



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WESTERN  
AUSTRALIA**

Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery

# Education Kit

## **CREATURES:**

Ochred, Poked, Carved &  
Twined | 27 February – 5 June 2021



# Education Kit

This Education Kit was prepared to accompany the exhibition *Creatures: Ochred, Pokered, Carved & Twined* from the Ronald and Catherine H. Berndt Collection, an exhibition at the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery (27 February – 5 June 2021).

The kit provides educational resources for teachers and students from K-12. Aligned with WA School Curriculum and Standards Authority outcomes, it includes context for research across curricula including Visual Arts, Design, Humanities and Social Studies along with art making and interpretation tasks.

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EXHIBITION TITLE: *Creatures: Ochred, Pokered, Carved & Twined*  
Berndt Museum of Anthropology

## Introduction

The Berndt Museum at The University of Western Australia is renown nationally and internationally for its holdings of Australian Aboriginal, Melanesian and Southeast Asian art and cultural material.

Established in 1976, the museum was founded on the collections of anthropologists Professor Ronald and Dr Catherine Berndt. Since that time it has grown with further donations and acquisitions.

Its 11,500 objects, approximately 30,000 photographs and extensive archival and audio-visual materials are embedded with Indigenous knowledge and provide testament to dynamic and continuing living cultures and identities.

## The Exhibition

This exhibition features animals, including insects, kangaroos, fish, lizards and butterflies. These objects provide a lot of information about the Aboriginal makers and their communities of origin.

The choices of subject, the diversity of technical practices and the materials that have been employed to create them, reflect not only the locale of the production, skill and imagination of their makers, but along with the variety of materials - including natural and manmade fibres, woods and ochres, that have been

employed - provide information about the nature of the natural, economic and social environments within which they have been made.

