearing this, became very afraid and huddled close together. “We are very sorry”, they said. But the Water Spirit roared and said: “It is too late to be sorry. I will punish you and your kind for disturbing me. From this day on you will lose your beautifully coloured beaks. I will cast them into the deep waters; never to be seen again.” And with one swipe of her hand, the beautiful colours disappeared from the beaks. the twins were shattered because the rest of the Minaku blamed them for losing their beautiful colours and they were banned from the flock. And that is why today when you walk beside a river or waterhole you will see the many Minaku diving and swimming in the waters — still looking for their lost, beautifully coloured beaks.

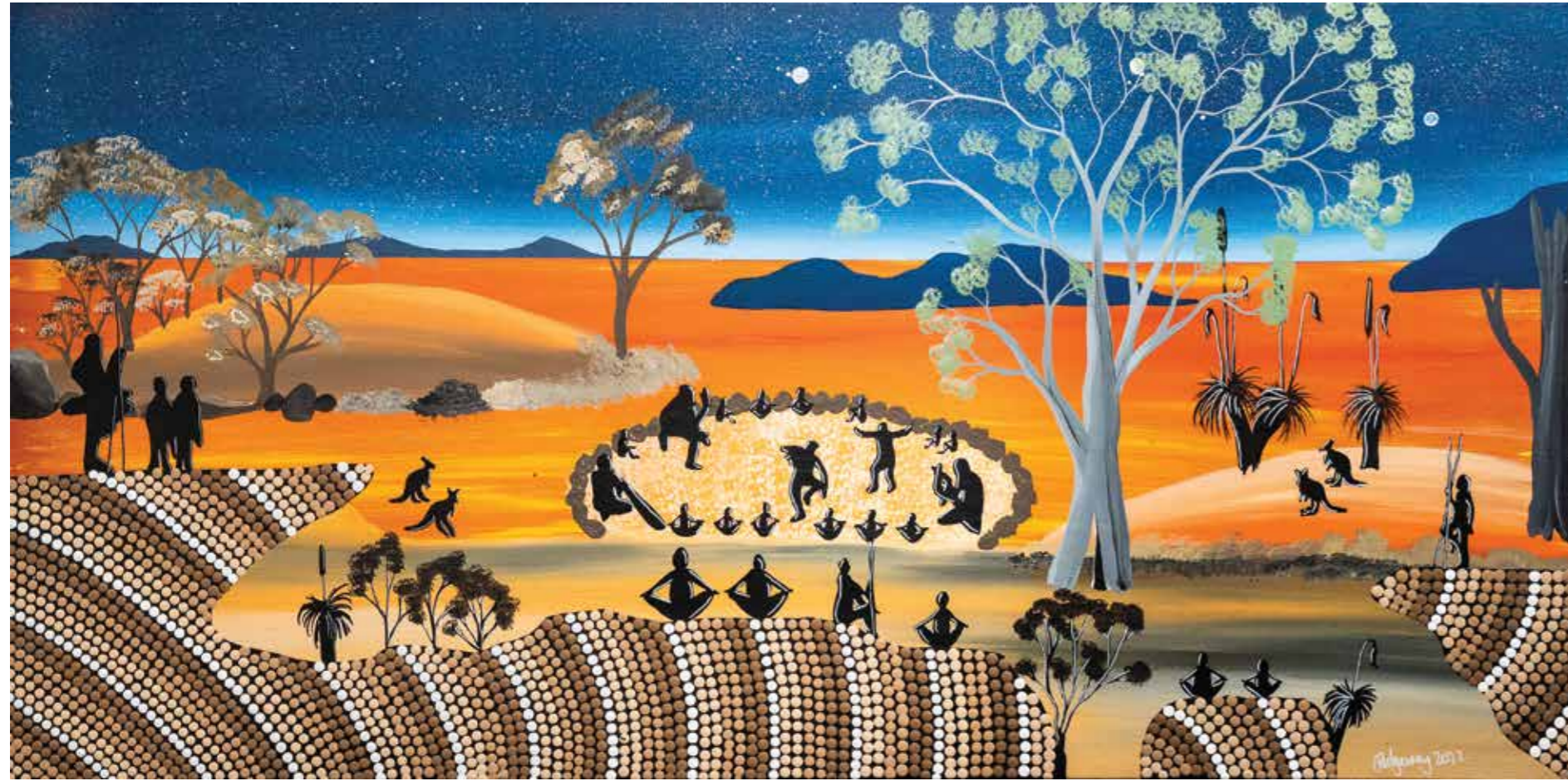


Jason Ridgeway

***Tracks of the goanna* 2022**

Acrylic on canvas

As we know goannas set out from camp to camp in search of food. This is represented with the meeting places and goanna claw prints as it heads to its next destination in the hope of finding food. Goannas bring a sense of calmness when observing them in their natural habitats.



Jason Ridgeway  
**Corroboree** 2020

Acrylic on canvas

Corroboree at dawn. To welcome our past leaders to give us guidance and a sense of healing. To help us live with the land. Our old people give permission. When we look after the land the land looks after us. Keeping our traditions alive helps us to keep our knowledge alive it helps us to pass it on and teach others of our experiences and our old peoples ways.

Jeremy Saunders

**3 Brothers Mountains Dream** 2023

Acrylic on canvas

This painting is inspired by my dreams. In which I saw ephemeral animal-like spirits rising as a mist, snaking its way up the mountains and into the night sky. There are several Guri constellations that are significant to me.





Jeremy Saunders  
**Warling Girra** 2023

Acrylic on canvas

Warling Girra — the Honey Bee, this is *Tetragonula Carbonaria*. They are such gentle creatures and their honey is the most amazing flavour and texture.

Jeremy Saunders  
**Waparr Yulang** 2023

Kangaroo skin burned

This is a beautifully prepared Grey Kangaroo skin that I have burned showing the connection between land and sky. It shows the many faces of Gilayn the moon watching over the mountain and valley Barray.





