Printing Knowledge and Preserving Tradition:

Printmaking on the Tiwi Islands

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Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university. To the best of the author's knowledge, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to all the artists on the Tiwi Islands who make and print designs. I hope they will see this work as a tribute to their art, talent and imagination. In a world where our vision is dominated by a single cultural way and where this dominance threatens the survival of other ways of thinking and being, there is a need for an alternative way of seeing the world. The Tiwi give us an alternative view.

Acknowledgments

The idea for this thesis came from an awareness of my own Latvian cultural background and how culture has been encoded into everyday items. Latvian mythology and the numerous ancient deities are represented symbolically in everyday items. These symbols are there to guard, bless and bring happiness. Likewise, Tiwi culture is encoded in the prints produced on the islands.

This project also emerged from my interest in the work of Tiwi artist Bede Tungutalum. It came to my attention that there existed a large body of silk screen print designs produced in the twentieth century on the Tiwi Islands. Some of these print designs have become part of museum and gallery collections. Many are not.

My research for this thesis is based in the greater part on the abundant visual material found in the literature depicting Tiwi silk screen print designs. This abundance can be attributed to the visual impact the designs have made on the wider Australian audiences when presented in the many textile exhibitions of the late twentieth century.

I have been dependent on the work of others when it came to Tiwi culture and mythology, in particular Charles Mountford's 1958 seminal work – The *Tiwi, Art, Myth and Culture*. Equally the work of Sandra Le Brun Holmes (1995), *The Goddess and the Moon Man* was invaluable in capturing knowledge about Tiwi culture that was fading fast as a result of the Tiwi move towards integrating into the wider Australian society and way of life.

There are many people to thank for making this thesis possible. Primarily, I would like to thank Professor Howard Morphy for recognising the value of my research topic. I also thank Professor Morphy for his guidance in the writing of my thesis through my panel supervisors Prof. John Carty and Dr. Robyn McKenzie. However, without the help of the Tiwi people the project would not have got off the ground. In particular I would like to thank all the women at Bima Wear who helped me, especially Noella Babui.

Research for this thesis was undertaken while I was a graduate student at both Northern Territory University and Australian National University. I am grateful to both institutions for the research funds provided. During this time my main informant was Bede Tungutalum. I would like to thank Candida Spence from ILP for helping me put this document together.

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Abstract

My research examines silk screen printing on the Tiwi Islands and the significant role textiles play as carriers of values connecting people across time and maintaining important cultural knowledge. Silk screen printing is an introduced technique that flourished on the islands in the late twentieth century. My aim is to show how the Tiwi have retained their identity while engaging in a non-traditional form of artistic expression. I argue that the silk screen print designs produced on the islands express a relationship to the land, ancestors and cultural artefacts. Early print designs produced in the 1970s by Tiwi men at the Tiwi Design workshop depict images relating to cultural artefacts, myth and ceremony. Later designs produced by the women in the 1980s are predominantly images connected to the environment. Still later images produced in the 1990s by an older generation of artists revert back to the traditional markings using lines and dots. My thesis shows how visual markings are produced in a new context and for new uses. I explore the print designs produced by the Tiwi in the twentieth century as a type of meta-media, that is, an expressive form of thought showing a relationship to land, ancestors and culture. The designs printed by the Tiwi on fabric are a means by which the old is linked to the new and cultural identity is reinforced during a time of great change. The designs show how tradition has been transformed to meet new circumstances.

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Introduction

Growing up in Sydney in the 1950s and 1960s my experience of Aboriginal Australia was non-existent. This gap in my knowledge I wanted to fill. I decided to travel to Darwin. Strolling down Casuarina beach one afternoon soon after my arrival in Darwin I came across a tin boat with outboard motor, containing a large turtle. That evening I ventured down to the beach again to see if the turtle and the boat were still there. I was greeted by the friendliest group of people I had met in a long time. Introductions were made and I learnt that my new friends were from the Tiwi Islands, just north of Darwin. I explained that I had come from Sydney and that the turtle had caught my attention, and was immediately greeted with –"Can't catch these on Bondi Beach." I agreed. The speaker was none other than Bede Tungutalum, and as the conversation flowed I realised I was talking to an established artist who had spent many years working in the area of silk screen printing. My introduction to the Tiwi people and silk screen printing on the Tiwi Islands came from this chance meeting with artist Bede Tungutalum on Casuarina Beach. My interest in Tiwi prints began here and has continued ever since. The Tiwi and their print making has been the inspiration for this thesis. Their help and friendship has made this thesis possible.

I spent twelve years living in Darwin post my encounter with Bede Tungutalum. During this time I made contact with the Tiwi on numerous occasions. There was the annual Australian Rules Football Grand Final trip to Bathurst Island at the end of each wet season. During these twelve years Bede Tungutalum made numerous visits to my home in Darwin. I was able to gain first- hand knowledge about silk screen printing and his involvement in this artistic movement on the islands. A close friendship developed at this time with him and the Tiwi people.

Each culture has its own version of how we came to be on earth. The Tiwi believe that during *Palinari*, the creation times, there was only darkness and the earth was flat and bare. At this time, *Murtungkala*, an old blind woman crawled out of the ground carrying three infants. As she crawled along, sea water bubbled in the tracks she made. These tracks became the Clarence and Dundas Straits, dividing the Tiwi Islands from

mainland Australia. After she made her way around this land mass she created Apsley Strait, which divides the two Tiwi islands – Bathurst and Melville Island. *Murtungkala* then decreed that the bare islands be covered with vegetation and inhabited with animals so that her three children left behind would have food. After the islands were made habitable she vanished. Nobody knows where she came from, or having completed her work, where she disappeared to. The children she left behind are the ancestors of the Tiwi people today.

Living in Darwin opened my eyes to another culture with deep roots in the past. Tiwi religion, customs and law have their roots in the great mythological stories from the creation times. These mythological stories give meaningful order to the world for the Tiwi. The same myths are the inspiration for artistic endeavours. Tiwi life focuses on two main ceremonies – the *Kurlama* initiation, regeneration and health ceremony and the *Pukumani* mourning ceremony. The *Pukumani* ceremony marks the conclusion of formal mourning and the lifting of taboos associated with death. The *Kurlama* ceremony is performed annually by groups of Tiwi at the end of the wet season, when the *kurlama* yams are ripe. A gold ring forms around the moon as *Japarra*, the Moon Man performs the *Kurlama*. Inside the *Kurlama* ring a multitude of star people sing and dance the *Kurlama* songs. The ceremony is held to bring good health and to ensure fertility of the land. In the past the ceremony was also an important initiation ceremony for both men and women with rituals to initiate them into the different stages of ceremonial hierarchy. The ceremony has been modified and changed during the twentieth century and today it is used to express the wishes of the participants for a healthy and prosperous future.

Returning to the islands in August 2015, at a Catholic confirmation ceremony, I saw children dressed in garments made from the silk screen printed fabric of the islands. Today artists and residents from the islands identify themselves through this form of cultural expression. In the past designs were painted on bodies for ceremony and on ceremonial objects. Today the Tiwi people on the islands wear garments made from screen printed fabric.

Many changes have occurred on the islands since Father Gsell, a Catholic missionary arrived in 1911. These changes have affected the way the Tiwi islanders dress. Before the arrival of father Gsell body covering was limited to paperbark aprons. The mission at Nguiu, Bathurst Island introduced the concept of clothing. The first clothes to be worn by the islanders were unadorned calico skirts. After woodblock printing was introduced to the islanders, items of clothing were printed with single motif prints featuring animals and other motifs from the islands.

The printing of designs on fabric by the Tiwi has allowed participation in the cash economy of the Western world. This market was limited to begin with. However, the hand printed fabrics contributed significantly to a cultural "identity" for the Tiwi people. Printed fabric is sold locally to tourists and to outlets in Darwin, and also via the internet. The development of a significant trade in printed fabric has helped to modernise and westernise the economy of the Tiwi people.

The Tiwi have always produced cultural objects that are aesthetically pleasing. In the past these objects were produced for ceremony. They were part of Tiwi everyday life. Ceremony was an activity that was engaged in by all Tiwi. Consequently the Tiwi did not have a word for "art" or "artist". The closest word in the Tiwi language is *jilamara* meaning "to paint". The most elaborate and visually pleasing objects were created for ceremony. They consisted of various categories of arm decorations, carved wooden spears, carved wooden burial poles, painted bark baskets and body painting. Tiwi artistic freedom was, in the past linked to concepts of ritual innovation which enabled Tiwi artists to develop individual unique styles (Bennett 1998: 28). Tiwi artists all worked in a number of mediums – painting, printmaking, carving and ceramics. The development of Tiwi screen print designs need to be understood in this diverse context. The designs that emerged in the second half of the twentieth century and the figurative carvings that emerged during the 1920s as reflected in the Tiwi Vatican Collection (Aigner 2017) show figures and animals and cultural objects incorporated along with abstract patterning in the new designs produced. These designs show an emotional link to the country that has sustained these people for many centuries. The images can be interpreted as a bridge between themselves and the country they love.

The designs restore a tie with their place of birth and origin and their culture. For example, traditional ceremonial ornaments have been reproduced as printed designs on fabric. Each new design tells a story and recalls personal ties to culture and country. Eric Venbrux recalls in his publication, *A Death in the Tiwi Islands*, how a group of female dancers at a mortuary ceremony wore red skirts printed with a buffalo print representing their patrilineal group while performing the buffalo dance (Venbrux 1995: 98). Modernisation has stimulated Tiwi artists to widen their source of inspiration. As a result a rich and diverse collection of images are printed today on fabric. Textiles on the Tiwi Islands play a significant role as carriers of values connecting ideas across time and maintaining important cultural knowledge. The print designs connect the past to the present and future. The designs show how images can be produced in a new context and for new uses. Previously visual markings were confined to ritual events and ceremonial objects. Today the same markings see expression in a new media, printed fabric.

My thesis by examining the silk screen print designs of the Tiwi will argue that the creative spirit emanating from this culture is a dynamic, living entity in constant interaction with the tangible world outside its own borders. Interaction between the Tiwi and Western art movements has created a unique expression of culture. The Tiwi silk screen print is a phenomenon of the twentieth century. It is also part of a long history of image making on the Tiwi islands. Image making is central to the Tiwi way of life and has been for thousands of centuries. Early pre-contact images were symbols and representations of clan structures, an important part of Tiwi society. The new process of image making using the technique of silk screen printing allows the Tiwi to connect with their ancestral past and reaffirm their links and affinity with the environment and culture. The twentieth century has seen many changes and developments in Tiwi image making in terms of form, medium, style and subject matter. My thesis looks at one area in which these changes and developments have occurred, that is, the incorporation of silk screen printing into Tiwi image making.

I explore the cultural value of the Tiwi silk screen print and show how material practices reflect cross-cultural influences. The relationship the Tiwi silk screen print has

to history, place, social change and cultural memory will be examined. The substantial craft production of the print will be shown as a way a people maintain cultural identity.

Thesis Objectives and Structure

The Tiwi live on two islands 80 kilometres north of Darwin separated from mainland Australia by the Clarence and Dundas Straits. The islands are known as Bathurst and Melville Islands named after the third Earl Bathurst, Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Second Viscount Melville, first Lord of the Admiralty. The islanders identify themselves as members of their local independent landowning groups according to the territorial divisions of the islands. At the beginning of the twentieth century the Tiwi were divided into nine territorial groups – Tiklauila, Wrangwila, Mingwila, Malauila, Wilrangwila, Munupula, Turupula Yeimpi and Mandimbula (Hart 1930/31: 171-172). Throughout the twentieth century the number of these groups has changed. More recent studies show twelve groups (see Map 3). The islands are sparsely populated. Population is centred in three settlements – Milikapiti, Pularumpi and Nguiu (now known as Wurrumiyanga). The majority of the population resides in the township of Nguiu on Bathurst Island.

Chapter 1 of my thesis locates the Tiwi people geographically in their setting as island people on two islands situated north of Darwin. This chapter also introduces the reader to the unique heritage of the Tiwi people – their ceremonies, artefacts and mythological past. Following this chapter I trace the journey of Tiwi creativity in the Western imagination in the twentieth century – from ethnographic curiosities housed in museums to fine art worthy of inclusion in the art galleries of Australia. Chapter three is a history of silk screen printing on the islands. This chapter is followed by a short biography of the most influential person in the story of silk screen printing on the islands – Bede Tungutalum. Chapter five analyses the cultural knowledge contained in the silk screen print designs produced on the islands. Chapter six is a very brief overview of printmaking on paper. Printmaking on paper was a direct outcome of the success of printmaking on fabric. By the 1980s indigenous printmaking was seen as fine art and many Aboriginal artists were encouraged by Australia's art institutions to

become involved in this practice. In conclusion I discuss the frequent association of the term ‘traditional’ with a higher value than the term ’contemporary’ which was seen as being of lesser value. My thesis argues that contemporary Tiwi material culture has its basis in ancient mythological and philosophical concepts.

The main aim of my research was to collect and record a comprehensive body of information relating to the emergence, development and growth of an Indigenous printing on fabric industry on the Tiwi Islands, Northern Territory, Australia. My research links the advancement of this industry to historical circumstances that enabled this to occur. My research highlights the cross cultural exchange that occurred between Tiwi artists and non-Tiwi art/craft advisors and artists. Printed fabric has become an important medium of communication by which the Tiwi express themselves and their cultural continuity. My thesis aims to demonstrate how the Tiwi silk screen print is a vehicle for expressing cultural identity.

I argue that the Tiwi have shown innovation in the manner in which they have integrated printmaking into their artistic practice. They have embraced this new art form while retaining their own cultural knowledge and sense of who they are as expressed through the choice of design images. I have provided a historical narrative that explores the sequence of events leading to the acceptance of printmaking as a means of communicating their belief system to the outside world.

Visiting the four art centres on the Tiwi Islands revealed the constantly evolving nature of Tiwi art in response to cross-cultural influences and individual initiative. My research has shown that the form and aesthetic of Tiwi art has changed in the twentieth century with the introduction of printmaking on fabric. However, there is no change in the substance. The print designs tell the stories of the creation time. The print designs produced by the Tiwi in the twentieth century are a type of meta-media, an expressive form of thought, which express relationship to land, ancestors and culture.

Methodological Approach

The main aim of my work is to provide a comprehensive history of the introduction of silk screen printing on the Tiwi Islands and the use of this technology by Tiwi artists to encode their beliefs and culture into this new art form. My research has used a combination of approaches which include art, history, anthropology, ethnography and archival research. As a result it is difficult to present a clear articulation of the methodology employed. My approach has been multi- disciplinary and inter-disciplinary. Diaries and archival records were used to trace the historical progression of Tiwi silk screen printing. Interviews with artists and collaborators were conducted. A visual methodology was used to interpret the silk screen designs. This methodology relied heavily on reproductions of the designs in various publications, including exhibition catalogues. Diana Wood Conroy provided valuable information in the form of her personal diary from the time she worked at Tiwi Design in the 1970s mentoring Bede Tungutalum.

I examined Tiwi silk screen printing as a phenomenon of the twentieth century. Interactions in the twentieth century between the Tiwi and outsiders led to this new form of material culture developing on the islands. This new medium of artistic expression was adopted enthusiastically by the Tiwi and led to a successful industry of hand printed textiles on the islands as a result of the cross cultural exchange between the Tiwi and non-Tiwi art/craft advisers and artists.

My research examined a selection of fifty print designs from the four art centres on the two islands. Iconographical elements of the designs were analysed and traced back to ancient ideas and concepts.

Literature Review

My thesis explores the recording through a visual language the rich culture and mythology of a traditional oral society. The Tiwi silk screen print is evidence of how a culture is seen to preserve itself in the absence of written records. The Tiwi print can be interpreted as a mnemonic method whereby knowledge is preserved and passed

along from generation to generation. The oral tradition has been transferred to a visual tradition. The print serves a symbolic function. It is the intersection between the social, ecological and cosmological concerns of the society. For many years the Tiwi Islands have provided physically, mentally and spiritually for the people. The people have in turn nurtured nature.

I have found that the most valuable cultural literature for my thesis have been the many booklet publications produced by the Nginingawila Literature Production Centre at Nguiu, Bathurst Island. For example, the bi-lingual text *Murtankala the Creator* which tells the creation story of the Tiwi Islands. The work from this centre owes a lot to Sister Anne Gardiner who worked with Tiwi elders to put into print form the many creation stories passed on in oral form from one generation to the next. These include *Ngirramini ngini Pwanga* by Magdalen Kerinaiua and Ancilla Puruntatameri. This booklet tells the story of *Pwanga*, the spider woman who made the first bark basket (*tunga*) and how she took the bark of the stringybark tree, heating it over the fire to make it flexible. Then she would prepare vines from the jungle to be used to sew the sides of the basket together with a fish bone. On completion the basket was given to her husband to be painted. Other publications from this press include Gerardine Tungutalum's *The Arrival of Father Gsell June 8th 1911*. This tells the arrival of Father Gsell from a Tiwi perspective.

The earliest anthropological literature about the Tiwi is the work of Charles Hart (Hart, Pilling and Goodale 1960/1988). Hart conducted fieldwork on the Tiwi Islands 1928-1929. He was researching culture, kinship structure and the customary law of the Tiwi. Hart's work was followed up by Arnold Pilling 1953-54 and also by Jane Goodale in 1954, 1962, 1980-81 and 1986-87 (Hart, Pilling and Goodale 1988). The work of these three anthropologists is summarised in the publication, *The Tiwi of North Australia.* In 1971 Jane Goodale published *Tiwi Wives: a study of the women of Melville Island, North Australia.* This study is from the perspective of a Tiwi woman as she changes through her life course from birth to the rituals performed after her death. The study includes detailed information on marriage arrangements and the important rites of passage such as the annual initiation ceremony and funeral ceremony. Hart, Pilling and

Goodale (1960/1988) and Goodale (1971) are valuable resources for an understanding of Tiwi cultural systems and life. Charles Mountford's 1958 publication, *The Tiwi, their Art, Myth and Ceremony* contains information given by Tiwi informants about the culture of the islands. Likewise Sandra Le Brun Holmes 1995 publication, *The Goddess and the Moon Man* contains valuable cultural stories, in particular the story of *Purrukuparli* and how death came to the Tiwi Islands. The publication details a major collection of Tiwi wood carvings and bark paintings whose central focus is the story of *Purrukuparli* that were collected in the 1960s and 1970s by the author. The carvings and bark paintings tell the Tiwi creation stories as recounted to the author by Alie Miller Wurraputiwai Mungatopi and his wife Polly Miller Paiahningmaiu.

Herbert Basedow visited the Tiwi Islands in 1911 in his capacity as Chief Protector of Aborigines in the Northern Territory. He published in 1913 *Notes on the Natives of Bathurst Island, North Australia* in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*. These notes were made at a time when body decoration and the use of cicatrices were being widely used among Bathurst Islanders. Basedow discusses dwellings, personal wear, domestic utensils, hunting and fishing equipment, canoes, ceremonies, burial methods and burial poles. These early descriptions of Tiwi material culture are most valuable as they show it as it was early this century, before intensive contact with Europeans.

Baldwin Spencer was the member of a small scientific commission sent to the Northern Territory in 1911 by the Commonwealth Government to make a preliminary survey of the country. Later Spencer returned to the Northern Territory for twelve months as Special Commissioner for Aboriginals and Chief Protector. During his 1911/12 trip Spencer visited Bathurst and Melville Islands, and with the assistance of Joe Cooper, a buffalo shooter who had set up a camp at Paru, Melville Island, he spent six weeks among the Tiwi on Melville Island. This was followed by a later trip to Bathurst Island in December 1912. During these trips Spencer put together a comprehensive collection of Tiwi material culture items which are now housed in the Museum of Victoria. These items show Tiwi material culture as it was at the beginning

of the twentieth century. The collection is complemented by illustrations and photographs (Spencer 1914).

Literature on the early history of Tiwi contact with outsiders ranges from Macknight (1969), *The Farthest Coast,* to John Pye (1977) *The Tiwi Islands* and John Morris (2001) *The Tiwi: from isolation to cultural change, a history of encounters between an island people and outside forces*. John Morris's 2001 publication is the most comprehensive work on this topic. Morris's study is a history of life on the Tiwi Islands from pre-contact times to a series of infrequent cross cultural encounters with outsiders from the seventeenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth century, a time of great social and cultural changes in Tiwi society. His study looks at the coming of the Macassan trepang fishers to the islands (1700 to 1894), the Fort Dundas settlement (1824 to 1829), the buffalo shooters on Melville Island (1895 to 1916) and Father Gsell and the missionaries (1911 to 1918).

Father John Pye is a priest who resided on Bathurst and Melville Islands in the 1940s and 1950s. His publication is a summary of events from a historical perspective as they occurred on Bathurst and Melville Islands since the mission was established at Nguiu, Bathurst Island in 1911. Included is also a short history of pre-mission times with mention of the Macassan trepang fishers and the establishment of a British military garrison at Fort Dundas.

The art centres have played a vital role in the growth of silk screen printing on the islands. Much has been written about the art centre, Tiwi Design. In 1976 Diana Wood Conroy outlined in *Art and Australia* the development of all over silk screen printing at Nguiu, Bathurst Island under her guidance while she was employed by the Aboriginal Arts Board of the Australia Council. The beginnings of Tiwi Design is also discussed in an essay by Kathy Barnes in Kleinert and Neale's 2000 publication, *The Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art and Culture*. Margie West in her unpublished 1988 MA Thesis, *Art for Money's Sake: the Art and Craft Enterprises on Bathurst Island,* uses Tiwi Design as an example of a successful art and craft enterprise that has fulfilled the desired policy of economic self-sufficiency for Aboriginal communities.

Apart from Tiwi Design, other art centres on the Tiwi Islands produce silk screen printed fabric. Jilamara Arts and Crafts located on Melville Island have in the past produced their own unique silk screen print designs referred to as *Marlipinyini Amintiya Pwanga* (lines and dots). These designs were printed on silk using a different type of dye that created a softer finish. Textile artist James Bennett has written much about silk screen printing on the islands. For example, in *Screen Printing the Tiwi Way: an element of spontaneity*, published in *Artlink* in 1992, James Bennett links the Tiwi fabric printing process to the traditions of body painting. Bennett explores the dynamics of change in Tiwi society and argues that the essence of ceremonial art that appears to be fading out is being transferred to screen printed fabric. He argues that Tiwi art is still concerned with body decoration, despite its transference to a new medium and technique.

In the exhibition catalogue accompanying *Raiki Wara: Long Cloth from Aboriginal Australia and the Torres Strait,* published in 1998, in his essay, *Screenprinting as indigenous textile art* James Bennett argues that silk screen printing is a grass roots medium of creative expression in indigenous communities that is relevant and useful to daily life and defines contemporary black aesthetics to a wider audience. Furthermore, he argues that of all the ways of art making in Aboriginal Australia, textiles speak most about cultural interaction between black and white Australia.

Grace Cochrane's 1992 publication, *The Craft Movement in Australia: A History*, gives a comprehensive account of the role the Australia Council and the Aboriginal Arts Board played in supporting textile production in remote Aboriginal communities.

A recent exhibition (2015), *Being Tiwi* at the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia (MCA) contains many essays about the early years at Tiwi Design. Madeleine Clear writes about how she encouraged the artists to experiment with the print medium in her essay *Tiwi Design: the Early Years*. Diana Wood Conroy writes about working with artist Bede Tungutalum in her essay *Bede Tungutalum: Milimika (circle).*

Photographer Heidi Smith visited the Tiwi Islands in 1987. The resulting publication *Tiwi: the life and art of Australia's Tiwi people* (Smith 1990) is a photographic essay of life on the islands and the people. This work was followed in 2008 with another study, *Tiwi: Portrait of a People*.

