



JABU BIRRINY

(land + sea)

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Contemporary stories by Yarrabah artists

Jabu Birriny (land + sea), pronounced Jah-boo Bir-rin-ee, celebrates the unique environment of Yarrabah and its ongoing importance to culture and people.

Located on the shore of Cape Grafton in Far North Queensland, Yarrabah is a dynamic Aboriginal community surrounded by tropical native bushland and mountain ranges united by sandy coastlines and coral reefs.

Jabu Birriny (land + sea) shares stories rich in lineal and recent histories through vibrant prints, intricately woven vessels and textured ceramics that embody the land and sea.

*The Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council acknowledges
Aboriginal peoples as Australia's First Peoples.*

*We recognise the Gunggandji and Mandingalbay Yidinji, as
Traditional Owners for Yarrabah and cultural custodians.*

We pay our respects to our Elders past, present and emerging.

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HOUSES AT YARRABAH, CA. 1912 PICTURE QUEENSLAND, SLQ



▶ MAYORS FOREWORD

Congratulations to the eight artists featured in Jabu Birriny [land + sea] Touring Exhibition. It is a fascinating collection of works and stories brought together by the Yarrabah Arts & Cultural Precinct from their 2017 and 2018 Cairns Indigenous Arts Fair exhibition collection that gives an insight into the diverse cultures and practices of our residents of Yarrabah. The Jabu Birriny (land + sea) Tour will aid in celebrating our communities' unique cultural identity, diversify in the Visual Arts Industry.

The Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council is very pleased to support the upcoming tour of the exhibition Jabu Birriny [land + sea] the exhibition was developed by The State Library of Queensland in partnership with Yarrabah Arts & Cultural Precinct. The state wide tour of Jabu Birriny is being presented and managed by Flying Arts Alliance.

The Yarrabah Art & Cultural Precinct provides studio space, materials and a range of art and crafts workshops for local community artists. The Art Centre is well known for its ceramics, textiles and prints. The Centre also manages a Museum of traditional and historic Indigenous history, artefacts and literature. We are empowering our people to develop & share their culture, knowledge and skills to keep and hold our culture sacred.

Our council and the community are very ambitious about the future economic aspirations of where we'd like to go and it is events such as these that positively promote and market our community to the rest of the world.

The Yarrabah community lies to the east of Cairns. By road it is placed about 60 kilometres from Cairns CBD, however, it is only approx. 12 kilometres if measured in a straight line. It takes about 45 minutes to travel by car from the Cairns CBD to the Yarrabah Community.

Our coastline runs east from False Cape around Mission Bay, past Cape Grafton and Kings Point and then south to Palmer Point. The total coastline is in excess of 60 kilometres.

Geographically, our land area could generally be described as a long slender shape bounded in the west by the Murray Prior Range and the coast on the east. It has an overall length of about thirty (30) kilometres and is about 2.5 kilometres wide in the south, but broadens out to almost 8 kilometres across the northern part.

It has an area of about 158.8 square kilometres. The Township of Yarrabah is for the most part located adjacent to Mission Bay. Originally, European influence began in earnest with the establishment of an Anglican Mission on this same location on the 17th of June, 1892.

Cr Ross Andrews
Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council

▶ HISTORY OF YARRABAH

Located on the shore of Cape Grafton in Far North Queensland, Yarrabah is the traditional Country of the Gunggandji people. It is a dynamic Aboriginal community surrounded by tropical native bushland and mountain ranges united by sandy coastlines and coral reefs.

Yarrabah originated as the Bellenden-Ker Mission by Reverend John Brown Gribble in 1882 and was later named Yarrabah Mission. During that time, Aboriginal people and some South Sea Islanders from many different groups and areas across Queensland were forcibly relocated to Yarrabah. Today, the community has a population of 2,559 and many families in the community claim historical and traditional ties to the area that encompasses about 158.8 square kilometres.

The region's first Aboriginal Council was established in the mid 1960's and the Aboriginal Shire Council later became Local Government under the Local Government Act 2009.

The region's first museum, the Menmyny Museum was built in 1996 and was dedicated to housing an archival collection revealing the traditions and impact of Christianity on the Yarrabah community.

