

Barayuwa Mununggurr's Yarrinya Paintings

Bengitj Ngurruwuthun

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Essay to accompany exhibition at The Cross Art Projects, Sydney 2012

Firstly I will talk about of what my brother has told and passed on. The open seas that join in together from each angle of the surrounded Inlands and the main lands around Blue Mud Bay salt water.

He said: "The Inland's open sea waters are Gapa-Dha-yindi,' (literally water with open mouth) it is Dhapyngu" (Dhuwa moiety clan name) "Wurramanggamirri, Wurrungkurkur" (powerful names for Dhapyngu clan) Their minyt'tji (sacred designs) "translating the taste of Green Turtles that etched by the smell of the sea around Walirra" (the body of the water that joins in from Blue Mud Bay) "Garrawandhu," Wularrikuyu bat'pa (surrounded rock inlands) and "Mapindawurru reef and" seabed areas within the body of waters.

The Sacred minyt'tji (paintings) that has been etched by the sea where the ocean named Wulamba roars. (Rinyimurryun, power name for the Dhuwa waters that merged by the storms). The open sea Dhuk'dhuk'pa (power name for this water body), Yidingimirri (esoteric name of the resting place of the shark), Barrwalandji (the shelter of the shark's knowledge).

The surrounding of the roaring waters, it is called Wulamba, the open wide seas that have a huge "tails of waves" that roars. This water existed in ancestral times and this massive ancient "endless infinity water called Gapu-Dha-yindimi cycle" continues on."

This story had passed on from generations by our Elders that Yarrinya belong to Munyuku, Warramiri and Liyalanmi (Yirritja clans) that are closely related clans. Here at "the bottom of the sea's bed or the seawaters of my country Yarrinya, (place name of Yirritja body of waters Garnggirr Manbuynga in the Blue Mud Bay). "The water Garnggirr Manbuynga (power names for the Yirritja bodies of water in the open sea)" Nyak'nyakt'hun, that merged and joins together with gapu Mungurru (Yirritja waters from Blue Mud Bay) and the Wulamba gapu (Dhuwa water) from the surrounding Inlands. Both waters Garinnggi Manbuynga and Mungurru has the same songlines, clapsticks and ritual incantations of power names (Birkarr'yun"- yunnhami). Birka'yun is the special sacred Yirritja religious ceremony name used in which power names are ritually declaimed," that reaches right up to the seashores of Mayangaraka (skeleton) dries out and other Yirritja seashores around Blue Mud Bay areas. This design is for Munyuku, for my two brothers (who are not with us any more), their children and for me.



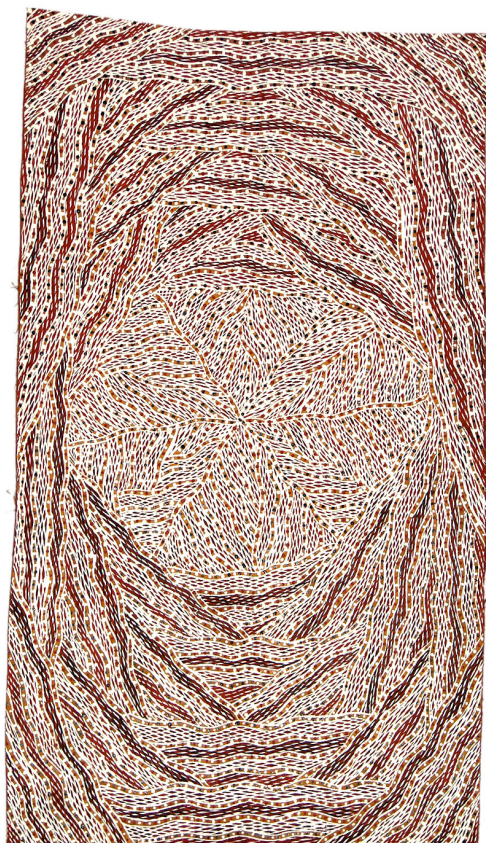
Barayuwa Mununggurr, Mirinyunu at Yarrinya, 2011 (4103D). Bark, 129 x 43cm.