Jeremy Saunders

***Gulaman* 2023**

Hand crafted Flooded Gum

Large Gulaman came from the Turtle campsite, a Birrpai camping place near Saltwater, that was decimated by fire in 2019. Gulamans like this were left near camps all around Birrpai Barray.

Josie Atkinson-Flanders

***Bindarray Winda — River of Stars* 2023**

Acrylic on canvas framed in Tasmanian Oak

The artist pays homage to the universe and Ancestors invisible wisdom within the stars. The purple and yellow hues describe the depth of light and dark globally humanity has faced in the last three years. The design interweaves the artists imagination and love of storytelling with the dotting representing the ochre dots, Gumbaynggirr women dance with along the forehead. The world is a diverse landscape yet humanity is all under the one solar system and sees the same view at night.





Kathy Stevens

***Paper Raffia Baskets and Earrings* 2023**

Raffia and cowrie shell

Coil weaving to me symbolises our journey through life, as we travel our paths, going around and around, gathering experiences and knowledge as we flow through life.

Kathy Stevens

***Vine and Emu Feather Baskets and Earrings* 2023**

Vine and Emu Feather

These baskets were woven with the intention of collecting and drying out seeds for making jewellery. The gap between the vine allows for airflow. Weaving is an amazingly useful skill to have, which serves many purposes, along with being a form of meditation to help clear the mind and stay connected to the land. The Gathering and passing on of food knowledge to the next generation. And the Gathering of the people to share the food.





Keiana Bateman

***My Island Home* 2023**

Acrylic on canvas

This painting encapsulates my life growing up on the island and its surroundings. No words can describe the feeling of being spiritually, mentally, and physically connected to a place. Some say “the home is where the heart is” but mine lies deeply within the rich soils and saltwater of this island.

My island home is aesthetically captivating, however imprinted is a visual story that shares a personal journey of where a sense of belonging was created before I can even remember.

