

PARLINGARRI AMINTIYA NINGANI AWUNGARRA

**OLD & NEW AT JILAMARA ARTS
24 MAY — 10 AUGUST 2025**

Old and new. Here and now. This survey of contemporary art from the Tiwi Islands celebrates artists working at Jilamara Arts & Craft Association in Milikapiti. It points to the long-standing expression of cultural knowledge and innovation emanating from this important art centre since its establishment in 1989.

Presented across both levels of UNSW Galleries, the exhibition showcases the breadth of work made at Jilamara Arts—from ironwood carvings to ochre paintings on stringybark, paper and canvas, printmaking, and video. Together, these works reveal the unique visual, performative, and material culture of the Tiwi people, centred around ceremonial body painting designs, clan totems, and Creation stories.

All Tiwi people are connected by a rich cosmology and complex system of inheritance, receiving their yiminga (skin group or tribe) from their mother, and their yoyi (dance) and murrakupupuni (Country) from their father. These connections are expressed through song, dance, body painting and its designs known as jilamara, which are central to the kulama (coming of age) and pukumani (mourning) ceremonies. In these events, bodies are painted to camouflage the living from spirits, and tutini (poles) and tunga (baskets) are decorated using locally sourced ochres.

Today, markings on the body are also painted on other surfaces, creating new and distinctive expressions. Emerging language and culture expert Colin Heenan-Puruntatameri explains, “From body it moved onto bark and then canvas, silk, printing, and now we are moving into digital. Culture is evolving with time. We adapt, we evolve, we change, we create as we write into the future.”

‘Parlingarri Amintiya Ningani Awungarra’ features newly commissioned and recent works by Walter Brooks, Kaye Brown, Johnathon World Peace Bush, Timothy Cook, Raelene Kerinauia Lampuwatu, Michelle Pulatuwayu Woody Minnapinni, Arthurina Moreen, Janice Murray Pungautiji, Matthew Freddy Puruntatameri, Patrick Freddy Puruntatameri, Conrad Kamilowra Tipungwuti, Columbiere Tipungwuti, Mickey Fogarty Wilson, Dino Wilson and Pedro Wonaeamirri.

The exhibition also pays tribute to the late senior women of Jilamara Arts whose innovation and adaptations of jilamara were instrumental in raising awareness of Tiwi art—Kutuwulumu Purawarrumpatu (Kitty Kantilla), Maryanne Mungatopi, Mary Magdalene Tipungwuti and Taracarijimo Freda Warlapinni—including works from the art centre’s Muluwurri Museum.

Curated by José Da Silva with Jilamara Arts & Crafts

LEVEL ONE

**murrakupupuni
(Country)**

**the first old ladies of
Jilamara**

**parlingarri
(long time ago)**

**ngiya jilamara
(my design)**

yoyi (dance)

**warnarringa, japparra
amintiya japalinga
(sun, moon and stars)**

pwoja-pukumani

warnarringa (sun)

**japparra and japalinga
(moon and stars)**

messengers

GROUND FLOOR

introduction

Tiwi parlingarri (Creation time) centres around the ngirramini (story) of the first Tiwi man, Purukapali, and his wife, Wai-ai (Bima), and the loss of their baby son, Jinani, that introduces mortality to the Tiwi people.

As Pedro Wonaeamirri explains:

A long time ago, before there were many people on earth, there was a place called Yimpinari, on the eastern side of Melville Island. In this place lived a small family: Purukapali, Wai-ai and Jinani. Purukapali's brother Japarra was staying not far away on the other side of the creek. At that time, they were the only people on earth.

While gathering food, Wai-ai is seduced by Japarra and leaves Jinani alone, who subsequently dies from heatstroke. Purukapali and Japarra fight, with the wounded Japarra drifting into the sky, where today he is seen as the moon, reminding Tiwi of the life and death cycle (full moon, no moon, new moon).

Purukapali then performs the first pukumani (mourning) ceremony to honour the death of his son, walking into the sea with his son and drowning. He leaves his wife in the bush to become the night curlew, who is heard calling out with grief for her son during the dry season.

Pedro explains further:

The story of Purukapali, his wife and son, is important to Tiwi life and culture. It teaches lessons about life and is also the beginning of our ceremonial culture. Since that time when Purukapali danced his dead son into the sea at Yimpinari, the Tiwi people have come together for pukumani ceremony, to sing, dance and farewell the spirit of our family so they can be at rest back on Country. Pukumani ceremony is a grieving ceremony, but it is also a celebration of life. Every dance has a song. The song and dance are how you connect to the land and the spirit of the deceased person. To let go and say goodbye, see you next time on your Country.

messengers

Bird life features heavily in Tiwi Creation stories as messengers and ancestral wanderers, bridging the physical world and the spiritual realms, most notably in the story of Purukapali, where birds warn him that his son Jinani has died. Jurrukukuni, the owl, also acts as a messenger for lovers Wai-ai and Japarra, guiding them to one another through the bush.

Jurrukukuni plays a central role in the first kulama ceremony performed after the death of Purukapali when all animals and birds were still human. Jurrukukuni, a boobook owl man, and his wife Pintoma, a barn owl woman, performed the ceremony, and the white-headed sea eagle Jirakati was the first initiate.

Patrick Freddy Puruntatameri and Janice Murray Pungautiji each explore the owl's significance and by extension the important role of bird life to Tiwi cultural identity. Puruntatameri creates ironwood sculptures depicting his totem jurrukukuni along with tutini—sculpted funeral posts, often referred to as pukumani poles, that were traditionally carved from bloodwood—featuring figurative elements to conceptualise human form. Murray also depicts native bird species from the Tiwi Islands—from owls to bush turkeys and Burdekin ducks—and here shows Jurrukukuni and Pintoma together.

Patrick Freddy Puruntatameri

Born 1973, Larrakia Country/Darwin, Northern Territory.