The remnants of the mission times are an important collection gathered for the people, by the people. Some of the material in the collection was transferred from the Queensland Museum.

▶ YARRABAH ARTS & CULTURAL PRECINCT

The Yarrabah Arts & Cultural Precinct was established in 2002 to provide facilities for local artists to strengthen art and cultural practice across weaving, painting and ceramics. Well known for its pottery, Yarrabah Arts Centre continues to produce outstanding work and increase its profile in the national and international Indigenous arts market, strengthening local economic development in support of Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council's long-term strategic planning.

These future plans enrich traditional practice and offer opportunities for national and international visitors wishing to learn more about the rich Indigenous culture of tropical north Queensland.

In partnership with the Department of Communication and the Arts, Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support (IVAIS) program and Arts Queensland Backing Indigenous Arts (BIA) – Yarrabah Arts & Cultural Precinct deliver an exciting and ambitious visual arts program focussed on strengthening the sustainability of the Art Centre, preserving culture and providing economic opportunities for artists.

FIBRE WEAVING AT YARRABAH CA. 1950 PICTURE QUEENSLAND, SLQ. >





▶ ART CENTRE FOREWORD

I'm pleased to share with you, *Jabu Birriny [land + sea] Touring Exhibition*, a collection of captivating works and contemporary stories expressed through vibrant prints, intricately woven vessels and textured ceramics.

We congratulate featured artists Philomena Yeatman, Michelle Yeatman, Valmai Pollard, Edna Ambrym, Ruben Ambrym, and Eric Orcher and also independent artist, Elverina Johnson on their involvement with this inaugural touring exhibition.

Co-curated with the Yarrabah Arts & Cultural Precinct (YACP) the selected works are from collections exhibited during the 2017 and 2018 Cairns Indigenous Art Fair (CIAF).

Yarrabah Arts & Cultural Precinct is a branch of the Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council. In 2010, YACP launched a framework of Visual Arts Programs to support, up skill and showcase the breadth and diversity of Yarrabah artists on their journey towards success.

This year and beyond 2020, we are excited to announce the delivery of several new programs and events which will see major career pathways developed for our community artists in visual arts and the performing Arts.

In June 2019, Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council will hold three major events: the Communities annual signature event, *The Yarrabah Music and Cultural Festival* (formally known as the Yarrabah Band Festival) in partnership with Queensland Music Festival, the inaugural *Jabu Birriny [land + sea] Touring Exhibition* in partnership with Flying Arts Alliance and *Jabu Birriny [land + sea] Cultural Festival* that showcase our diverse arts and cultural from the Yarrabah Community.

I thank the Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council Elected Councillors and Executive Staff together with staff and artist from the Yarrabah Arts & Cultural Precinct whose commitment, energy and cultural belief is truly extra-ordinary – thank you Philomena, Edna, Valmai, Ruben and Eric – what a team!

Finally, I also extend a huge thank you to our key funding partners: Arts Queensland Backing Indigenous Art (BIA) and Department of Communication and the Arts –Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support (IVAIS) for their continued support of our visual arts program.

Darrell Harris

Manager | Yarrabah Arts & Cultural Precinct



Eric Orcher

Turtle at The Great Barrier Reef - 2018

Etching on paper

▶ JABU BIRRINY [LAND + SEA] TOURING EXHIBITION

Menmuny Museum Gallery, Yarrabah

14 June - 31 July 2019

Arts Ablaze Conference, Kooralbyn Valley

25 Sept - 9 October 2019

Lapunyah Gallery, Chinchilla

7 Dec 2019 - 22 Jan 2020

Grasslands Art Gallery, Tambo

7 Feb - 21 Mar 2020

Tablelands Regional Gallery, Atherton

8 June - 25th July 2020

Banana Shire Regional Art Gallery, Biloela

21 Aug - 2 Oct 2020

Artspace Mackay

16 Oct 2020 - 24 Jan 2021

Gab Titui Cultural Centre, Thursday Is

Mar-21 - TBC

Jabu Birriny, meaning 'land' and 'sea', celebrates the unique environment of Yarrabah and its ongoing importance to culture and people. Located on the shore of Cape Grafton FNQ, Yarrabah is the traditional Country of the Gunggandji people. It is a dynamic Aboriginal community surrounded by tropical native bushland and mountain ranges united by sandy coastlines and coral reefs.