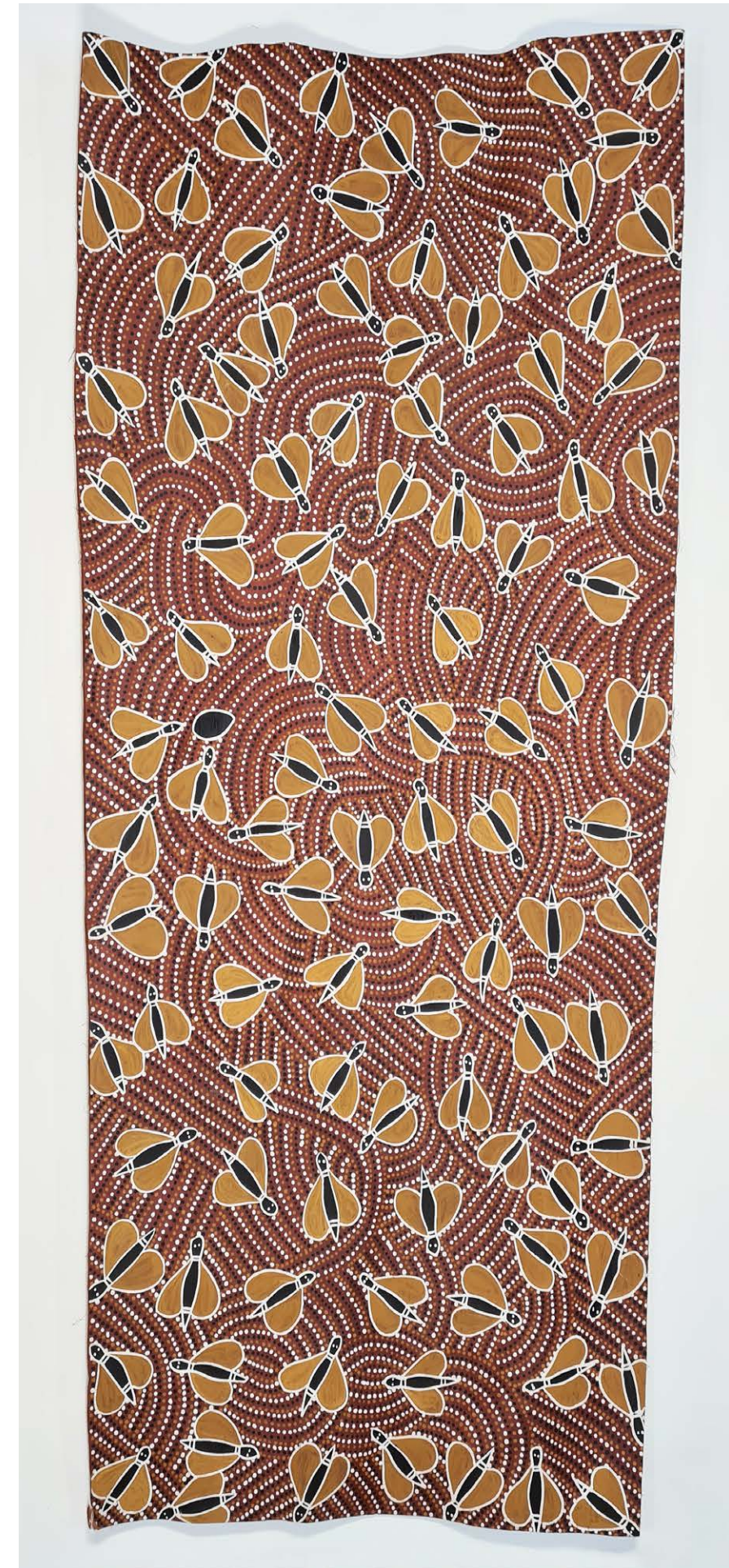


# The Objects

## Ochred

Ochre painting is one of the principal foundations of cultural expression and visual language sharing in Indigenous Australia. Derived from natural pigments sourced from the landscape, ochres vary in colour – from rich reds, purples, yellows and pinks (forms of iron oxide or limonite), to deep black (charcoal) and bright whites (pipeclay). Ochre has been used for millennia in trade, rock paintings, body painting for ceremony and in cultural material such as sculpture and bark painting. Artists can use an array of tools to apply ochre – from feathers and strands of hair, to tough grasses and sedges. Natural fixatives such as wax, egg yolks, resin or even the sap of orchids is sometimes used to bind pigments, although today PVA glue is typically favoured.

Ralwurrandji Wanambi, Dhuwal (Yolngu) Language, *Guku – Honey*, c.2006. Yirrkala, Northern Territory. Natural pigments on bark. Berndt Museum of Anthropology Collection [2006/0015] © Estate of the artist licensed by Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Arts, 2020.



## Pokered

The practice of carving animals with burnt poker designs was originally encouraged by missionaries in the 1950s in response to a rise in tourism in Central Australia and is now a well-established practice for several Western and Central desert communities. If a naturally occurring animal form exists in the branch or root of a tree on country, the punu (wood) is dug up or cut and roughly shaped with an axe. Once the final shape of the animal body is achieved, fencing wire or pipe is heated on the fire and then used to precisely incise the details onto the animal body, to replicate the scales of a tinka (sand goanna) or feathers of a tjulpu (bird) you might find in the desert. The popularity of this creation practice has given rise to an iconic and distinct style of decorated carving from the desert.



Unknown Creator, *Tjilkamata – Echidna*, c.1995. Warburton, Western Australia. Wood. Gift of Rod Stockwell, Berndt Museum of Anthropology Collection [1995/0106]



## Carved

A broad range of carving techniques are represented through the work of many artists from across Indigenous Australia. Carving holds a significant place in the tradition of Australia's First People who draw upon rich pools of cultural knowledge relating to environment, material and customs, producing not only functional utensils and weapons but also emblematic representations such as the animals featured in this exhibition. Materials such as stone, pearl shell and wood have been carved for millennia for purposes ceremonial, secular and utilitarian. The artists make use of both traditional and contemporary tools including stone, bone, shell, files and rasps to not only shape form but also to delicately incise details or depictions.

Basil Biggie Albert, Bardi Language, *Larrgardi - Boab Nut*, c.1988. Broome, Western Australia. Boab nut. Berndt Museum of Anthropology Collection [1988/0037]



## Twined

Making objects from plant fibres has been a significant practice for Indigenous Australians for thousands of years. The materials and techniques used in this practice rely on an intimate cultural knowledge of harvesting, preparation and production passed down through generations. Historically, items were created for ceremonial or utilitarian purposes. For Central and Western Desert communities, hair, feathers and native grasses were used to create head rings to carry coolamon (manguri rings), wigs, string skirts and shoes, whilst in the tropical region of Arnhem Land, pandanus and other local plant fibres were used to create durable mats, baskets and dilly-bags (materials which are still used today). New materials and new markets have contributed to the evolution of this practice.

Janine McAullay Bott, Noongar Language, *Kangaroo and Joey*, 2004. Perth, Western Australia. Plant fibre, wood and gum nuts. Berndt Museum of Anthropology Collection [2004/0013]



# Western Australian Curriculum

## Cross Curriculum Priorities

In the Western Australian Curriculum the Arts, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures enrich understanding of the diversity of arts practices in Australia. Exploration of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures provides a rich opportunity to build a greater understanding of Australian history as well as fostering mutual understanding and respect between cultures. The study of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures for making and responding should be undertaken by teachers and students in ways that are culturally sensitive and responsible through the support of relevant elders and communities.

