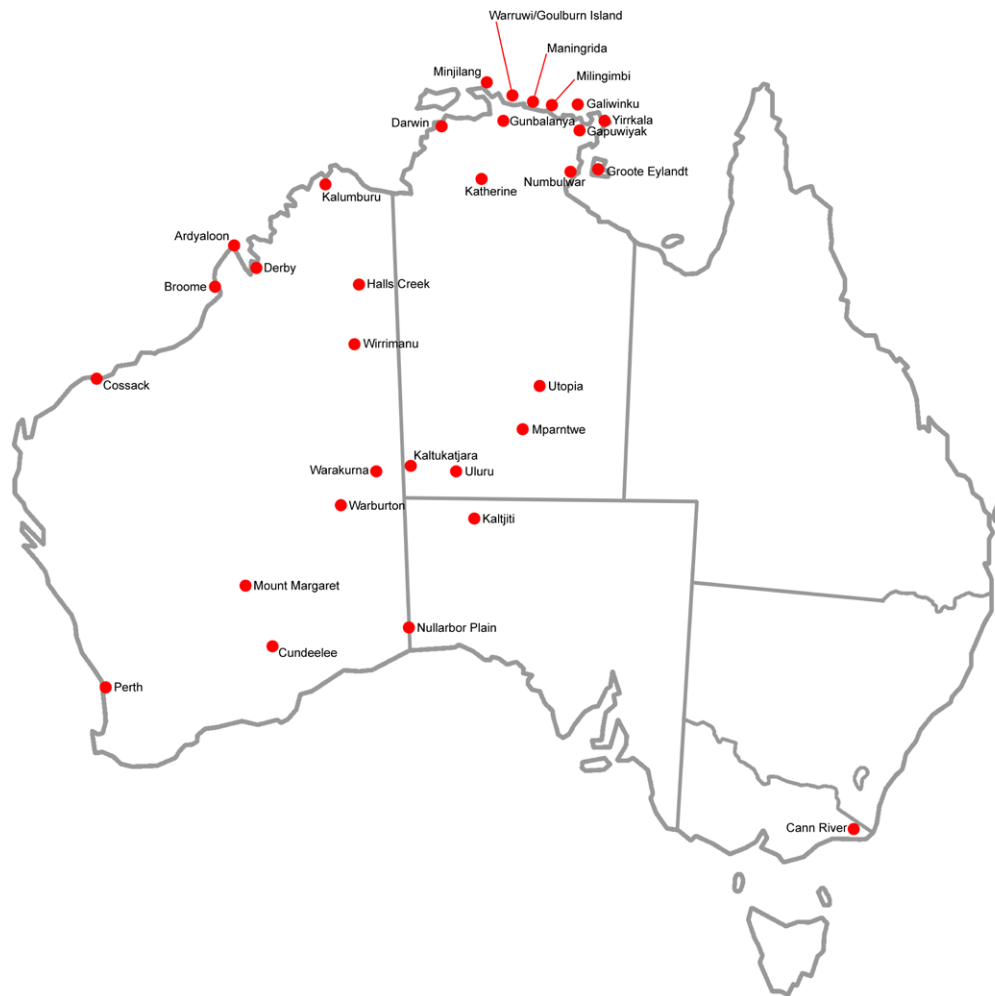




# CREATURES

OCHRE, POKERED,  
CARVED & TWINED

A BERNDT MUSEUM EXHIBITION AT THE  
LAWRENCE WILSON ART GALLERY | 27 FEBRUARY – 27 NOVEMBER 2021



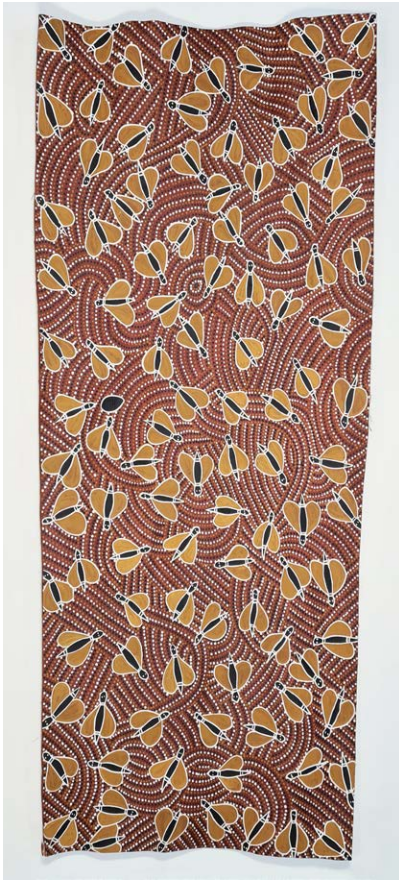
Map indicating the place of origin for material used in this exhibition.

### *Creatures: Ochred, Poked, Carved and Twined*

delves into the depths of the Berndt Museum of Anthropology's object collection illuminating a diverse menagerie of animal representations from across Indigenous Australia. The exhibition showcases over 100 years of creation practices by Indigenous Australian peoples, for whom the creatures of the land, water and sky were, are, and forever will be, deeply ingrained in their culture and beliefs.



Dulcie Raggett, Luritja Language, *Bird*, 2011. Mparntwe, Northern Territory. Wool, embroidery thread and wood. Berndt Museum of Anthropology Collection [2012/0016] © the artist provided by Yarrenyty Arltene Artists, 2021



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, 2021.



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

## 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.

## POKERED

The practise 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 practise 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 practise has given rise to an iconic and distinct style of decorated carving from the desert.



Yibiyung Roma Winmar, Noongar Language, *Mountain Devil*, c.1998. Perth, Western Australia. Emu Egg, 9.5 x 15 x 8.5 cm. Berndt Museum of Anthropology Collection [1998/0058] © Yibiyung Roma Winmar, 2021



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] © Janine McAullay Bott, 2021

## 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.

## TWINED

Making objects from plant fibres has been a significant practise for Indigenous Australians for thousands of years. The materials and techniques used in this practise 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 natives 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 dillybags (materials which are still used today). New materials and new markets have seen to the evolution of this practice.





Unknown Creator, *Tjuppu - Bird*, c.1995. Cundeelee, Western Australia. Wood. Gift of Rod Stockwell [1995/0117]



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Berndt Museum of Anthropology would like to thank the many community members from the Northern Territory, Victoria, South Australia, New South Wales and Western Australia who provided the artwork for this exhibition. Given the time-frame for exhibitions and our limited resources, we recognise that it is not always possible to travel to Country or to sit with Elders, but all efforts have been made to ensure that items displayed in this exhibition are open to the public. The Museum encourages active engagement with Aboriginal community members and is open to further exchange of advice in relation to this show.

Thanks to the Berndt Museum team: especially Sofie Nielsen and Michael Houston as co-curators as their dedication led to the successful implementation of this exhibition and Isobel Wise.

Thanks also to Clare McFarlane for her design of exhibition related materials, Megan Hyde for ensuring this exhibition reaches diverse audiences and to the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery install team led by Anthony Kelly and Lyle Branson.

The Museum is very grateful to exhibition artist, Roma Winmar who performed the Welcome to Country on the opening night of the exhibition. Thank you to all the artists featured in this exhibition catalogue: Basil Biggie Albert, Dulcie Raggett, Ralwurrandji Wanambi, Yibiyung Roma Winmar and Janine McAullay Bott.



BERNDT MUSEUM  
LAWRENCE WILSON ART GALLERY  
OPEN TUES - SAT 12 - 5PM  
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