Jabu Birriny unites these stories rich in lineal, past and recent histories through vibrant prints, intricately woven vessels and textured ceramics that embody the land and sea.

Yarrabah Arts and Cultural Precinct artists are renowned for their production of distinctive contemporary work in the mediums of ceramic, textile, fibre, print and painting. Each artist has their own unique approach to their art making which celebrates the community's cultural identity of the land and sea and continues the cultural practices and stories unique to the area. With support of the State Library of Queensland (SLQ) and Flying Arts Alliance the Yarrabah Arts & Cultural Precinct will deliver the inaugural touring exhibition program in 2019/2020.

The *Jabu Birriny [land + sea] Touring Exhibition* has been curated from works exhibited at the Cairns Indigenous Arts Fair in 2017 and 2018. The exhibition was curated with the State Library of Queensland (SLQ) and Yarrabah Arts & Cultural Precinct (YACP), a branch of the Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council. Senior YACP artists have been curated and include; Philomena Yeatman, Michelle Yeatman, Valmai Pollard, Edna Ambrym, Ruben Ambrym. Independent senior artist, Elverina Johnson is also included, as are the beautiful artworks from a relatively new Yarrabah artist, Eric Orcher.

In partnership with YACP, Flying Arts will enhance the touring of *Jabu Birriny [land + sea]* by coordinating a ground-breaking initiative for deeper engagement between Yarrabah artists and regional communities through a dynamic suite of public programs, travelling artists, community members and Elders from Yarrabah to share art and culture with specially invited Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members from galleries in ten regional Queensland communities.

2019 has been declared International Year of Indigenous Languages; we are encouraging a lasting dialogue around art and culture in this context.