Two recent publications are *Kiripapurajuwi: skills of our hands* by Kathy Barnes (1999) and Jennifer Isaacs (2012) *Tiwi: Art, History, Culture*. Kathy Barnes worked as art advisor to Tiwi Design for more than a decade. Her publication is a historic profile of the creativity on the Tiwi Islands. Jennifer Isaac's publication is the same, a profile of the creativity on the islands in the twentieth century. The Isaacs volume has a particular focus on information from those sent to the islands to advise the Tiwi, the outsiders, the art/craft advisors. Very little research has been conducted with the actual artists themselves.

Use of the print medium by an Aboriginal community in Northern Australia, the Yolgnu of Northeast Arnhem Land, has been researched comprehensively by Denise Salvestro in her PhD thesis – *Printmaking by Yolgnu Artists of Northeast Arnhem Land: another way of telling our stories*. Salvestro's focus is printmaking on paper. My focus with the Tiwi is printmaking on fabric. Printing on fabric by the Tiwi was researched by Margie West in her MA Thesis – *Art for Money's Sake: the Art and Craft Enterprises on Bathurst Island.* West's thesis looks at how successful art and craft enterprises on Bathurst Island have been in fulfilling the desired policy of economic self-sufficiency for Aboriginal communities.

In Liz Thompson's (1990) *Aboriginal Voices: Contemporary Aboriginal Artists, Writers and Performers* is a collection of stories by Aboriginal people telling of their personal and collective experiences. All the participants are involved in the arts. In *Aboriginal Voices* the artists speak for themselves and their stories tell of personal experiences and individual efforts to overcome destruction of land, language, song, dance and identity. The static view of 'real' Aboriginal culture as that belonging to the past is challenged through these stories. Aboriginal culture is seen as a dynamic process searching for understanding in contemporary Australia. Artist Bede Tungutalum from

Bathurst Island features in this publication. He believes that different cultures have a lot to learn from each other.

Silk screen printing in remote communities has not been covered in any depth in the literature. The only publication dedicated to this topic is Mary Lou Nugent's 2000 text, *Putting in the Colour.* The text covers a number of indigenous art centres involved with printing on fabric, and as a result does not cover the topic in any depth.

Originality and Value of Research

Material culture as a source of evidence in anthropological analysis has been neglected in the twentieth century. Ethnographic analysis of Tiwi silk screen printing has received inadequate attention. My thesis aims to fill this gap.

My research into Tiwi silk screen print designs covers the twentieth century. The focus of the research is centred on four art centres on the Tiwi Islands – Tiwi Design and Bima Wear at Wurrumiyanga (previously Nguiu), Bathurst Island and Jilamara Arts and Crafts and Munupi Arts and Crafts, Melville Island. These centres have been the focus of silk screen print designs as well as other artistic production such as wood carving and acrylic painting and fine art printing on paper.

During the late twentieth century printing on fabric developed as an important technology for the Tiwi. Hand printed textiles led to the emergence of a very successful industry on the islands. No detailed account has been written about the emergence of the Tiwi printmaking. Information about this subject is in the form of short essays in art journals and introductions in catalogues accompanying exhibitions. Very little has been documented with regard to the development of this industry on the islands and its growing importance as a means by which the Tiwi can participate in the wider Western economy. The Tiwi were the first Australian Indigenous group to become involved with print technology. The Tiwi example has been used as a model by other indigenous communities in Australia since then. For example, screen printed fabrics are produced today at Julalikari Arts and Crafts, Tennant Creek, Kaltjiti Arts and Crafts, Fregon, Ernabella Arts Inc., Ernabella, Injalak Arts, Gunbalanya, Babbarra Women's

Centre, Maningrida, Merrepen Arts Nauiyu Community, Daly River, Bula'bula Arts, Ramingining and Titjikala Women's Centre, Titjikala. Tracing the emergence of new material culture in the twentieth century will show how Aboriginal creativity has developed from being seen as an ethnographic curiosity to existing now as a highly sophisticated and lucrative art industry.

Chapter 1
The Tiwi Islands - a unique Culture

This chapter introduces the Tiwi people and their unique heritage to the reader. It highlights the uniqueness of the ceremonies, artefacts of ceremony and the mythological past that governs Tiwi life today. This cultural aspect of Tiwi life is encoded into the silk screen print designs produced by the islanders in the twentieth century. This chapter also discusses the early contact history the Tiwi had with outsiders. Especially significant is the arrival of missionary, Father Gsell in 1911.

The Land

Bathurst Island and Melville Island collectively known as the Tiwi Islands, are located in the Timor Sea, approximately 80 kilometres north of Darwin, Australia (see Map 1). These islands form a geographical and cultural unit. The islands are separated from the Australian mainland by the Clarence and Dundas Straits. Melville Island, the larger of the two islands is 5,700 square kilometres in area. Bathurst Island is 2,200 square kilometres in area. The two islands are separated by the narrow Apsley Strait. The islands lie between latitudes 11 and 12 degrees south and 129 and 132 degrees east. It is thought that at one time these islands were part of the Australian mainland. Chappell and Thom (1977: 275-288) suggested that these islands were cut off from the Australian mainland as a result of rising sea levels during inter-glacial times. Beaton (1985: 1) has argued that sea levels stabilised about 6,000 years ago. Hart, Pilling and Goodale (1988: 3) state: "*The sea was as low as 30 metres below its present level throughout the period from 6,500 years ago and 80,000 years ago."* This indicates that Melville and Bathurst Islands were separated from the Australian mainland sometime between 6,000 and 80,000 years ago. As a result of this the Tiwi have developed a unique language, culture and social system (Hart 1930/31; Mountford 1958; Goodale 1971).

The islands rise 500 metres above sea level and have long sandy beaches, steep red cliffs and crystal clear waterways. The north of Melville Island is covered with lush monsoonal forests. The rest of the islands are heavily timbered eucalypt forests with

clusters of ancient cycad palms. The coastline and waterways are fringed with dense mangrove forest, home to a great number of foods. Amongst the tangled roots of the mangroves live many varieties of fish and shellfish and the *yuwurli*, mangrove worm. Bush fruits can also be found on the islands. There are a number of varieties of the 'bush plum' and also the sweet red *pinyama,* wild apple. The stems and leaves of the palms and waterlilies are used as a supplement to the diet (Goodale 1971: 4-6).

The islands experience two distinct seasons, generally referred to as the 'wet' and 'dry'. The distinctions developed by the Tiwi are much finer. The Tiwi refer to three major seasons based on environmental events and ceremonial periods. *Tiyari* (season of the song of the cicadas) is when the storm clouds begin to build up after seven months of virtually no rain. During this time the cicadas emerge and their song can be heard across the islands. *Jamutakari* (rainy season) begins around Christmas time when the storms finally break. In two months 2,500 mm. of rain brings forth lush tropical growth. *Kumurrupunari* (season of smoke) comes around March /April when powerful winds flatten the tall grasses that have thrived during the wet season. At this time when the vegetation is dry there is a deliberate firing of the bush, after which the plants regrow. The knowledge of fire and its effects is used as a cultural tool to improve the availability of animals. The *Kurlama* ceremony occurs during the season called *Tawutawunga (*time of the clapsticks) towards the end of the wet season. The Tiwi see the seasons as a frame of reference for their lifestyle, food sources and ceremonial activity connected to the environment and the land (Stevenson 1985: 309-15).

Land ownership on the Tiwi islands does not follow Western notions of ownership. Land is inherited from the father. The Tiwi identify themselves as members of their local independent land owning groups according to territorial divisions of the islands (see Map 3).

Social Structure

Tiwi social structure is organised into two types of groups. One is matrilineal, the other is patrilineal.

Matrilineal

The clan group which is matrilineal is known as *yiminga in the Tiwi language*, meaning totem, life, breath and pulse. Membership of a clan group is assumed through a person's mother. The clans are associated in a religious way with sites on the islands. The matrilineal groups consist of four large groups, each with a number of sub groups. The four large groups have been identified as – *Wantarringiwi* (sun), *Mantirikuwi* (pandanus), *Takaringuwi* (mullet) and *Marntimapila* (stone) (Ward 1990: 17-19).

Patrilineal

Patrilineal groups are associated with land and are known as *timani* (Hart 1930/31: 171-172; Goodale 1971: 14-15). At the beginning of the twentieth century the Tiwi were divided into nine territorial groups (Hart 1930/31: 171-172). Hart listed these groups as – *Tiklauila, Wrangwila, Mingwila, Malauila, Wilrangwila, Munupula*, *Turupula, Yeimpi amd Mandimbula.* Throughout the twentieth century the number of these groups has changed, with more recent studies showing twelve groups in 1990 – Murnupi, Wuliwankuwu, Jamulampi, Mantiyupi, Yimpinari, Jurrupi, Yangarntuwu, Marruwawu, Malawu, Minkuwu, Wurankuwu and Jikilarruwu (Ward 1990: 11).

The dreaming dance is also of patrilineal inheritance (Ward 1990: 21).

Early History

Contact between the Tiwi and outsiders previous to the twentieth century was sporadic. Macassan fishermen visited the islands in the seventeenth century (MacKnight 1972). The Dutch also visited the area in the seventeenth century. In 1636 Pieter Pieterszoon sailed along the north coast of Melville Island, commanding the

ships *Cleen, Amsterdam* and *Wesel* and named the area Van Dieman's Land (Powell 1988: 31).

During the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century there was a period of colonial exploration of Northern Australia. In 1705 Maarten van Delft surveyed and chartered the west, east and north coasts of Bathurst and Melville Islands and the northern two thirds of Apsley Strait between Bathurst and Melville Islands (Robert 1973: 40). In 1802 a French expedition under Baudin explored Bathurst Island. Between 1801 and 1803 an expedition led by Matthew Flinders in the Investigator explored the north coast of Australia, recording the north coasts of Bathurst and Melville Islands, thought at the time to be part of the Australian mainland (Flinders 1814/1966). In 1818 Phillip Parker King established that Melville and Bathurst were two separate islands, not joined to the Australian mainland. He named the two islands after The Right Honourable, the Earl of Bathurst, K.G., His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, and The Right Honourable, Lord Viscount Melville, K.T., First Lord of the Admiralty (King 1827/1969: 117).

In the early nineteenth century (1824) the British under the direction of Sir Gordon Bremer established a military garrison at Fort Dundas on Melville Island (King 1827: 233). Fort Dundas was abandoned in 1829. A combination of death, disease, white ants and the hostility of the Tiwi proved too much for the British (Krastins 1972: 28-33; Pye 1977: 9-11).

The twentieth century saw a change in the nature of Tiwi contact with the outside world. More permanent settlement was made by outsiders on the Tiwi islands. In 1904 Joe Cooper established a buffalo camp at Paru, Melville Island. Father Gsell a Jesuit missionary established a Catholic Church at Nguiu, Bathurst Island in 1911. This paved the way for infiltration into Tiwi life by missionaries and European authorities.

In 1906 Herbert Basedow, the Protector of Aborigines visited Melville Island briefly staying with Joe Cooper in his camp at Paru, Melville Island. A German, Herman Klaatsch visited the Tiwi in 1906. The purpose of his visit was to assemble a collection

of ethnographic objects to be shown in the *Rautnstrauch-Jost-Museum fur Volkerkunde* in Cologne. Baldwin Spencer visited the Tiwi islands in 1911/1912. His stay on the islands led to a major ethnographic collection being assembled. It is now found in the National Museum of Victoria, Melbourne.

The Tiwi and Father Gsell

Christianity has played a central role in the history of white/Aboriginal relations on the Tiwi Islands. While missionaries claimed goodwill and concern for Aboriginal people, they would disrupt the ceremonies and beliefs that were at the heart of Tiwi society. Missionaries saw their task as not only conversion to Christianity, but also the 'civilization' of Aboriginal Australians. In practice this meant imposing aspects of Western culture on Aboriginal people, while at the same time suppressing Aboriginal customs and ceremonies.

Father Gsell, a French priest from the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart arrived in Darwin in 1906 to set up a mission in the Darwin area. He decided that success could only be achieved in an area isolated from Darwin. After some deliberation he decided that his best chance of success was Bathurst or Melville Island.

In Father Gsell's own words:

> *I had decided whether to make my base on the mainland or to establish a bridgehead on one of the numerous islands which lie off the north coast. The Jesuits were my guides. I recall that they had tried the mainland, only to suffer a setback through flooding and the proximity of white men. I decided to choose an island. But which one? (Gsell 1956:40).*

In April 1911 Father Gsell set out to inspect the Tiwi Islands and to choose a site for a mission. On Melville Island Father Gsell met up with Joe Cooper who directed Father Gsell to an area of land on Bathurst Island that was neutral territory. In principle the land now known as Mantiyupwi land belonging to the *Mandiboolas* of Melville Island. Through negligence or inability to defend the land they had forfeited their rights or had allowed them to lapse and the site had become a no-man's land over which people came and went as they pleased. The ownership of this land is still under

discussion among the Tiwi people from these two groups (personal comment to myself in October 2014 from Magdalen Kelantumama, Patakijiyali Museum Bathurst Island). No-one laid claim to the land and all could visit it. This site, selected by Father Gsell, is where the present township of Nguiu is located today.

Father Gsell started his mission on Bathurst Island on a shoestring. With four Filipino helpers he built a prefabricated house, hired a small boat from the mainland for two pound a week, dug a well, planted gardens and introduced pigs and cattle. He did not go in search of people to convert. Instead he waited for them to come to him. The Tiwi were slow to come. In his book, *The Bishop with 150 Wives* he describes how a whole month had gone by and not one woman or child had been sighted, although men were coming and going.

After two months two Sisters from the Sisters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart arrived on Bathurst Island. The Tiwi on seeing that the missionaries now had their own 'wives' allowed their women and children to visit the mission. The arrival of the women had boosted Tiwi confidence in Father Gsell as they measured a man's prestige by the number of his wives. When the Tiwi discovered that the sisters lived celibate lives, which of course they did before very long, their astonishment knew no bounds. The example of the Sisters had a very profound effect. The Sisters were seen as *"angels sent to look after them; and they were given complete confidence." (Gsell 1956:64)*.

Conversion to Christianity would be a different matter. Father Gsell had realised very early that he was impossible trying to change the ways of the old people as he himself said, even after thirty years of work he didn't have one single adult convert. His aim was to work with the young people. He felt he had a much better chance of converting the young people to Christianity. In 1921 a young Tiwi girl, who later became known as Martina and who is credited with the Tiwi version of Women's Liberation, arrived on Father Gsell's doorstep. At a very early age she had become the 13th wife of an old Tiwi man. Finding the marriage unacceptable, she headed for the mission, asking Father Gsell to intervene and keep her at the mission. Father Gsell's first instructions to her were to go back to her people. Five days later she ran away again arriving back at the

mission, begging Father Gsell to help her. This time she had been followed by elders from her group.

When the Tiwi men arrived at the mission, they demanded that Father Gsell give back the young girl. He would be killed and his mission burnt down if he failed to do so. Not knowing how to solve this dilemma, Father Gsell waited for inspiration. He knew that the buying and selling of wives on a temporary or permanent basis was not new to the Tiwi. So he set out flour, knives, mirrors, tobacco and a tomahawk to the value of two pounds. On seeing this display of sought after goods, the Tiwi men entered into a contract with Father Gsell. Martina was allowed to join the convent as one of Father Gsell's 'wives' in exchange for these goods Gsell 1956: 80-87).

In time more girls were purchased as 'wives' by Father Gsell. By 1926 the mission had purchased 150 young Tiwi girls. Father Gsell became known as 'the bishop with 150 wives'. This later became the title of his memoirs which relate the early history of the mission on Bathurst Island.

When Father Gsell arrived in 1911 on Bathurst Island his aim was to transform Tiwi society. Gerardine Tungutalum gives a Tiwi account of the arrival of Father Gsell (see appendix). He believed that his primary purpose on Bathurst Island was a spiritual one – to save the bodies and souls of these people. He scorned the social system of the Tiwi, which he described as 'absolute communism'. He aimed to break the power the Tiwi male elders had in this society. He wanted to turn the Tiwi into agriculturalists. But above all he wanted to convert the Tiwi to Christianity. I was only when Martina arrived at the mission to escape an arranged marriage to an older man that he had any kind of breakthrough.

The young women that Father Gsell collected were raised in dormitories at the mission by the nuns. In their late teens they were allowed to marry Tiwi men of their own age and their own free choice, on the condition that their husbands promised to remain monogamous and that their children would become Catholics. The missionaries saw polygamy as sinful and an undesirable part of the 'new' Tiwi life. Infant bestowal was

also abolished. However, as Hart, Pilling and Goodale (1988) point out, a female did not actually choose freely in these marriages between age mates as Father Gsell had hoped. The exchange of partners between matrilineal clans remained intact in these new marriages. The matrilineal clan groups determine the marriage line. A marriage is usually arranged between families, but always in keeping to the marriageable lines. Even those who apparently choose a partner, do not make a random choice, but always adhere to traditional lines of acceptance (Ward 1990: 17-19). Young Tiwi girls selected youths to which they had been tentatively promised by relatives. They married under mission auspices young men who were at least second or third in line as husbands. A Tiwi girl would normally be married to an older man. After this marriage had ended with his death she would marry the next in line. These new marriages had new obligations attached to them. They included a bride price. By the 1950s some men were asking as much as 100 pounds for a daughter and matrilocal, post-marital residence with the young man promising to 'work' for the father of the bride, thereby ensuring a set up that functioned in much the same way as before.

Father Gsell thought that a new Tiwi system would result from monogamous marriages and a pattern similar to the European pattern of single family households would emerge. He was wrong. The Tiwi managed to retain large households even under the mission system of monogamy. The composition of these large households altered but their function remained the same. Instead of a large household consisting of an older man with many wives, the new households included women who had become widows, especially if they had daughters. These women were protected by their brothers and the brothers became 'bosses' of their daughters and arranged marriages for them with boys who were willing to become 'workers' for them.

Another impact the church brought to bear upon the Tiwi was the suppression of so called 'pagan' rituals. This had a strong impact on Tiwi initiations. The indoctrination and seclusion of a large number of young Tiwi women eligible for initiation, prevented their initiation at an appropriate age. Also young Tiwi men were able to obtain wives from the mission at an age when they had not yet completed their initiation, as had been customary in the past. Some Tiwi did become devout Catholics and gradually a

Tiwi population was created which regarded the mission as its home. The number of Tiwi attached to the mission increased over the years. The missionaries gave new monogamous couples protection and also provided rations including tobacco, medical treatment, housing and schools. Health problems such as scabies, hepatitis, leprosy, yaws and tuberculosis were addressed. The use of Western medicine helped greatly in establishing the mission and its staff in the eyes of the Tiwi Islanders. Initially one of the greatest successes Father Gsell had was the treatment of yaws with a simple injection (Gsell 1956: 72).

Today the Catholic Mission on Bathurst Island has changed its policy towards traditional culture. Traditional rituals are no longer suppressed. The church supports Tiwi culture and is attempting to integrate it with Catholicism. As Sister Anne Gardiner has pointed out – the Tiwi have a strong spiritual history of their own that can embrace Christian beliefs in its own special way (Gardiner 1993). Today the Tiwi involved with the church are seeking authentic ways to express both their Tiwi and their Christian religious heritage in meaningful ways. Big changes have been encountered by the Tiwi this century. The historical process of encapsulation into Christianity hasn't completely compromised their distinctly Tiwi value and belief system.

Creation Time

Tiwi life today and in the past is directed by the events of the creation period. *Palinari* is the creation time. The creation story as known by the people of the Tiwi Islands has been passed down the generations of Tiwi people. During the *Palinari* there was only darkness and the earth was flat. There was no sun, moon or stars. *Murtankala,* an old blind woman crawled out of the ground with her three children – *Wuriupurungala, Murupiyankala* and *Purrukuparli*. She crawled on her knees and as she crawled sea water rose behind her tracks dividing the islands from mainland Australia. As she made her way around the land mass she decided it was too large, so she divided the land mass into two islands. When *Murtankala* saw there was nothing on the islands for her children to eat or drink, she ordered that the land be covered with vegetation and animals. Leaving her children camped in the area where she came out of the ground,

she disappeared. No-one knows where she came from or disappeared to (Kerinaiua 1994: 1-32).

The following version of the Creation story was told in 1985 by Beatrice Kerinaiua, who heard the story from her grandmothers. The story has been translated into English by the bi-lingual education program at Murrupurtiyanuwu Catholic School on Bathurst Island:

> *"Long ago there were no people on the earth and darkness covered the land. There were no rivers or billabongs, there was no water in the streams, no hills or valleys. There were no animals living in the sea, no fish, turtles or crocodiles.*
>
> *Above the sky there lived the Yamparriparri, the spirits who roamed around the earth looking for living things that they could devour.*
>
> *Below the earth there was a large cave separating it from the earth by a valley and hills. Here in this land beneath the earth there were some people who roamed about in the darkness.*
>
> *Among these people there lived one old woman. She was really big and bent and her face was lined and wrinkled. Her name was Murtankala. On her back she carried her children, two girls and a boy.*
>
> *One day she dug her way from the cave below and arrived on the earth. When she knelt to rest her children cried because they were hungry. Murtankala had no milk so she looked around for food for her children and for soft ground where she could lay them, but she could find nothing. There was no grass, no water nor any bushland where they could look for food.*
>
> *Murtankala placed her children in a bark basket and tied it around her neck for she was afraid of the Yamparriparri people because they might want to eat her children.*
>
> *So then she began to crawl at that place where she had arrived on the earth. When she crawled along she made a large hole behind her and the sea water began to rush in behind her back.*
>
> *She was facing towards where the sun now rises and her face was turned to that eastern side, she crawled on and after a long time returned to where she first started and so she created these two islands. Murtankala crawled ashore and placed her children on the ground.*
>
> *Then Murtankala wanted to have light so she called one woman from the cave below. Murtankala took hold of the bark of a tree and lit that piece of bark and*

she gave it to the woman who was holding a bark basket in her hand. Inside the basket there was the red soil of earth.

Murtankala told the woman, "You will light the fire across the sky, so my children can see and will be warm. Travel across the sky to the west, go down to the underworld and come up again in the east. So there will be light and darkness."

Murtankala took hold of a bark basket with red earth inside it. She said to the other woman, "You will throw this red soil high in the sky so my children will know that night is coming. And in the morning throw soil again and my children will know it is time to rise."

When she finished speaking she disappeared and she was never seen again. Her two daughters, Wurupurungala and Murupiyankala and their brother Purrukuparli lived in that place where they camped.

Wurupurungala became lonely. She wanted children to hold in her arms. Her sister Murupiyankala also wanted children. Murupiyankala said to her older sister, "What shall we do?" So they went and talked together to Purrukuparli.

He said to them, "I will go and look for children for the two of you." So Purrukuparli went off.

For many days he looked around but didn't see any children. Then he saw the little island called Wayilawu. When the tide was low he could walk on the reef and so he arrived there.

When he arrived at the sandbank he saw that tiny little person. He was climbing high up on the rocks as he saw him. That little person spoke to Purrukuparli and said, "I'm Pitipituwu." So Purrukuparli asked him for children for his two sisters. The little person replied, "I will become a spirit person and you and I will return to your camp. There I will cease being who I am and enter your younger sisters.

Thus Wurupurungala and Murupiyankala had many children and grandchildren. Purrukuparli lived there happily with his wife Pima until the time of the death of their son, Jinani" (Kerinaiua 1994:1-32).

The Ceremonies

The Tiwi place great emphasis on two ceremonies, the *Pukumani* (funeral) ceremony and the *Kurlama* (yam) ceremony. Tiwi social and ceremonial life evolved out of mythological stories about the creation times. During creation times the activities of the ancestral beings laid the foundations of the social laws and tribal relationships. The

activities of the forebears are told as stories and are re-enacted in dance and song during ceremonies.