School Curriculum Standards Authority, 2014

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Culture

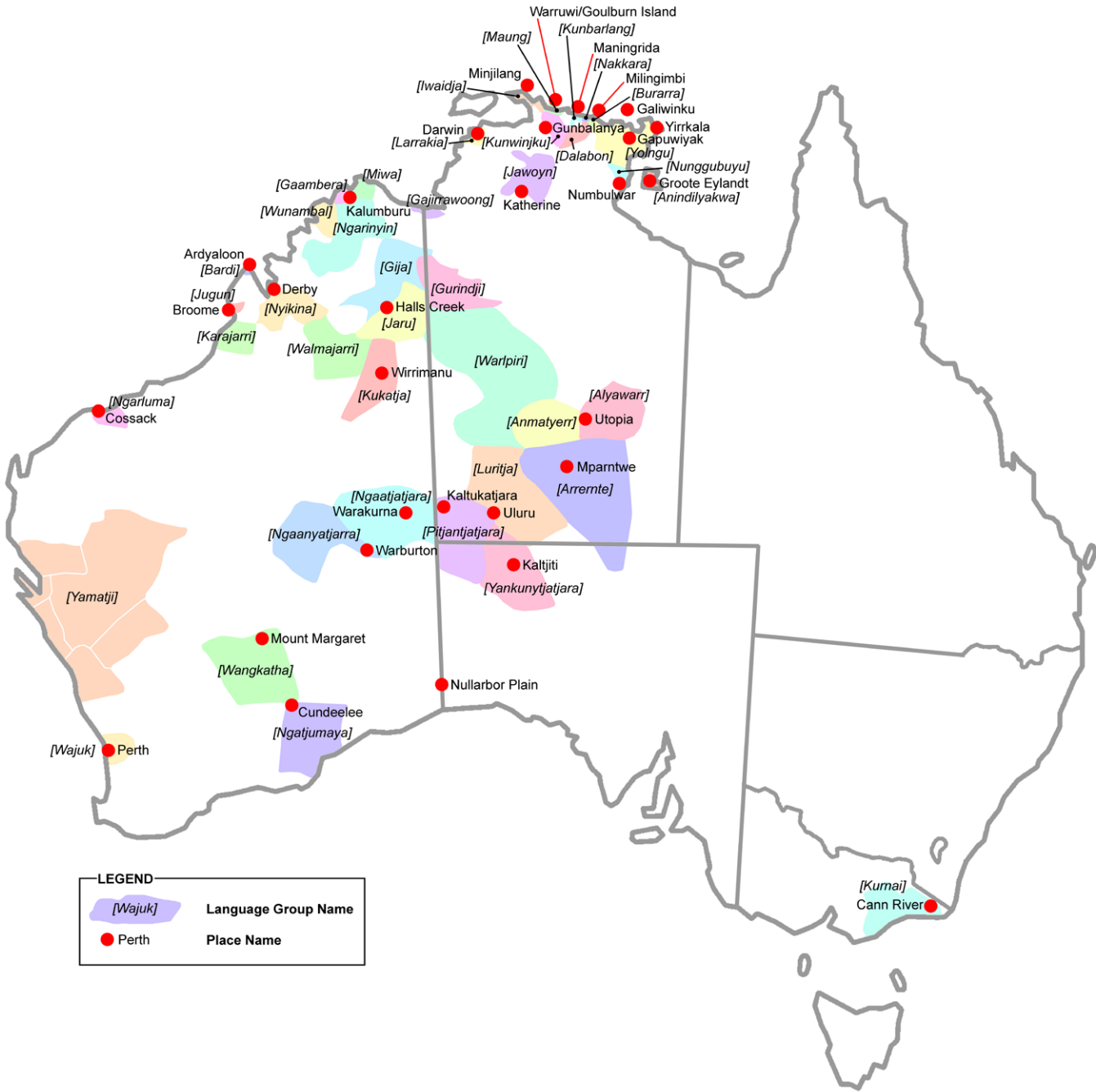
This exhibition allows students and teachers the opportunity to address cross curriculum outcomes priorities through viewing material evidence of a shared history. Students will be able to deepen their knowledge of Australia by engaging with the stories, places of origin and experiences of Aboriginal people who have created these objects. The exhibition will provide opportunities for students to connect with the stories, and students should gain a broader understanding that Aboriginal communities are diverse, resilient and strong.