Each symbol, colour, animal has a significant meaning and place amongst the story, ranging from the tides, animals, totems, and seasons.

Bundles of core memories, in addition to gaining life skills, knowledge and creating connectedness to land and water.

Now a mother myself, I have begun raising my sons on their traditional lands where we call our island home. I can pass on my knowledge and allow them to connect to their homelands, enhance their spiritual and physical connection, but also creating breathtaking laughter, smiles and fun forever.

I will forever continue to call this place our home. Now my little footprints are all grown, I am blessed to have created more little feet to grow on our island.

Kim Healey

***Sense of place* 2022**

Carved hebel

Utilising organic design this work speaks of our sense of place, a guiding beacon for our connection to our country, people and culture. It reflects the landscape with sgraffito marking songlines encompassing our life journey and purpose while looking through the center of our present environment.







Kim Healey

***Mimmi*** 2022

Pottery, clay and mixed media

Working with clay this work encapsulates and is representative of my three children. A nurturing coolomon surrounded by soft emu feathers that cradle my eggs, giving them comfort, nourishment and stability to emerge from their shells to grow.



Laurel Swan

***Guuray Jugan (Blossom Time)*** 2023

Acrylic on canvas

The arrival of the gum blossoms marks the end of winter and the promise of warm spring days. Each blossom peeking out from its protective casing intermittently bursting to full glory spreading hints of vivid hues though the leaves like dancers twirling in vibrant coloured skirts, until entire trees are filled with the sight of spring waiting for summer's heat. I have been having

a love affair with gum trees, from the rich tapestry colours and textures of their bark to the elegant twists and turns of their branches and leaves. The inspiration for this artwork came during a journey on Country (Gumbaynggirr) up to the plateau, to Ebor, during early spring and the sight of the gums in flower. The variety and vibrancy of the colours captured my imagination.



Leo Wright

*Always Will Be* 2023

Acrylic on canvas

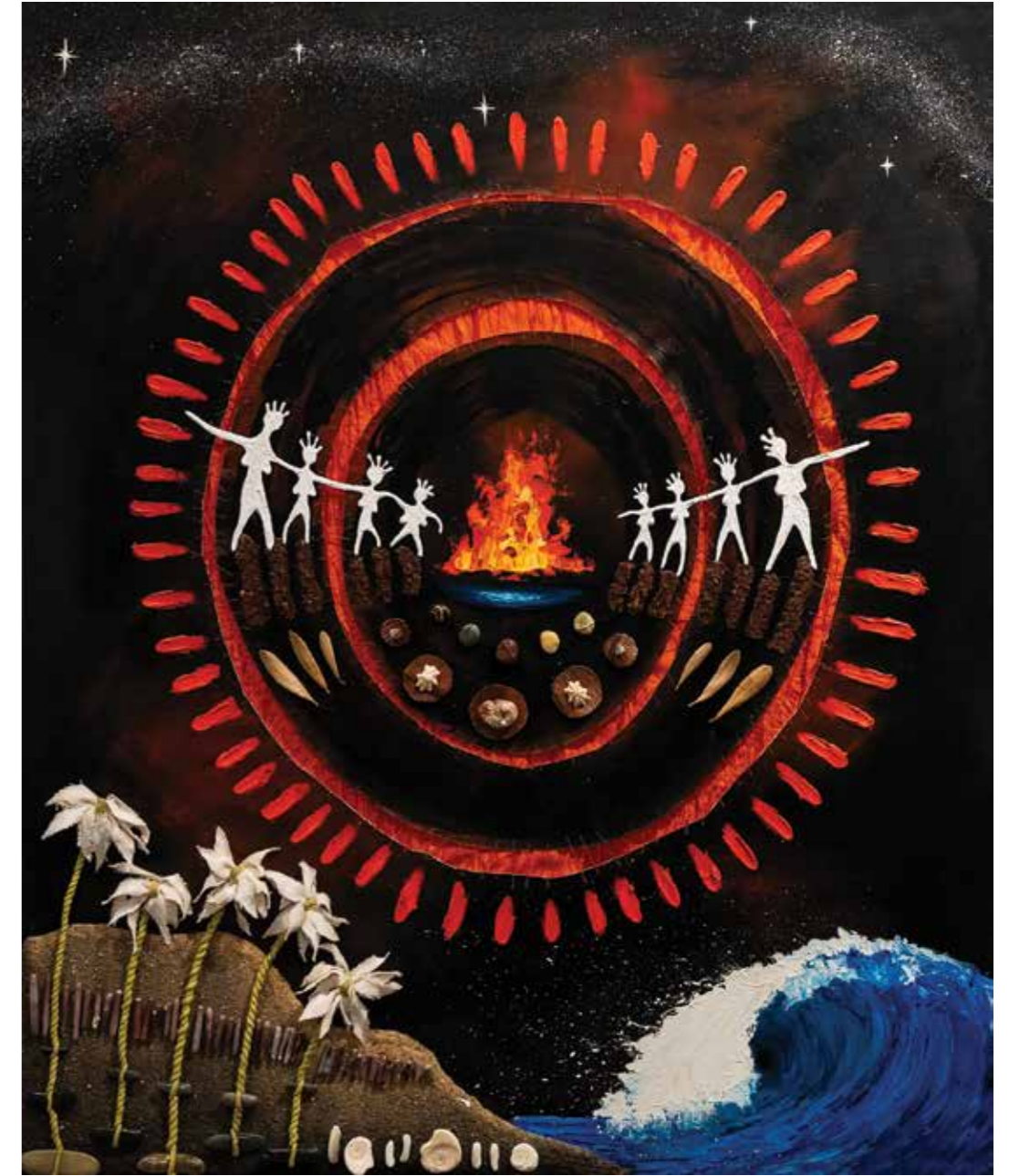
The Elder stands sentinel over the lands — never ceded. Always Will Be — Aboriginal Land.

