



Bidjir-yabulam (lawyer cane) 2012, acrylic on bark cloth, 2200mm x 700mm



Guyul dcedagal (fish bone) 2012, acrylic on bark cloth, 2200mm x 760mm



Garra (spider) 2012, acrylic on bark cloth, 2200mm x 670mm

Solo Exhibitions

- 2012 *Rainforest ID (past and future)*, KickArts Contemporary Arts, Cairns
- 2012 *New Wave Rainforest Art*, c.1907 Gallery, Cairns
- 2010 *New Flames*, Grant Thornton, Brisbane
- 2010 *Men's Business*, Cairns Regional Gallery, Cairns
- 2009 *Echoes of the Rainforest*, KickArts, Cairns
- 2008 Exhibition, UMI Arts, Cairns

Group Exhibitions

- 2012 UMI Arts stand, Cairns Indigenous Art Fair (CIAF)
- 2011 *CIAF Director's Exhibition*, Cairns Regional Gallery, Cairns
- 2010 *New Flames*, Canopy Arts, Cairns
- 2010 *Pathways*, UMI Arts Gallery
- 2009 *Marking Country*, Aboriginal Rainforest Art Group, KickArts, Cairns
- 2009 Dreaming Festival, Queensland
- 2008 *NAIDOC Exhibition*, Tanks Art Centre, Cairns
- 2007 *Caring for Country – North Queensland Indigenous Art and Craft*, Girringun Art Centre, Cardwell

Residencies & Workshops

- 2012 Etching workshop, Michael Kempson, Inkmasters, Cairns
- 2012 Textile printing workshops, Bobbie Ruben, KickArts, Cairns
- 2012 Bark cloth printing project, Djumbunji Press, Cairns
- 2012 Mentoring – Andrzej Janczewski, Cairns
- 2012 Collaborative print residency, Paul Machnik, Montreal, Canada.
- 2010 *New Flames Residency*, Canopy Arts, Cairns (5 weeks)
- 2010 Artist in residence at KickArts, Cairns, including Editions Tremblay (2 weeks)
- 2010 Invited artist for printmaking at Djumbunji Press, Cairns (1 week)
- 2008 Exhibition Ready program, UMI Arts, Cairns

Commissions & publications

- 2012 Textile designs, KickArts, Cairns
- 2011 Artlink, volume 31, number 2, page 129
- 2011 CIAF Teachers' resource publication
- 2011 Inclusion in *Pathways* publication, UMI Arts
- 2010 Black Flair journal design, KickArts, Cairns
- 2010 Inclusion in CIAF postcard series
- 2010 Various private commissions

- 2008 Authentic Indigenous Creations – art for reproduction on 'Dilly bags'
- 2007 Authentic Indigenous Creations – set of four shield designs for prints
- 2007 Tjapukai Cultural Park – design and painting of artwork for a canoe

Grants

- 2012 Arts Queensland Career Development Grant (Canadian printmaking residency)
- 2012 KickArts' Perpetual Trustees National and International Artist in Residence program (Canadian printmaking residency)
- 2012 Arts Queensland BS&O towards exhibition at KickArts (CIAF)
- 2010 Arts Queensland, BS&O towards staging an exhibition at CRG & towards producing an art and cultural booklet
- 2010 Regional Art Development Fund – towards researching and creating a database of Rainforest shields and artefacts

Awards

- 2011 Selected into Queensland Regional Art Awards touring exhibition for 2011
- 2010 Encouragement award Cairns Regional Council tourism product awards

Photography: Michael Marzik

Cover: *Burri-burri nga:yi-y (old initiated men)* (detail) 2012, oil stick on canvas, 1500mm x 1000mm



Napolean Oui

RAINFOREST ID

Past and Future



7 AUGUST TO 15 SEPTEMBER 2012



Napoleon Oui's country is Djabugay, one of 20 traditional tribal groups situated in the tropical rainforest region of Far North Queensland. He has worked as a cultural presenter and educator in Cairns for 18 years. Oui's strong connection to culture helps to inform his creative practice. His knowledge and awareness of his culture both drives and inspires his art.