Links to content can be explored through but not limited to the following Western Australian School Curriculum and Standard Authority courses:

- Humanities and Social Studies (HASS)
- Visual Arts
- Design
- Aboriginal and Intercultural Studies

## Points to consider as you view the exhibition.

1. From viewing the exhibition, what is your impression of the natural environment within which the makers of the creatures live?
2. How have different Aboriginal nations interacted with their local environment and with the wider community of Australia?
3. Culture, what is it? How is it formed?
4. Consider the diversity amongst the ways in which Aboriginal people have lived and worked throughout our shared history.
5. How have past as well as present issues in politics and the economy impacted upon the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?
6. How do the social interactions of Aboriginal people impact upon the development of cultural identity?



Map produced by the Berndt Museum of Anthropology



## Humanities and Social Studies (HASS)

### Syllabus examples:

**In Year 4**, Humanities and Social Sciences consists of Civics and Citizenship, Geography and History.

‘Students are given the opportunity to develop their historical understanding through the key concepts of sources, continuity and change, cause and effect, perspectives, empathy and significance. These concepts are investigated within the context of exploring the history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples before the arrival of the Europeans, and European exploration and colonisation up to the early 1800s. They explore interactions between groups and determine how these experiences contributed to cultural diversity.’

<https://k10outline.scsa.wa.edu.au/home/teaching/curriculum-browser/humanities-and-social-sciences#year-4-syllabus>

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ ways of living were adapted to available resources and their connection to Country/Place has influenced their views on the sustainable use of these resources, before and after colonisation. (ACHASSK089 )

**In Year 8**, Humanities and Social Sciences consists of Civics and Citizenship, Economics and Business, Geography and History.

‘The concepts of place, space, environment, interconnection, sustainability and change continue to be developed as a way of thinking and provide students with the opportunity to inquire into the significance of landscapes to people and the spatial change in the distribution of populations. They apply this understanding to a wide range of places and environments at the full range of scales, from local to global, and in a range of locations.’

<https://k10outline.scsa.wa.edu.au/home/teaching/curriculum-browser/humanities-and-social-sciences/year-8>

## Visual Arts

### Introduction

Although this lesson featuring twined bush animals relates to a year 3 class, the complexity of the task can be increased and adapted to suit older year levels. Exploration into links with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders’ culture, histories and traditions can also be enriched to provide students a gateway to discover more about different cultural traditions evident in regional Australia. Extension ideas have been included in the lesson plan to assist in including outcomes more suited to upper school outcomes. Students can consider factors such as the impact of environment and other contextual factors on art making in Aboriginal communities as they explore the artwork of the Western Central Desert.

This program will focus on the grass and twine animal sculptures that are created by the women artists who are a part of the Tjanpi Desert Weavers. The artists produce characterful sculptures made from grasses collected in the desert in Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) and Ngaanyatjarra lands . These sculptures are of animals such as lizards, dogs, emus and camels found in their desert homelands.



Photograph from fibre-art workshop at Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, 2017



ASSESSMENT TASK	
Year level	3
Subject	Visual Arts- Sculpture
Title of task	Twined Bush Animals
<b>Task Details</b>	
Description of task	Students create an animal sculpture using wire, newspaper, natural grasses and wool/twine.
Type of assessment	Summative
Purpose of assessment	To assess students' ability to apply visual art processes to their own artwork.
Evidence to be collected	Artwork
Assessment strategy	Final artwork and teachers' anecdotal notes.
Suggested time	5 x 1 hour lessons
<b>General Capabilities</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical and creative thinking</li> <li>• Personal and social capability</li> <li>• Intercultural understanding</li> <li>• Ethical understanding</li> <li>• Literacy</li> </ul>
<b>Content from the Western Australian Curriculum</b>	
<b>MAKING</b>	
Ideas	<p>Exploration of artwork from other cultures, such as styles and symbols of Indigenous Australia.</p> <p>Exploration of visual art elements, in conjunction with different materials, media and/or technologies, when creating artwork. (ACAVAM111)</p>
Skills	Development of artistic processes and techniques to explore visual conventions through: form, pattern, emphasis, proportion, balance, unity, shape, colour, space, texture create artwork. (ACAVAM111)
Production	Experimentation with a variety of techniques and use of art processes. (ACAVAM111)
<b>RESPONDING</b>	
	Appreciation and respect for a variety of artwork. (ACAVAR113)
	Personal responses discussing the use of visual art elements in their own and other's artwork, and identifying meaning in artwork from other cultures. (ACAVAR113)