Pukumani

The Pukumani ceremony originated during the Creation Time when Purrukuparli organised the first funeral rites for his dead son *Jinani.* The mythical man, *Purrukuparli* was *Murtungkala's* only son. He organised the first *Pukumani* for his son *Jinani.* The ceremony culminates in the erection of monumental carved and decorated burial poles called *tutini.* These are gifts to placate the spirit of the dead. Placed around the grave, the power from the poles comforted and protected the new ghost, who would then leave and go back to its clan country. Pole carvers are commissioned to carve and paint the poles. They are elaborately decorated with white, yellow and red ochres and black charcoal in bold geometric designs. The poles range in size and can be up to four metres in height. During the ceremony participants decorate themselves with natural ochres in intricate designs to conceal their true identity from the malevolent *Mapurtiti* spirits of the dead. The poles erected around the grave are the central focus of intense displays of dramatic singing and dancing. Poles often have upturned *tunga,* bark baskets (see Plate 8) placed on top. These painted baskets hold the gifts for the men who made the burial poles and performed the dances at the ceremony. The ceremony is conducted according to strict ritual custom and every action and word is performed to ensure proper respect for the spirit of the deceased. After the ceremony the poles are left to weather in the bush (Anderson and Apuatimi 1985: 4-6).

The story of the death of *Jinani* was told to Charles Mountford in 1954 and he subsequently recorded it in his 1958 publication, *The Tiwi, their Art, Myth and Ceremony.*

> *"Purrukuparli was strongly attached to Djinini. Every morning, when Bima went out food-gathering, she would take Djinini with her, bringing him back to Purrukuparli at the end of the day, together with the food she had collected.*
>
> *In the same camp lived an unmarried man, Tjapara, who used to persuade Bima to leave her child asleep under the shade of a tree and sneak into the forest with him. This intrigue had been going on for some time when, on one very hot*

day, Bima stayed away from her child too long, for, when she returned, the shade had moved and Djinini was lying dead in the hot sun. Distraught with grief, Bima chanted her song of remorse –

Bili wangia tingatia

(Evil woman am I to have caused the death of my son.)

When Purrukuparli heard of the death of Djinini, his anger knew no bounds. Striking his wife on the head with a throwing stick, and hunting her into the forest, he decreed that death should come to the whole world. As his son had died, said Purrukuparli, so the whole of creation would die, and once dead, never again would come to life. There was no death before that time.

Tjapara remonstrated with Purrukuparli, and pleaded for the dead body of Djinini, promising to restore him to life in three days. But Purrukuparli was so adamant that the two men quarrelled about this matter until Purrukuparli, losing his temper, threw a *murunga at Tjapara who replied with the forked throwing stick, miluanta known today as Tjapara's muruguna. Soon the two men were locked in a deadly struggle, each wounding the other severely in the face and body.*

Still railing. Purrukuparli picked up the dead body of his son, which Bima had wrapped in a sheet of paperbark, and walking backward into the sea, called out loudly as the waters closed over his head,

Mauliantanili awangtini mu mu

(You must all follow me; as I die, so must you all die.)

The place where Purrukuparli died ……on the east coast of Melville Island, became a whirlpool so strong that any aboriginal who approached it in a canoe would be drowned. When Tjapara saw what had happened, he changed himself into the moon. But he did not entirely escape the decree of Purrukuparli for, even though Tjapara is eternally reincarnated, he has to die for three days. On any clear night,one can see on the face of the moon man the wounds he received in his fight with Purrukuparli so long ago.

When Tukimbini…heard of the death of Purrukuparli, he sent a message stick to Talinini of the honey people of central Bathurst Island, appointing him the ceremonial leader… of the burial rituals.

At the same time,…. he told the people who lived at Murupianga, Wuriupi and Wailu, that as they were appointed "workers,….it would be their duty to cut the bural poles, tudinis, make and paint the large ceremonial baskets, wanatuna, and the elaborate pukamuni spears, tunkaringa, as well as to clear the burial ground….the place where Purrukuparli died" (Mountford 1958:29-31).

Kurlama

The *Kurlama* ceremony is a yearly celebration of life, a ritual to help with good health and to ensure good hunting. In the past this ritual was performed as part of different stages of ceremonial hierarchy. The ceremony involves two to three days and nights of ritual body painting, dancing and singing. Songs are about everyday situations, significant events, remorse or joy for someone or something past and stories about mischief and intrigue. There are some traditional *Kurlama* songs which include a re-enactment of the first *Kurlama* ceremony performed by *Purrikikini*, the Boobook Owl and his wife *Pimtoma,* the Barn Owl woman.

Kurlama yams are poisonous if not prepared properly. The yams are carefully gathered and prepared. Men dig up the yams which they soak in water for three days to leach out the poison. After this they dig a deep round hole in which a fire is prepared. When this burns down, the yams are placed in it and cooked overnight. Early the next morning the hole is filled with bark and sand and long sticks are placed around it. After three days of body painting and singing, the men dig up the yams and have a ritual feast, communing with the spirits of leaders long dead. The men sing around the remaining coals and dance the owl bird dance, holding each other's arms and shaking like birds as they imitate the bird's cry.

Ceremonial Regalia

In the Tiwi past, before the twentieth century, the most spectacular visual markings displayed by the Tiwi were the body decorations, facial paintings, headdresses, armlets and mourning rings that were worn at major Tiwi ceremonies such as the *Pukumani* (burial) ceremony and the *Kurlama* (yam) ceremony. Plate 1 shows a Tiwi man in full ceremonial regalia. Many items of ceremonial regalia appear as motifs in Tiwi print designs.

Ceremonial regalia include the *yarriringa,* a slim mourning band (see overleaf) made from fine pandanus fibres and coloured with natural ochres, worn in clusters along the arms of the bereaved during the *pukumani* period of mourning.

Armbands and headbands made of woven pandanus and feathers are known as *pamijini* (see Plate 7).They are usually constructed from the root of the mangrove tree, bound with string made from the pandanus palm. They often have feathers attached with bush string and the wax of the native bee. Bright arbrus berries are sometimes stuck on as decoration. Natural ochres are used to decorate the bands. *Pamijini* are worn for both *Pukuman*i and *Kurlama* ceremonies Women wear large feathered ones on their heads for *Pukumani* dances, while the smaller ones are worn high on each arm (Anderson and Apuatimi 1985: 15).

Jukuti are the bark armbands (see Plate 7). These armbands are constructed using bark that has been softened and bent. Beeswax and pandanus are used to hold them together. Often feathers are fixed to the armbands using wax and bush string. Natural ochres are used to decorate them with traditional geometric designs. The *jukuti* are worn high on the arm by young men and women during parts of the *Kurlama* ceremony (Anderson and Apuatimi 1985: 18).

Tapalinga (see Plate 7) are highly decorative ornaments traditionally worn in *Pukumani* ceremonies and for some *Kurlama* activities. They are hung around the neck or fixed to the head. They are constructed from woven vine or pandanus, painted with ochres and have feathers attached with bush string and bees wax, Red arbrus berries are attached with bees wax (Anderson and Apuatimi 1985: 19).

Marikwani (see Plate7) is a neck ornament fitted to both men and women at a certain level of initiation. They are worn for a period of one month before being removed by cutting. They are made from flexible vine, bent around the neck and tied across the ends with bush string with more strings hanging loosely (Anderson and Apuatini 1985:20).

The goose feather balls, *tokayinga* are worn around the neck for the *Pukumani* ceremony. They are made by pushing the ends of downy feathers of the pied goose into a ball of native bees wax. The mourner will hold the ball in his mouth while dancing, to help ease grief. The *tokayinga* is also worn on other ceremonial occasions

either around the neck or tied around the upper arm. Held in the teeth while dancing it increases the dramatic effect (Holmes 1995: 133; Anderson and Apuatimi 1985: 16).

Aratji, the feathered head dress is made from the feathers of the white cockatoo. It is entwined into the hair on top of the head (see Plate 1).

The beard *imputu* is made of bark, bees wax and goose feathers. The false beard is worn by men at ceremonies, both *Pukumani* and *Kurlama*. The beard is worn in conjunction with an intricately painted face and is an effective disguise to protect the wearer from the spirit of the dead. The feathers are attached to a band of woven pandanus fibre with bees wax (Holmes 1995: 133; Anderson and Apuatimi 1985: 17).

Numwariyaka, spears are made from ironwood. These intricately carved spears (see Plate 6) are made by elders. Much time was spent in the old days by men carving spectacular spears to show off their skills and to boost their social status. There are several variations to the spear. The male spear, *tunlalinta/tukaringa* has large barbs down one side only. The female spear, *arawinikiri* has barbs down both sides of the spear head. The spears are decorated in traditional designs with natural ochres. These spears are never used for hunting or fighting. They are symbols of status used for display purposes only. They are intricate pieces of work showing the many days of painstaking work that went into creating them. In the past they were carved with cockle shells and would often take up to three months to complete. At every Pukumani ceremony an elder would stand guard with a long thin double sided spear with which to spear anyone who interrupted the ceremony (Holmes 1995: 134-135; Anderson and Apuatimi 1985:9).

Clubs and throwing sticks come in a variety of shapes and sizes (see Plate 6). Some are made for everyday use and some are made for fighting. The narrow fat club is used to shield the face and for hand- to- hand combat. The forked club was for piercing the eyes and throat. The flat paddle shaped club was for chopping the head and neck in battle. The heavy bulbous club was for throwing at the legs of the opponent to unbalance him. *Taparrunga*, a triple pointed club was used for close combat and was

first made by *Purrukuparli*. *Thorpurunga*, a long forked club with two points was first made by *Taparra*, the moon man. *Tarramuni*, *takamuni* are heavy rounded clubs used to club the head of the opponent, and also to throw at the legs. The heavy ironwood fighting stick is called *timirrikamara*. Others are *murukuwunga*, the long and round fighting stick and *kutunga*, the short and round fighting stick (Holmes 1995: 135).

Tiwi artefacts such as the burial poles, spears and decorative ornaments for ceremony provide the artists with inspiration for Tiwi print designs. In the past these items of material culture were considered to be ethnographic curiosities. This aspect of Tiwi material culture is explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 2
Ethnographic Curiosities

In the past outsiders have considered 'traditional' examples of artistic output as more noteworthy and 'genuine' than contemporary examples. Throughout the twentieth century there has been an extraordinary aesthetic, economic and scholarly investment in the material culture of indigenous Australians. Huge numbers of material culture items have been traded, catalogued, stored, exhibited and published. Contemporary indigenous cultural items, including printed fabric, reflect the changing nature of contemporary indigenous society and provide a useful insight into contemporary Indigenous culture. Indigenous societies are not 'static' and we should not expect them to be so. Cultural interaction is not a new phenomenon. It has been taking place for centuries. In this chapter I examine the changing attitudes towards Aboriginal artistic expression in the twentieth century. I explore Tiwi artistic expression before silk screen printing by examining the early collections of Tiwi material culture put together by D. M. Sayers, Baldwin Spencer and later in the 1950s by Charles Mountford, Stuart Scougall and Tony Tuckson.

As John Berger (1972:7) has stated: "*The way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe*." Collections of Aboriginal cultural items put together for museums and art galleries in the early twentieth century were influenced by philosophical and social theories of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Over time understanding of humankind and society has expanded. Likewise, understanding of Australian Aboriginal culture and society has expanded. As a result, reasons and methods used when putting together Australian Aboriginal culture collections, have changed. In this chapter I will examine the influence of theory on method in the study and collection of Australian Aboriginal material culture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Historical and Disciplinary Perspectives

At the beginning of the twentieth century some artists such as Picasso, Giacometti, Brancusi and others from this generation of artists recognised that "primitive" objects

were in fact powerful “art”. Tribal objects had been gathered in the West by ethnographic museums, art galleries and private collectors. A major exhibition held at MOMA (Museum of Modern Art) in 1984, *Primitivism in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern* documented the influence of non-Western artefacts on modern artists. The ‘discovery’ of tribal objects occurred during the twentieth century at the time of colonialism. A large class of non-Western artefacts came to be defined as “art”. This taxonomic shift occurred when the world’s tribal people came under European political, economic and evangelical dominion. Previously non-Western objects had generally been classified as ethnographic specimens. In art galleries non-Western objects were displayed for their formal and aesthetic qualities. In ethnographic museums they were presented in a “cultural” context. When these tribal objects were presented as art, the original cultural context was excluded.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century non-Western objects have been discussed within the discourses and institutions of art or within those of anthropology. These two domains have excluded and confirmed each other by disputing the right to contextualise or represent these objects. The aesthetic/anthropological opposition born from the perception of a vanishing tribal world, rescued and made valuable and meaningful as either ethnographic “culture” or primitive/modern “art” is invalid. Both discourses assume a ‘primitive’ world in need of preservation and representation. The inventive existence of vernacular tribal cultures is supressed in the process of either constituting authentic “traditional” worlds or appreciating their products in the timeless category of “art”. In this way the real or genuine life of tribal works always precedes their collection and is seen as an act of salvage. At the same time the actual ongoing life and inventions of tribal people are erased in the name of cultural or artistic “authenticity”.

The basic premise of my work is, the Tiwi silk screen print is a cultural phenomenon of the twentieth century that resulted from historical happenings. The incorporation of silk screen printing into Tiwi image making is part of a dynamic response to new conditions and changes in their society. The Tiwi silk screen print is a vehicle for expressing cultural identity in a changing world.

Theoretical Perspective

Anthropological thought in the twentieth century relevant to material culture shows two distinct phases. The first phase is dominated by an evolutionary paradigm and is based on a classificatory approach. The second phase begins in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This phase emphasises Aboriginal material culture as having great artistic merit and is characterised by its visual component being isolated from the cultural whole.

Early twentieth century collecting was influenced by notions of cultural evolution prevalent at the time. These collections were used to show how culture had evolved into its present stage of complex civilisation. Indigenous creativity was regarded as an ethnographic curiosity by Europeans. Cultural objects were collected, categorised and stored in museums as evidence of the earliest stages of human culture. During the late nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century anthropology was concerned with establishing laws of human nature by which all societies behaved. T.H. Huxley published *Man's Place in Nature* in 1863. He argued that Australian Aboriginal physical anthropology could provide evidence to support an evolutionary hypothesis. He believed there were distinct similarities between Neanderthal crania and Australian Aborigines (Huxley 1863: 185, 202). The dominant paradigm at this time was evolution. Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* had been published in 1859. This paradigm came to be applied to material culture studies. The most visible proponents of the evolutionary paradigm in material culture studies were Edward Burnett Tylor (1865) and Lt. Augustus Henry Lane Fox Pitt-Rivers (1874). During the nineteenth century and early twentieth century attitudes towards Australian Aboriginal culture centred around the concept of the material progress of mankind. Australian Aboriginal culture was used as evidence of the survival of an early stage of human development. Australian Aborigines were seen as living examples of "primeval humanity" and Australia itself was seen as a "storehouse of fossil culture" (Mulvaney 1990:24). At the First Congress of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science in 1888 it was proclaimed that the purpose of anthropology was "the critical examination of the intellectual and material progress of man from the earliest stages down to the

present" and stressed Australian evidence as important for understanding "the earliest stages of the human race" (Wild 1889: 443-445). The particular objective in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century was as Pitt- Rivers stated:

> *Tracing out the sequence of ideas by which mankind has advanced from the condition of the lower animals to that in which we find him at the present time, and by this means provide really reliable materials for a philosophy of progress (Pitt-Rivers 1874/1906:9-10).*

The emphasis at this time was on the notion of progress and evolution of humankind from the primitive to the civilised. In *Primitive Culture* published in 1871 Tylor argued that culture evolved from the simple to the complex, and that all societies passed through three basic stages of development - savagery, barbarism and civilisation. Development was seen in terms of progress and this accounted for cultural variation. Tylor (1871) believed that contemporary societies were at different stages of evolution. He postulated parallel evolutionary sequences. Australian Aborigines were seen as living representatives of the Early Stone Age (Tylor 1898: 1014). Tylor believed that the material culture of Australian Aborigines was a survival from a past era doomed to extinction through contact with the superior white races. He believed that Aboriginal society and culture would, through an evolutionary process, eventually become extinct.

The study of Australian Aboriginal material culture during this time further emphasised the view that Australian Aborigines were "*stationary remnants of a primitive humanity*" (Tylor 1898: 1014). The Pitt- Rivers Museum, University of Oxford, was assembled to show how human minds had progressed from the simple to the complex. Pitt-Rivers arranged weapons in a sequence in accordance with his theory of technological evolution. Cooper (1989: 212-214) records that this collection included items from Melville Island. Australian Aboriginal material culture items were basic to his whole project as examples of survivals from an earlier time. Pitt-Rivers wrote:

> *In every instance in which I have attempted to arrange my collecting in sequence so as to trace the higher forms, the weapons of the Australians have found their place lowest in the scale (Pitt-Rivers 1874/1906: 9-10).*

Pitt-Rivers attempted to demonstrate that all Australian weapons could be traced by their connecting links to the simple stick *"such as might have been used by an ape"* (Pitt-Rivers 1874/1906: 2). He believed that the Australian Aborigine had a simple material culture that was representative of early developmental stages of many artefact types. He constructed diagrams which showed the movement from simple to more complex stages in the development of forms (Pitt-Rivers 1874: Plate 111).

Other late nineteenth century collections of Australian Aboriginal material culture placed emphasis on food gathering implements and weapons of warfare as evidence of the 'hard primitivism' of Australian Aborigines (Smith 1945: 24-29; Mulvaney 1990: 6). These collections displayed tools, weapons and other utilitarian items. This concept of 'hard primitivism' was based on the belief that Australian Aborigines inhabited a harsh environment and had little or no time for ceremonial or artistic pursuits or other activities that were not directly linked to survival and the search for food (Jones 1988: 145). "*Europeans found what they expected to find in Aboriginal material culture"* (Jones 1988: 145).

Throughout the late nineteenth century huge trade fairs became popular amongst colonising nations. These included the Paris Exhibition of 1879/80, the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1879/80 and the Calcutta Exhibition of 1883/84. At these exhibitions spears and clubs were prominently displayed as examples of Australian Aboriginal culture, with focus on little else. Cultural items were presented in such a way as to provide evidence of the progression from the simplest human culture to the most sophisticated cultures, the technologically advanced cultures of Western Europe and North America. Museums became 'teaching centres' of evolutionary theory (Jones 1988: 157).

Many nineteenth century observers witnessed Aboriginal ceremonial dances and were aware of the use of ochres and other decorations. However, there remained a lack of recognition of the complexity of Aboriginal culture. Early ethnographic literature recorded the existence of rock engraving and painting but commentators rarely connected these occurrences with the activities of living people (Jones 1988: 145).

Collectors had fixed ideas about what they wanted to obtain and this was reflected in patterns of production by Aborigines for Western markets. The emphasis was on the stationary and utilitarian nature of Aboriginal cultural items. Developing forms of material culture were rejected as inauthentic.

The Collections

The first documentation of Tiwi artistic expression came to the Western world via the collection of D. M. Sayers. Sayers was a merchant and mining agent, based in Adelaide. During his survey trips to Northern Australia in the final decades of the nineteenth century Sayers, with the assistance of Joe Cooper, a buffalo shooter on Melville Island, collected ethnographic material from the Tiwi Islands. The Sayers collection was sold to the South Australian Museum. The significance of this collection lies in the fact that it contains the earliest and most complete collection of Tiwi burial poles and associated ceremonial objects.

The Sayers Collection was put together at approximately the same time as William Baldwin Spencer put together a collection of objects and photographs from the Tiwi Islands. Baldwin Spencer visited the Tiwi islands in 1911 as a member of a small scientific commission sent to the Northern Territory by the Commonwealth Government. Their instructions were to make a preliminary survey of the country. Spencer later returned to the Northern Territory for twelve months as Special Commissioner for Aboriginals and Chief Protector. During this time Spencer visited Bathurst and Melville Islands. He returned to Bathurst Island again in December 1912. It was during these trips to the Tiwi Islands that Spencer put together a collection of Tiwi cultural items. These are now housed in the Museum of Victoria. Mulvaney and Calaby (1985:292) record that Spencer took a collection of stores with him on his first fieldwork trip to Melville Island in order to pay informants and purchase specimens. These stores included seven hundredweight of flour, 60 yards of red cloth and handkerchiefs, 12 tins of treacle, a gross of pipes, 4 dozen hatchets, 20 lbs. of beads and 28lbs. of sweets.

Like other anthropologists and scientists of his time Spencer thought Australian Aborigines to be at a stage of evolution that preceded the development of both art and religion. Spencer was heavily influenced by Sir James Frazer, author of *The Golden Bough*. Frazer believed that Australian Aborigines were a relic of a pre-logical stage of human development. In *The Golden Bough* Frazer argued that magic gave way to religion which further gave way to scientific thought. Frazer viewed Australian Aboriginal myths and rituals as forms of magic (Frazer 1922/1969: 72). Spencer's 1927 publication *Arunta* was dedicated to Frazer. Spencer has been described as possibly the last of the great Victorian anthropologists (Mulvaney in Vanderwal 1982). He believed that biological evolution went along with mental development and material progress.

Spencer regarded Tiwi material culture as ethnographic objects. His collection of cultural objects range from ceremonial items, musical instruments, watercraft and spears. Both the Sayers and Spencer collections show that the Tiwi produced their most elaborate items of material culture for their ceremonies. Spencer recorded other items of material culture, such as bark canoes, dugout canoes, bark aprons and bark shelters in his photographs and on film. However, he did not classify these items in the same way as the spears, clubs, stone implements and ceremonial objects. Both collections show an evolutionary and taxonomic approach in their presentation. This was typical of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The presentations divorced the cultural items from their cultural contexts and presented them typologically. See Tables 1. and 2. Appendix 3. These ethnographic items were used to show Aboriginal culture was a precursor to civilised European culture and society. These material culture collections were used by anthropologists to explain the progress of humankind from its origins to civilisation. However, it is important to note as Weltfish has pointed out (1958: 301-311; 1960: 160-177) that these collections do not show the conceptual categories for cultural items important to the Tiwi. As the 1975 Museums Report points out, these:

> *Europocentric preconceptions concealed the essential spirituality, the network of social bonding and obligations, and intimate man-territory relationship which typify Aboriginal society (Committee of Inquiry on Museums and National Collections 1975:21).*

New Discourses

Franz Boas was the first to challenge the application of evolutionary principle to the study of indigenous material cultures. In 1927 Boas published *Primitive Art* in which he expressed the view that the notion of a distinct primitive mentality that is a less intelligent form of humanity was scientifically unsustainable and morally unacceptable. He argued for the study of indigenous material culture from an aesthetic point of view (Boas 1927/1955).

As anthropological fieldwork continued and expanded in the twentieth century, anthropologists had to give up evolutionary schemes and theories. During the first half of the twentieth century most European anthropologists believed that Australian Aboriginal people were in danger of extinction. There was a sense of urgency in the race against passing time to record this archaic society before it disappeared altogether.

After the early interest in Aboriginal material culture at the beginning of the twentieth century which prompted collections such as the Spencer Tiwi Collection, less interest was taken in material culture collections. Between the time of WW1 and the late 1950s there was a shift away from material culture towards social organisation in anthropology (Morphy 1988:60; Miller 1993: 5-7).

A conceptual shift had also taken place with regard to how Australian Aboriginal creativity was viewed. There was a recognition by some in Australia that Aboriginal creativity had great artistic merit. This idea was first voiced by Margaret Preston (Preston 1925, 1930). She suggested that Aboriginal art might form a foundation for the development of a national art. Six articles on Aboriginal art were published in *Art and Australia* between 1925 and 1941 (Preston 1925; Preston 1930; McConnel 1935; McCarthy 1939; Preston 1940; Preston 1941).

In 1929 the National Gallery of Victoria held an exhibition – *Australian Aboriginal Art*. This was the first exhibition of Aboriginal art held in Australia. By the 1940s the perception of Aboriginal art as having aesthetic value was strengthened. Tony Tuckson,

Deputy Director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales argued that the 1943 exhibition, *Primitive Art* held jointly by the National Gallery of Victoria and the National Museum of Victoria did a lot to promote interest in Aboriginal art (Tuckson 1964: 63).