Tiwi people

Murrakupupuni (Country): Yarpalika/Pukulupi (Maxwell Creek); Yimunga (Tribe): Miyartuwi (Pandanus); Yoyi (Dance): Jurrukukuni (Boobook Owl)

Tutini – Pukumani Pole 2024

Tutini – Pukumani Pole 2024

Locally sourced ochre on ironwood

Courtesy of the artist, Jilamara Arts & Crafts, Milikapiti, and Martin Browne Contemporary, Gadigal Nura/Sydney
cat. no. 278–24 and 279–24

Tjurukukuni (Owl) 2025

Locally sourced ochre on ironwood

Commissioned by UNSW Galleries with the support of the New Contemporaries Fund

Courtesy of the artist and Jilamara Arts & Crafts, Milikapiti
cat. no. 402–24, 436–24, 461–24, 518–24, 519–24, 44–25, 45–25, 46–25, 47–25, 49–25, 52–25, 64–25, 65–25, 73–25, 74–25, 75–25, 76–25, 78–25, 79–25, 80–25, 84–25, 86–25, 87–25, and 88–25

Janice Murray Pungautiji

Born 1966, Milikapiti, Melville Island, Northern Territory.

Tiwi people

Murrakupupuni (Country): Yimpinari; Yimunga (Tribe) Tarnikina (Flying Fox); Yoyi (Dance): Tarrikarlani (Turtle)

Tjurukukuni (Owl) 2024

Locally sourced ochres on canvas

Courtesy of the artist and Jilamara Arts & Crafts, Milikapiti
cat. no. 446–24

warnarringa, japparra amintiya japalinga (sun, moon and stars)

Japparra, warnarringa and the circle on the ground all important for kulama. Three days and nights – Friday, Saturday and Sunday are the ceremony. No dancing, just calling out to the ancestors, each direction. This way, that way. Just singing, calling out and crawling in a circle calling out and sharing stories from parlingarri. At the end of the kulama, on Sunday we eat, then Monday morning everyone comes in, the children and old people. The cooked yam is mixed with red ochre and put on their bodies. — Pedro Wonaeamirri

Conrad Kamilowra Tipungwuti

Born 1966, Bathurst Island, Northern Territory.

Tiwi people

Murrakupupuni (Country): Wurankuwu; Yimunga (Tribe): Arinkuwula (Stone); Yoyi (Dance): Jarrangini (Buffalo)

Centre

Warnarringa (sun) 2023

Locally sourced ochres on linen

Private collection, Narrm/Melbourne

cat. no. 30–23

From left

Warnarringa (sun) 2024

Warnarringa (sun) 2024

Locally sourced ochres on linen

Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Narrm/Melbourne

cat. no. 535–24 and 547–24

Warnarringa (sun) 2024

Locally sourced ochres on linen

Private collection, Narrm/Melbourne

Kulama: warnarringa, japparra, japalinga (sun, moon and stars) 2024

Locally sourced ochres on linen

Collection: Agnes & Peter Cooke, Meanjin/Brisbane

cat. no. 32–24

Timothy Cook

Born 1958, Milikapiti, Melville Island, Northern Territory.

Tiwi people

Murrakupupuni (Country): Mananowmi/Paluwiya (Goose Creek);

Yimunga (Tribe): Marntupuni (House Fly); Yoyi (Dance): Tartuwarli (Shark)

Centre

Kulama 2003

Locally sourced ochres on linen

Courtesy of the artist and Aboriginal and Pacific Art, Gadigal Nura/
Sydney

cat. no. 1475–03

From left

Kulama 2023

Locally sourced ochres on linen

Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Narrm/Melbourne

cat. no. 193–23

Kulama 2023

Locally sourced ochres on linen

Private collection, Gadigal Nura/Sydney

cat. no. 285–22 and 286–22

Kulama 2015

Locally sourced ochres on linen

Courtesy of the artist and Jilamara Arts & Crafts, Milikapiti

Conrad Tipungwuti and Timothy Cook's paintings draw on the visual language of parlingarri (old times) to depict the moon and stars. Both artists repeatedly return to the ceremony of kulama, often described as a coming-of-age ceremony—a celebration of life and the passing of knowledge to the next generation, often symbolised by the giving of an adult name to the young people present. Although no longer practiced often, kulama was historically held at the end of the wet season, when a yellow halo appears around the full moon—a sign from the ancestral moon figure Japparra that the ceremony should begin.

Over three nights, Tiwi Elders would lead the community in ritual activities, including body painting, singing, dancing and the preparation and eating of the kulama kulama yam, a tuber that must be carefully cooked to remove toxins. The ceremony initiates young men into adulthood and reinforces cultural knowledge, kinship structures and wellbeing. While the ceremony is now rarely performed, it remains a powerful source of cultural meaning.

In their paintings, large concentric circles represent the Kulama kulama ground, the yam, or the halo around the full moon. Dotting often represents stars, or spiritual ancestors present during ceremony. Cook's use of a white ochre ground—instead of the more traditional black—makes the painted surface appear radiant, evoking moonlight and the celestial energy of the ceremony. His work speaks to both physical and spiritual cleansing: "We share with the universe and everything, it comes around us. And our culture too, it goes into it."

Timothy Cook

and

Patrick Freddy Puruntatameri

Tutini – Pukumani Pole 2019

Tutini – Pukumani Pole 2020

Tutini – Pukumani Pole 2020

Tutini – Pukumani Pole 2024

Tutini – Pukumani Pole 2024

Locally sourced ochres on ironwood

Courtesy of the artist, Jilamara Arts & Crafts, and D'Lan Contemporary, Narrm/Melbourne

cat. no. 479–19, 296–20, 297–20, 528–24 and 529–24

pwoja-pukumani

We still use old ways on the Tiwi Islands, but then also some new. We still use bark to make paintings. We collect the bark in the wet season to make flat pieces for painting we call purrungupari or mintawinga, this is old language for flat pieces of bark. I remember old people using mintawinga to make shelter before tin sheds and now we still paint on these at the art centre. — Pedro Wonaeamirri

Pedro Wonaeamirri

Born 1974, Pirlangimpi, Melville Island, Northern Territory.