Lilly Clegg

*Healing Ceremony* 2023

Acrylic and mixed media on canvas

Only a few generations ago the continuation of ceremonial practice ceased on my country. It was too dangerous to continue, or to pass on and teach to the next generation, and a lot of our most beautiful ceremonial sites on this coastal paradise were claimed by colonisers. This piece depicts the spirits of my ancestors a line of matriarchal magic going back a millennia. Healers and clever women, reaching out over the void of a hundred years, yearning for us to join them in ceremony. To mend the links in the chain that have been broken by dispossession. To once again sing and dance to make the land and people flourish. We all crave ceremony in our hearts. To dance around the fire under the stars. This was our first ever form of prayer. Neanderthals dancing for rain. It's a part of all of us. And we need it. For the well-being of our Spirit.





Lilly Clegg

***Yanggay Mirubay (Shark Egg)* 2023**

Monkey vine, cordyline, settlers flax

The spiral shape of the egg allows a shark mother to wedge it onto rocks and crevices so the ebb and flow of waves doesn't wash it away and it stays safe from predators. This piece is about the resilience of Gumbaynggirr culture, and hope for our future. About keeping our cultural knowledge safe throughout strife, and not losing it all to invasion and adversity in the struggle for survival. Keeping it safe and hidden so that, when the waves pass and it's time for us to hatch, we will be able to practice ceremony, speak our language and live on our Ancestral lands again, with the wisdom and knowledge of our People.



Mabel Ritchie

***Desert sunset Dreaming* 2023**

Acrylic on canvas

My artwork represents the connection to Country and our Ancestors through the Dreamtime.



Matthew Flanders

***Marlawgayju Wajaarr Guunumba  
(Lightning Revive Country) 2023***

Acrylic

Marlawgay (Lightning) is an important element in our world, it provides a channel of energy that passes on to our wajaarr (Country). When marlawgay strikes the ground, the energy transferred creates fire and light which travels through the landscape. After right fire goes through, it regenerates and revives the plant & animal life in the area, moving more energy along our walking tracks, songlines and special places. These all join with our waterways and the energy continues moving through before travelling back to the sky in a continuous circle.



