

## BUNDANON UNVEILS MIWATJ YOLŲU - SUNRISE PEOPLE

*Showcasing important works by senior and emerging artists from Yirrkala*



*Miwatj YolŲu – Sunrise People* install view, Bundanon, 2023. Photo: Zan Wimberley

IMAGES AVAILABLE [HERE](#)

**Shoalhaven, NSW:** Bundanon has unveiled its new exhibition season, ***Miwatj YolŲu - Sunrise People***, presenting important works by 13 senior and emerging YolŲu artists from the Yirrkala Community in East Arnhem Land, open to the public in Bundanon's award-winning Art Museum until **11 February 2024**.

During January 2024, the exhibition will be a key regional destination for **Sydney Festival**, attracting audiences from the city and across the state to experience the exhibition and public programs throughout the Festival season.

Curated in collaboration with **Buku-LarrŲgay Mulka Art Centre** and **The Mulka Project**, ***Miwatj YolŲu – Sunrise People*** explores storytelling, ecology and materiality in the works of YolŲu artists. Like Bundanon's location in the Shoalhaven, Yirrkala is a place where fresh and saltwater meet, and its lands and waterways inform diverse creative practices. This new exhibition brings to light the centrality of weather patterns and ecological systems within YolŲu culture, and tells interwoven stories of land, water, and sky.

Exhibiting artists include **Ms N Marawili**, **Dhambit Munungurr**, **Gaypalani WaŲambi**, **Mulkun Wirrpanda**, **Muluymuluy Wirrpanda**, **Djirrirra Wunungmurra**, **DjakaŲu YunupiŲu**, **Nyapanyapa YunupiŲu**, **Wanapati YunupiŲu**, and artists

from The Mulka Project including, **Ruby Djikarra Alderton**, **Ishmael Marika**, **Patrina Mununggurr** and **Gutiŋarra Yunupinu**.

*Miwatj Yolŋu* translates to 'sunrise people' in Yolŋu Matha (Yolŋu tongue). Geographically, Miwatj refers to the furthest north-eastern part of Arnhem Land that receives the morning sun, as it rises in the east. Yolŋu artists enact cultural traditions through the expression of both sacred and secular narratives. The use of materials from local lands is an important part of this practice, encompassing natural ochres, ŋuwayak (bark painting) and larrakitj (memorial poles).

The exhibition features works by Yolŋu artist **Ms N Marawili**, regarded as one of the most important Australian painters of her generation, who recently passed in October 2023.

Known for her signature magenta hue salvaged from discarded printer cartridges, **Ms N Marawili** is one of the many artists in this exhibition that have pioneered the use of reclaimed materials in artmaking, in keeping with the Yolŋu dictum 'if you paint the land, use the land'. This process is also seen through the metal works of **Gaypalani Wanambi**, one of the younger Yolŋu women, and **Wanapati Yunupinu** who works with discarded signage and scrap metals from nearby bauxite mining sites.

The prolific artist **Dhambit Mununggurr** presents paintings in her iconic vivid palette of cobalt blue capturing secular narratives with a deep understanding of Yolŋu lore, while **Djakaŋu Yunupinu**, one of the celebrated 'seven sisters' group of Yolŋu women artists, presents a recent body of work depicting the artist's interpretation of the sacred Yolŋu story relating to the constellation known as the Seven Sisters or Pleiades.

A remarkable work by **Nyapanyapa Yunupinu** uses a computer algorithm to seamlessly meld 120 white paint pen on acetate drawings into an infinite and layered painting of light, demonstrating a conceptual leap from the static medium of painting.

There are five video works presented throughout the exhibition created by **Ruby Djikarra Alderton**, **Ishmael Marika**, **Patrina Mununggurr** and **Gutiŋarra Yunupinu**. These artists are part of **The Mulka Project** and their works experiment with contemporary animation, film and performance, with the goal of preserving Yolŋu cultural knowledge.