Tiwi people

Murrakupupuni (Country): Paluwiyanga/Andranangoo (Goose Creek);

Yimunga (Tribe): Milipurrula (White Cockatoo); Yoyi (Dance): Jilarti

(Brolga)

From left

Pwoja Pukumani – Body Paint Design 2024

Pwoja Pukumani – Body Paint Design 2024

Pwoja Pukumani – Body Paint Design 2024

Pwoja Pukumani – Body Paint Design 2024

Pwoja Pukumani – Body Paint Design 2024

Locally sourced ochres on stringybark

Courtesy of the artist, Jilamara Arts & Craft and Alcaston Gallery,

Narrm/Melbourne

cat. no. AK23496, AK23503, AK23500, AK23504 and AK23501

Tunga (folded bark basket) 2025

Locally sourced ochres on folded stringybark, bush string

Courtesy of the artist and Jilamara Arts & Crafts, Milikapiti

cat. no. 132-25

Pedro Wonaeamirri is a senior cultural leader with a strong knowledge of the old Tiwi language and the important songs and dances in Tiwi culture. His practice has its foundations in jilamara, derived from pwoja (body designs) as an extension of the pukumani ceremonial body designs. His works are graphic expressions of dance and song that capture the essence of performance. Pedro says of his work: "The songlines relate to body paintings; the designs that I paint are like body painting and face painting. The designs are already in my head, and I use the kayimwagakimi, our traditional wooden comb made from ironwood and natural ochres from the island to paint."

This collection of recent barks demonstrates a traditional approach, featuring intricate geometric patterns and meticulous fine detail. Pedro also has rights to specific ochres not used by other artists, which he gathers on his Country on the eastern side of Melville Island — a place he connects to through his paternal line. Ochres are ground and burnt to release the traditional colours — red, black and yellow, with white — and he applies the paint in a painstaking process using the kayimwagakimi ironwood comb.

Janice Murray Pungautiji

and

Pedro Wonaeamirri

Jarrikarlani jilamara amintiya Ngarraminni (turtle design and story)

2023

HD video, colour, stereo, 4:05 minutes

Collection: Wurrungura Multimedia, Milikapiti

Kaye Brown

Born 1954, Milikapiti, Melville Island, Northern Territory.

Tiwi people

Murrakupupuni (Country): Paluwiyanga/Andranangoo (Goose Creek)

Yimunga (Tribe): Takaringuwi (Scaly Mullet); Yoyi (Dance): Tartuwali

(Shark)

From left

Kayimwagakimi jilamara 2025

Yirrinkiripwoja (body paint design) 2025

Yirrinkiripwoja (body paint design) 2024

Yirrinkiripwoja (body paint design) 2024

Yirrinkiripwoja (body paint design) 2024

Locally sourced ochres on stringybark

Commissioned by UNSW Galleries with the support of the New

Contemporaries Fund

Courtesy of the artist and Jilamara Arts & Crafts, Milikapiti

cat. no. 81–25, 27–25, 407–24, 329–24 and 477–24

Kaye Brown also keeps alive the knowledge of ancestral modes of minga (body markings) and contemporary forms of yirrinkiripwoja (body painting), which represents spiritual attachment to ancestral beings. Her tightly clustered dots and layers of ochre are reminiscent of the body-painting styles used to prepare for ceremony and yoyi, made using the pwoja or kayimwagakimi.

Tutini (Pukumani pole) with Tunga (folded bark basket) 2025

Locally sourced ochres on ironwood; folded stringybark, bush string

Made in collaboration with Patrick Freddy Puruntatameri

Commissioned by UNSW Galleries with the support of the New

Contemporaries Fund

Courtesy of the artist and Jilamara Arts & Crafts, Milikapiti

cat. no. 127–25 and 559–24

Pedro and Kaye have also created examples of tunga (folded-bark basket) that sit atop tutini (poles), acknowledging the profound significance of honouring the dead and aiding the spirit's journey to the afterlife through the objects used in pukumani ceremonies. Following ceremonies, tunga baskets are placed atop the pukumani pole so the person's spirit can use and take things with them on their journey.

Kaye says: "Tunga was a basket for hunting. My ancestors ... when they caught bush tucker they would put what they caught in the tunga and take it back to their family. We still make tunga and ceremonial objects for pukumani and for artworks as well ... When we finish the ceremony the tunga would be put on top of the pukumani pole, so the spirit of the person can use and take things with them on their journey."

warnarringa (sun)

In Tiwi the red ochre is yellow that we burn on the fire—it is the colour of the sun. Murtankala is our Creation story—that old lady came up when it was all dark and she made light with yikwani (fire), and it became the sun. — Dino Wilson

Dino Wilson

1983–2023. Born Wurrumiyanga, Nguu, Bathurst Island, Northern Territory.
Tiwi people
Murrakupupuni (Country): Wurrumiyanga; Yimunga (Tribe): Takaringuwi (Scaly Mullet); Yoyi (Dance): Jarrangini (Buffalo)

From left

Warnarringa (sun) 2021

Locally sourced ochres on linen
Private collection, Narrm/Melbourne
cat. no. 337–21

Warnarringa (sun) 2021

Locally sourced ochres on linen
Courtesy of Outstation Gallery, Garramilla/Darwin
cat. no. 433–21

Warnarringa (sun) 2021

Locally sourced ochres on linen
Courtesy of the artist and Jilamara Arts & Crafts, Milikapiti
cat. no. 554–21