Through art, Oui explores and presents the ancestral knowledge of the Djabugay in contemporary media. The paintings and prints on bark cloth and the oil-stick works in *Rainforest ID (past and future)* evoke the mark-making found on the ancient traditional rainforest shields of his heritage. Oui's style draws inspiration from the traditional stylised art unique to these shields and the Far North Queensland region. Much of the 'abstract' art found on the shields has totemic significance, while other designs relate to the natural world of the rainforest, reflecting the close association and deep understanding that the traditional people had for the rainforest environment in which they lived.



This page clockwise from above:

Yagal badjigan (pandanus basket) 2012
oil stick on canvas, 2000mm x 800mm

Wagay and jimbirru (sword and throw stick) 2012
oil stick on canvas, 2000mm x 800mm

Walbirr-walbirr (butterfly) 2012
oil stick on canvas, 1000mm x 2270mm

Traditional headdress 2012
oil stick on canvas, 1500mm x 1000mm

Wurru (stick insect) 2012
oil stick on canvas, 1500mm x 1000mm

Mimu (water lily) 2012
oil stick on canvas, 1500mm x 1000mm



Though still considered an emerging artist, Oui has benefited from receiving a number of workshops, grants and residencies in recent years. In 2010, Oui attracted RADF funding, which enabled him to research and create a database of rainforest shields and artefacts. It was during this research that he discovered the use of traditional bark cloth in the tropical rainforest region of Far North Queensland. It was produced from the bark of rainforest trees using similar methods to the making of tapa in Fiji. Inspired by this discovery Oui is one of the few artists of this region who is now working on bark cloth.

In April 2012, Oui travelled to Montreal, Canada, as part of KickArts Contemporary Arts' Artist in Residence Program. This program provides access for Far North Queensland artists to international best practice in the arts. During his residency Oui discovered a passion for printmaking. Working collaboratively with Master Printmaker Paul Machnik and Inuit artist Jutai Toonoo they exchanged cultural knowledge and developed artworks culminating in an exhibition that received an overwhelming response from the Montreal community.



Oui's recently developed skills are evident in *Rainforest ID (past and future)*. The artist's contemporary interpretations of his traditional culture and stories are vibrantly portrayed using the media of oil stick on canvas, woodblock print on bark cloth and acrylic on bark cloth. The inclusion of the oval shape 'boss', centred in all his new works, is a distinguishing feature unique to all rainforest shields.

The traditional groups of the tropical rainforest region of Far North Queensland were the only Aboriginal people in Australia to make bark cloth and it was generally used as blankets. In this exhibition I am the first contemporary rainforest artist to work with this material, using acrylic paint and also woodblock printing on bark cloth.

During my Montreal residency I was introduced to oil sticks on canvas and found this medium allowed me to express my art in a free flowing way.

– Napoleon Oui



This page clockwise from top left:

Bunda:rra (cassowary) 2012, oil stick on canvas, 1000mm x 2270mm

Rainforest shield design Wabarr gabay-barra/Hunting for termites (white ants) I 2012, woodblock on bark cloth, 760mm x 560mm

Rainforest shield design Wabarr gabay-barra/Hunting for termites (white ants) II 2012, woodblock on bark cloth, 760mm x 560mm

Rainforest shield design Wabarr gabay-barra/Hunting for termites (white ants) III 2012, woodblock on bark cloth, 760mm x 560mm

Rainforest shield design Wabarr gabay-barra/Hunting for termites (white ants) IV 2012, woodblock on bark cloth, 760mm x 560mm

Gimala (fire sticks) 2012, oil stick on canvas, 1500mm x 1000mm

Mundu-warma (spirit dancing) 2012, oil stick on canvas, 1500mm x 1000mm