In 1954 Charles Mountford visited Melville Island with the National Geographic Team. He commissioned a large collection of bark paintings and other items from Melville Island for the South Australian Museum (Mountford 1958). Mountford had previously led the 1948 American-Australian Scientific Expedition to Arnhem Land (AASEAL)where he obtained a large number of bark paintings from the area. In 1956 each State Gallery received from the Commonwealth Government 24 paintings from Arnhem Land collected by the Australian Scientific Expedition to Arnhem Land (Mountford 1956; Tuckson 1964:63). Jones (1988: 172) credits Mountford with achieving more success than anybody else in promoting Aboriginal art in Australia, Europe and America during the 1950s and 1960s, as a result of the impact of his collections.

In 1959 the Art Gallery of New South Wales accepted a gift of Melville Island burial poles from Dr. Stuart Scougall, a collector of Aboriginal art who had collaborated with Tony Tuckson, the Deputy Director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales (AGNSW) (Neale 1994: 82). At this time there was some doubt as to how Aboriginal cultural items should be viewed – were they art or ethnological curiosities. Douglas Stewart writing in the Bulletin (July 1, 1959) had this to say:

> *….the 17 grave-posts….make a somewhat bizarre display….and most people, admitting that the poles are delightful in themselves, will wonder if the proper place for them is not the museum….These Melville Island posts, though have a definite artistic merit of an elementary kind, are really more in the nature of ethnological curiosities than works of art (Stewart in Tuckson 1964: 63)*

James Gleeson writing for the Sun (July 18, 1959) said:

> *Whatever their symbolic significance might be they represent an ensemble of abstract shapes of considerable aesthetic appeal. The very limitations of the technique and the restrictions imposed by the media produce a fine unity of design, despite the fact that no two posts are identical in shape or decoration. Even in the artificial atmosphere of an art gallery they are impressive, for the painted posts stand about the grave in a protective ring, forming as it were, a barrier between the world of living reality and the shadowy world of the spirit (Gleeson in Tuckson 1964: 63).*

Mountford put together a large collection of Tiwi material culture when he visited the islands in 1954 with the National Geographic Team. Mountford obtained paintings on bark and painted bark baskets (*tungas*) and a number of carved figures. His aim was to record the mythological stories he believed the paintings represented. It was unknown to him that Tiwi practice in these matters differed considerably from that of mainland Australia and the Arnhem Land model he was familiar with. The Charles Mountford Collection is now held in the South Australian Museum.

During the latter half of the twentieth century Australia became more familiar with the artistic expressions of Australia's Aborigines through various collections. Perceptions of Aboriginal creativity fundamentally altered. Gradually a new perspective emerged as the visual and aesthetic value of Australian Aboriginal creativity was recognised. By the end of the twentieth century the lives of Australian Aborigines were no longer seen as devoid of creative and cultural significance. In fact, many non-Aboriginal Australians had come to realise that Australian Aboriginal life is a highly complex and integrated cultural and religious world, much of which is communicated through its artistic expression and material culture that finds expression through many new media today. Philosophical, political and social theories and beliefs have changed dramatically over the past one hundred years. During the twentieth century a shift has occurred in understanding, from an evolutionary paradigm to a much broader set of paradigms, where cultures are understood on their own terms as unique entities. Australian Aboriginal culture is no longer used as a sign of perceived 'savagery'. The theory of cultural evolution and the accompanying racist and paternalistic attitudes that dominated thinking at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century have been successfully challenged. As Langness (1987: 48) points out, Western Europeans can no longer compare themselves and their culture favourably with all other cultures. Edwards (1988: 270) has argued that the concept of 'civilisation' is no longer largely defined by science and technology, as it was in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Contemporary Australian Aboriginal material culture can no longer be treated as an ethnographic curiosity, or as an example of the static unchanging state of humankind's first existence.

As the twentieth century progressed aesthetic appreciation of Aboriginal artistic expression developed. Australian Aboriginal artistic expression has been accepted and allowed a place in the Western art world. Today it is acknowledged as one of the world's great living artistic traditions. In conjunction with this, the use of new media has been accepted. Tiwi material culture has exhibited great changes in the twentieth century. Many new items and media have come into their cultural repertoire. Alongside this, the contextualisation and value given to cultural items by outsiders has changed.

Printed Fabric

The printing of textile lengths has a limited and recent history in Aboriginal Australia. As Roger Butler, curator of Australian prints at the National Gallery of Australia has stated:

> *It is not a matter of chance that Australian Aboriginals began to produce prints in the late 1960s. The origins lay in a need to preserve and promote the rich traditions of their visual culture, printmaking offered the possibility of vital new forms of artistic expression….There is no tradition of printmaking in Australian Aboriginal culture other than the stencilled images – often of hands – found in caves throughout Australia (Butler 1993: 2-3).*

Printing techniques took root in the 1970s. The Referendum of 1967, the Aboriginal Land Rights flag of 1971 and the Aboriginal Land Rights Act (Northern Territory) of 1976 prompted an intense cultural resurgence for indigenous Australians. Screen printing was introduced to Aboriginal communities with government funded assistance for white teachers, adult educators and art advisers. The transition from ephemeral forms of mark making to modern styles of screen printing would probably not have occurred without the direct intervention of the Australia Council for the Arts. Also, integral to the process has been the continuous presence in the twentieth century of various professional crafts people who have worked in collaboration with indigenous artists in remote communities.

An important facilitator in the 1970s was Mary White, a prominent designer and teacher who was appointed to be crafts advisor to the Australia Council for the Arts in

1971 and later the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. White's role was to explore the potential of developing craft based industries in Aboriginal communities that drew on traditional skills and beliefs. The decision to introduce printed textiles to indigenous Australians in the early 1970s was possibly sparked by the explosion of textile art forms during the 1960s and 1970s as part of the craft movement.

The story of printed textiles in Aboriginal Australia has been dominated since 1969 by the commercial success of Tiwi Design on Bathurst Island. Tiwi Design was initially funded and encouraged by the Catholic Mission resident on the island. Tiwi Design was the first Aboriginal screen printing workshop to specialise in textile production and has become a significant role model for many similar enterprises in remote communities. It has stood the test of time, succeeding in the marketplace.

The introduction of the new technique of screen printing and of new media played a part in transforming Tiwi cultural items. Tiwi material culture items found a place of fascination for outsiders early in the twentieth century in ethnographic museum collections of the West, and was seen as a source of information about earlier stages of human culture. As anthropological paradigms changed and earlier theories came to be rejected, new attitudes developed towards indigenous material culture objects. Some viewed these objects as expressions of great artistic value. Margaret Preston, Tony Tuckson and Charles Mountford all saw aesthetic value in Tiwi material culture objects and were instrumental during the middle of the twentieth century in promoting Tiwi material culture as art. Interest in the aesthetic value of Tiwi material culture meant that the form of these objects changed. The exposure of Tiwi material culture through collections and exhibitions saw the popularity of these objects increase in the second half of the twentieth century, and further interest was invested in Tiwi material cultural items as economically viable products that could be produced for sale to outsiders in the wider marketplace.

Demand was growing for Aboriginal cultural items as craft and souvenir items. From the 1920s to the 1950s there was a gradual migration by Aboriginal people in northern Australia to mission stations. Mission funds were limited and Aborigines were

encouraged to produce artefacts to supplement their income. These artefacts were promoted as both art and craft by the missionaries. The Church Missionary Society active in northern Australia, established a head office in Sydney and later in other capital cities (Carroll 1983:45). A demand for Aboriginal cultural items was established. As Berndt states:

> *Unfortunately it is this debased form, in the shape of commercially produced items for the tourist trade that appears to have made the strongest impression (Berndt 1964: 73).*

Ronald Berndt has argued that aesthetic objects can provide a key to understanding a society's value orientations. Non-literate societies produce objects that may have no 'practical' purpose, but which can be seen as 'artistic' in the sense that an aesthetic element is involved. These objects have a special meaning for the members of the social group concerned. Their production has significance in social and cultural terms. They are symbols that convey meaning in that they tell something about the kind of society and culture in which they are found (Berndt 1964).

The social significance of Aboriginal cultural items and their relevance to Aboriginal life and religion was poorly understood by the majority of Australians. During the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s some individuals were concerned with assembling collections of Aboriginal objects before 'traditional' Aboriginal life disappeared. Their interest led to the emergence of new items such as bark paintings and smaller, more representational wood carvings. Significant among the collectors of Tiwi cultural objects were American collector Louis Allen, artist Tony Tuckson, Dr. Stuart Scougall, Charles Mountford, Helen Groger-Wurm, Dorothy and Lance Bennett and Sandra Le Brun Holmes. These collections are now housed in various museums and galleries in Australia.

During the last three decades of the twentieth century, the Tiwi have accepted new techniques and media into their cultural repertoire. This saw the emergence of many new items of Tiwi material culture, in particular, the growth of a textile printing industry. The Tiwi tradition of body painting and the painting of ceremonial objects provided the inspiration and motivation for Tiwi creativity. The Tiwi, unlike other

Australian Aboriginal groups have a large decorative component to their aesthetic expression. As James Bennett explains:

> *Since much of the decoration for pukumani is connected with the concept of disguise, symbolic function becomes less important. Instead. Imagination and invention are the key elements on each artist's creative agenda (Bennett 1993: 40).*

The Tiwi Islands is an example of a small culturally strong community ready to adapt and explore new arenas and areas of cultural production without giving up their identity as a culturally distinct group. The technique of silk screen printing is an example of a new type of cultural production relevant to the changing circumstances in the twentieth century for this cultural group. The acceptance of Tiwi silk screen print designs as contemporary artistic production, mirrors the shifting attitude towards Australian Aboriginal culture during the twentieth century. The fear at the beginning of the twentieth century was that Australian Aboriginal cultural life due to its clash with modern Australia, would not survive. However, the reverse is true on the Tiwi Islands. Tiwi silk screen print designs express Tiwi group identity and the relationship the people have with their country. Art centres have flourished across the islands producing contemporary material culture items, such as printed fabric. The designs printed on the fabric have preserved elements of Tiwi culture. The printed fabric has provided a vehicle for spreading knowledge about Tiwi culture to the outside world. The beliefs lying at the heart of Tiwi culture are now visually embedded in the designs produced on the islands, and are being sold to a wide Australian audience. As such, the Tiwi world view has been incorporated into modern Australian life in spite of the overwhelming disruption and change that has occurred on the islands in the twentieth century. In the next chapter I record the history and growth of silk screen printing on the islands in the twentieth century.

Chapter 3
A History of Silk Screen Printing on the Tiwi Islands

Origins in a Changing Society

In the late 1960s silk screen printing began on the Tiwi Islands at the initiative of the Catholic Church. Bishop O'Loughlin from the Catholic Church in Darwin, had seen illustrations of Inuit woodblock prints and believed that the Tiwi could do similar work. It was thought that woodblock printing was suitable for the Tiwi as it conformed closely to their practice of wood carving (West 1988: 42). The idea of a craft based on developing traditional skills into meaningful economic activity of a Western kind seemed appropriate to the changed historical conditions and settled living pattern. As Margaret West points out:

> *Tiwi Designs….was the first of the craft enterprises on Bathurst Island to be officially encouraged by the church. This was at the height of the assimilation era, when government was intensifying training programmes to inculcate Aboriginal people with vocational skills in an attempt to equip them for the general workforce. This new technique was radically different from the traditional ways in which the Tiwi produced their craft, and as a result it required a degree of training and capital input (West 1988: 42).*

By the time the Aboriginal Arts Board was established within the Australia Council in 1973 to support the development of Aboriginal arts, the Tiwi were in full production at Tiwi Design, as the following extract from the *Western Australian*, November 29, 1969 shows:

> *At Bathurst Island Mission eleven young Aborigines are pioneering a new industry. Helped by Perth art teacher Madeleine Drenth [later Mrs. Madeleine Clear] and using the techniques of silk screen printing and wood block design, they are producing original Arts and Crafts. Financed from Mission funds, a donation of 250 pounds, and two sewing machines founded the group. A work room was established beneath Miss Drenth's living quarters in one of the oldest buildings (Pye 1977: 69).*

Tiwi Design

In 1968 Madeleine Clear taught rudimentary screen printing and wood block printing to three young Tiwi men on Bathurst Island – Bede Tungutalum, Eddie Puruntatameri

and Giovanni Tipungwuti under the old presbytery at Nguiu, Bathurst Island.

Madeleine Clear has written about this time:

> ***I*** *first met Tiwi artists Eddie Puruntatameri, Bede Tungutalum and Giovanni Tipungwuti in 1968 when they were teenagers and Tipungwuti was still at school. I had come to Bathurst Island from Perth as a newly graduated art student in response to an advertisement placed by Bishop O'Loughlin of Darwin for an artist to work voluntarily with young Tiwi artists. O'Loughlin was a man of vision who had seen the work of the Canadian Inuit and, in particular, the prints that the Inuit – traditionally known as stone carvers – were producing. He believed that the Tiwi woodcarving tradition might be taken in a similar direction to produce woodcuts (Clear 2015: 29).*

Madeleine Clear writes about this time:

> *I answered an ad by the Bishop of Darwin, John O'Loughlin, for an artist to come and work with the adult Tiwis. I always stress that it was the vision of Bishop O'Loughlin that got the ball rolling. He had been to Canada and seen the work of the Inuit artists and was so impressed by the stone cuts and lithographs made by these people who were traditionally stone carvers that he thought a similar transition might be possible for the Tiwis. And I found it a very exciting idea, however the reality was that trying to start a project was very slow. I had arrived on BI [Bathurst Island] with a minimum of gear, not knowing what lay ahead, and as funds were virtually non-existent to start with it was decided I would teach art in the two schools (Xavier's, the boys school and St. Theresa's the girls) (Isaacs 2012: 176).*

Bede Tungutalum describes the beginnings of Tiwi Design:

> *I left school in 1969 and I went to Darwin to study pottery. I worked there for nearly six months. I didn't like it, it wasn't very interesting, so I came back to the island. We had a teacher who taught us woodblock printing and started me off on printing and making woodblock prints. Then in 1970 with help from the mission, me and Giovanni started a partnership doing woodblock prints…When Giovanni and me started off Tiwi Design we just did single print designs in the beginning, like crabs, turtles, fish – all sorts of animals. The next year we started to form a company. Before it had been a partnership not a company.*
>
> *Tiwi Design started in the new presbytery. We had about eight girls who did mostly sewing, we did the printing and two old men did all the designs for us for wall hangings. At the time, we mostly did wall hangings, tablecloths and placemats. I taught the younger ones. We used to go to the school to see the kids and the ones who were good in art. I would ask if they wanted to work at Tiwi Design.*
>
> *Tiwi Design was growing and growing. Five years later we moved into another place and I did bigger designs on fabric. I'm real happy with the development of Tiwi Design. It's selling a lot overseas now. Some designs represent my life, like my Dreaming (Tungutalum in Thompson 1990: 72-76).*

The printing of fabric at Nguiu was supported by the Catholic Mission on Bathurst Island. A small room was made available under the Old Presbytery. Conditions were primitive, the height of the ceiling was so low that those inside had to stoop when standing. The Mission purchased two sewing machines and women were employed and taught to sew the fabrics into garments. However, most items at this stage were hand finished with fringed edges. Monica Timaepatua was one of the early sewers. Monica speaks of this time:

> *I bin working all the time and managing a family. I bin sewing all my life. I did sewing around the convent making skirts for the convent girls, habits and veils for the nuns, and mending altar cloths….Until recently I was part-time seamstress at Tiwi Design, a screen printing workshop. Here I sewed tablecloths, placemats, etc. I started there when Bonaventure [youngest son] was 11 months old (Gallagher 1992: 29-30).*

There was a big demand for tablecloths and table napkins. This saw the employment of women in the early days as finishers for the products, hemming the edges of the table cloths and napkins. In 1970 six sets of tablemats printed with the early woodblock design prints were entered for the Design Council of Australia Awards. Work from Tiwi Design was accepted by the Design Council of Australia and therefore eligible to bear its seal. In 1970 Tiwi Design won an award from the Design Council of Australia for tablemat designs that included crocodile and dragonfly images (Barnes in Kleinert and Neale 2000:717).

Madeleine Clear explains:

> *Six sets of tablemats were entered for awards and six won….I guess I believed we had a product worthy of assessment so when we were in New South Wales in 1970 we travelled by train to Melbourne and took them there…. (Isaacs 2012: 179).*

In May 1970 Giovanni Tipungwuti and Bede Tungutalum entered into a partnership under the name Tiwi Design. Funding was sought from the Australia Council for the Arts for the first solo exhibition of Tiwi Designs held in October 1971 at the Sebert Galleries in Sydney. Bede and Giovanni travelled to Sydney for the exhibition. The exhibition featured prints on paper and a number of wall hangings. Financial support was only available at this stage for exhibitions. Later, grants were available for artist/managers. Sales of Tiwi Design fabric began after this exposure with orders from

the Rocks Gallery in Sydney and the Aboriginal shop at the International Airport in Sydney. Dorothy Bennett became an agent for Tiwi Design in Darwin in 1971. This proved to be a successful relationship with continuous orders for three years. Also supportive of Tiwi Design in the early 1970s was Adrian Newstead from Co-ee Emporium in Sydney. Both did much to promote Tiwi Design in the early years.

Madeleine Clear who worked on a volunteer basis left Bathurst Island in 1973. This resulted in a slowdown in production at Tiwi Design. The Aboriginal Arts Board agreed to provide a salary and recommended that the supervisory position be filled by an experienced artist. Diana Wood Conroy, a textile artist filled the position. (Conroy 1976: 278).

The early prints completed under Madeleine Clear's stewardship were all single motif prints. All- over repeat textile designs for screen printing developed when Diana Wood Conroy came to Bathurst Island as art/craft advisor in 1974. Diana Wood Conroy and her husband arrived on Bathurst Island in February 1974. Diana Wood Conroy encouraged Bede Tungutalum and Giovanni Tipungwuti to experiment with filling in the background of their screen print designs with patterns to produce designs that could be repeated across the fabric. This enabled the artists at Tiwi Design to produce lengths of fabric.

Diana Wood Conroy describes her arrival on Bathurst Island:

> *When I came to Bathurst Island in 1974 to act as advisor to Tiwi Designs the same animal and bird patterns had been in use for five years and there was a general feeling of despondency. I worked mainly with Bede, who is the mainstay of Tiwi Designs, as Giovanni was away in Darwin and Eddie had moved to pottery. We tentatively explored other possibilities of screen printing using all-over repeating patterns instead of 'floating' motifs….*
>
> *My admiration for traditional bark paintings came as a surprise….Bede made many striking designs similar in feeling to the traditional style, using irregular circles and cross hatching to make all-over fabric designs….in matter of colour, the warm range of yellow and red ochre, orange, brown and black were most appreciated….while the cool range of blue, green and purple was not easily manipulated (Conroy 1976: 278).*

In a report to the Aboriginal Arts Board of Australia Diana Wood Conroy states:

> *I have tried to encourage Bede and Giovanni to think in terms of all-over geometric motifs from traditional Tiwi art, and not just isolated animal and bird figures. Of course they still incorporate many animals into the designs which does not relate to the strictly abstract Tiwi tradition, but does show a very 'Aboriginal' stylization. Up until now they have made simple square or rectangular repeat patterns, in one colour only – we combine the screens to give a variety of colour and pattern, one for each colour. Giovanni's sense of design is more asymmetrical (wiggly) than Bede's strong patterns, I hope to develop it. Bede's sense of design has improved enormously; he now makes excellent designs with very little direction from me….we now have about fifteen new designs which can be combined in a great many ways (Conroy 1974:2).*

Diana Wood Conroy was responsible for an innovative step in the transition from printing individual motifs to repeat fabric lengths. Early self-contained images of animals and birds were superseded by designs that would create a continuous pattern. Excerpts from Diana Wood Conroy's diary from this time charts this process (see Appendix 1 for diary excerpts).

On reading the diary kept by Diana Wood Conroy, while resident on Bathurst Island and employed as a facilitator at Tiwi Design (see Appendix 1) it is evident that Ms. Conroy is concerned about influencing the design style of the artists. For example, on March 7th she writes: "*don't want to push him [Bede] in unnatural styles*; on March 15th she writes: *perhaps I am manipulating Bede"* and April 30th she has written:" *Bede's design so altered by my taste, yet I am only the 'supervisor'.* "

On further reading Diana Wood Conroy (Conroy 2015: 49-50) states it was her desire to influence the design style on the Bathurst Island.

> *When I began as coordinator of Tiwi Designs, my great desire was to encourage all-over patterns, printed on cloth through the transparent mesh of the silkscreen. Tiwi art was abstract, with many vivid permutations of spots, circles, crosshatching and diagonals in the four main colours, red, yellow, white and black. Single animal figures in one colour had been the mainstay of the design repertoire at Tiwi Designs, not unlike Eskimo woodcuts that had caused a stir in the 1960s. Although these were charming. I longed to see the force and sweep of geometric and brushy motifs of Tiwi bark paintings and carved poles translated on to cloth in dense webs of all-over pattern. Unlike other Aboriginal societies in Australia, the Tiwi motifs were not sacred or hidden, or limited only to men. A strange irony was that Joseph and I re-introduced the young artists, as well as the older Paru artists across the strait, to the variety and richness of their heritage through photocopied reproductions of bark paintings in Charles Mountford's Tiwi Art and Culture (1958). To return to the freshness and intuitive force of 'tribal' art, we used*

> *books. The culture was all around in language and dance but the Mission and Government processes had made a break in transmission between the older non-literate artists and the young ones educated at the Mission school, Saint Xavier's.*

A ground breaking exhibition of Tiwi Design printed fabric was organised by Adrian Newstead and held at the Hogarth Galleries in Sydney in 1983. Hogarth Galleries was established by Jennifer Isaacs and run by Kerry Steinberg for the prominent Sydney lawyer Clive Evatt (Newstead 2014: 295). The exhibition displayed the fabric alongside traditional Tiwi artefacts. Following the exhibition, major Australian designers – Jenny Kee, Linda Jackson, Robert Burton and Collette St. John selected Tiwi Design fabric to be made into fashion garments (Healy 1998:59). At the time Linda Jackson requested fabric from the Tiwi Design with an Ayres Rock theme. She was sent fabric featuring lizards, crocodiles and various other sea animals printed on a background of ceremonial motifs (see Fig.49). Linda Jackson's response was: "…*when they finished and sent it back to me it was so beautiful I couldn't bear to cut it up. So I am using it as a simple pareo [wrap-around skirt]*" (Healy 1998: 59).

Adrian Newstead describes the exhibition at Hogarth Galleries:

> *The Hogarth mezzanine featured mannequins dressed in designer outfits, while the large gallery space below became a floating forest. Ceiling to floor drops of printed tulle, French voile, shot taffeta and Thai silk hung interspersed between giant ochre-decorated bloodwood Pukumani poles (Newstead 2014: 203).*

Adrian Newstead describes the success of the exhibition and the business success of Tiwi Design:

> *The result was a sensation. Huge spreads in Vogue magazine, the Sydney Morning Herald and other publications…..Within just a year….the turnover at Tiwi Design art centre had increased from $30,000 per annum to $300,000 (Newstead 2014: 44-45).*

The success of Tiwi Design provided inspiration to other communities to use the silk screen process. It led also to the establishment of other printing enterprises on Bathurst and Melville Islands. Bima Wear was established in 1978. Jilamara Arts and Crafts was established in 1988 at Milikapiti (Snake Bay), Melville Island. Munupi Arts

and Crafts was established in 1990 at Pirlangimpi (Garden Point), Melville Island. The success of Tiwi Design has led to its being used as a model for many other remote communities (McGuigan 1992: 6).