Warnarringa (sun) 2022

Warnarringa (sun) 2022
Locally sourced ochres on linen
Courtesy of Outstation Gallery, Garramilla/Darwin
cat. no. 543–22 and 256–22

Dino Wilson's paintings depict warnarringa—the sun in Tiwi culture, its rising and setting, and the important cultural story that describes the arrival of sunlight and life to the Tiwi Islands through fire. Will Heathcote at Jilamara Arts & Craft recounts this story from parlingarri:

It is believed that the whole world was in perpetual darkness and inhabited by yamparriparri (evil spirits). The wulimaka (old lady) Murtankala came up from underground with three children in a tunga on her back. As she moved around on the surface, she created grooves and crevices in the land with her body. Some of these filled with water, gradually forming the geographical shapes and channels of the Tiwi Islands. She made yikwani by rubbing grass and sticks together and lifted it up into the sky with her two hands to create light for her children, one of whom was Purukapali (the first Tiwi man).

The story of Murtankala continues in the paintings of Michelle Pulatuwayu Woody Minnapinni, where she echoes the creation of landforms and waterways, using ochre and ceremonial motifs.

japarra and japalinga (moon and stars)

Columbiere Tipungwuti

Born 1965, Bathurst Island, Northern Territory.
Tiwi people
Murrakupupuni (Country): Wurankuwu; Yimunga (Tribe): Wulinjuwula (Mosquito); Yoyi (Dance): Jarrangini (Buffalo)

From left

Japarra 2024

Japarra 2025

Japarra 2024

Japarra 2024

Japarra 2024

Japarra 2024

Japarra 2023

Japarra 2024

Japarra 2025

Japarra 2025

Locally sourced ochre on stringybark
Commissioned by UNSW Galleries with the support of the New Contemporaries Fund
Courtesy of the artist and Jilamara Arts & Crafts, Milikapiti
cat. no. 37–24, 120–25, 297–24, 178–24, 241–24, 211–24, 403–23, 263–24, 119–25 and 124–25

Columbiere Tipungwuti paints the celestial elements of Tiwi ceremonial culture: Japarra, the moon and ancestral figure that brought mortality to the world, and japalinga, the stars commonly represented by ochre dots applied to the body for ceremony and yoyi. Japarra, who ascended to the sky to become the moon, is a reminder to the Tiwi people of the cycles of life.

Tristen Hardwood observes: “The Japarra figure wears no ceremonial ornaments, body paint or clothes, unlike Purukapali and many other Tiwi ceremonial dancers. Japarra is suspended in limbo after bringing mortality to the Tiwi people. In years gone by, there was a strong Tiwi tradition of producing nude figurative ironwood carvings that tell this story. Tipungwuti’s paintings draw on these important cultural influences to create innovative works grounded in his knowledge of the old stories and connection to longstanding practices of storytelling.”

parlingarri (long time ago)

Walter Brooks

Born 1994, Larrakia Country/Darwin, Northern Territory.
Tiwi people
Murrakupupuni (Country): Purrampunarli/Karslake; Yimunga (Tribe):
Wantaringuwi (Sun); Yoyi (Dance): Kapala (Boat)

Purukapali, Waiai & Jinani 2024

Locally sourced ochres on ironwood
Courtesy of the artist and Jilamara Arts & Crafts, Milikapiti
cat. no. 284–24

From left

Purukapali 2024

Purukapali and Bima 2024

Purukapali with Tokwampini 2024

Purukapali with Tokwampini 2024

Purukapali 2024

Locally sourced ochres on ironwood
Courtesy of Jilamara Arts & Crafts and Vivien Anderson Gallery,
Narrm/Melbourne
cat. no. 391–24, 425–23, 344–24, 543–24 and 40–24

Walter Brooks makes ironwood carvings of Purukapali, Wai-ai (Bima) and Jinani that evoke the Tiwi Creation story marking the pivotal moment when mortality was introduced to the world and turned Tiwi people from immortal beings to humans. He also includes the figure of Tokwampini, the messenger bird commonly depicted as water birds such as jabirus (native crane), cormorants, and pelicans, who were responsible for revealing Jinani’s death to Purukapali.

Johnathon World Peace Bush

Born 1974, Larrakia Country/Darwin, Northern Territory.
Tiwi people
Murrakupupuni (Country): Paluwiyanga/Andranangoo (Goose Creek);
Yimunga (Tribe): Takaringuwi (Scaly Mullet); Yoyi (Dance): Tartuwali (Shark)

The Last Supper and the Big Breakfast 2023

Locally sourced ochres on linen
Courtesy of the artist and THIS IS NO FANTASY, Narrm/Melbourne

Johnathon World Peace Bush’s paintings re-imagine old anthropological images of Tiwi people and Catholic figureheads covered in ceremonial designs and ornaments. They reflect on one of the dominant colonial experiences for the Tiwi people that came with the establishment of a Catholic mission on Bathurst Island in 1911.

Johnathon says: “We are fighting for recognition for our existence in our past and our present and with the future. From the lesson of old to the lesson of new. It is important to link the past to the present for healthy future regeneration. Like a chain reaction. To fix up a family tree you have to go down to the roots and into the past.”

murrakupupuni (Country)

Country is important to me because it makes me think of the old people. When I go out I still feel their spirits. Whenever we go out, we call out to these ancestors, us Tiwi mob. We let them know that we are there and that they are guiding us. Anyone of our ancestors who has had a Pukumani ceremony, we believe they are at rest out on the Country of their family. — Michelle Pulatuwayu Woody Minnapinni

Michelle Pulatuwayu Woody Minnapinni

Born 1972, Pirlangimpi, Melville Island, Northern Territory.
Tiwi people
Murrakupupuni (Country): Pupatuwu; Yimunga (Tribe): Miyartuwi (Pandanus); Yoyi (Dance): Kapala (Boat)

