

EVERYWHEN ART

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Owen Yalandja



Born: 1961
Skin Name: Ngarridj
Language: Kuninjku
Clan: Dangkorlo
Moiety: Yirridjdja
Country: Barrihdjowkkeng

Kuninjku artist Owen Yalandja is a senior member of the Dangkorlo clan, the custodians of an important yawkyawk site. In the early 1980s, Yalandja learned carving from his father, renowned artist Crusoe Kuningbal who invented, in the early 1960's the representation of mimih spirit in sculptural form for use in a trade ceremony called Mamurrng. Members of the Darnkolo clan have re-established an outstation community at Barrihdjowkkeng near a billabong that is a Yirridjdja moiety sacred site for the yawkyawk spirits. Yawkyawk or young spirit girls live in this billabong and their shadows can occasionally be seen as they humans who approach. They are girls who transformed into mermaid-like figures with fish tails. The identity of the Darnkolo clan is very much related to the Yawkyawk djang (dreaming) for which they have spiritual and practical responsibility. Yalandja and his brother Crusoe Kurddal followed their father's legacy but over the years have found their own distinct styles.

In the early 1990s, Yalandja experimented with the dot patterns his father taught him, and created V shaped marks to represent the scales of the watery beings. As Yalandja says, "I make it [yawkyawk] according to my individual ideas. My father used to decorate them with dots. A long time ago, he showed me how to do this. But this style is my own, no one else does them like this." Yalandja continued to innovate, "In the early 1990s Yalanja experimented with the patterns of dots taught to him by his father and created new arrangements; first in arcs to suggest scales, but later he developed small v- shaped marks to suggest individual scales."¹ Yalandja works exclusively with the kurrajong tree for carving and carefully selects trunks which can be thin and curvilinear to give his figures a sinuous appearance. Yalandja's work is represented in major International collections and has been exhibited at major institutions both locally and globally including at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, National Gallery of Australia, Melbourne Museum, Bargehouse Gallery, London and Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. His work has also been presented at the Venice Biennale, Biennale of Sydney and the National Australian Indigenous Triennial.

1. Taylor, Luke. 2005. "Manifestations of the Mimih." In the Power of Knowledge and the Resonance of Tradition, ed. Luke Taylor, Graeme Ward, Graham Henderson, Richard Davis, and Lynley Wallis, 182-98.

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Solo Exhibitions

2022 Owen Yalandja, Michael Reid, Sydney, NSW
2015 Owen Yalandja - Seva Frangos Art, Subiaco, WA
2011 Yawkyawk: Water Spirit Carvings from Maningrida - Rebecca Hossack, London
2010 Owen Yalandja: Yawkyawk - Seva Frangos Art, Subiaco, WA
2008 Owen Yalandja - Annandale Galleries, Sydney, NSW
2005 Owen Yalandja - William Mora Galleries, Melbourne, VIC
2004 Owen Yalandja - Annandale Galleries, Sydney, NSW
2002 Owen Yalandja - Redback Gallery, Brisbane, QLD
2000 Owen Yalandja. Water Spirit Sculptures from Barrihdjowkeng - Aboriginal & Pacific Arts, Sydney, NSW

Group Exhibitions

2021 Summer Collectors Show – Everywhen Artspace, Flinders VIC
2020 Tarnanthi Art Fair - Lot Fourteen, Adelaide SA
2020 Maningrida Arts & Culture - Michael Reid Galleries, Sydney, NSW
2020 RESILIENCE: The power of the past today - Maningrida - Aboriginal Signature Estrangin Fine Art, Brussels, BELGIUM
2020 Paris, Paris! - Art Kelch, Freiburg, Germany
2020 Art Paris 2020 - ARTKELCH @ Art Paris, Paris, France
2020 The Magic of Black and White - ARTKELCH @ KUNSTWERK, Eberdingen-Nussdorf, Germany
2019 Rendezvous - ARTKELCH, Freiburg, Germany
2019 Top End Ochre, Everywhen Artspace, Mornington Peninsula, VIC
2019 36th National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Awards Exhibition - Museum and Art Gallery Northern Territory, Darwin, NT
2019 art Karlsruhe 2019 - ARTKELCH @ art Karlsruhe 2019, Karlsruhe, Germany
2018 Mardayin - Aboriginal Art von Maningrida Arts - ARTKELCH, Freiburg, Germany
2018 From Coast to Escarpment: Spirit Worlds of Maningrida - Michael Reid, Sydney, NSW
2018 Outstation - Outstation Gallery, Darwin, NT
2016 Owen Yalandja, Bob Burruwal, Jack Nawilil: New Yawkyawk Spirits and Sculptures - Annandale Gallery, Sydney, Australia
2016 Sentient Lands - Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, NSW
2015 Black Art / White Walls, Curated by Djon Mundine - Counihan Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
2014 Four Spirits from Maningrida - FireWorks Gallery
2012 Dream Catchers - Coo-ee Aboriginal Art Gallery, Sydney
2012 Maningrida Group Show - Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne, VIC
2011 Maningrida 2011 - Where the Dreaming Changes Shape - Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne, VIC
2011 Shalom Gamarana Ngiyani Yana - Waterhole Art, Sydney, Australia
2011 Maningrida Arts and Culture - Annandale Gallery, Sydney, Australia
2010 Togart Contemporary Art Exhibition - Chan Contemporary Arts Space, Darwin, Australia
2009 Menagerie - Melbourne Museum, Melbourne, VIC
2009 26th Telstra National & Torres Strait Islander Art Award Exhibition - Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin
2009 Orche - A Study in Materiality - Short Street Gallery, Broome, WA
2009 Spirit Beings and Ceremonial Lorrkon - Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne, VIC
2009 Maningrida Group Show - Maningrida Arts & Culture Gallery, Darwin, NT
2008 Gungura - The Spiraling Wind - Annandale Galleries, Sydney, NSW
2008 Maningrida Survey - Short Street Gallery, Broome, WA
2008 Melbourne Art Fair - Art Fair, William Mora Galleries, Melbourne
2007 One sun, one moon - Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, NSW