Task Preparation	
Prior Learning	Students have been exposed to artworks from different cultures that use a variety of techniques to create artwork.
Assessment Differentiation	<p>Teachers should differentiate their teaching and assessment to meet the specific learning needs of their students, based on their level of readiness to learn and their need to be challenged.</p> <p>Where appropriate, teachers may either scaffold or extend the scope of the assessment tasks.</p>
Assessment Task	
Assessment Conditions	This assessment is a whole-class experience with students producing individual works.
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wire</li> <li>• newspaper</li> <li>• masking tape</li> <li>• raffia</li> <li>• wooden skewers</li> <li>• pipe cleaners</li> <li>• native grasses dried (if available)</li> <li>• string/wool twine, brown string and or jute</li> <li>• buttons</li> </ul> <p><b>WEBSITES</b></p> <p><a href="https://tjanpi.com.au/">https://tjanpi.com.au/</a></p> <p>You Tube Desert Weavers</p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5goh7sHg4HM&amp;feature=emb_logo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5goh7sHg4HM&amp;feature=emb_logo</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aLTm_OHBEOI&amp;feature=emb_logo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aLTm_OHBEOI&amp;feature=emb_logo</a></p>

LESSON PLAN	
PRIMARY	UPPER SCHOOL EXTENSION IDEAS
Students will view a variety of different works of art created by Aboriginal artists focussing on the work of the Tjanpi art group in the Western Central Desert area.	Through a process of critical analysis, identify the forms of each artwork and recognise the rich diversity of Aboriginal art and its ability to link the past with the present.
Students will use their knowledge of the different forms of Aboriginal art to experiment with a variety of mediums to create their own interpretation of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander work of art.	<p>Students will be given opportunities to explore the works of art from a number of Aboriginal artists.</p> <p>Consider factors such as the impact of environment and other contextual factors on art making in Aboriginal communities.</p> <p>Investigate a particular artist.</p> <p>Compare and contrast Aboriginal works of art with that of other cultures.</p>
Procedure	
<p>Research and refer to images of Australian animals. Consider dingoes, emus, echidnas, lizards, koala, turtles, platypus, kangaroo, wombat, quokka, willie wagtails, possums...</p> <p>Create a drawing of your creature and consider what are the main features, consider exaggerating the form, elongating, shortening or altering it in some way to give your animal original characteristics.</p> <p>Using wire, pipe cleaners or sticks create an armature. Bind the shape with tape to secure it in place, or you could just use crumpled up newspaper to add form and shape to your animal. You could then add wire or pipe cleaners to create longer thinner shapes to your animal.</p> <p>Once your animal is complete you can use a piece of raffia/string (brown or jute) and start to wrap your sculpture evenly to create strength and to begin defining form.</p> <p>You can then begin to add coloured string or woollen yarn and fabrics to enrich the surface of the animal.</p> <p>Once your animal is completely covered you can sew or glue on buttons for features such as nose, eyes and ears.</p>	

MARKING KEY	
MAKING	
<b>Ideas - Exploration of artwork from other cultures through the use of visual art elements and through art materials when creating an artwork.</b>	
When developing and expanding ideas: clearly shows the influence from artwork that references cultural styles.	4
When developing and expanding ideas: shows influence from artwork that references a cultural style.	3
When developing ideas: replicates an aspect of artwork that references a cultural style.	2
Does not consider, or omits the influence of a particular culture or artwork when developing ideas.	1
<b>Skills - Development and experimentation of artistic processes and techniques to explore visual conventions</b>	
Purposefully explores and effectively uses different techniques to create an artwork for a given purpose.	4
Explores and uses different techniques to create an artwork for a given purpose.	3
Uses different techniques to create an artwork for a given purpose.	2
Uses a technique to create an artwork for a given purpose.	1
RESPONDING	
<b>Appreciation of the meaning of their own and other artworks through personal responses, discussing the use of visual art elements.</b>	
Identifies the cultural of origin of an artwork, giving a specific rationale based on key features.	4
Identifies the cultural of origin of an artwork, giving a rationale based on key features.	3
Identifies the cultural origin of an artwork, and comments on some features.	2
Sometimes identifies the cultural origin of an artwork, without commenting on features.	1

## REFERENCES

<https://k10outline.scsa.wa.edu.au/>  
<https://tjanpi.com.au/>



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Cover image: Unknown Creator, *Tjulpu - Bird*, c.1995.  
Cundeelee, Western Australia. Wood, 28 x 7 x 8 cm. Gift  
of Rod Stockwell, Berndt Museum of Anthropology  
Collection [1995/0117]



**CULTURAL PRECINCT**

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