Centre

Ngiya Murrakupupuni 2024

Locally sourced ochres on linen
Courtesy of the artist and Jilamara Arts & Crafts, Milikapiti
cat. no. 221–24, 222–24, 223–24, 224–24 and 225–24

From left

Ngiya Murrakupupuni 2024

Locally sourced ochres on linen
Collection: St John of God Health Care Art Collection
cat. no. 501–24

Ngiya Murrakupupuni 2024

Locally sourced ochres on linen
Courtesy of the artist and STATION Gallery, Gadigal Nura/Sydney
cat. no. 532–24

Michelle Woody’s paintings speak to the living connections between Country, ceremony, and ancestral knowledge. Working with local ochres gathered and applied using a kayimwagakimi (comb), she honours traditional forms of jilamara used in ceremonial practices. Her layered lines and ochre fields evoke the Tiwi landscape — tingata (sand), winga (saltwater), makatinga (freshwater) — and carry the presence of Murtankala, the ancestral woman who emerged from the earth to bring light, shaping land and water as she moved across the islands. “My paintings are about thinking back on these ancestors,” Michelle says. “It’s the story of how it all connects – songline, dance, body and Country.” Each work draws strength from the materiality of place: white, yellow and red earth pigments are collected, crushed and burned on Country, then layered with care. In both form and spirit, Michelle’s practice sustains the ceremonial and creative lifeblood of Tiwi culture.

Michelle Pulatuwayu Woody Minnapinni

and
Colin Heenan-Puruntatameri

Kapala (Sailing Boat) 2024

HD video, colour, stereo, 1:58 minutes
Collection: Wurrungura Multimedia, Milikapiti

the first old ladies of Jilamara

In the 1980s, a generation of senior Tiwi women emerged as foundational figures in the development of Tiwi art. These artists adapted traditional jilamara into individual visual languages, and contributed significantly to recognition of Tiwi visual culture.

Taracarijimo Freda Warlapinni

c.1928–2003. Born Melville Island, Northern Territory.

Tiwi people

Murrakupupuni (Country): Mirrikawuyanga; Yimunga (Tribe): Wulinjuwula (Mosquito); Yoyi (Dance): Yirrikapayi (Crocodile)

From left

Untitled date unknown

Locally sourced ochres on stringybark

Collection: Muluwurri Museum, Milikapiti

cat. no. MM62–20

Pwoja – pukumani body design 2002

Locally sourced ochres on paper

Courtesy of Aboriginal and Pacific Art, Gadigal Nura/Sydney

Untitled 1999

Untitled 1999

Etching, intaglio and relief printed in colour, from one plate

Printed by Australian Print Workshop

Courtesy of Aboriginal and Pacific Art, Gadigal Nura/Sydney

Edition 30/30 and 6/30

Freda Warlapinni developed her distinct designs by watching her father, who created designs for ceremonial pukumani poles. She sought to create movement and energy with mulpinyini (line) interspersed with panga (dots) that she described as the bush wildflower japartinga—a delicate, small blossom that grows during the dry season.

Kutuwulumi Purawarrumpatu (Kitty Kantilla)

c.1928–2003. Born Purupmawu, Melville Island, Northern Territory.

Tiwi people

Murrakupupuni (Country): Yimpinari; Yimunga (Tribe): Anjiluwi (Rain);

Yoyi (Dance): Marntipani (seagull)

From left

Pumpuni Jilamara 1999

Locally sourced ochres on linen

Courtesy of Jilamara Arts & Craft Association, Milikapiti

cat. no. 99–02

Untitled 2003

Locally sourced ochres on paper

Private collection, Gadigal Nura/Sydney

Untitled 2003

Locally sourced ochres on linen

Collection: Muluwurri Museum, Milikapiti

cat. no. MM456–20

Untitled 2003

Locally sourced ochres on linen

Private collection, Gadigal Nura/Sydney

Untitled # 2 2000, printed 2001

Intaglio etching, printed in black ink, from one plate

Printed by Australian Print Workshop

Courtesy of Aboriginal and Pacific Art, Gadigal Nura/Sydney

Edition 50/50

Untitled 2003; printed 2009

Untitled 2003; printed 2009

Lithographs

Printed by Australian Print Workshop

Courtesy of Jilamara Arts & Crafts, Milikapiti

cat. no. ET3–20–30 and ET4–20–30

Kitty Kantilla's minimal, abstract paintings reflect a deep ceremonial knowledge and a fierce commitment to cultural expression. Her radical reworkings of jilamara designs and refusal to explain her imagery to outsiders affirmed her status as a cultural custodian and innovator.

Mary Magdalene Tipungwuti

1935–2020. Born Pirlangimpi, Melville Island, Northern Territory

Tiwi people

Murrakupupuni (Country): Warriyuwu; Yimunga (Tribe): Arinkuwula

(Stone); Yoyi (Dance): Kirrilima (Jungle Fowl)

Jilamara 2003

Jilamara 2003

Locally sourced ochres on paper

Courtesy of Jilamara Arts & Crafts, Milikapiti

cat. no. 1331–03 and 1461–03

Mary Magdalene Tipungwuti brought a unique perspective to jilamara through her knowledge of weaving techniques. Drawing on Tiwi and Arnhem Land traditions, her work reflected a deep connection to cultural heritage and material knowledge, expressed through pandanus weaving and ochre paintings.

Maryanne Mungatopi

1966–2003. Born Melville Island, Northern Territory.