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2007 Spirit in Variation - Annandale Galleries, Sydney, NSW
2007 Culture Warriors - National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, ACT
2007 rarrk - Bargehouse Gallery, London, UK
2007 Spirit in Variation Part II - Annandale Galleries, Sydney, NSW
2006 Dream Tracks, Aboriginal art of Arnhem Land - La Fontaine Centre of Contemporary Art, Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain
2006 Untitled - Togart Contemporary Art exhibition, Darwin, NT
2006 23rd Telstra National & Torres Strait Islander Art Award Exhibition - Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin
2006 Sculptures from Maningrida - William Mora Galleries, Melbourne, VIC
2006 Australian Aboriginal Art 2006/2007 - John Gordon Gallery, Coffs Harbour, NSW
2006 Lorrkons and Spirit Figures - Annandale Galleries, Sydney, NSW
2005 rarrk - Annandale Galleries, Sydney, NSW
2005 Aboriginal vision in Contemporary Australian Art - Wright exhibition space, Seattle, USA
2005 Spirit Beings and Lorrkon - Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne, VIC
2004 Crossing country: the alchemy of western Arnhem Land art - Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, NSW
2003 The Visit - Annandale galleries, Sydney, NSW
2003 Next Generation - William Mora Galleries, Melbourne, VIC
2003 Dreamtime, contemporary aboriginal art - Cankarjev Dom Ljubljana, Slovenia
2003 People - Fire-Works Gallery, Brisbane, QLD
2003 Mythological beings from Maningrida - Hogarth Galleries, Sydney, NSW
2002 19th Telstra National & Torres Strait Islander Art Award Exhibition - Museum & Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin
2002 East + West - Annandale Galleries, Sydney, NSW
2001 Vital fluids - Helen Maxwell Gallery, Canberra, ACT
2001 In the Heart of Arnhem Land. Myth and the making of contemporary Aboriginal art - Musée del l'Hôtel-Dieu, Mantes-la-Jolie, France
2001 Outside in: Research Engagements with Arnhem Land Art - Drill Hall Gallery, Australian National University, Canberra, ACT
2001 18th National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award Exhibition - Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin, NT
2000 Biennale Of Sydney 2000 - Biennale Of Sydney, various venues at various location, NSW
1999 Spirit Country: Australian Aboriginal Art from the Gantner Myer Collection, - Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, San Francisco, California, USA
1999 My Country: Australische Aboriginal Kunst - Brandweer Kazerne, Utrecht, Netherlands
1998 Spirits of the Dreaming Jarraman Arts Aboriginal Corporation, - National Aboriginal Cultural Centre, Sydney, NSW
1997 Metamorphosis - Gallery Pizzi at Venice Biennale Palazzo Papadopoli, Venice, Italy
1996 Dreaming: Aboriginal Art from Australia - Galerie Kouwenhoven, Delft, Netherlands
1996 Maningrida Exhibition - Indigenart, Subiaco, WA
1996 Spirits of the Dreaming, Raintree - Raintree Fine Art Gallery, Darwin, NT
1996 Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi - Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne, VIC
1994 Pitture e Sculture dell Australia Aborigena - Touring Italy: Spazio Krizia, Milan; Palazzo Butera, Palermo; Museo di Architetture e Scultura Ligure di Sant Agostino, Genova.
1993 Group Maningrida Exhibition - Hogarth Galleries, Sydney, NSW
1993 The Tenth National Aboriginal Art Award Exhibition - Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin, NT

Collections

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Aimee Proost Private Collection, Australia
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia
Artbank, Sydney, Australia
Australian Museum, Sydney, Australia
Coopers & Lybrand Collection, Utrecht, Netherlands
David Betz private collection, New York, USA
Gantner Myer Collection, United States of America
Helen Read Collection, Darwin, Australia
Kluge Collection, Morven Estate, Charlottesville, Virginia, USA
Lavery Collection, Sydney, Australia
Macquarie Bank Art Collection, Australia
Musee des Confluences, Lyon, France
Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin, Australia
Museum of Aboriginal Art, Utrecht, The Netherlands
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Australia
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia
Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia
Walonia Aboriginal Art, The Netherlands
William and Lucy Mora Private Collection, Melbourne, Australia

Awards

2019 36th Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Awards - Finalist
2002 19th Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Award - Finalist

Selected Bibliography

2020 Black/White. ARTKELCH - Robyn Kelch
Exhibition Catalogue. Freiburg, Germany
2018 Maningrida Arts. ARTKELCH - Robyn Kelch.
Exhibition Catalogue. Freiburg, Germany