Bima Wear

Bima Wear is an independent Tiwi owned business, clothing and fabric design workshop at Nguiu, Bathurst Island. Bima Wear describes themselves on the web (bimawear.com/fabrics) as a place that:

> *Creates brilliant, bold, timeless Aboriginal fabric designs. Our range of unique fabrics feature traditional Tiwi aboriginal symbols, structures, family and environmental representations that are central to our Tiwi culture.*

The word Bima stands for Bathurst Island Mission Auxiliary or Bathurst Island Mother's Association. In Tiwi oral mythological history Bima was the wife of the noted chief Purrukuparli, who had a great number of wives (Pye 1977: 70). Bima Wear had its origins in a project initiated in 1969 by the Roman Catholic Church at Nguiu, Bathurst Island (N. T.). Sister Eucharia Pearce, a nun who had resided on the Tiwi Islands since 1936 taught a dedicated group of Tiwi women to sew, as a training project and to provide clothing for the Tiwi people. Four Tiwi girls started with Sister Eucharia Pearce in 1969. They were Noreen Maria Kerinaiua, Lucia Pilakui, Josepha Kantilla and Carmen Puautjimi (Gardiner and Puruntatameri 2011:38). It was Sister Eucharia's dream that one day the Tiwi women would have their own factory (Gardiner 2011:22). By the late 1970s Bima Wear was a growing enterprise, supplying many schools at the Top End with uniforms and selling wall hangings, sarongs and place mats through shops in Darwin. The opening of Darwin's Arnhemland Art Gallery and the employment of Shirley Collins in 1975 did much to promote Tiwi textiles. Garments were made at Bima Wear using fabric printed at Tiwi Design. The then Prime Minister's wife, Tamie Fraser wore garments made at Bima Wear on an overseas trip. In 1982 silk screen printing was introduced at Bima Wear. Sister Eucharia explained the reason for this:

> *"The girls do not wish to work with the men at Tiwi Design, and that the men do not have the monopoly as artists; it is designed to be a help to both Tiwi Design and Bima Wear,*

> *as the demand for original designs in screen print is becoming ever more popular" (Sister Eucharia to the Chief Minister Paul Everingham, Nov. 1981 in Barnes 1999:133).*

In 1983 the Aboriginal Development Corporation, a division of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs approved a major grant to expand Bima Wear and to provide premises and a manager's position. Tara Munkanome and Fiona Kerinaiua commenced working at Bima Wear around this time, producing many new textile designs. Sewing machines were upgraded in 1984 and with the assistance of the Tiwi Land Council, Bima Wear opened a retail shop. The premises became a modern merchandising area for women's clothing at Nguiu. In 1986 Sister Eucharia left Bathurst Island and the organisation ceased to be a Catholic Mission project.

In 1987 the Aboriginal Development Commission (ADC) suggested amalgamating Tiwi Design and Bima Wear. This received a firm rejection. The concept was not acceptable to either organisation. It was pointed out that:

> *There is no rivalry between the two organisations; we work separately because we have a custom that we are not allowed to speak to our close relatives like our uncles and brothers, only our brothers-in-law (Claudia Kantilla in Barnes 1999: 134).*

Trish Butler took over when Sister Eucharia departed in 1986. In 1988 Marie McMahon who had been screen printing with Tin Sheds in Sydney, moved to Bathurst Island to assist Trish Butler. Her experience in fabric printing brought a certain professionalism and all-over designs began to be developed and produced at Bima Wear.

For three months in mid-1988, Fiona Kerinaiua, Tara Munkanome, Fatima Kantilla and Carmel Kantilla worked with Marie McMahon creating twenty new all-over designs for fabric. Before the all-over designs had been developed, virtually all prints were motifs. From 1986 until early 1988 many designs had been completed by outside artists and sold to Bima Wear to be adapted as textile designs. Bede Tungutalum, Francine Tungutalum, Alan John Kerinaiua, Berna Timaepatua, Eulalie Munkara and Leah Kerinaiua all completed designs for Bima Wear at this time. By the late 1980s printing tables and screens were a major feature at Bima Wear. Three eight metre tables for silk screen printing were in place at Bima Wear. This allowed the women a more creative outlet. The women at Bima Wear developed a distinctive design style with

motifs that were larger than those produced at Tiwi Design. Colourways were also distinctly different from those at Tiwi Design. Their fabric prints featured black on pink and bright red and black designs. With the new fabric designs came a new range of clothing with a greater fashion emphasis and aimed at a wider audience. It was reported in the Land Rights News, September 1988: *"The main goal of Bima Wear is to get the new range into retail outlets, and for it to be shown as unique designer wear."*

Garments were included in major fashion shows in Darwin during 1988. For example, they were featured in NAIDOC week and also at the opening of the ANCAAA Gallery at Bagot in Darwin. This was followed by fashion parades in October 1988 in Darwin, Alice Springs and Yulara. The purpose of the parades was to:

> *Create public awareness of an industry in screen printing and garment manufacturing owned and operated by the Tiwi women of Bathurst Island. As a result new mainland markets have been found and a renewed interest by retailers. An equally important priority of the fashion shows was to give five Tiwi women the opportunity to experience modelling as a career (report by Denise McCarthy to DAA, 1988 in Barnes 1999: 135).*

In 1991 Claudia Kantilla became the manager of Bima Wear and Bev McMillan the advisor. That same year funding was given by the ABTA to open a retail shop in Darwin. The shop opened in September 1991 in the Galleria Arcade, Darwin. Media exposure was substantial. Claudia Kantilla moved to Darwin to manage the shop. However, by late December 1991 it wasn't doing well financially and the shop was closed.

Today most Bima Wear garments feature Bima Wear designs which are quite different from those produced by the men at Tiwi Design. In the late 1990s Bima Wear refocused its efforts on screen printing and de-emphasised the manufacture of garments. It retains an important role within the community, supplying fabric and clothing for ceremonies, special occasions, funerals, as well as continuing to supply a small number of outlets around Australia. Clothes produced at Bima Wear have become an integral part of Tiwi social life. Tiwi shop for clothing at Bima Wear and proudly wear the vibrant designs to special occasions, such as religious and cultural ceremonies and football matches.

The exhibition, *A Material World*, at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney 1990 included hand painted silk and coloured prints from Bima Wear. In the early twenty first century Bima Wear was renamed *Pwanga*. The operation was rehoused in a building close to the original Nguiu store where the women still sew and print fabric for the community. This modestly funded enterprise provides an atmosphere of female conviviality that continues the work of the Mission in the early days. A sign on the wall reads **–** *"we see Pwanga as a place where ladies in our community can be creative, can build up our traditional designs, can pass skills to younger ones and have purpose and pride."*

Jilamara Arts and Crafts

Jilamara began as an adult education programme in 1985. Ian Foster, an adult educator initiated a six month Community Employment Programme to train women in basic screen printing techniques, sewing and leatherwork. The site of the 'old bakery' at Snake Bay (Milikapiti) was chosen as the place where this programme would be developed. The principle artist was Raelene Kerinauia, whose brother, Vivian Kerinauia was a screen printer at Tiwi Design in its early years. Initially only small screens were used to print tshirts, table cloths and tea towels. The motifs were simple and pigment dyes were used. In 1987 Ann Marchment was appointed as Adult Educator in Milikapiti (Snake Bay). Ann expanded the programme to include garment assembly. Short lengths of fabric were printed and sewn into garments. Fabric from Tiwi Design was also used to make garments. Local sales to the community was an essential part of the programme development. This allowed the enterprise to expand financially and artistically. In 1988 the Association was incorporated as an Aboriginal artist's co-operative with finances from the ADC (Aboriginal Development Corporation) and James Bennett was employed as a full-time art co-ordinator. Funding from the ADC also enabled the building of a new studio. James Bennett introduced the printing of high quality silk lengths using procion fibre reactive dyes. This resulted in a greater range of colour subtlety and a softer feel to the finished product.

Bennett, a textile artist who had previously worked in Indonesia, was responsible for encouraging new textile designs. Paintings that had recently been produced on canvas

were adapted to the screen printing medium. The backgrounds of these paintings were often the lines and dots of Tiwi abstract art superimposed with a figurative image. Adaptation of designs from the Tiwi bark paintings collected by Charles Mountford from Milikapiti in 1954 were used as inspiration for new designs. The community and the Tiwi Land Council supported the concept of adapting the old designs. Also, three paintings by an older artist, Nancy Henry Ripijingimpi were transferred to screen prints.

The printing of cotton fabric lengths with pigment dyes continued for local garment sales. The printing of silk lengths for various markets became a commercial success. In June 1990 the Crafts Council Gallery in Darwin exhibited twenty- two silk lengths and ten ochre paintings in an exhibition titled: *Ngini Parlani Jilamara* – From the Old Designs. Artists included were Aileen Henry, Lois Mungatopi, Leon Puruntatameri, Janet Mungatopi and Mary Elizabeth Mungatopi. Bennett noted the intimate link between traditional Tiwi decorative arts and contemporary textile design.

In May 1991 the first major interstate exhibition of Jilamara prints was held at Reptilia Salon in Sydney. This exhibition included an installation of a *pukumani* (burial) site. Poles were carved by Leon Puruntatameri and Pedro Wonaeamirri, a *tunga* (bark basket) made by Terence Farmer and Bruce Tipuamantumirri and spears by Paddy Freddy Puruntatameri and Andrew Freddy Puruntatameri. Ochre paintings on canvas by Terence Farmer, Colleen Freddy Puruntatameri, Cabrini Wilson, Katrina Kerinauia and Paula Mungatopi were also included in the exhibition. Bennett wrote:

> *The choice of this venue and the accompanying installation was conscious statement of the link between Milikapiti screen printed designs and traditional Tiwi art, as well as its position in the wider context of contemporary Australian textile craft (Bennett in Barnes 1999: 118).*

Jennifer Saunders, Assistant Director of the Powerhouse Museum wrote in the exhibition catalogue for the *Lizards, Snakes and Cattledogs: Contemporary Australian Textiles* exhibition:

> *By the 1990s Australian textiles are distinguished by their vibrant colour and imagery inspired by the unique Australian environment and shaped by the cultural diversity of*

> *Australian society. The selection in this exhibition displays the innovative approach to textile art achieved through a high level of expertise and freshness of individual expression unencumbered by a structured industry or long traditions. This is fresh aesthetic from a young and energetic country (Saunders 1992: 7).*

In the exhibition catalogue of the exhibition at the Crafts Council Gallery in Darwin in June 1991 titled: *Yinkiti Amintiya Yoi* (Food and Ceremony) Bennett stated:

> *[all the work in this exhibition arose] from the two most absolute parts of human experience, yinkiti and yoi, food and ceremony. Central to all cultures is the recognition of the need for both outward and inward sustenance (Bennett 1991).*

The exhibiton generated interest from Beverly Knight of Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne. Artists from Jilamara Arts and Crafts were supported by Alcaston Gallery for the next four years. The first exhibition of contemporary art from Milikapiti was held in November 1991 and coincided with the National Aboriginal Art Award at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory.

In 1992 artists at Jilamara Arts and Crafts began ochre painting on paper, in addition to painting on canvas. James Bennett has commented on this:

> *The younger artists favour the paper for its surface qualities that more closely approximates the traditional stripped bark rather than woven canvas. For a senior artist of the generation of Kitty Kantilla it allows the opportunity for the artist to define the format of each design unencumbered by the rigid geometry of stretched canvas (Bennett in Barnes 1999:118).*

A significant exhibition of Jilamara's artist's work was *Ngingingawula Jilamara Kapi Purunguparri* (Our Designs on Bark) at the National Gallery of Victoria in 1992. It consisted of thirty bark paintings by 16 artists and 10 screen printed textile lengths. The works were shown in conjunction with poles and carved figures from the National Gallery of Victoria collected in the late 1950s. The gallery purchased 42 bark paintings and 12 silk lengths in 1992.

Nancy Henry Ripijingimpi, an artist included in the exhibition, is one of the last artists painting in the style of pre-contact times, when designs were directly based on body painting and included designs resembling body scarification practised in earlier Tiwi society. Another significant older Tiwi woman, Kitty Kantilla's work was included in the

National Gallery of Victoria exhibition in 1992. Kitty Kantilla was a prolific practising artist for twenty years. She lived at Paru on Melville Island before moving to Milikapiti in the early 1990s. She has had three solo exhibitions in Sydney. Two other older women painting in the early 1990s are Jean Baptiste Apuatimi and Freda Warlapinni.

Towards the end of the 1990s very little fabric reactive dye printing was produced at Jilamara Arts and Crafts. Fabric was still printed using pigment inks and being sewn into garments. Today there is no printing activity happening at Jilamara Arts and Crafts.

Munupi Arts and Crafts

Munupi Arts and Crafts was formed in 1990 when Yikikini Women's Centre and Pirlangimpi Pottery were incorporated under the name Munupi Arts and Crafts Association. Eddie Puruntatameri was the first President. Early activity at the centre was fundamentally an Adult Education Programme to create employment for Tiwi women.

Annie Franklin, an arts co-ordinator on the Tiwi Islands, describes the very first beginnings at Munupi:

> *In September 1989 Marie McMahon who had just completed a six month artist residency at Bima Wear on Bathurst Island was invited to Pularumpi (Garden Point) to help upgrade the screen printing which had thus far consisted of a few warped screens, a tshirt jig that nobody knew how to use and the occasional assistance of two local nuns with no background experience in art. What Marie discovered on arrival was a large tin shed piled high with remnants of failed projects and other assorted junk with only one small space in which sat a sewing machine. With its dense layers of dust and grime and ancient cobwebs it was more akin for rats than a centre for women to produce art (Franklin in Anderson and Smith 1993:13).*

There was no money for equipment or materials. Susan Ostling, who was working as the arts co-ordinator alongside Marie financed the first stock, a few tshirts. These were printed with the warped screens and some old lumpy ink found in the mess. The tshirts were sold locally and the small amount of profits were used to buy canvas boards and acrylic paint. The first design artists at Munupi were Reppie Orsto and Donna Burak.

Marie Josette Orsto also began working at Munupi at this stage. Marie, a talented artist, began her artistic career as a small girl assisting her father, Declan Apuatimi, the famous Tiwi sculptor, painter and performance artist. Marie Josette had previously worked for some time at Tiwi Design on Bathurst Island. Marie Josette became a role model for the other young women. They were inspired and encouraged by her skill and dedication. The sale of two of Marie Josette's paintings to the National Gallery provided funds for paper stock and paints.

In 1992 Tiwi Design assisted Munupi with four all- over textile designs, based on small black and white linocuts as repeat designs for fabric lengths. Two designs were by Thecla Puruntatameri. They were the bushfire design and the muddy possum tracks design. The other two designs were by Reppie Orsto. They were the mussel shell design and the bush apple design. These designs were printed at Tiwi Design as Munupi did not have the facilities to print long runs of fabric. The fabric was sold through the Ampiji shop at Darwin Airport.

An exhibition in 1997 curated by Merryn Gates titled, *Patterning in Contemporary Layers, Art of Meaning,* included two print designs from Munupi Arts and Crafts. The prints were *Kulama* (ceremony) by Thecla Puruntatameri and *Yirrikipayi* (crocodile) by Fatima Kantilla. The exhibition's curator states in the exhibition catalogue that: *"[This exhibition examined] abstract languages that have a lineage distinct from that of Western modernism" (Gates 1997:3).*

Focus at Munupi Arts and Crafts shifted from screen printing to printing on paper when Blue Moon, under the direction of Annie Franklin, entered into a licensing agreement with Munupi Arts and Crafts. Blue Moon is a NSW company printing postcards and wrapping paper. The artwork was based on paintings from Munupi Arts and Crafts with royalties going to the artists whose designs were used. The reproductions on the cards were very successful. The range of cards was expanded to include the paintings of artists Susan Wanji Wanji, Thecla and Fiona Puruntatameri, Donna Burak, Maryanne Kantilla, Marie Josette Orsto, Fatima Kantilla, Francesca Wilson, Maree Puruntatameri and Reppie Orsto. A jigsaw puzzle was also printed using

a painting by Maree Puruntatameri. Today there is no screen printing carried out at Munupi Arts and Crafts. All screen printing at Pularumpi occurs at the women's centre.

Conclusion

Silk screen printing on the Tiwi islands has evolved over time. What began with small printed craft items such as wall hangings, placemats and table cloths evolved into larger items like sarongs and tshirts and eventually into designer dresses and fine art fabric lengths. The flowering of screen printing on the Tiwi Islands occurred in the second half of the twentieth century, and was part of the popular Australian urban craft movement of the 1960s and 1970s.

Towards the end of the twentieth century there was a general trend at Jilamara Arts and Crafts, Milikapiti Melville Island away from screenprinting and towards the production of one-off artworks that could attract higher prices than a length of printed fabric. Emphasis in the 1990s at the art centres on Melville Island was directed towards fine art prints on paper. This gained impetus from printmaking workshops run in Canberra for Australian Aboriginal artists. In the early 1990s Tiwi women artists from Yikikini Women's Centre at Pularumpi, Melville Island, attended their first printmaking workshop in Canberra. The women spent a four week residency in April 1991 at Studio One, Canberra's public access print workshop. The residency resulted in an exhibition at Studio One of the work produced during the women's stay in Canberra. The exhibition was a huge success and received wide media coverage and proved to be very popular with the art buying public (Franklin 1991: 20).

Chapter 4
Bede Tungutalum – a visual storyteller

Bede Ampuruwaiuah Tungutalum (see Plate 9) is the father of silk screen printing on the Tiwi Islands. As an emerging contemporary artist, he has pioneered a new artistic approach with his silk screen print designs. He blends the old and new worlds in his creation of a modern and viable contemporary expression of Tiwi artistic creativity with his silk screen print designs. In an increasingly globalised world, the best way Tiwi Islanders can remain true to themselves and their cultural identity is by carving out a niche where they can express confidently their world view and original creativity through the production of cultural and artistic forms that are distinctive to their islands. This has been achieved with the Tiwi silk screen print. Tiwi silk screen print designs have strong historical and sentimental significance to the people of the Tiwi islands.

Bede Tungutalum was born on February 11, 1952 at Nguiu, Bathurst Island at St. Gerard Magella Hospital. Unlike many Aboriginal births at this time in Australia, his birth was recorded. He is the fifth offspring of Agnes and Gabriel Tungutalum. Forty years earlier, a mission had been set up on Bathurst Island by Father Gsell. The life Bede Tungutalum would experience growing up would be unlike that of his father and grandfathers.

Bede Tungutalum grew up at a time when his society faced great changes to their lives. At the beginning of the twentieth century the Mission, by distributing food and other benefits created a situation where people would ‘come in’ to the Mission, giving up their traditional pattern of semi-nomadic movement across the land, according to the seasons. In this sense the Mission was responsible for the first steps taken by the Tiwi towards a settled life style in a fixed place. As the twentieth century progressed, the dependency of the Tiwi would be encouraged again. In the 1970s government policies created much greater dependency, when welfare programs and welfare payments were made to the people without them having to work.

Agnes Tungutalum, Bede Tungutalum's mother was the daughter of Cabbagie (Purrumayilimirri). The Tungutalum family were members of the Tiklauila group, the first group subjected to mission influence and European culture. Cabbagie was married to Carmel (alias Polly) in one of the first Christian marriages conducted by Father Gsell on Bathurst Island. Polly had been promised to Timalarua of the Rangwila tribe. Timalarua was a good friend of Tu'untalumi, Bede's great grandfather on his mother's side. Polly decided she did not want an old husband like Timalarua and ran away to the Catholic Mission run by Father Gsell, later known as the Bishop with 150 wives (a reference to the many young girls in his care in the mission dormitory). When Father Gsell asked Polly who she wanted to marry, she named Cabbagie as the man of her choice. Cabbagie was not an entirely 'free choice' of marriage partner by Polly. Cabbagie was a youth to whom Polly had been tentatively promised by her family as second or third in line as marriage partner in the traditional polygamous marriage system of the Tiwi. Cabbagie was twenty three when he married Polly. His marriage to Polly was monogamous. Cabbagie and Polly had three daughters – Agnes, Stella and Gertrude. When his daughters married Cabbagie arranged for his sons in law to reside with him and support him politically. Cabbagie's daughters had a total of ten children. Bede Tungutalum is one of Cabbagie's ten grandchildren.

As a child Bede Tungutalum was enrolled at Xavier School, the Catholic Missionary School for boys on Bathurst Island. He showed an early inclination towards art and drawing, rather than listening attentively to his teacher's lessons. On completing school he attended a pottery course at Bagot Training Centre in Darwin. Following this he completed a wood block and silk screen printing course under the supervision of Madeleine Clear who worked as the art teacher at the mission school.

Bede Tungutalum and Madeleine Clear

In 1968 Madeleine Clear was appointed by Bishop O'Loughlin of Darwin to the position of art teacher at the mission school at Nguiu, Bathurst Island. It was thought that wood block printing was suitable for the Tiwi as it conformed closely to their practice of wood carving (West 1988: 42). This new technique was introduced by Madeleine Clear

to three young Tiwi men – Eddie Puruntatameri, Bede Tungutalum and Giovanni Tipungwuti. The early woodblock prints were monotone and printed on rice paper. The first wood block design was produced by Bede Tungutalum and depicted a turtle. A commission was received in 1968 from UNESCO for 900 screen printed Christmas cards using the turtle design (Barnes 1999:83). Designs were also printed on linen and cotton as wall hangings, tablecloths and place mats.

Bede Tungutalum and Diana Wood Conroy

In 1974 Diana Wood Conroy arrived on Bathurst Island with her husband as art/craft advisor to Tiwi Design. Diana worked mainly with Bede as Giovanni was away in Darwin and Eddie had moved to pottery. It was under the tutelage of Diana Wood Conroy that Bede Tungutalum developed his screen print designs from single 'floating motifs' to all over repeat fabric designs based on abstract traditional Tiwi symbols and motifs. Much use was made of the traditional lines, dots, circles and cross-hatching and the figurative animal motifs became highly stylised. A collaborative relationship developed between the two artists as Diana Wood Conroy guided Bede Tungutalum in the production of these new designs suitable for repeat pattern printing. In her diary dated 18th April 1974 (see Appendix 1) Diana Wood Conroy writes: "*Bede did nice designs, gently helped."*

Other excerpts from the diary chart the progress of the relationship between her and Bede Tungutalum. Conroy struggled with the degree to which she should try to influence Bede's artistic output. She feels he needs to move from single motifs to repeat patterns. She writes on April 30th:

> *"Bede's designs are so altered by my taste, yet I am only the 'supervisor'? Bede so much more reserved – I really appreciate it. Seemed very pleased with the new circle design, I forgot the "degeneration of Raphael" in working in T.D. [Tiwi Design]. Talked to getting a secretary to take over the bookwork when we go etc. – training Bede in keeping books."*

On April 10 1974 Diana Wood Conroy writes:

"Bede printed his fishes – OK in repeat."

It seems as though some sort of breakthrough had occurred, with Bede using a repeat pattern in his fish design.

Diana Wood Conroy introduced Bede Tungutalum to Western literature about Tiwi art. April 17th she writes:

"Terry brought books over – Mountford – looked at it with Bede who kept it by him all day and copied a design from it, which I thought very good."

A print design produced by Bede Tungutalum at this time, the *Warnaringa* (sun) design (see Fig. 1) bears a striking resemblance to a bark painting collected by Charles Mountford in the 1950s. This design is a reconfiguration of an earlier design painted on a *tunga* (bark basket) for Charles Mountford (see Mountford 1958: Plate 5b). Bede Tungutalum's clan group, Red Ochre is a sub-group of the *Warntarringiwi* (sun) clan. Therefore he has rights to this design.

Cultural misunderstandings may have played a part in the meeting of these two artists. Conroy writes February 26 1974:"not interested in traditional patterns" and again March 6 1974: "Does not see the strength of old designs." Conroy may not have been aware that motifs are 'owned' by families, individuals and clans. Hence the only motif contemporary artists are allowed to paint are the parallel lines called *minga* (scars).