**Rachel Kent, CEO said:** *"Yirrkala is a place close to my heart, and one of the most exciting and dynamic artistic communities in Australia, and the wider world. I've had the immense privilege of working with artists in this community over time, some of whom are no longer with us, and celebrated in this exhibition. These artists are truly world-class; and their innovative practice encompasses artistic media from bark painting and larrakitj through to repurposed dance boards, metal road signs from local mining industry, and screen-based media".*

The exhibition season includes a curated **public program** of talks, workshops and performances, giving audiences the chance to engage with First Nations artists and leaders in the cultural sector. The program includes:

- [Jeanine Leane Poetry Reading & Workshop](#) | **Sunday 3 December 2023**: A reading of new poems in the Art Museum from Bundanon artist in residence alumnus, & acclaimed Wiradjuri author Jeanine Leane; followed by a participatory workshop that draws inspiration from artworks on display.
- [Nici Cumpston Public Talk](#) | **Sunday 3 December 2023**: Artistic Director of Tarnanthi and Curator of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art at the Art Gallery of South Australia Nici Cumpston shares her knowledge of artistic practices from East Arnhem Land, including the work of Djakaŋu Yunupinu who features in *Miwatj Yolŋu* and Tarnanthi.
- [Myles Russell-Cook Public Talk](#) | **Saturday 13 January 2024**: Myles Russell-Cook, Senior Curator of Australian and First Nations Art, at the National Gallery of Victoria, speaks about innovation in the practice of women artists from East Arnhem Land, including Dhambit Mununggurr.

- [Charmaine Papertalk Green Poetry Reading](#) | **Saturday 13 January 2024**: Aboriginal poet, artist and acclaimed author, Charmaine Papertalk Green presents a reading of recent work developed in residence at Bundanon.
- [Song Spirals Dance Performance](#) | **Saturday 20 & Sunday 21 January 2024**: This is a new dance work in development by Rosealee Pearson that choreographically explores the crying of songlines (milkarri), referred to as song spirals in North East Arnhem Land. Offering an experience of the ancient songs and dances (bungul) that act as a guide for Yolŋu people. This work is an interpretation of the groundbreaking book by the Gay'wu Women's Group.

For more information on the exhibition and the full program visit: [www.bundanon.com.au/miwatj-yolnu/](http://www.bundanon.com.au/miwatj-yolnu/)

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***Miwatj Yolŋu - Sunrise People***

Until 11 February 2024

Bundanon

[www.bundanon.com.au](http://www.bundanon.com.au)

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**ABOUT BUNDANON:** Established in 1993, Bundanon was gifted to the Australian people by Arthur and Yvonne Boyd, representing one of the most significant acts of philanthropy in the history of the arts in Australia. Bundanon is located on 1,000 hectares of bush and parkland overlooking the Shoalhaven River, on the South Coast of New South Wales, two and a half hours from Sydney.

Bundanon's mission is to operate the property as a centre for creative arts and education, for scientific research and a place to explore landscape and engage with First Nations history and culture. Bundanon's residency program for visual artists, writers, musicians, dancers, performers and scholars, and its learning programs, are an investment in Australia's future. Bundanon is supported by the Australian Government through the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications' Office for the Arts, Create NSW, the University of Wollongong, Landcare Australia, and a range of other foundation, bequest, and philanthropic contributions. The Collection features some 1,448 works by Arthur Boyd together with Boyd's contemporaries such as Sidney Nolan, John Perceval, Joy Hester and Charles Blackman. In addition, Bundanon has an archive of artist books, scripts, compositions and working models related to artwork developed on the properties through the Artist in Residence program.

Bundanon's Artist in Residence program is the largest program of its kind in Australia and spans a 30-year history. In 2023, over 150 multi-disciplinary artists and researchers will be in residence at Bundanon. Bundanon's residency program is for visual and performing arts, literature, science, dance and music. It provides important career opportunities for artists and researchers to develop their work in an inspiring environment. Artists and researchers are hosted in purpose-built studios and rehearsal spaces on the organisation's secluded Homestead Site.

For more information visit [www.bundanon.com.au](http://www.bundanon.com.au)