Michelle Flanders

***Ceremonial Sites – Jaagi jibaanga miirarl & Maginyjun 2023***

Acrylic on canvas

Ceremonial grounds depicts both a mens ceremonial gathering and a womens ceremonial gathering. These gatherings were held for trade, lore business, and community celebrations. The women often held ceremony for the birth of a child, women's business and general celebrations.



Michelle Flanders  
**Ngarrwa — give birth** 2023

Acrylic on canvas

This painting depicts the celebration of the birth of twin boys.



Natalie Jennings  
**Warrangal Yinarr (Strong Woman)** 2023

Acrylic on canvas

This artwork tells the story of my Identity, honouring my Aboriginality, femininity, and strength. Sharing my connection to Country, culture, family, and self. This piece has added significance as it represents healing from a significant traumatic event; art and the creative process of using imagery and emotions, instead of words, as a way of storytelling, aided the healing journey and connecting with my identity.

The centre circle symbolises my femininity and strength, with my totem, the dragonfly, sitting on my hand, carrying the wisdom of transformation and adaptability. The outer circle is symbolic of family and connection to kinship ties and Country.

Elements of Country and family are woven throughout the piece to signify my deep connection to culture and kin. The colour palette used is a blend of pink and brown that depict the rich colours of Lands and my femininity.



Nicole Duncan

***The Black Box, a Posy of Birrpai and Worrimi* 2023**

Acrylic on canvas

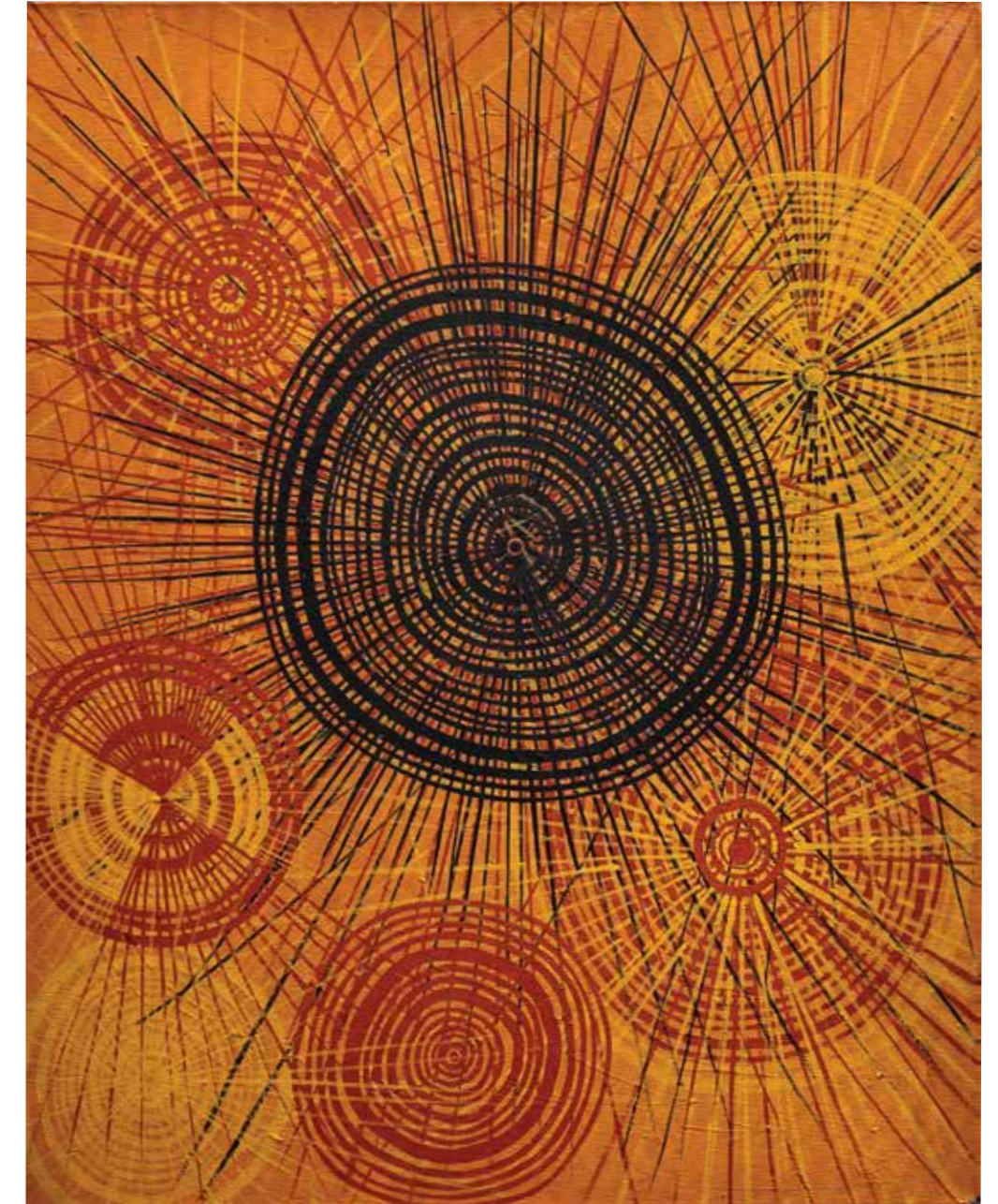
It's called "A Posy of Biripi, and Worrimi — The Black Box" It's about how white people like to box us in. Judge us. Tell Us what We should look like, dress like, how we should talk. They like to label Us. This is who I am. A Blooming, Proud Biripi Galbaan Dhanbann. Don't try to box me in.