Tiwi people

Murrakupupuni (Country): Purumpanali/Karslake; Yimunga (Tribe):

Wantaringuwi (Sun); Yoyi (Dance): Yirrikipayi (Crocodile)

Jilamara 1996

Untitled 2001

Locally sourced ochres on paper

Courtesy of Jilamara Arts & Crafts, Milikapiti

cat. no. 3–96 and 310–01

Maryanne Mungatopi was a versatile artist, dedicated to the preservation and dissemination of cultural knowledge: "Some of our culture is losing away. I paint because I am trying to hold onto Tiwi culture. When I started, I thought it was for money, not very serious, then my artwork made me start to think seriously about culture."

ngiya jilamara (my design)

All artists in Milikapiti draw on collective Tiwi memory, and their work’s individual expression and aesthetic qualities of marlipinyini (lines) and pwanga (dots) reflect a personal interpretation of the jilamara. Ngiya jilamara means “my design”, and this selection of works focuses on five distinct interpretations of jilamara.

Raelene Kerinauia Lampuwatu

Born 1962, Wurrumiyanga, Bathurst Island, Northern Territory.
Tiwi people
Murrakupupuni (Country): Pickataramoor/Mantiyupwi; Yimunga (Tribe): Wantaringuwi (Sun); Yoyi (Dance): Yirrikapayi (Crocodile)

From left

Kayimwagakimi jilamara 2024
Miyaringa (woven pandanus mat) 2023
Kayimwagakimi jilamara 2024

Locally sourced ochres on stringybark
Courtesy of the artist and Jilamara Arts & Crafts, Milikapiti
cat. no. 240–24, 308–23 and 259–24

Raelene Kerinauia Lampuwatu creates contemporary interpretations of jilamara using the traditional Tiwi painting comb, kayimwagakimi. Her designs connect ancestral knowledge with her family’s ceremonial heritage, expressed with a striking and distinctive visual language.

Arthurina Moreen

Born 2000, Larrakia Country/Darwin, Northern Territory.
Tiwi people
Murrakupupuni (Country): Yangtanga/Purumpunali; Yimunga (Tribe): Takaringuwi (Scaly Mullet); Yoyi (Dance): Kaluputi (Black Whip Snake)

From left

Jilamara 2025
Ngiya jilamara II 2025
Jilamara 2025
Ngiya jilamara II 2025
Ngiya jilamara II 2025

Locally sourced ochres on stringybark
Commissioned by UNSW Galleries with the support of the New Contemporaries Fund
Courtesy of the artist and Jilamara Arts & Crafts, Milikapiti
cat. no. 106–25, 123–25, 89–25, 82–25, 83–25

Athurina Moreen is a rising star in the Northern Territory AFL Womens Premier League. She started as a sceenprinter and is learning to paint from the senior artists.

Pedro Wonaeamirri

Jilamara 2016
Locally sourced ochres on linen
Courtesy of the artist, Jilamara Arts & Craft and Alcaston Gallery, Narrm/Melbourne
cat. no. AK21120

Pedro says of this work commissioned for the 2017 National Indigenous Art Triennial: “Nginginilawa Jilamara is my design that no one else will use or copy. It’s like singing and dancing that no other clan or tribe can use for their own purpose. The lines of the brush represent the miyinga (scarification) and the dots from the pwoja comb represent yirrikiripwoja (body painting) and it all comes together to disguise me from bad spirit.”

Matthew Freddy Puruntatameri

1972–2007. Born Larrakia Country/Darwin, Northern Territory.
Tiwi people
Murrakupupuni (Country): Yarpalika/Pukulupi (Maxwell Creek); Yimunga (Tribe): Pandanus; Yoyi (Dance): Jurrukukuni (Owl)

From left

Jilamara 1999
Jilamara 1999
Jilamara 2001
Jilamara 1999
Jilamara 1999
Jilamara 2000
Jilamara 2001
Jilamara 2001
Locally sourced ochres on paper
Courtesy of Jilamara Arts & Crafts, Milikapiti
cat. no. 132–99, 99–99, 65–01, 99–99, 23–99, 110–00, 212–01 and 332–01

Matthew Freddy Puruntatameri was renowned for his ochre paintings and intricate ironwood carvings, which translated jilamara into refined visual compositions. His works reflect cultural knowledge, inherited from his father, the celebrated artist Paddy Freddy Puruntatameri.

Mickey Fogarty Wilson

Born 1973, Larrakia Country/Darwin, Northern Territory.
Tiwi people
Murrakupupuni (Country): Jurrupi (Jessie River); Yimunga (Tribe): Wulinjuwula (Mosquito); Yoyi (Dance): Narringari (Magpie Goose)

From left

Storm Clouds and Pakatringa (rain) 2024
Storm Clouds and Pakatringa (rain) 2024
Storm Clouds and Pakatringa (rain) 2025
Locally sourced ochres on stringybark
Courtesy of the artist and Jilamara Arts & Crafts, Milikapiti
cat. no. 298–24, 51–24 and 57–25

Mickey Wilson’s unique use of fine jilamara is “all about the clouds we get up here in the build-up and wet season” and outline the changing combinations of clouds and rain that make up the various seasons in the Tiwi Islands.

yoyi (dance)

We still use old ways on the Tiwi Islands, but then also some new... Our songline, dance and the art we make belongs to us Tiwi. New technology is new and we are using it, but we still have that story that is ours. With the old and the new coming together we are moving forward... The films and recording we make helps us bring this story forward into the future, to connect. — Pedro Wonaeamirri

Martina Baxter

Born 1976, Larrakia Country/Darwin, Northern Territory.
Tiwi people
Murrakupupuni (Country): Wurankuwu/Ranku; Yimunga (Tribe): Takaringa (Scaly Mullet); Yoyi (Dance): Jarranga (Buffalo)

Neil Black

Born 1982, Larrakia Country/Darwin, Northern Territory.
Tiwi people
Murrakupupuni (Country): Mirrikawuyanga; Yimunga (Tribe): Takaringini (Scaly Mullet); Yoyi (Dance): Pikipiki (Pig)

Pamela Brooks

Born 1958, Milikapiti, Melville Island, Northern Territory.
Tiwi people
Murrakupupuni (Country): Mirrikawuyanga; Yimunga (Tribe): Marntupuni (House Fly); Yoyi: Pikipiki (Pig)