A selection of work from Tiwi Design was exhibited at Expo '70 in Japan. In 1985 Tiwi Design was nominated for an international Design Award by the Japanese Design Foundation. Bede Tungutalum was the principle design artist at Tiwi Design at this time.

Bede Tungutalum's career as an artist evolved from fabric print designer to independent artist in the 1980s.Tungutalum began forging an independent career during this time. Speaking to Liz Thompson about this, he said:

> *I've left the company now. I just want to start my own business, to be on my own. I've been there long enough – almost twenty years. I just want to do something different. I do all sorts of things now….I like painting a lot now.*
>
> *Tiwi Design was my dream to create something for the people. I set it up but now I want to break away to do something for myself. Twenty years is long enough. I'm thinking of sculpting in bronze. I was asked in Sydney last year to go back for six months and study bronze casting. I'd like that. I could do birds, all sorts of sculptures. I'd keep painting just so that I could relate to here, to the birds and animals (Tungutalum in Thompson 1990: 76).*

Fine Art Prints

The 1980s saw developments in the career of Bede Tungutalum as a fine art print artist. Major developments in fine art printmaking had occurred in the 1970s in Australia. Printmaking became a vital area of activity and became regarded as an art of visual mass communication (Butler 1986:7; Grishin 1994: 172). The Tiwi, in particular Bede Tungutalum, began producing this form of material culture, using the medium of paper and the technique of printing in the 1980s.Printing on paper mirrored other developments that had evolved on the Tiwi Islands under the influence of craft advisors in the late 1960s, such as woodblock printing (Lendon 1989: 18)

Fine art printmaking was first introduced to the Tiwi by artist Theo Tremblay. He was inspired to work with Aboriginal artists after he attended the 1984 Biennial Conference held by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies. The suggestion that Aboriginal artists should work within the print medium was initially greeted with indifference and outright hostility. As Tremblay recounts:

> *I put forward the question had any of them tried promoting Aboriginal prints? The replies indicated varying degrees of indifference to outright hostility, depending on the subject's knowledge of printmaking. It was thought by one prominent director that prints included paper placemats, posters postcards and stationery. In a plea of anguish she gave warning to all purveyors of such trash to stop polluting the market (Tremblay 1986: 15).*

Fine art prints produced by Bede Tungutalum were linocuts made when he attended the Canberra School of Art and Lithography as artist-in –residence. The most outstanding work produced at the workshop was his *Self Portrait, Owl Man* (see Plate 10). In his self- portrait Bede Tungutalum portrays himself in the ceremonial regalia of his Dreaming, the owl. He wears a feathered head dress and a false beard and his face is painted with the appropriate ceremonial design. This work was subsequently included in a travelling exhibition, *New Tracks Old Land: Contemporary Prints from Aboriginal Australia* curated by Theo Tremblay and Adrian Newstead in 1992 (McGuigan 1992).

The Printmaking Workshop at the Canberra School of Art, since its beginning in 1980, has played a central role in providing access to printmaking facilities and skills training for Aboriginal artists. Theo Tremblay became responsible for introducing the mediums of lithography and linocut to many Aboriginal artists (McGuigan 1992: 6).

> In working with Aboriginal printmakers Tremblay states that he was not interested in simply duplicating a painting style into a print medium, but instead to create black and white prints based on the painting skills of the artist (Tremblay 1986: 16).

The first real exposure Aboriginal printmakers received was through the 1987 Print Council of Australia exhibition, *Aboriginal Australian Views in Print and Poster* curated by Christine Watson and Jeffrey Samuels. The exhibition toured Australia and overseas. Bede Tungutalum's work was included in the exhibition. The catalogue accompanying the exhibition was the first publication to promote Aboriginal fine art printmaking (McGuigan 1992:7).

Following his stay at the Canberra School of Art and Lithography, Bede Tungutalum participated in a print project in New Zealand. Lithographer Franz Baetens and his wife Magda van Gills of Muka Studios had expressed interest in prints by Australian Aboriginal artists as part of a Youth Print Project they were setting up in their New Zealand studio. Adrian Newstead of Coo-ee Emporium in Sydney was involved in the project and he suggested Tiwi printmaker, Bede Tungutalum as the person who should be the first Aboriginal artist to collaborate with an overseas studio (Newstead 1992:

15). Bede Tungutalum left for New Zealand in 1989, accompanied by Rembarrnga artist and tribal elder, Paddy Fordham Wainburranga. He produced a suite of lithographs at the New Zealand studio and these were exhibited as part of the *Najonooga* exhibition at Coo-ee Emporium, Sydney in 1989 (Newstead 1992: 15).

Bede Tungutalum also incorporated political prints and posters into Tiwi material culture in the 1980s. The Earthworks Poster Collective had produced posters demanding Aboriginal Rights in the 1970s. This work was expanded on by Tin Sheds at Sydney University in the 1980s (Butler 1986: 13). The *Right Here, Right Now – Australia 1988* exhibition was the work of 32 black and white printmakers from across Australia, whose aim was to present an alternative view of the bi-centenary in Australia to that promoted officially. The exhibition was a powerful rejection of the official theme of celebration and focused on the desire for reconciliation and hope for the future for Aboriginal Australians. Representing the Tiwi people in this exhibition was a work by Bede Tungutalum, titled *Kurlama* (Ewington 1988).

A unique collection of twelve contemporary posters by Aboriginal printmakers, including Bede Tungutalum was commissioned by the Northern and Central Land Councils in 1988. The posters were produced with the assistance of the Northern Aboriginal Investment Corporation as a series of lithographic prints. These limited edition posters focused around the slogan – *We Have Survived*.

Independent Artist

The emergence and recognition of Tiwi artistic endeavour as fine art began in the 1980s. During this time Bede Tungutalum moved away from creating fabric designs to creating large commissioned works of art for institutions and large companies in Darwin. Michael O'Ferrall, curator of Aboriginal and Asian art at the Art Gallery of Western Australia describes this change:

> *Bede has evolved his personal work to a position where he now largely concentrates on his own one-off screened and hand painted works….The critical stage of transition from process-oriented work to original compositions occurred in 1984. A series of individual commissions from Darwin firms provided the incentive and opportunity for Bede to*

> *experiment with one-off compositional works, in contrast to his normal designs for repeat-pattern processing (O'Ferrall 1989: 11).*

This change in direction led to Bede Tungutalum's participation in a major exhibition in 1989– *On the Edge, Five Contemporary Aboriginal Artists* at the Art Gallery of Western Australia. This exhibition addressed the changing status given to Australian Aboriginal art. The art was no longer seen as 'primitive'. The works in this exhibition show the evolution of Bede Tungutalum's art from fabric print designer to independent artist.

The first of the large scale works created by Bede Tungutalum is *Sea Life* (see Plate 14). This work was commissioned in 1984 by Coopers and Lybrand in Darwin. *Sea Life* depicts the rich resources of the waterways around Bathurst and Melville Islands. Amidst the tangled roots of the mangroves live many varieties of fish and shellfish. Further out in the ocean crocodiles, turtles and dugong are found. In this work the combination of isolated designs merge into a coherent narrative composition which can be seen in the horizontal alignment of turtles and other creatures of the sea. The thematic selection of sea creatures shows a conscious emphasis on a coherent narrative composition. The background images of creatures from the sea goes back to an earlier print design inspired by a viewing of some carved poles in Charles Mountford's publication, *The Tiwi, their Art, Myth and Ceremony*. Charles Mountford collected these poles when he was on the islands in the 1950s (see Mountford 1950: Plate 35).

Following *Sea Life*, Bede Tungutalum was commissioned to do another work for Coopers and Lybrand in Darwin in 1984. This work, *Purrukuparli and Bima* is an interpretation of the major Tiwi myth which is the reference source for Tiwi burial ceremonies. This work features as background, two signature motifs used by Bede Tungutalum, the sun motif and the burial poles motif. This work comprises of two panels. It is a screenprint with ochres and pandanus on cotton. In the left panel *Bima,* the wife of *Purrukuparli* is depicted standing under a pandanus tree. The right panel features the burial poles which *Purrukuparli* first ordained to be part of all funeral ceremonies subsequent to his own death and the death of his son *Jinani*. Behind

Purrukuparli is a large disc, a recurring motif in the work of Bede Tungutalum. The footprints in the work suggest *Bima's* illicit rendezvous with *Purrukuparli's* brother.

In 1986 Bede Tungutalum was awarded the Peter Stuyvesant Cultural Foundation Award, part of the National Aboriginal Art Award which later became the Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, for his work, *Pukumani Poles*. The poster for the first National Aboriginal Art Award in 1986 was by Ray Young. It featured Bede Tungutalum painting a screened image of a crocodile. His work, *Pukumani Poles* (see Plate 15) was awarded the Cultural Foundation Award. Bede Tungutalum's entry was a silk screened hand painted work on cotton. In this work the artist has combined elements from a number of silk screen designs – the sun design and the stone design. The main feature of this work is an artist painting a burial pole. These poles are carved and decorated for the final stage of the mortuary ceremony and are erected around the deceased's grave as a gift from his relatives.

Pukumani Posts and Dancing Figures (see Plate13) is another work that was commissioned by the Aboriginal Development Commission in Darwin in1984. The work continues the exploration of the narratives of Tiwi mythology. The carved burial poles are central to this work. Beside the burial poles are figures painted up for ceremony. The artist can be seen to be consciously reworking mythological material previously only transmitted in an oral form. The figurative carvings of mythical beings and animals began on Bathurst Island in the early 1950s. They have added a significant dimension to the largely non-figurative traditions of Tiwi visual art. The right side of the work features a large disc superimposed on a background featuring the early Sun repeat design. Overlaid on this are images of animals and birds that in the past contributed to the Tiwi diet.

Murtangkala – Creation Story (see Plate 11) created in 1987 celebrates the origin of the Tiwi Islands and the first appearance of light when only darkness existed. The central figure in this composition is reminiscent of Byzantine Christian iconography, perhaps unconsciously absorbed through the Catholic missionary educational system

on Bathurst Island that the artist was subjected to. *Murtungkala* emerging out of the water, is surrounded by land and sea creatures. The great disc of the sun above her in the sky is superimposed on a background of burial poles. This work of art by Bede Tungutalum is produced within the context of his immediate social group, the Tiwi. It addresses the big ideas, such as the creation of the Universe as understood by the Tiwi people. The work is part of a collection held at the Art Gallery of Western Australia.

In 1988 Bede Tungutalum was artist in residence at Flinders University, South Australia. During his time there he created the painting *Night Sky* (see Plate 16) The work tells the story of the men in the Milky Way and their wives. During the Creation Times some men would take other men's wives, leading to fighting. After this the men rose into the sky to become The Milky Way, while their wives turned into stars. In this work *Japarra,* the moon man is featured, his face scarred from the wounds he received at the hands of *Purrukuparli*. The ring around *Japarra* shows that he is taking part in a *Kurlama* ceremony. *Wuriupranala*, the sun woman can be seen sinking in the West as she extinguishes her blazing torch of bark. She covers herself with red ochre before she sets out from the east in the morning. The dust from the ochre reddens the early morning clouds. When she reaches the Western horizon she powders her body again with ochre, resulting in the brilliant sunsets.

The 1988 work *Tipungwuti finds the Nyingawi* (see Plate 12) concerns the spearing of earlier spirit residents of the island by *Tipungwuti,* an ancestral being from whom some Tiwi claim direct descent. The setting is a campfire. The figure of *Tipungwuti* emerges from the jungle, holding a spear in his hand. The background to this work shows the very fine traditional geometric designs that were in the past painted on bark baskets and other ceremonial items.

A much later work was completed in December 1992 at the Sydney International Airport. This work, a mural, *Fighting Crocodiles* (see Plate 17) can be seen in the Arrivals Level of the airport. The work is an acrylic on board measuring 3x8 metres. Bede Tungutalum went to Sydney mid-1992 to paint the design for the mural, working in a studio in Ultimo. He did the design to a 1:5 ratio of the finished work. The work

was taken to full size on panels by artists from Public Arts Projects. Bede returned to Sydney to apply finishing touches. The background of the work shows burial poles with traditional Tiwi designs with some sea life decoration added. The two black fighting crocodiles are based on the Tiwi legend *Irrikipayi*, the first carver of wood, who was speared by men jealous of his ability. He jumped into the water and transformed himself into a crocodile. The barbed spear became his tail. In the mural, the two crocodiles are engaged in a battle, a young male is challenging the older one. Bede has said: ”*the old man always wins”* (Battersby 1994:63)..

The Impact of Bede Tungutalum

Bede Tungutalum has worked for more than forty years on silk screen print designs, progressing from a young woodcut print trainee to chief designer at Tiwi Design. He co-founded the company with Giovanni Tipungwuti in the early 1970s. Originally the design and screen printing workshop concentrated on woodcut designs which were transferred as mono colour silk screen prints onto tablecloths, wall hangings and short lengths of fabric that were sewn into dresses for local wear. By 1974 the simple single designs had been replaced by more complex repeat patterns.

Bede Tungutalum through his screen designs has re-interpreted the compositional parameters of traditional Tiwi art, eventually creating one-off silk screened and hand painted works on fabric. These works continue the exploration of the narratives of Tiwi mythology. Aware of the changes that have occurred on Bathurst Island in his own lifetime, Bede Tungutalum is reworking mythological material previously transmitted only in an oral form.

The figurative carving of mythical beings, began on Bathurst and Melville Islands in the early 1950s, adding to the largely non-figurative traditions of Tiwi visual art and wood working skills. This figurative idiom has been absorbed into Bede Tungutalum’s work. In addition the rich source of ceremony performed during the annual *Kurlama* (yam) ceremonies and the *Pukumani* (funeral) ceremony have been an influence in his work. Bede Tungutalum’s adoption of a narrative approach in his later works reveals a desire

to break away from the abstract geometric design and repeat process technique of silk screen printing.

Bede Tungutalum has contributed to a distinctive contemporary Tiwi idiom of visual expression. Tiwi Design has been successful not only in fabric designs which are instantly recognisable throughout Australia, but as an influence for many other Aboriginal screen printing fabric workshops. As a designer for the workshop and his own single screened works, Bede Tungutalum's input has played a critical role. More specifically he has, with other artists on Bathurst and Melville Islands, maintained the relevance of Tiwi aesthetic traditions in a changing world and extended the understanding of those traditions far beyond the shores of his own island.

Bede Tungutalum's contemporary art is the result of a process of acculturation. It represents a continuum of development in a culture that has always encouraged change and innovation. Bede Tungutalum has readily explored new methods of visually expressing his cultural beliefs. Images previously seen on bark, wood and ceremonial body painting have been transferred to other mediums by this artist. The contemporary interpretation of the symbolic designs traditionally used to decorate burial poles, spears and bark baskets as well as the elaborate markings that were painted on the body for ceremonies can be seen in the art produced by Bede Tungutalum. As such, the art of Bede Tungutalum needs to be placed in a broader cultural and historical context.

As a contemporary artist Bede Tungutalum has pioneered with his silk screen print designs, a new artistic approach that blends the old and the new worlds. The silkscreen print is a modern and viable contemporary expression of Tiwi artistic creativity. In an increasingly globalised world Tiwi Islanders have remained true to themselves and their culture. With the production of silk screen printed fabric they have carved out a niche where they can confidently express their world view and original creativity. The Tiwi silk screen print is an artistic form that is distinctive to the Tiwi Islands. Many Tiwi artists followed in the footsteps of Bede Tungutalum. They contributed to the

collection of print designs produced on the islands. The next chapter examines the artistic output of these artists.

Chapter 5
The Artists and the Prints encoding a culture

Aesthetic Expression of the Tiwi

The art produced by the Tiwi in a cultural context is very different from that which a Western artist produces. The objects most associated with Tiwi art in the Western mind are the painted burial poles. The burial poles are an iconic Tiwi product. In the Tiwi context these cultural objects are not 'fine art' as understood in the Western sense. They are not designed to be placed in art galleries. These objects play important roles in ceremonial situations. It was in the middle of the twentieth century that aesthetic objects from indigenous cultures began to be included in Western art discourse. These objects labelled 'primitive art' became a part of world art discourse.

Tiwi aesthetic perceptions value brightness of ochre colour and boldness of design executed in a meticulous way. In contemporary artistic expression subject matter is of prime importance in determining the value of artistic output. Popular object types are burial poles, ceremonial armbands and ritual spears. The diversity of style in contemporary artistic expression reflects the traditional aspect of Tiwi artistic expression, which has always placed emphasis on individuality and innovation.

Mary Lou-Nugent (2000:34) and Margie West (1988: 51) have pointed out, when the Tiwi produce new designs for silk screen prints, characteristically a process of peer group assessment comes into play. To be accepted, a new design must include some recognisable element of Tiwi culture, for example, an artefact, an animal, a mythological figure or a symbolic element representative of *jilamara*.

When creating a print design for fabric Tiwi artists have no difficulty separating their thinking about design from the process of executing its production. Graeme Were in his publication, *Lines that Connect* explores pattern as a type of meta-media, an expressive form of thought that moves across forms in time and space. He has said:

> *Pattern is not just something that appears in and on media but also is in some sense itself a medium, perhaps a meta-medium that transcends any specific material incarnation, even if it must always appear in some expressive form (Were 2010:1-3).*

Tiwi artists are adept in the process of moving visual markings from one media to another, as a result of the planning and organisation needed to organise a funeral ceremony. They have transferred this skill to the process of the production of print designs. Jane Goodale has discussed the creative organisation involved in funerary ceremonies in her essay *Cultural Context of Creativity Among the Tiwi* (Goodale 1973:185-186)).

> *The artist may work on his pole as a single unit or complete one section before moving on to another but his efforts at pole painting are in large measure irreversible; elements can only be added to the painted design and undesirable effects can only be countered or cancelled through addition.*
>
> *3. When these general features of the technical processes of carving and painting are considered, the third set of conditions—careful planning superseded by a "take-over" phenomenon—appear relevant. Since very false starts are not permissible and each new effort at design limits the variation possible, the pole-cutters work slowly and carefully in the initial stages of their work and appear to hesitate less in the concluding stages. As they proceed the carved form determines the general arrangement of the painted design; the first bold outlines of the painted design (usually line elements) frame the geometric shapes that are subsequently painted and these shapes structure the arrangement of dots and small linear filler elements that complete the design. The graphic process is complemented by the simultaneous application of colour which adds variation and complexity but also limits the range of variation possible at each stage of composition.*
>
> *Workers vary in the extent to which they plan their compositions before executing them. In any group of pole artists there are some who are experienced and have already achieved success. These men formulate more detailed plans but because of the value of originality as a means of expression, the "take-over" effect is as apparent in their work as in the less-experienced.*

Art is a particular vision of the world, a subjective expression of the beliefs and hopes of people. Art forms on the Tiwi Islands in the past were associated with ceremony. Today artistic expression as seen in fabric print designs is an expression of Tiwi identity. Today, the artistic expression of the Tiwi is a means of communication and a vehicle for the expression of ideas about culture. The silk screen designs produced on the Tiwi Islands in the late twentieth century have a visual effect, whereby values and

ideas are transmitted non-verbally to those qualified to understand the concepts involved. By this means a culture is kept alive.

Tiwi Artists, Print Designs and Memory

The paradigm of the single lone artistic originator and creator does not apply to Tiwi artists. Tiwi artistic expression depends heavily on the collective nature of Tiwi heritage. The Tiwi draw on their heritage and environment for inspiration for their print designs. They do not work alone, but are part of a collective group with a common heritage and common ideals and values. Authorship of Tiwi print designs rests in Tiwi heritage and culture. Their form of artistic identity does not align with the Western notion of the artist expressing an individual signature. The Tiwi view creativity through a different frame, the frame of inherited culture. Artistic authorship is not the property of a single person, but the property of a whole cultural group of people. The culture of the individual, where individual expression, happiness and liberty were of primary importance, inherited by Western artists from the Reformation and the Enlightenment during the Age of Reason, has not been the Tiwi historical experience. The Tiwi value the collective above the individual. From an early age Tiwi children are taught the importance of the kinship system. The Tiwi refer to each other by their kinship term as opposed to their given names (Ward 1990: 11-13). Print designs produced by the Tiwi in the late twentieth century rely heavily on a pedagogical aim. The early Tiwi print artists, in particular Bede Tungutalum, were concerned with keeping Tiwi culture alive. The prints produced by Tiwi artists depended on communicating a relationship to history and hence an invocation of memory. Enfolded in the print designs is evidence of Tiwi culture. The body of Tiwi silk screen print designs are a collaborative entity, composed of images created by many artists. The images are of the animals on and surrounding the islands, ceremonial items, environmental subjects and mythological subjects. The prints surfaced at a time when Aboriginal identity and self-determination were key motivating forces in Australian Aboriginal societies.

The Tiwi Silk Screen Print as a New Form of Artistic Expression and Body Decoration

As the twentieth century progressed Tiwi body decoration was replaced with clothing. This was the direct result of Catholicism coming to the island. When Father Gsell, a Jesuit missionary, first arrived on Bathurst Island in 1911, one of his first actions was to provide the Tiwi with calico clothing. Gerardine Tungutalum describes this in her monograph titled, *The Arrival of Father Gsell on the Tiwi Islands in 1911*:

> *"Alright? All naked," he said*
>
> *I'll give you these Father said*
>
> *He made pieces of calico.*
>
> *Some of them didn't have clothes, but paper bark.*
>
> *First woman to use the calico was Wumala, maninga (Tungutalum 1983: 11).*

Before the arrival of Father Gsell on the Tiwi Islands, the Tiwi had adorned their bodies with warm earth based pigments, used ornamental head bands, armlets and belts made from fibre, shell, feathers, bark and berries, or scarred their skin with special markings (see Plate 2 and 3). When Baldwin Spencer first met the Tiwis, the women stood wearing bark aprons (see Plate 4). The sight of naked bodies was problematic for some Europeans. Early colonisers like Father Gsell sought to cover their unclothed bodies. 'Naked' black bodies were thought to be uncivilised and tainted. As Margaret Maynard has said, the progress of indigenous people towards civilisation was believed to be discernible by the degree to which they submitted to wearing European dress as a technique of acculturation (Maynard in Kleinert and Neale 2000: 384-390).

As the missionaries and Father Gsell entered the lives of the Tiwi, bark aprons were replaced with simple white calico skirts. This was followed by printed fabric garments. Silk screen printed fabric became a new form of body decoration adopted by the Tiwi in the late twentieth century. Cloth is seen as another skin that can also be imprinted with marks. It does not matter that the designs are made with fabric paint rather than ochre. The wearing of Tiwi printed clothing is an important marker of Tiwi identity today. As James Bennett has said:

> *The tradition of body painting has now virtually vanished but in one sense its essence has been transformed onto the printed cloth, and old ceremonial motifs continue to inspire the art of fabric printing on both these islands (Bennett 1992: 59-60).*

Since the late 1960s the Tiwis have been empowered by the development of their own printed fabrics. Their fabric designs have entered the realm of fashion and contemporary design in Australia. Silk screen printed fabric from the Tiwi Islands can be seen as a community responding to the intersection of the self and history, and the ability of the Tiwi people to reconstruct their identity when they move across cultural borders. The designs link back to heritage and culture and are an expression of Tiwi identity today.

Silk Screen Printing

The process of silk screen printing is a technology that is suitable for remote communities as the process involves a minimum of equipment. Screen printing is the technique of transferring images onto fabric with a silk screen. This is usually a fine mesh made from synthetic fibres which is stretched across a frame. Ink or dye is pushed through the screen which has been masked or covered in certain areas to form the image or design, using a squeegee. A squeegee is a printing tool composed of a durable rubber belting encased in a wooden or metal holder with the rubber extending out one and a quarter inches. The working part of the squeegee is the rubber blade. The casing keeps the blade firm and also provides a gripping space for the hand.

