



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

CULTURAL PRECINCT



YIRRKALA DRAWINGS

WORKS ON PAPER, BARKS, SCULPTURES

BERNDT MUSEUM & LAWRENCE WILSON ART GALLERY
THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA
UNTIL 20 JUNE 2015

EDUCATION RESOURCE

This collection is culturally valuable to Yolŋu, and to our future generations. Our history looms large in these drawings, and the knowledge of our Old People remains meaningful to us. The stories and designs – about the land, sea and those before us – still hold true.

Wäka Munungur, Ceremonial Leader and Senior Custodian, Yolŋu Language, Djapu Clan.¹

Paying respectful homage to Wäka Munungur's words, and the Yirrkala Community more broadly, this exhibition presents a superb oeuvre of crayon drawings on brown paper that were first created in 1946-1947 at the Yirrkala Community in the Northern Territory's north-east Arnhem Land. The drawings, alongside accompanying barks and sculptures, highlight not only the qualitative expertise of Yolŋu artists past and present, but also an interconnecting, continuing artistic affiliation to laws, lands, waters and families: a living culture made accessible through the visual lens of art.

Students from Kindergarten to Year 12 are invited to experience this remarkable exhibition of crayon drawings on paper, barks and sculptures from Yirrkala. From designs first created generations ago by Yolŋu artists, artwork in this exhibition has stood the test of time. It continues to have meaning for Yolŋu people today.



Participants from school groups are encouraged to look closely at the artworks on display, to think and talk about them with their peers, and to explore the culturally significant stories being told by the artists. This includes stories of sacred figures, social justice, fishing and food production, creation narratives, seasonal cycles, and natural resource management. A particularly enduring theme is that of trading and other contact with people from Indonesian islands, especially from the Port of Macassar.

Students can consider the different visual styles and materials used by the artists, and think about how they might tell stories about their own lives, cultural beliefs, or connections with land and family in visual form.

This exhibition provides an excellent opportunity for students of all ages to engage with a number of key learning areas, including the cross-curriculum priorities identified in the Australian Curriculum:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures
- Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia
- Sustainability

For more information or to make a booking please contact:

Dr Janice Lally
Curator Public Programs
E: janice.lally@uwa.edu.au
T: 6488 3718

1. *Yirrkala Drawings* Catalogue, Art Gallery of New South Wales (AGNSW), Preface, 2013, p.13.