Walter Brooks

Born 1994, Larrakia Country/Darwin, Northern Territory.
Tiwi people
Murrakupupuni (Country): Purrapunarli/Karslake; Yimunga (Tribe): Wantaringuwi (Sun); Yoyi (Dance): Kapala (Boat)

Brenda Bush

Born 1952, Milikapiti, Melville Island, Northern Territory.
Tiwi people
Murrakupupuni Country- Pickataramoo (Mantiyupwi); Yimunga (Tribe): Miyartuwi (Pandanus); Yoyi (Dance): Marntipani (Seagull)

Doriana Bush

Born 1952, Milikapiti, Melville Island, Northern Territory.
Tiwi people
Murrakupupuni (Country) Paluwiyanga/Andranangoo (Goose Creek); Yimunga (Tribe): Takaringa (Scaly Mullet); Yoyi (Dance): Narringari (Magpie Goose)

Michelle Bush

Born 1978, Milikapiti, Melville Island, Northern Territory.
Tiwi people
Murrakupupuni (Country): Paluwiyanga/Andranangoo (Goose Creek); Yimunga (Tribe): Milipurrula (White Cockatoo); Yoyi (Dance): Narringari (Magpie Goose)

Timothy Cook

Born 1958, Milikapiti, Melville Island, Northern Territory.
Tiwi people
Murrakupupuni (Country): Mananowmi/Paluwiyanga (Goose Creek); Yimunga (Tribe): Marntupuni (House Fly); Yoyi (Dance): Tartuwarli (Shark)

Colin Heenan-Puruntatameri

Born 1995, Larrakia Country/Darwin, Northern Territory.
Tiwi people
Naringa Murrakupupuni (Country): Yarpalika/Pukulupi (Maxwell Creek); Yimunga (Tribe) Jangala (March Fly); Yoyi (Dance): Kapala (Boat)

Nancy Kerinauia

Born 1991, Larrakia Country/Darwin, Northern Territory.
Tiwi people
Murrakupupuni (Country): Pickataramoor/Mantiyupwi; Yimunga (Tribe): Takaringa (Scaly Mullet); Yoyi (Dance): Tayama (Dingo)

Raelene Kerinauia Lampuwatu

Born 1962, Wurrumiyanga, Bathurst Island, Northern Territory.
Tiwi people
Murrakupupuni (Country): Pickataramoor/Mantiyupwi; Yimunga (Tribe): Wantaringuwi (Sun); Yoyi (Dance): Yirrikapayi (Crocodile)

Raylene Miller White

Born 1988, Larrakia Country/Darwin, Northern Territory.
Tiwi people
Murrakupupuni (Country): Purrapunarli/Karslake; Yimunga (Tribe): Wantaringuwi (Sun); Yoyi Dance): Yirrikapayi (Crocodile)

Edwina Moreen

Born 1991, Larrakia Country/Darwin, Northern Territory.
Tiwi people
Murrakupupuni (Country): Malawu; Yimunga (Tribe): Wantaringuwi (Sun); Yoyi (Dance): Jarranga (Buffalo)

Mary Elizabeth Moreen

Born 1946, Milikapiti, Melville Island, Northern Territory.
Tiwi people
Murrakupupuni (Country): Purrapunarli/Karslake; Yimunga (Tribe): Wantaringuwi (Sun); Yoyi (Dance): Yirrikapayi (Crocodile)

Bernadette Mungatopi

Born 1971, Milikapiti, Melville Island, Northern Territory.
Tiwi people
Murrakupupuni (Country): Purrapunarli/Karslake; Yimunga (Tribe): Miyartuwi (Pandanus); Yoyi (Dance): Yirrikapayi (Crocodile)

Gerry Mungatopi

Born 1981, Larrakia Country/Darwin, Northern Territory.
Tiwi people
Murrakupupuni (Country): Purrapunarli; Yimunga (Tribe): Wantaringuwi (Sun); Yoyi (Dance): Yirrikapayi (Crocodile)

Jimmy Mungatopi

Born 1985, Larrakia Country/Darwin, Northern Territory.
Tiwi people
Murrakupupuni (Country): Purrapunarli/Karslake; Yimunga (Tribe): Miyartuwi (Pandanus); Yoyi (Dance): Yirrikapayi (Crocodile)

Janice Murray Pungautiji

Born 1966, Milikapiti, Melville Island, Northern Territory.

Tiwi people

Murrakupupuni (Country): Yimpinari; Yimunga (Tribe) Tarnikina (Flying Fox); Yoyi (Dance): Tarrikarlani (Turtle)

Tina Patlas

Born 1968, Milikapiti, Melville Island, Northern Territory.

Tiwi people

Murrakupupuni (Country): Mantiyupwi; Yimunga (Tribe): Pingaluwula (Stone); Yoyi (Dance): Marntipani (Seagull)

Geraldine Pilakui

Born 1978, Cape Fourcroy, Bathurst Island, Northern Territory.

Tiwi people

Murrakupupuni (Country): Wurankuwu/Ranku; Yimunga (Tribe): Arinkuwula (Stone); Yoyi (Dance): Yirrikapayi (Crocodile)

Aileen Puruntatameri

Born 1949, Mantiyupwi, Bathurst Island, Northern Territory.

Tiwi people

Murrakupupuni (Country): Purrampunarli/Karslake; Yimunga (Tribe): Wantaringuwi (Sun); Yoyi (Dance): Yirrikapayi (Crocodile)

Barbara Puruntatameri

Born 1970, Pirlangimpi, Melville Island, Northern Territory.

Tiwi people

Murrakupupuni (Country): Yarpalika/Pukulupi (Maxwell Creek); Yimunga (Tribe): Wantaringuwi (Sun); Yoyi (Dance): Kirrilima (Jungle Fowl)

Colleen Freddy Puruntatameri

Born 1969, Larrakia Country/Darwin, Northern Territory.