There are a number of different ways to mask a screen. Photo emulsion can be used to develop images permanently onto the screen surface. A negative image is placed on the surface of the screen which has been coated with light sensitive emulsion. The screen is exposed to light (either sunlight or light in a darkroom) causing the image to develop on the surface of the screen. The unexposed emulsion is washed out leaving the positive image exposed on the screen. Another method is the use of rubylith film which is cut into a design and then adhered to the screen mesh. The film blocks the ink from passing through the screen's mesh. The technique of silk screen printing allows images to be printed in repeating numbers. Both the use of rubylith film and the photo emulsion method are used on the Tiwi Islands.

Textile artist Tara Munkanome from Bima Wear, Bathurst Island talks about the printing process:

> *We have four tables here. One seven metres, one seven and a half metres, one nine metres and one – the biggest – fourteen metres. We do all the printing, two ladies at a time. Across the table. It's a two person job. We put our designs onto the screen using rubylith film cut to follow the design. Then we expose them. We've fixed up one of the rooms to be a darkroom. Our designs are done here: one's of cemetery poles, bushtucker, mango fruit. My cousin came here, too, and she did one based on Tiwi dancing. We print one screen over the top of a dyed background (Munkanome in Nugent 2001: 66).*

The process of printing is described by Osmond Kantilla, master printer at Tiwi Design:

> *Because our fabric is hand done, we can never make any one thing exactly the same as another. Buyers want perfection, but they must realise that it is hand done and that it is different, plus it is Tiwi art and that makes it special. It's not some modern mass produced thing.*
>
> *Sometimes we have problems printing. You have to wait a long time for the ink to dry during the wet season. It gets very hot here then as well. In the dry season it dries too quickly, the ink on the screen dries too. I want to keep it going through, it's a good place and good for our community (Kantilla in Nugent 2001: 64).*

Another Tiwi artist, Bernadette Puruntatameri has commented on the weather being a problem:

> *The weather is a problem here also, and the water. Sometimes we have no water at all. The people who do the power come and turn off the water, and we can't wash the screens (Puruntatameri in Nugent 2001: 46).*

Silk screen printing became a major form of artistic expression for Tiwi islanders in the late twentieth century. This introduced medium resonated with the Tiwi as a vehicle for artistic expression and a means of connecting cultural values across time. Artists take their inspiration from traditional ceremonial items. For example, the *Tapalingini* (headband) design by Francine Tungutalum (see Fig. 12). This design invokes memory of the Tiwi ceremony which is performed after a funeral to keep the spirit of the dead away. The decorative ceremonial ornament, known as *Tapalinga* is reproduced in two dimensional form and represented by a circular element in the design.

Collaboration

As Edward Said has stated: *all cultures are involved in one another, none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated and unmonolithic* (Said 1994: xxix). This is certainly true of the Tiwi in the twentieth century. Tiwi printmaking speaks of a cultural exchange between two very different cultures. Textile designs produced on the Tiwi Islands in the twentieth century demonstrate the interaction between black and white Australia and provide an example of the link between the two societies.

Artistic collaboration has been a vital component of Tiwi silk screen printing. In the beginning Madeleine Clear taught the rudimentary elements of the silk screen printing technique to three young Tiwi men at Nguiu, Bathurst Island. This was a technique that was new to the Tiwi Islands and is outlined in a previous chapter.

Diana Wood Conroy came to the island in 1974. Conroy was responsible for the transition from printing individual motifs to printing repeat lengths of fabric. In this process self- contained images of birds, animals and insects were altered to become a design that would create a continuous pattern on the surface of the fabric as can be seen in Bede Tungutalum's design, Sea life (see Fig. 24).

Between 1979 and 1988 Ray Young, a screen printer from Tin Sheds in Sydney was 'master printer' at Tiwi Design. He introduced the technique of colour fonting (a technique that involves the use of several colours when printing) that has since been widely used on the island and has become a distinguishing feature of screen printing at Bima Wear (see Fig. 26).This design named *muputi wata* (fish swimming) uses four colours, purple, pink, yellow and turquoise in the one screen printing process. Tara Munkanome from Bima Wear describes the process: *"We print one screen over the top of a dyed background; we put four different inks at a time along the bottom of the screen to get a rainbow effect." (Munkanome in Nugent 2001: 66).*

In 1991 Sydney textile designer Glenda Morgan visited Northern Australia. During her visit Glenda introduced a style of printing used in her own Reptilia fabrics which was

adopted by the textile artists of Northern Australia including those on Bathurst Island. Morgan used the random over printing of individual motifs to create rich layers of design (see Fig. 50). In this fabric design artist Angelo Munkara from Tiwi Design has superimposed his *muputi* (fish) design over Declan Apuatimi's *yilaniga* (carpet snake) design.

The 1990s saw a new type of printing emerge on Melville Island under the guidance of textile artist, James Bennett. He introduced the use of fibre reactive dyes on silk fabric. The resulting printed fabric was of a high quality with a softer finish and consequently a commercial success with silk scarves and printed fabric lengths produced for various markets around Australia. .

James Bennett, employed as co-ordinator at Jilamara Arts and Crafts in the 1990s, remarks on the role of the co-ordinator:

> *No job description can define completely the role of the person employed as co-ordinator in a community screenprint studio. The expertise of this person has often been crucial to the adoption of introduced techniques and media yet both black artists and the white art market have often incorporated cunning strategies to ensure these 'in-between' people remain invisible (Bennett 1998:30).*

Classification of designs

As Tiwi silk screen print designs developed, three types of design motifs emerged that can be loosely aligned with the different art centres. The early print designs produced at Tiwi Design in the 1970s by men, in particular Bede Tungutalum, focused on Tiwi heritage, mythology and culture (see Figs1-16).Images of designs produced in the 1980s mainly by a younger generation of female artists aligned with Bima Wear, focused on environment (see Figs.17-40). In the 1990s there was a return to an older and more 'traditional' style of motifs that employed the use of lines and dots (see Figs.41-49). These designs were produced by an older generation of artists located mainly at Milikapiti, Melville Island. I discuss each of these in turn.

The process of name giving

The early 1970s Tiwi Design prints draw on cultural knowledge for inspiration. The designs are perceived as representing something in particular. The names of the designs reflect a certain understanding and apprehension of cultural phenomenon. What is the relationship between the design and the cultural phenomenon? Presumably the relationship is established by the name of the design. In the relationship that is established between a specific design and a cultural phenomenon, there is an operation of selection of some salient feature, such as an element of the shape to trigger a mental representation of the external reality. Often the element is a mental representation which does not replicate the complexity of the visual phenomenon, but tends to reduce it to a point beneath which the phenomenon could not exist as a form. What is borrowed from the real world is an ultimate fragment or sign in this process. For example, *Kulama* ceremonies are reduced to circles. The condensation of complex phenomenon into a sign or elementary geometric shape is tied with a name. The link between the original and its representation is the name which bridges the two elements. In the linking of the original and its representation, the name is an essential factor.

The Sun design created by Bede Tungutalum (see Fig. 1) was inspired by Tiwi mythology. Every morning the sun woman, *Wuriupranala,* one of the daughters of the original creator, *Murtungkala,* climbs on a high mountain in the east. Sometimes she powders herself with red ochres, the dust flying into the sky, reddens the early morning clouds. She then travels across the sky carrying a torch of blazing bark given to her by *Purrukuparli.* Rising above the eastern horizon with her blazing torch she is a signal for the Tiwi men with spears and wooden clubs to go hunting and for the women with their bark baskets hanging from a stick over their shoulder to gather food from the forest and swamp land. About mid-day the sun woman cooks the food she has gathered, making the heat of the day unbearable. On reaching the Western horizon, the sun woman extinguishes her bark torch and by the light of the glowing embers finds her way back east through the underworld, before returning east she again powders herself with ochres, once again colouring the clouds.

The Stone Axe design by Jock Puautjimi (see Fig. 4) brings to mind the Creation Times story of *Bumerali*, the woman of lightning, who carries stone axes mounted on long crooked handles in each hand. She uses these axes while travelling in the clouds to strike the ground beneath destroying trees and occasionally people. *Bumerali* becomes angry when her children jump from cloud to cloud. The sharp crack of thunder which immediately follows the flash of lightning is the voice of *Bumerali* reprimanding her children for their disobedience (Mountford 1958: 44).

The connectedness to culture manifests in many ways. Sometimes it is in reference to ancient mythological narratives. The Spider web design by Vivian Kerinauia (see Fig. 3) is inspired by a creation myth. During *Palaneri* (the creation times), *Baraka*, the spider woman who lived at Rungani, made a basket for the *Pukumani* (burial ceremony) of *Purrukuparli.* She stripped a sheet of bark from a eucalyptus tree, heated it over a fire to make it flexible, then bending it double, sewed the edges together with split lawyer vine. When she had completed the basket she gave it to her husband and he painted it, giving it to *Purrukuparli* for the burial ceremony of his son, *Jinani*. From that day, the women of Melville and Bathurst Islands have made their baskets in the same way.

The Owl design by Giovanni Tipungwuti (see Fig. 15) also has inspiration in Tiwi mythology. *Purrukikini,* the owl awoke in the daytime and called out: “Death has come to the world. *Jinani,* the son of *Purrukuparli* is dead.” *Purrukikini,* the boobook owl performed the first *Kurlama* ceremony for *Jinani,* the son of *Purrukuparli*.

The Burial pole designs by Bede Tungutalum and Ray Young (see Fig. 5) and by Tara Munkanome (see Fig. 6) depict the *tutini,* burial poles, unique to Bathurst and Melville Islands. When *Purrukuparli* discovered the death of his son, *Jinani,* he decreed that death would come to all living things.

The *Kurlama* (yam) designs by Bede Tungutalum, (see Figs. 7 and 8) and by Thecla Puruntatameri (see Fig.9) reference this ceremony. *Kurlama* is an important yearly ceremony held on the Tiwi Islands. The first ceremony was held before the death of *Purrukuparli,* when the animals and birds were still men and women. *Purrukikini,* the

boobook owl man and his wife *Pintoma*, the barn owl woman decided to perform the first *Kurlama* ceremony. The white headed sea eagle, *Jirakati* was the first initiate and still wears the ceremonial paint. At the close of the Creation Period, the spirits performed a second and complete *Kurlama* ceremony. This included the preparation of the poisonous *Kurlama* yam for food and the performance of all stages of initiation. At its completion it was agreed that this form of ceremony should always remain the same.

When a gold ring forms around the moon during the final stages of the wet season, it is believed that *Japara*, the moon man is performing *Kurlama*. Inside a ring a multitude of star people sing and dance *Kurlama* songs. This is the time to prepare for *Kurlama*, the annual celebration of life.

During *Kurlama* many new songs and dances are performed. The composition of songs and dances were traditionally the duties of the new initiates. Due to changes in the last century initiation is no longer part of the *Kurlama* ceremony today. The songs and dances express the wishes and desires of the participants for a healthy and prosperous future (Anderson and Apuatimi 1985: 3).

The Tiwi bird design by Bede Tungutalum, see Fig. 10 draws on the birds that feature in many of the creation stories. Ancestral beings turned into birds during and at the end of the creation period. *Tokwampini*, the ancestral bird man organised the first *Pukumani* ceremony for *Purrukuparli* and taught the Tiwi people the rules of behaviour, the laws of marriage and tribal relationships they must always obey. He also laid down the periods of light and darkness that still determine the daily cycle of Tiwi life. When the first light appears in the morning sky, it is the melodious call of *Tokwampini*, the yellow faced honey eater that awakens the Tiwi from their sleep.

Ceremonial arm bands and head bands feature in a number of designs. See Figs.12 and 13. The *Tapalinga* (headband) design by Francine Tungutalum and the *Pamajini* (arm and headband) design by Maria Josette Orsto. Also, Fig. 14.the ceremonial armbands and headbands design by Raelene Cook and Raelene Kerinauia. These items are used

during ceremonies such as *Pukumani* and *Kurlama* as decoration. They are worn by both males and females and are believed to keep bad spirits away. They are made from pandanus leaves which are woven and plaited together. The leaves are dyed with natural pigments and decorated with *tapatapunga,* crab eye/red arbrus seeds which are stuck on as decoration.

The Land and the Environment

The Tiwi Islands are an example of a small scale local culture where traditional modes of experience still prevail. It is a culture that hasn't fully enclosed itself within an exclusively human field of meanings. The Tiwi dwell within a landscape that is alive, aware and expressive. Discourse in such a culture as Abram (1997) has pointed out, is bound in specific ways to the earth and landscape. There is a belief that animals and plants once shared a common language with human beings. At a time long ago all living beings shared one society and went through transmutations from animals or plants to humans and back again. The relationship to the sustaining landscape was direct and intimate. Ancestors emerged from the ground and created the islands. *Murtungkala*, an old blind woman emerged from under the ground and crawled on her hands and knees creating the two islands and separating them from mainland Australia. The strength of the relationship the Tiwi have with the land and environment is evident in the designs produced in the 1980s by the artists of the Tiwi Islands.

Designs produced in the 1980s drew inspiration from the environment. See Figs. 17 to 40, Appendix 3. For example, the Muputi (fish) design by Angelo Munkara see Fig. 28 shows the many fish varieties that are found in the waters around the Tiwi Islands – bream, catfish, rock cod, sawfish, jewfish, trevally, snapper and mackerel.

The design named *Tarnikinni,* (flying fox), see Fig. 18 depicts an important food source for the Tiwi. This design was created by Fiona Kerinauia c. 1988 and shows the foxes in flight. Flying foxes are found everywhere on the islands and are hunted exclusively by men. They use ironwood fighting clubs to bring down flying foxes. Sticks are also

thrown to knock down flying foxes out of the branches of the mangroves, where they roost during the day. When approaching flying foxes the men smear swamp mud over their bodies to disguise their body odour.

The bushfire design by Thecla Puruntatameri, see Fig. 17 draws inspiration from the use of fire on the Tiwi Islands as a way of managing and caring for the land. Dry grass is burnt to ensure that there is no build-up of flammable material in case of accidental fire. Burning also allows certain seeds to germinate. Clearing the land makes animal tracks more visible, assisting in hunting and avoidance of snakes. During the night, fire protects humans from snakes and crocodiles. During the day it transforms products such as meat into consumable items. Fire is purifying during *Pukumani*. Dancers walk through smoke to be cleansed and objects polluted by death are passed through smoke to be decontaminated.

Yirrikipayi (crocodiles) are a favourite design motif for Tiwi print designs. See Fig.22. The crocodile is a traditional Tiwi food. Crocodiles lay their eggs in the mangroves and live in the sea all around the islands. In times past all Tiwi men would go out at night with spears to hunt crocodiles.

Another favourite animal motif is the *Taringa* (snake) motif. See Figs. 20 and 21. There are many varieties of snakes on the islands. The majority are highly poisonous. Only the carpet snake is harmless. When establishing a new camp during the dry season, one of the first things to do is to burn off the grass surrounding the camping area as a protection against snakes. Snakes are collected by both men and women for food. Snakes are often found in hollow logs that have been chopped down to collect honey nests.

Arijilani (hermit crab) is a design motif used by Connie Puautjimi for her print design for Bima Wear. See Fig. 33. Hermit crabs are found in the mangroves that line the rivers and shores of the Tiwi Islands. They are collected by both men and women. Generally they are caught by hand as the crabs become annoyed if touched with a stick. Crabs are a favourite food.

Shells are a popular design motif. The *Wurripiti* (cockle shell) design by Francine Tungutalum, see Fig. 30 draws inspiration from the rich abundance of food found in the waters around the Tiwi Islands. Cockles are abundant along the mangrove lined rivers and shore reefs of the islands. Cockles are either roasted or baked to be eaten.

The *Pwaja* (clam shell) design (Fig. 31) by Sheila Portaminni is inspired by the cutting tools available to the Tiwi before iron tools became available. Clam shells were used in the past as cutting tools. The elaborately carved spears were carved in the past with these shells, taking up to three months for one person to carve a spear.

Marlipinyini Amintiya Pwanga

In the 1990s another kind of print design emerged on the Tiwi Islands with the arrival of James Bennett, a textile artist. These designs initially created by an older generation of Tiwi artists who resided on Melville Island, have been described as 'classical' by various writers (Bennett 1992; West 2007; Ryan 1998). Bennett encouraged the production of new textile designs when he arrived at Jilamara Arts and Crafts in 1989. Inspiration came from adapting recently produced paintings to the silk screen medium. The works of Nancy Henry Ripijingimpi, Aileen Henry and Leon Puruntatameri were reconfigured as screen print designs. The outstanding feature of these designs was the use of lines and dots, *marlipinyini amintiya pwanga*, which had previously been used as a filler in designs produced on the islands, not as an overall design. See Figs. 41 to 49 in Appendix 3.

The *tutini aminitya arawinikiri* design (see Fig. 41), known as the cross spears design by Leon Puruntatameri for Jilamara Arts and Crafts, was developed from an ochre painting by Leon Puruntaameri in the early 1990s. It features mortuary poles and ceremonial spears at a *Pukumani* site on the islands. The work was inspired by the repatriation of two ceremonial spears to the Milikapiti community on Melville Island. In 1991 a European man living in Darwin donated two spears to the Milikapiti Muluwurri Community Museum. They had been given to him several decades earlier by Leon's father-in-law's father. Leon's father-in-law subsequently asked Leon to

repaint the spears where the original ochre designs had flaked severely. As a traditional *tutini* (burial pole) carver, Leon was well trained in creating decorative motifs for application on wooden sculptures. He was inspired to use a two dimensional painting format to depict two ceremonial spears, crossed and placed on a grave, flanked by burial poles as is traditional practice (Vanags 1999).

The fabric design *Jilamara* (see Fig.44) by Jean Baptiste Apuatimi was developed from a painting by the artist, titled *Winga* (saltwater), painted in natural ochres and pigment on paper. *Jilamara* is a motif used frequently by the artist. The word translates literally as 'painting and colour'. This geometric design refers in Baptiste's case to body painting. *Jilamara* is in itself a geometric design made up of patterns of regular lines and dots that alternate with each other. In the case of the print design, the *jilamara* is loose, unbound and flowing. It has been suggested (Jorgensen 2013: 154) that this may have been due to the influence of the art co-ordinators, Angela and Tim Hill at Tiwi Design at the time, who were encouraging the artists there to be more expressionistic in their work.

The Past and the Present

A static notion of identity was the core of cultural thought in the nineteenth century. Authenticity was derived from a supposedly unbroken tradition. The reality of historical experience was ignored. New cultural forms were regarded as inauthentic. The Tiwi silk screen print was one such new form. The print making of the Tiwi can be seen as a method used by a colonised people to assert their own identity and history. In the print designs produced by the Tiwi in the twentieth century we see the past and the present informing each other. Each implies the other and each co-exists with the other. The synthesis of the past and the present is the most significant feature of Tiwi silk screen print designs in the twentieth century. There is a complex relationship between the past and the present in Tiwi print designs. The representation of the past in these print designs shapes our understanding of the present. In this chapter I have attempted to present an argument that shows how the past continues into the present

in a different form. Tiwi silk screen prints are a contemporary form of mark making with roots in ancient body painting and ceremonial object decoration.

Visual markings as a form of knowledge

Graeme Were (2010) has argued that visual markings are a form of knowledge. Visual markings have been part of Tiwi aesthetics for centuries. Tiwi Islanders become familiar with these markings from an early age and through a variety of means. Visual markings play and have played an important role in the lives of Tiwi people, from decorating bodies for ceremony to applying decoration on ceremonial items such as burial poles, bark baskets and in the twentieth century decorating fabric with patterns. Markings in the form of designs printed on fabric can be seen as part of a consciousness that surfaces in the forms and media through which it is incarnated. These markings are agents that forge connection for the Tiwi with their past. Today it is part of both everyday life and ritual life on the islands. From a Tiwi perspective their print designs retain special significance as an expression of place, heritage and being. They manifest themselves as an index of ancestral presence articulated through the twentieth century medium of cloth and the introduced technology of silk screen printing. The Tiwi silk screen print designs created in the twentieth century are a form through which the people of the Tiwi Islands express themselves. The designs printed on fabric are more than merely decorative. They are forms expressing relationship to land, ancestors and culture. The designs are a form of knowledge connecting the past to the present. Visual markings express ideas about people, their environment, their culture and their past. These markings surface in many forms and facilitate linking the old with the new, acting as a logical framework for integrating the unknown through spatial and temporal properties. These markings become internalised at a young age on the Tiwi Islands and are made visible publicaly and are transmitted in various social contexts.

The production of printed cloth and clothing began soon after the Catholic Mission arrived on Bathurst Island and the people were encouraged to wear clothing. Geometric markings once painted on bodies and ceremonial objects were reconfigured

and printed on fabric. The arrival of new materials such as fabric combined with the introduced technology of silk screen printing, led to the translation of markings from one medium to another and the establishment of a thriving craft industry on the islands.

The painting of skin and the printing of fabric with repeat patterns shows a notion of identity increasingly manifested on the surface. The printed fabric and clothing carry ideas and associations that make connections to things that lie beyond the surface as Gell (1993) captured so well in his study of tattooing in Polynesia. Gell argued that the surface dependent modes of identity are a form of image making. This provides a useful framework for considering the role fabric has played on the Tiwi Islands. Fabric has become a powerful surface for the islanders to express their cultural heritage. It is acknowledged on the islands that fabric can be substituted for skin and used to express identity.

The adoption of new materials in the form of clothing has been viewed by some as blind conversion to Christianity. The production of printed cloth and clothing began after the Catholic Mission arrived on Bathurst Island and the people were encouraged to wear clothing. Printed fabric made an impact on the existing economy as it was taken up in varying ways and began to circulate in areas outside the Tiwi Islands such as in wider Australia. New products such as table cloths, t-shirts, dresses and sarongs carried design motifs with origins in the ancestral past of the Tiwi. The designs found a ready market beyond the islands during a time when ‘primitive’ was in vogue.

As Were (2010:107-108) points out material culture studies of groups across the Pacific have shown how skills of observation and mimicry take precedence over direct verbal instruction in the process of learning and knowledge transmission. He cites how Maureen MacKenzie (1991) describes the technique involved in making string bags in the highlands of Papua New Guinea is transmitted from women to girls through observation and repetition. He also mentions Borofsky (1987) and canoe building in the Cook Islands. The canoe building skills are transmitted between males. Apprentices learn by watching senior men, then go away and practice for themselves, copying the

technique of a master carver. Little if any emphasis is placed on verbal instruction. Such a process of knowledge transfer is at odds with those brought up in a Western education system where book learning and interrogation is actively encouraged.

Learning on the Tiwi Islands is also done by observation and mimicry. This mode of learning is typical where traditional knowledge and skills are being transmitted. The Tiwi absorb design elements and patterns from watching. Tiwi artist Kitty Kantilla, when asked if there was a story to a painting she had produced, replied:

> *Ngaki tutayinguni ariayninga yaringa (this is white, this is yellow, this red). She then proceeded to describe where the ochres for the painting were gathered and how she painted. Following this, art co-ordinator, James Bennett inquired if the painting had a ngirramini (story). Her reply was that the picture was like a bark basket made by 'the old man' in which he kept sugarbag (honey). He painted both sides and it was made so strong it did not break or leak. She finished by saying: "All 'em countrymen gone now, all gone." (Bennett 1992: 11).*

Were (2010) also refers to the work of Peter Gow when discussing pattern as the art of connecting. Gow in his 2001 publication argues that woven cloth displaying mythical designs as abstract shapes does not derive importance from the design meaning but rather, it is the relationship to society that gives them value. Therefore, visual markings can be seen as a symbolic vehicle that reflect social values. Gow's approach has located knowledge outside the designs on the surface of objects and placed it in the ideas the designs reflect about knowledge held within a society. Likewise the silk screen print designs produced on the Tiwi Islands in the twentieth century are more than merely decorative. They are forms expressing relationship to land, environment, culture and ancestors. The designs are a form of knowledge connecting the past to the present.