▶ ARTWORKS



Michelle Yeatman

-

Coiled Ceramic Brown

Ceramic

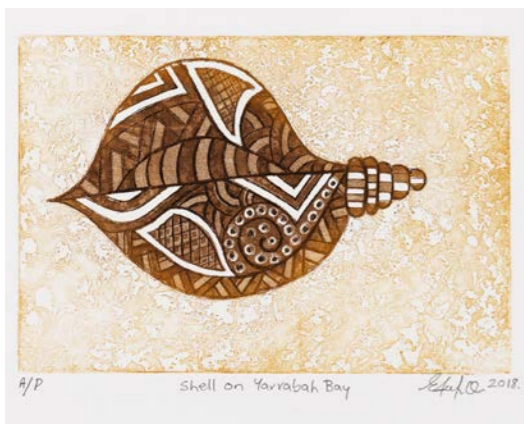


Michelle Yeatman

-

Coiled Ceramic White

Ceramic



Eric Orcher

Shell on Yarrabah Bay - 2018

Etching on paper



Eric Orcher

Starfish - 2018

Screenprint on paper



Philomena Yeatman

Sea Cucumber - 2018

Screenprint on paper



Philomena Yeatman

Untitled - 2017

Etching on paper



Philomena Yeatman

Woven Mat - 2015

Pandanus



Philomena Yeatman

Bottle Vase Cream - 2017

Glazed Ceramic



Philomena Yeatman

Mura Mura - Basket - 2014

Pandanus



Philomena Yeatman

Little People - 2017

Etching on paper



Philomena Yeatman

Untitled - 2017

Etching on paper

Philomena Yeatman

Leaves of the Rainforest - 2017

Etching on paper



Valmai Pollard

Swimming Hole - 2018

Etching on paper

Valmai Pollard

Green Bottle Vase - 2017

Glazed Ceramic

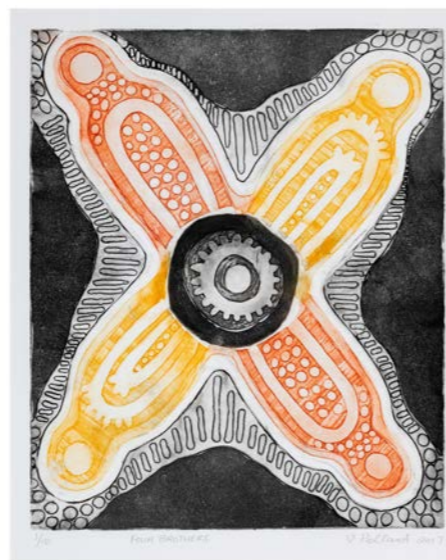




Valmai Pollard

Untitled - 2017

Etching on paper



Valmai Pollard

Untitled - 2017

Etching on paper



Valmai Pollard

Large Green Bowl - 2016

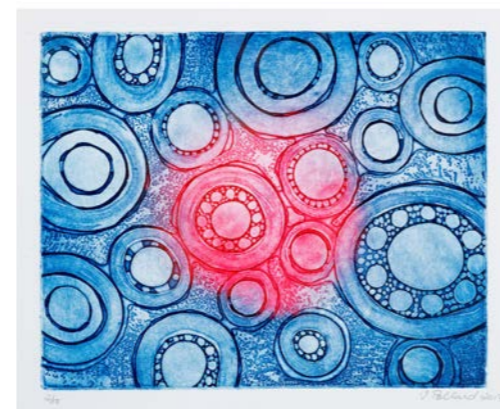
Glazed Ceramic



Valmai Pollard

Untitled - 2017

Etching on paper



Valmai Pollard

Untitled - 2017

Etching on paper



Valmai Pollard

Brown Green Bowl - 2016

Glazed Ceramic



Valmai Pollard

Brown Green Bowl - 2016

Glazed Ceramic



Ruben Ambrym

-
Untitled - 2017
Etching on paper



Ruben Ambrym

-
Untitled - 2017
Etching on paper



Ruben Ambrym

-
Paper Bark - 2018
Screenprint on paper



Elverina Johnson

-
Paperbark
Painting on canvas



Elverina Johnson

-
Bark bag
Fibre art (palm frond)



Elverina Johnson

-
Painted Coconut Shell
Sculpture



Elverina Johnson

-
Mangroves
Painting on canvas



Edna Ambrym

-
Untitled - 2017
Etching on paper



Edna Ambrym

-
Mayi Bugaam - Land - 2017
Etching on paper



Edna Ambrym

-
Mayi Bugaam - Sea - 2017
Etching on paper



Edna Ambrym

-
Untitled - 2017
Etching on paper



Edna Ambrym

-
Untitled - 2017
Etching on paper



Edna Ambrym

-
Brown Shell Bowl - 2016
Glazed Ceramic

▶ ABOUT THE ARTISTS



Edna AMBRYN

Edna identifies with the Gunggandji people on her mother's side and Eastern Kuku Yalanji on her father's side. She has lived in Yarrabah all her life and has been a practising artist with Yarrabah Art Centre for over ten years. Her daughter Valmai and husband Ruben are also artists working at the Art Centre.

Edna is an accomplished artist whose favourite medium is painting, but she also works across ceramics, printmaking and textiles to share memories and experiences of Yarrabah. She draws inspiration from her childhood filled with fishing, hunting and collecting from the land with her family.

Edna's work celebrates the vitality and beauty of Yarrabah's environment. Her intimate understanding of the land and sea is reflected by abstract and illustrative depictions of food sources, seasonal change, significant places and features of Country.

Michelle YEATMAN

Michelle Yeatman belongs to the Gunggandji people and was born and raised in the Yarrabah community. She is an artist working across the mediums of ceramics, painting and printmaking.

In the early 1970's, pottery was introduced to Yarrabah as an initiative of the Queensland Government to provide skills development and job opportunities for local residents. In 1982, Michelle commenced employment with the pottery studio as an apprentice, mixing raw clay, waxing and glazing ceramics.

Michelle's experience at the studio incited a strong interest in ceramic work, and she has since developed a particular style that distinguishes her in the field of ceramics. She creates unique coiled pots that are carved and imprinted with natural materials collected from the beach, such as shells and seaweed.

Michelle's work draws on her intimate knowledge of Country and reflects her relationship with Jilghi Beach at Yarrabah, where she has lived for over 25 years with her family.

Across her varied practice, Michelle continues to experiment with new techniques focussing on cultural expression and her deep love for the ocean, it's creatures, and the beautiful lifestyle that surrounds her.