My son Barayuwa(2) Mununggurr is the caretaker for this land Yarrinya and the sacred designs that lies beneath the foundation of the sea Garrnggirr Manbuynga and beyond. Balanggayparra, Gurrukurrya, Bangulnga, Banguli (power names for this Yirritja saltwater country in and adjacent to Blue Mud Bay connected to Yarrinya). Garrnggirr (power name for Yirritja saltwater body exists and Manbuynga power name for same Yirritja saltwater body roars. Mungurru Liya-nhina marrtji, “Nungpaka, Bulthirrirri” wanga, (power names for a different Yirritja saltwater body Mari Gapu, body of Yirritja saltwater in Blue Mud Bay) comes together “and intertwines with” Garrnggirr Manbuynga Gapu (power names for Yirritja saltwater body of Yarrinya). “It is from the shelters of our ancestors” that the foundation of Munyuku stems ties and lies between the two Mari clans, “Madarrpa, Marrwala-Manha-Weyinmi” and Dhalwangu, Nungpulungun wana Marrwalami “(power names of the clan lit, long paddlers)”. In the deep saltwater “literally the bottom of the oars is for Madarrpa, Lany’tjurrunha Gawulungala” (power name of this saltwater identifying the “characteristics of paddles and clouds”).

Our paintings and designs represents the identity and the characteristics of who we are, where our mother and grandmother land is and where we need to stand firm in the foundations of our laws in Yolngu society. It tells and interprets our designs, the foundation that we sit and stand on, our wisdoms and the “sinews of Yolngu” people.

This powerful historic story had been told and passed on by my brother and it’s written for our future children to see and read. He’s no longer with us, but his powerful knowledge and stories remain alive, that lies deep beneath Gapu Garrnggirr Manbuynga ga Mungurru, Dharrakanmatji, Muyurrurra, Ningangba, (power Yirritja water names for us Munyuku, our father’s Marimi (grandmother) Madarrpa, our grandmother’s Marimi Manggalili and our grandparents Marimi Dhalwangu) .



Barayuwa Mununggurr, *Mirinyunu at Yarrinya, 2011* (4051V). Bark, 57 x 51 cm



Artist camp, Yarrinya, December 2009

This Sacred designs represents the saltwater Munbuynga Garrnggirr, that rises, merged and roars together with the Wulamba ga Mungurru Gapu (power names for Dhuwa moieties Djapu and Dhapyungu clans and Yirritja moieties Madarrpa and Dhalwangu clans). The design of the paintings indicates the waves that merged and roar from the roaring monsoons. The Mungurru mari (grandmother) saltwater joins together with Garrnggirr Manbuynga gapu and together they play and flow to meet the Wulamba, Ritjilili Mangamanga (power name for Dhuwa saltwater). The dots on the paintings represent the foam of the water that comes, brings in munumpili (seaweed) Rurruwiliny (mangrove stalks and leaves) onto the seashore of Yarrinya and than goes out again.

The curves of the Sacred design represent Gapu Garrnggirri Manbuynga Marrawat’pat’thunaya Wuymirriwungu Marrk’piriwuy (power names of the water splashes of the whale’s Tail). The sacred designs also represents Gunbilk Marrawulwu’ (power names of the calmness sea of Yarrinya) and of the Garrnggirr Manbuynga saltwater after the ragging waters from the stormy monsoons.

My son Barayuwa(2) Mununggurr paints the designs of his mother’s painting, because he is the custodian of this land Yarrinya. Me, and my two brother’s children, we are the landowners of Yarrinya.

Yarrinya is Barayuwa’s and also his grandfather’s (father’s fathers) motherland. So he is on the footsteps of his great grandfathers and grandfathers to take care of his Ngadimi miny’tji (mother’s painting) and his Ngadimi wanga (mother’s land). These salt waters Garrnggirr Munbuynga and Mungurru are Mari ga Gutharra manytji Gapu (Grandmother and Granddaughter waters that joins together) which also ties to our marriage systems in our laws. Our ancestors, and Elders in the past together they cared and protected our land and sea through ceremonial systems. Now today we are passing on this knowledge to our next generations for our future generations to see and learn the knowledge from the past.

Quotes from: *Saltwater: Yirkalla Bark Paintings of Sea Country*, Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre, 1999.
Declaration by Dula Nurruwuthun.