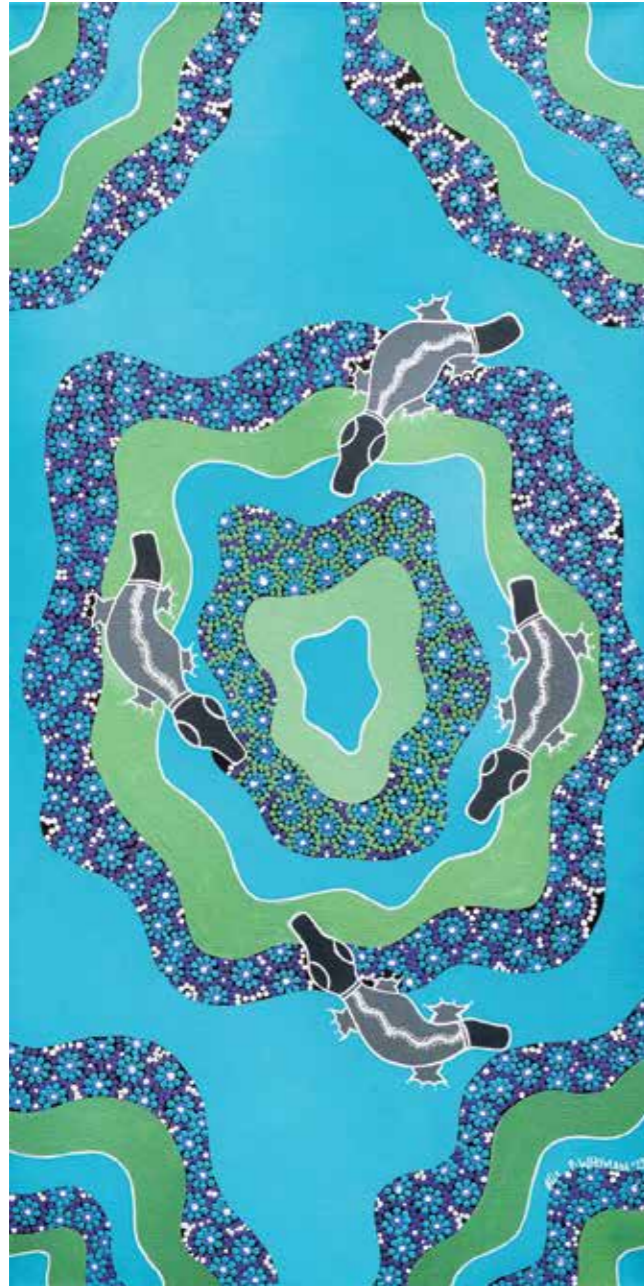
Nicole Duncan

***Weaving connections* 2023**

Acrylic on canvas

This painting reflects my connections to Barraba Ngapigan, My Grandmother, Barraba Bandjarr, My Aunties, Barraba Nyungaygan, My Daughter and Barraba Ngapigandjarr, Granddaughters representing our intertwining connections through our traditional practice of weaving.





Prisilla Whyman  
*Platypus Playing* 2020

Acrylic on canvas

| Platypus Playing

Rachel Cross

*Our Elders* 2023

Acrylic on canvas

Our Elders — Teachers, leaders, survivors, strength, tradition, culture, knowledge holders, and living libraries, there are many words and ways we can describe our Elders. The five circles in the centre represent our Elders, all different but a continual link. The ribbons of colour represent how we each interact with our Elders in different ways. The gold shows the impressions that our Elders leave in our communities. The colours left in the weave pattern show how our memories and what we learn and share with our Elders are imprinted all around us.





Sandy Abigail

***The stories we share* 2022**

Acrylic on stretched canvas

Each dot represents one of many things. The areas where they are loaded together are a depiction of Mother Nature cracking open and revealing what lies beneath the surface. These parts are all our loved ones that have come before us, and the stories and knowledge they hold. I decided to use dots again to create the journey lines. Each of these depict the storytelling that is being passed down in today's generations. I find it to hold great value to teach our youth about who they are in terms of family, where they come from, and all the possible bright futures they could strive towards.

Native animal and human tracks, as well as traditional hunting tools with a few witchetty grubs are featured throughout the piece, to showcase what can be found on country and the journeys that have been taken. I concluded to add some contemporary dotting symbols I've currently been experimenting with to fill in any areas. The gold line details are a small element I wanted to include to have a subtle representation of my cultural totem. We all have a story to share, whether that be one of tradition, or a new one. My question is, what's your story? What knowledge are you willing to share?