Tiwi people

Murrakupupuni (Country): Yarpalika/Kurlupini (Maxwell Creek); Yimunga (Tribe): Miyartuwi (Pandanus); Yoyi (Dance): Jurrukukuni (Owl)

Marie Claire Puruntatameri

Born 1992, Larrakia Country/Darwin, Northern Territory.

Tiwi people

Murrakupupuni (Country): Purrampunarli/Karslake; Yimunga (Tribe): Wantaringuwi (Sun); Yoyi (Dance): Yirrikapayi (Crocodile)

Patrick Freddy Puruntatameri

Born 1973, Larrakia Country/Darwin, Northern Territory.

Tiwi people

Murrakupupuni (Country): Yarpalika/Pukulupi (Maxwell Creek); Yimunga (Tribe): Miyartuwi (Pandanus); Yoyi (Dance): Jurrukukuni (Owl)

Rachel Puruntatameri

Born 1944, Milikapiti, Melville Island, Northern Territory.

Tiwi people

Murrakupupuni (Country): Jurrupi (Jessie River); Yimunga (Tribe): Miyartuwi (Pandanus); Yoyi (Dance): Narringari (Magpie Goose)

Irene Tipiloura

Born 1974, Larrakia Country/Darwin, Northern Territory.

Tiwi people

Murrakupupuni (Country): Taracumbi; Yimunga (Tribe): Takaringa (Scaly Mullet); Yoyi (Dance): Pika (Horse)

Pius Tipungwuti

Born 1954, Wurrumiyunga, Bathurst Island, Northern Territory.

Tiwi people

Murrakupupuni (Country): Wurankuwu; Yimunga (Tribe): Arinkuwula (Stone); Yoyi (Dance): Jarranga (Buffalo)

Pedro Wonaeamirri

Born 1974, Pirlangimpi, Melville Island, Northern Territory.

Tiwi people

Murrakupupuni (Country): Paluwiyanga/Andranangoo (Goose Creek); Yimunga (Tribe): Milipurrula (White Cockatoo); Yoyi (Dance): Jilarti (Brolga)

Michelle Pulatuwayu Woody Minnapinni

Born 1972, Pirlangimpi, Melville Island, Northern Territory.

Tiwi people

Murrakupupuni (Country): Pupatuwu; Yimunga (Tribe): Miyartuwi (Pandanus); Yoyi (Dance): Kapala (Boat)

YOYI 2019/23

4-channel HD video, colour, stereo, 25 minutes

Project and Creative Development Team: Pedro Wonaeamirri, Michelle Pulatuwayu Woody Minnapinni, Colin Heenan-Puruntatameri, Hannah Raisin and Will Heathcote

YOYI is a collaborative film made by 30 artists working at Jilamara Arts & Crafts and a celebration of culture shared through the medium of video, where the word wurrungura describes both the moving image medium and the act of moving forward. Self-directed by the artists, the film celebrates the performative foundations of Tiwi artmaking: dance, body painting, family, totem and ceremony. It shows individual artists wearing ceremonial garments and jilamara collected from the Country where they perform their totem dances. In doing so, they refer to Country—their land and their spiritual identity.

Lucy Latella writes of the project: “There is a palpable energy throughout the work, fuelled by community and togetherness. Though most dancers appear solo, they are held in the space by a rhythmic undercurrent of clapping and song behind the camera, releasing stories of totems, events, and daily life back into the Country that informed them. The voices spur on the performer and celebrate them as they dance, enforcing the importance of both the individual and the collective in actively practising culture. The viewer watches the performance through the lens, intimately immersed in the call and response.”

TIWI ISLANDS

BATHURST ISLAND

MELVILLE ISLAND



UNSW Galleries stands on an important place of learning and exchange first occupied by the Bidjigal and Gadigal peoples. We recognise them as the Traditional Custodians of this site and acknowledge them as the first artists to inhabit this Land. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, and extend this respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from all nations of Australia.

Jilamara Arts & Crafts is owned and governed by artists from the Milikapiti community. Situated on Wulirankuwu Country, on the north coast of Melville Island overlooking the Arafura Sea, it is a small community that celebrates family, culture and artmaking.

The works included in 'Parlingarri Amintiya Ningani Awungarra' embody the collective knowledge of the Tiwi people of the Milikapiti community. They were created by and with the consent of the Custodians of this knowledge. The intellectual and cultural property of these works belongs to the artists, the Tiwi People, and their Ancestors through their longstanding living culture and art practices.

Special thanks to Hannah Raisin and Will Heathcote at Jilamara Arts & Crafts for their assistance in realising this project.

New commissions were made possible through the UNSW Galleries New Contemporaries Fund, and curatorial travel was supported by the Gordon Darling Foundation.

UNSW Galleries also wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Vivien Anderson and Amy Boyd, Vivien Anderson Gallery; Justin Bourke KC; Peter and Agnes Cooke; Coby Edgar; Beverly Knight, Alcaston Gallery; Michelle Newton, Artspace; Gabriella Roy, Aboriginal & Pacific Art; Alister Shew, Gordon Darling Foundation; Erin Vink and Kirra Weingarth, Art Gallery of New South Wales; Nicholas Wales; and Matt Ward, Outstation Gallery.

Project Team

José Da Silva, Director

Karen Hall, Exhibitions & Gallery Manager

Justin Henderson, Exhibitions Technician

Emily Roebuck, Galleries & Curatorial Assistant

Catherine Woolley, Curatorial & Public Engagement Officer

Installation: Tommy Carman, Seamus Heidenreich, Gosha Heldtz, Jaime Krausmann, Abigail Montgomery, Gotaro Uematsu and Harrison Witsey

Exhibition Brand: Suzanne Boccalatte