Ruben AMBRYN

Ruben's bloodline includes Kuku Yalanji and South Sea Islander heritage. He has lived in Yarrabah all of his life with his wife Edna Ambrym and daughter; Valmai Pollard – both practising artists at Yarrabah Art Centre.

Ruben spends most of his days at the Yarrabah Arts and Cultural Precinct, in both his role as the carer for the grounds and as an emerging artist.

The influence from his creative family and the etching workshop he attended at the Art Centre ignited his artistic passion. Since then, he has continued to develop his creative practice in the mediums of lino printing, etching, painting, pottery and textiles.

Ruben's work embodies the diversity of food sources from land and sea and celebrates the uniqueness of the Yarrabah lifestyle and environment.



Valmai POLLARD

Valmai is a Gunggandji woman who has grown up in Yarrabah. She belongs to a large family of artists; her parents, Edna and Ruben Ambrym, are also members of Yarrabah Art Centre. Valmai joined them over four years ago in working at the Art Centre as a practicing artist. She is currently the Art Centre's youngest resident artist.

During the completion of high school Valmai undertook visual art classes and has been involved in various workshops at Yarrabah Art Centre where she specialised in linocut, pottery, textiles and woodwork. Through these activities and her family's influence, she has developed a strong interest for experimentation within her practice.

Philomena YEATMAN

Philomena identifies as a Gunggandji woman and was born and raised in the Yarrabah community. She began her art career in 1991 as a screen printer and jewellery maker, then later developed her skills as a weaver, producing table mats, fans and baskets.

Renowned as an expert weaver, Philomena is passionate about maintaining the knowledge and techniques taught by her grandmother. Her practice continues the longstanding skills of weaving with pandanus and cabbage palm collected from her immediate environment.

Philomena's work is inspired by traditional forms used for food collection and gathering from the land and sea. Her techniques include the merging of dyed fibres, which she weaves into the baskets to create distinctive and vibrant designs.





Elverina JOHNSON

Elverina Johnson lives in Yarrabah. Her traditional family name is Bunya Badjil, which means 'Good Woman'. She is of Kunganji Gurugulu lineage on her grandfather's side and Indinji Gimuy lineage on her grandmother's side.

Elverina is a highly respected advocate for the Yarrabah community and was presented with the 2017 National NAIDOC Artist of the Year award. Her creative talents span the spectrum of visual and performing arts. She has been involved in the arts industry for over 30 years as a singer, songwriter, playwright, actor and visual artist.

Elverina is the founder and manager of the Indigenous owned, Diringhi Aboriginal Arts and Craft Gallery at Yarrabah. Diringhi is a community-based social enterprise which supports local artists and craftspeople in Yarrabah to sustain their cultural traditions and earn income from their work.

In her visual arts practice, Elverina works across painting, textiles, fibre and photography to depict the natural abundance and beauty of Yarrabah's land and sea environment. Her work expresses a deep and innate understanding of Country and honours the traditions and stories belonging to her culture and ancestral homelands.

Jabu Birriny [land + sea]



BOY ON BEACH CA. 1913 PICTURE QUEENSLAND, SLQ.

Eric ORCHER

Eric identifies with his Language Group/Clan Group Ngemba Tribe (Mayi) from the Ngemba Nation in far west New South Wales.

He's an Aboriginal artist that articulates his Country and neighbouring tribes through paints on canvas. Eric also enjoys working with other mediums including etching, lino prints and screen printing.

Eric's works are contemporary and Traditional Artworks. To promote his artwork and be recognised for what he does, he shares his stories about his Country to locals, regional people and tourists, or any individuals from around the country.



Yarrabah Arts & Cultural Precinct
 Museum Road (off Back Beach Rd) Yarrabah QLD 4871
www.yarrabah.qld.gov.au/artcentre

PARTNERS & SPONSORS

The Jabu Birriny (land + sea) exhibition was developed by State Library of Queensland in partnership with Yarrabah Arts & Cultural Precinct. This project is supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland.

On behalf of our artists, Yarrabah Arts & Cultural Precinct sincerely thanks all involved.





Yarrabah

Arts & Cultural Precinct