Shannon Stone

***Magpie feather* 2023**

Steel

This is a connection from me to parental protection, the magpie is my oldest daughter... I speak to her, always have, at distance with love through the magpie. This sculpture also speaks to the beauty of letting go, of allowing flight and of her coming into her womanhood.







Shannon Stone

*The Guide* 2022

Sandstone

I grew up on sandstone country. This was likely the first raw material I etched my marks into as a child, after 30+ years I recognise it was guiding me all the way home, to my artistry, my Indigenous heritage and my true self.

Sheyleace Stevens

*Rainbow after the Storm* 2022

Acrylic on canvas

After being on Country after many days of rain and flooding it was nice to see a deadly rainbow inspiring me to put all the colours together. Our land is a better place after rain and sun.





Tulli Stevens

***Nyami ngalan (women together) 2022***

Acrylic on canvas

This artwork represents a woman's journey of self love, caring for and nourishing your mind, body and soul. Supporting one another to heal and grow together. One single continuous line symbolising an even flow, being in good health.

Zoe Golding

***We walked to the other side of the world 2023***

Traditional graphite and digital drawing

This piece is a morphing of still imagery captured from a trip to Tromsø Norway in the summer of 2023. At the time, I was seeking an escape of sorts, an escape from my mundane routines. During my time away, I became rather fond of the cool and crisp landscape so vastly different from my own. I remember experiencing a lingering sense of guilt. The realisation that I felt more at ease in a country so foreign to my own, whilst feeling a disconnect from my own culture. Not really fitting in here or there, but drifting somewhere in the middle.