During the twentieth century Tiwi society experienced major changes when a Christian missionary, Father Gsell established a mission on Bathurst Island. Semi-nomadic living was abandoned for a more settled pattern of living. Christianity forbade the practice of

ceremony. It was through the process of silk screen printing that the Tiwi were able to reassert their cultural beliefs. Tension between the old ancestral ways and the newly adopted Christian religion led to the adoption of new forms of cultural expression. Tiwi silk screen print designs have facilitated the linking of the old with the new, acting as a framework for integrating the unknown with the known through the spatial and temporal properties of the designs. As Graeme Were has stated (Were 2010: 1-3), *"they are an expressive form of thought that moves across time and space."*

Chapter 6
Beyond Silk Screen Printing – Works on Paper

In the late twentieth century printmaking on paper became a vital area of activity for the Tiwi. This was a natural extension of printmaking on fabric. The first prints on paper were the early wood block prints by Bede Tungutalum Giovanni Tipungwuti and Eddie Puruntatameri. These were turned into fabric prints later. Just as the first prints on paper led to prints on fabric so the prints on fabric led to prints on paper. The fine art prints produced by the Tiwi came as a result of access to new technologies and new cultural institutions (Lendon 1989: 18).

The Early Woodblock Prints

Wood block printing was introduced to the Tiwi in 1968 by Madeleine Clear, art teacher at the Mission School on Bathurst Island. Madeleine Clear thought wood block printing was suitable for the Tiwi as it closely conformed to the Tiwi practice of wood carving.

Madeleine Clear describes the early days:

> *We used local pine and Masonite for the woodblock surface. Their subject matter was drawn from the environment and the life with which they were familiar and included birds, reptiles and other animals, and activities such as hunting and fishing. I showed them catalogues of Inuit prints, and while this had a degree of influence on their work, they brought their own ideas to image making.*
>
> *Bede began with the careful stylisation of natural elements, such as feathers and fish scales. Traditional decorative elements were also used. Eddie was particularly interested in the human figure and made some sensitive and well observed images. Both artists were meticulous in the execution of the block cutting and printing process. With no press, all of the printing was done by placing the paper on top of the inked woodblock then rubbing the back of the paper with a large metal spoon. (Clear 2015: 29).*

Thirty six of the original woodblocks were found years later when Tiwi Design was undergoing renovation. This enabled the production of a second edition of prints in 1996 which were shown at a MCA (Museum of Contemporary Art) exhibition titled,

Tiwi Prints: a Commemorative Exhibition 1969-1996. The exhibition was held to honour Giovanni Tipungwuti who had died in 1993. An edition of 8 prints were printed of each design. Following the exhibition the MCA acquired the entire collection of 36 woodcut prints.

An early wood block print by Bede Tungutalum titled *Man Spearing Crocodile* was featured in the 2015 exhibition – *The Power of Paper: 50 Years of Printmaking in Australia, Canada and South Africa* held at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge.

Print Biennial Conference

In May 1984 the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies held a Biennial Conference at the National Gallery of Australia titled 'Aboriginal Arts in Contemporary Australia'. The conference was convened by Professor Howard Morphy. Theo Tremblay lecturer in drawing and printmaking at the Canberra School of Art, Australian National University attended the conference. In 1986 Tremblay wrote in an article for *Imprint* magazine (21:3-4) that the idea of Aboriginal printmaking was not very well received by most involved at the conference. He pointed out that there was little encouragement to promote Aboriginal prints in the marketplace as a result of a reluctance to experiment with art forms other than those described as 'genuine' or 'traditional'. Tremblay saw printmaking as an acceptable means of cultural expression for Aboriginal artists that could be developed in its own right. He believed that there was possibility for Aboriginal printmaking to develop as an art form. He was inspired to work with Aboriginal artists after he attended the 1984 Biennial Conference. The suggestion that Aboriginal artists should work within the print medium was initially greeted with indifference and outright hostility.

Canberra School of Art

The Printmaking Workshop at the Canberra School of Art, since its beginning in 1980 has played a central role in providing access to printmaking facilities and skills training for Aboriginal print artists. Theo Tremblay was responsible for introducing the medium

of linocut and lithography to many Aboriginal artists (McGuigan 1992: 6). However, in 1980 Bede and Francine Tungutalum attended as artists-in-residence a printmaking workshop at Flinders University, Adelaide South Australia. While he was at Flinders University as artist-in -residence Bede Tungutalum produced a fine art print featuring two birds. This early print was later reworked to become the all over silk screen print design – Sandpiper (see Fig. 35).

The first real exposure Aboriginal printmakers received was through the 1987 Print Council of Australia Exhibition, *Aboriginal Australian Views in Print and Poster* curated by Christine Watson and Jeffrey Samuels. The exhibition toured Australia and overseas. Bede Tungutalum's work was included in the exhibition. The catalogue accompanying the exhibition was the first publication to promote Aboriginal printmaking (McGuigan 1992:7). However, the first fine art prints produced by the Tiwi were the work of Bede and Francine Tungutalum at Flinders University of South Australia in 1980, when they were both artists-in residence there. Following this Bede Tungutalum attended the Canberra School of Art and Lithography as artist-in-residence in 1988. The most outstanding work he produced at this time was *Self-Portrait, Owl Man* (see Plate 10). I Works produced at the Canberra School of Art were included in the travelling exhibition *New Tracks, Old Land: Contemporary Prints from Aboriginal Australia*, curated by Theo Tremblay and Adrian Newstead in 1992 (McGuigan 1992).

Printmaking became a significant activity for many Tiwi artists. As Adrian Newstead explains:

> *Artists are only able to produce a small number of original paintings each year but the emergence of printmaking as a medium has given Aboriginal people the opportunity to engage in their own publishing in a way that gives them direct financial benefits and a much wider impact in the market (Newstead 1992: 15).*

In 1990 four Tiwi women from Melville Island attended a printmaking workshop in Canberra conducted by Theo Tremblay and produced their first prints (Franklin 1992:21). A year later another five Tiwi women artists from Yikikini Women's Centre at Pularumpi, Melville Island spent four weeks at Studio One, Canberra's public access print workshop. Annie Franklin, arts co-ordinator at Yikikini describes their experience:

> *Although a number of the young Melville Island girls had fully formed artistic personalities and most had experimented with screenprints and some etching, none had worked with linocuts or lithography. Studio One printmakers introduced them to the techniques involved with linoprints and lithography and almost as if instinctively traditional images swarmed onto the new materials. What was interesting was that the Tiwi artists did not simply transfer their images onto the new mediums but actually adapted the mediums to their traditional ways of working with materials. Linos for example were not carefully cut or incised, but were carved and the flattened areas were manipulated to reveal a rich textured surface* (Bot 1992: 20).

The focus of the workshop was colour relief printing. At the end of the residency at Studio One an exhibition was mounted from the work produced. The success of the workshop led to funding from ATSIC for an air conditioned printmaking room with drying racks and a press for the Munupi Art Centre (Franklin 1992:21). Access to printmaking facilities for printing on paper for those living in remote communities is important. In the past artists have been unable to pursue printmaking on paper in their own communities. Artists have had to resort to trips to the Printmaking School in Canberra as artists-in-residence to access these facilities (Butler 1986:2).

Northern Editions and Etchings

Printmaking in Northern Australia has benefitted greatly from the establishment of Northern Editions at Northern Territory University (now Charles Darwin University). Northern Editions was set up in the early 1990s under the leadership of Basil Hall, editioning manager and Franck Gohier, Leon Stainer and George Watts as technical assistants. Northern Editions provided a space for contemporary Aboriginal print artists to work collaboratively with printmaking technicians to produce culturally acceptable works of art. Some communities in the Northern Territory have set up their own printmaking equipment. For example, Munupi Arts and Crafts and Jilamara Arts and Crafts on Melville Island have their own etching presses and are able to produce their prints in house. In 1993 the School of Fine Arts at Northern Territory University convened a symposium *Getting into Prints*, as part of the International Year for the world's Indigenous People. The aim was to provide Aboriginal artists and communities who desired to pursue printmaking as part of their creative expression, access to to

equipment. Facilities for fine art print making were not available in most Northern Australian Aboriginal communities. Artists needed to travel south to Sydney, Melbourne or Canberra.

In 1996 *Printabout*, an exhibition of sugarlift etching works which were the result of three years of work at Northern Editions by a number of Tiwi print artists – Maria Josette Orsto, Cyril James Kerinaiua, Marie Evelyn Pautjimi, Bonaventure Timaepatua, Peter Damien Munkara and Osmond Kantilla (see Plate 18).

In 1998 Thecla Puruntatameri attended an etching workshop at Northern Territory University, Darwin. Her work *Kurlama*, produced at this workshop was included in the *Land Mark: Mirror Mark* exhibition held at Northern Editions as part of the Northern Territory University's School of Art and Design and also toured overseas.

Tiwi artist, Raelene Kerinaiua produced a body of etchings in 2014. These include *Pwoja* (see Plate 19). Her artistic breakthrough came in the early 1990s when she began to use the traditional painting comb, the *pwoja*. This comb with its fine wooden teeth creates delicate dots. This gives her work as Una Rey has stated: "a neo-traditional quality" (Rey 2015:63). Pedro Wonaeamirri also uses the traditional wooden comb *(pwoja*) in his work, Yirrinkrupwoja 3 and4 (see Plate 20). This gives his work a translucent and ethereal effect.

An etching produced by Melville Island artist Timothy Cook in 2006 is characterised by a focus on the *Kurlama* (yam) traditional ceremony (see Plate 21). This is a recurring motif in the artist's mature work. It should be noted that this ceremony is nearly extinct on Melville Island and that at the time this work was produced a *Kurlama* ceremony had not been performed in the community for three years. Cook describes the nature of the ceremony:

> *Yes, the yams be this thing for three days and three nights they have to circle around the fire when the yam is eaten, cooked in….the underground oven to make sure they bring….cleansing….we share with the universe and everything, it comes around us. And our culture too it goes into it too…. (Cook in Bullock 2015:50).*

In 2013 Maria Josette Orsto collaborated with her mother, Jean Baptiste Apuatimi and Northern Editions Printmaking Studio at Charles Darwin University. The project titled *Maternal Lines 2013* consisted of etchings, aquatints, intaglio and relief prints as well as a selection of prints that were sewn into three dimensional works resembling bark baskets (*tungas).* This innovative transformation of the two dimensional into three dimensional sculptural forms of cultural objects was a first in Tiwi art production (Munro 2015:75).

Lithographs

Other Tiwi artists have produced lithographs since those first produced by Bede Tungutalum in New Zealand. Pedro Wonaeamirri created *Yirrinkrupwoja* (Body Painting 1# and 2#) in 2004 (see Plate 22 and 23). Both lithographs use three colours and are printed using three aluminium plates. Pedro Wonaeamirri's individual style bears a marked resemblance to the body painting (see Plate 1) practiced by earlier generations of Tiwi.

In 2008 Maria Jostte Orsto created a two colour lithograph titled *Nguiu* (see Plate 24). A work, *Myinga* (scars) was specially commissioned by the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia for the *Being Tiwi* exhibition in 2015. As Keith Munro states:

> *….[the work]is informed by the artist's world-view, which encompasses both Tiwi culture and the western world. Myinga is the Tiwi word for scarification. It is closely related to the sorry business (Pukumani) ceremony conducted by Tiwi people. The scar is a physical reminder of a particular deceased person and has permanence and meaning (Munro 2015: 74).*

Politics, Posters and the Bi-Centennial

Political prints and posters also became incorporated into Tiwi material culture in the 1980s. Work begun by the Earthworks Poster Collective who produced posters demanding Aboriginal Rights in the 1970s was expanded on by Tin Sheds, University of Sydney in the 1980s (Butler 1986:13). The *Right Here, Right Now – Australia 1988* exhibition was the work of 32 black and white printmakers from across Australia whose aim was to present an alternative view of the bicentenary in Australia to that

promoted officially. The exhibition was a powerful rejection of the official theme of celebration and focused on the desire for reconciliation and hope for the future. Representing the Tiwi people in this exhibition was a work by Bede Tungutalum titled *We Have Survived* (Ewington 1988).In this work (see Plate 25) the artist depicts the rainbow serpent superimposed on a bark painting design by fellow Tiwi artist Danny Munkara.

A unique collection of twelve contemporary posters by Aboriginal printmakers was commissioned by the Northern and Central Land Councils in 1988. The posters were produced with the assistance of the Northern Aboriginal Investment Corporation as a series of lithographic prints. These limited edition posters focused around the slogan – We Have Survived. The comment has been made that:

> *It is the use of these new materials [printmaking], by Aboriginal artists which emerges as one of the most significant new developments, in the larger historical span, of the art of the past decade. The black print is a revealing aspect of a larger process of production of new cultural forms (reculturisation?) and the creation of new meanings and values. Out of a new political and social necessity, the use of these new technologies of visual communication have a particular urgency (Lendon: 18).*

Tradition and Innovation

An idea that persisted throughout the twentieth century centred around the notion that Aboriginal creativity needed to be judged on its 'authenticity' and relationship to 'tradition' to be 'real'. Thankfully this notion is no longer held as Australian Aboriginal creativity now encompasses a variety of non-traditional techniques and media. In its simplest form this view creates a definition of Australian Aboriginal life and culture as static, unchanging and essentially incapable of dynamic response, refinement or change. It has branded Aboriginal creativity as passive and unreactive. It is the culture of the 'primitive' frozen at the moment of contact with the coloniser and having no reason for existence other than as an archaism to be admired merely as a creative expression on the periphery of mainstream Western traditions. In seeking to isolate the 'authentic' as a representation of a presumed golden age of tradition has made certain styles of work more valuable in the market economy. However, Australian

Aboriginal creativity has shown dynamism and resilience and a response to the contemporary situation that has astonished the world in its capacity to engage and dominate world art markets.

Rich and diverse indigenous cultures exist in Australia. As Galarrwuy Yunupingu Chairman of the Northern Land Council has stated:

> *"When we paint – whether it is on our bodies for ceremony or canvas for the market – we are not just painting for fun or profit. We are painting as we have always done to demonstrate our continuing link with our country and the rights and responsibilities we have to it. Furthermore, we paint to show the rest of the world that we own this country, and that the country owns us. Unfortunately non-Aboriginal people remain ignorant of this fact, or deliberately choose to ignore it."* (Yunupingu in Caruana 1989: 16).

This tension between opposing views about indigenous artistic creativity is very apparent in the area of printmaking by Australian Aboriginal artists. An attempt has been made in the late twentieth century to popularise Aboriginal fine art prints and prints on fabric. The Artback NETS/NTU *Printabout* touring exhibition attempted to demonstrate the ways non-traditional techniques have been utilised by Aboriginal artists to assert a cultural production that is dynamic and responsive, rather than static and archaic. The works in the exhibition demonstrate the continuum of experience inherited from Australian Aboriginal cultures in remote areas of Australia. The Tiwi have been involved with print production for four decades. A willingness to experiment with new techniques has been a noticeable characteristic of Tiwi artists creative output. The strength and longevity of Tiwi use of printmaking techniques can be seen in the works of artists, Bede Tungutalum, Maria Josette Orsto, Pedro Wonaeamirri and Osmond Kantilla. Their ease and authority with the medium clearly illustrates that Australian Aboriginal artists are not obliged to be bound by the narrowness of traditions defined by outsiders.

Criticism about introducing remote Australian Aboriginal artists to new art production technologies are misplaced and depend on attitudes about what "real" Aborigines should and shouldn't be involved with. A more important discussion topic would be –

are the artists comfortable with the new technologies involved and do these technologies allow the artists to express their ideas. Individuality is highly rated in Tiwi creativity. This has proved useful in adapting to new technologies such as printing to the Tiwi way of life.

The most outstanding feature of Tiwi creative output in the past (ie. before colonisation) is that it is inseparable from daily life, appearing prominently in ceremonial observances such as *Pukumani* and *Kurlama* ceremonies. These rituals permeated daily life in aesthetic ways. Despite the hours of work to create the elaborate carvings present at Tiwi burial ceremonies, they were left to the elements after their ceremonial use and allowed to rot away. How different is this to Western practice where the same carved burial poles have been exhibited in the Art Gallery of New South Wales (AGNSW) since the 1950s, taking pride of place in the galleries Aboriginal art collection.

Contemporary Tiwi artists such as Bede Tungutalum have preferred to innovate rather than simply resume past practice. He has made thorough use of new technology, while still identifying his own work as lying within a Tiwi framework. As Bede Tungutalum has stated:

> *"It is good to show other Australians that we can produce beautiful works of art, using white man's techniques but doing Aboriginal way of art*" (Tungutalum in Samuels and Watson 1987:11).

As a Tiwi artist, Bede Tungutalum does not see his work in a contemporary medium as some kind of break with the past, but a continuity with the past. As Howard Morphy has said this work needs to be seen from:

> *"the perspective of [the creator] and their own value creation process and the ways in which they were transformed and [are] transforming in the colonial encounter"* (Morphy 2008: xv).

In the past the Tiwi were nomadic people. They had little concept of home decoration. The idea of printing fabric for furnishings, wall hangings and table cloths or printing on paper for items to be hung on walls, seems quite a paradox. Yet, the first printed work

produced were such items. They were of a high standard and the use of colour and design unique. The key to understanding this paradox lies in the art traditions of these people and the sources of their inspiration. Their creative output in the past was associated with ceremony. The abstract body painting of the past is the inspiration for many of the fabric designs produced by the Tiwi. Besides their traditional art practice, Tiwi artists also draw inspiration from the land and sea life which abounds around them. A traditional Tiwi diet includes crocodiles, turtles, cockles, mussels, oysters, mangrove worms, snakes, magpie geese, possums, barramundi and many other fish. Many of these are depicted in Tiwi print designs. This demonstrates a people who have pride in their culture, and who live on their own land, deriving a sense of security and self- esteem from it.

The recognition of Aboriginal aesthetic expression has been slow in coming. Today understanding extends beyond the narrow perimeters put down in the nineteenth century. Today it embraces traditions and aesthetic expressions beyond those narrow confines of nineteenth century Eurocentric aestheticism. Silk screen printing and fine art prints on paper played a major role in this transition as growth of interest in Aboriginal material culture increased in the late twentieth century.

Conclusion

In the twentieth century little emphasis was placed on decoration as a serious subject of study. Unlike the nineteenth century, when decoration was a major feature of discussion in intellectual life in Europe, North America and Great Britain (Brett 2005:1). Meanwhile on the Tiwi Islands in the twentieth century, decoration became a major occupation for many Tiwi artists with the introduction of the technique of silk screen printing. As Wilhelm Worringer stated in his 1910 publication, *Abstraction and Empathy*: "It is the essence of ornament that in its products the artistic volition of a people finds its purest and most unobscured expression" (Worringer 1910: 51).

Such was the case with Tiwi silk screen print designs. The designs produced by Tiwi artists in the twentieth century showcase Tiwi culture and beliefs, at a time when their way of life was most under threat. The artists on the Tiwi Islands encoded their beliefs and world view into the designs they created for silk screen printing.

My thesis explores vision as a form of cognition, a premise David Brett puts forward in his publication, *Rethinking Decoration* and Rosalind Krauss explores in her 1993 publication, *The Optical Unconscious*. This assumption is also shared by Rudolf Arnheim in *Visual Thinking*.

During the nineteenth and the twentieth century anthropologists recognised knowledge was contained in decoration and material culture. Material culture studies were regarded as meaningful. As Brett (2005:6-7) states: "*decoration is a constant in human behaviour and can take many forms. Decoration is used to make sense of the world, in particular, the world of objects. No society exist that do not decorate, embellish or make patterns. Decoration is a human universal. "*

In my thesis I discuss the various ways that knowledge and meaning are encoded in the decorative aspects of Tiwi print designs. My research into this topic has taken a 'horizontal' inquiry across the disciplines of history, art, biography and anthropology. These areas are normally kept apart.

When Christianity came to the Tiwi Islands clothing was introduced. At this point, decoration on skin was replaced with decoration on fabric. For Europeans adornment with clothing is often regarded as an artificial layer, concealing what 'really' lies beneath. The Tiwi concept is very different. Traditionally, decorated appearance revealed more than it concealed. Adornment was deeply involved with ceremony, religion, age grading ceremonies and world views.

Tiwi silk screen print designs show how tradition has been transitioned into a new art form and media on the islands. Knowledge has been encoded into Tiwi silk screen print designs. My thesis also provides a history of silk screen printing on both Bathurst and Melville Islands. Research has shown that the principal player in the silk screen print movement on the Tiwi Islands is Tiwi artist Bede Tungutalum. A brief biography of the artist's life is included in the thesis for this reason.

Bede Tungutalum was among the initial small group of young Tiwi men trained in printmaking techniques. He moved from printing on fabric to large scale one-off solo silk screened and hand painted works on fabric. The transition from process oriented work to original compositions occurred in 1984 when a series of individual commissions from Darwin provided the incentive and opportunity for him to experiment with one-off compositional works rather than producing designs for repeat pattern processing. Bede Tungutalum was also introduced to linocut and lithography techniques by Theo Tremblay at the Canberra School of Art in the 1980s. Throughout his life Bede Tungutalum has been at the vanguard of printmaking on the Tiwi Islands. He has participated in workshops, and as artist-in-residence at a number of universities in Australia. In 1986 he was awarded the Peter Styuvesant Cultural Foundation Award as part of the National Aboriginal Art Award at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory for his work *Pukumani Poles*, a silk screened and hand painted work on cotton.

The subject matter of Tiwi silk screen print designs includes images taken from the culture and environment of the Tiwi people. Tiwi silk screen printing was at its peak in the late twentieth century. It blossomed at a time when Tiwi values were threatened.

It can be seen as a way for the Tiwi people to reassert their cultural beliefs. Silk screen printing is not a traditional art form. The use of this introduced art form to reassert cultural beliefs shows the resilience of Tiwi culture.

Silk screen printing relies on a technical process unfamiliar to the Tiwi people. It was introduced to the Tiwi by a number of non- Tiwi individuals. This process was facilitated by a Government initiative implemented in the 1970s in Australia that provided funding for developing a range of 'adapted' craft enterprises for the economic development of remote Aboriginal communities.

The introduction of the silk screen printing technique shows the significance of cultural exchange in Australia between black and white artists. Contemporary image making by indigenous artists was encouraged in the twentieth century. Australian textiles were seen as a specific area of artistic enterprise. The use of Australian motifs and designs was encouraged by white Australian artists like Margaret Preston (Preston 1925, 1930 and 1940). The distinctive nature of the textiles produced on the Tiwi Islands depended on a reconfiguration of traditional Tiwi art. Inspiration came from a belief in culture and country as restated in a contemporary medium. Tiwi print design artists were able to develop individual and unique styles with ease as traditional Tiwi artistic freedom was linked to concepts of innovation.

By the 1960s in Australia there was a realisation that art and craft could provide an economic base for Aboriginal Australians living in remote communities. The technique of screen printing was introduced to the Tiwi in the early 1970s when government funded assistance for non-Aboriginal educators and art advisors was made available through the Australian Council for the Arts. In 1971 Mary White was appointed craft advisor to the Australia Council for the Arts and later the Department of Aboriginal Affairs as craft advisor. Her role was to explore the potential of developing craft based industries that drew on traditional skills and beliefs. The emphasis was less on the revival of traditional forms and more on the use of traditional skills, materials and techniques to develop a range of 'adapted' craft enterprises for economic

development. Australian textiles were seen as a specific area of artistic enterprise in the twentieth century.

Tiwi Design, a fabric printing workshop was set up on Bathurst Island in the late 1960s by Bede Tungutalum and Giovanni Tipungwuti with help from the Catholic Mission. A ground breaking exhibition of Tiwi Design screen printed fabrics was held at the Hogarth Galleries in Sydney in 1983. The exhibition displayed the fabrics alongside traditional Tiwi artefacts. Following the exhibition, major Australian fashion designers – Robert Burton, Jenny Kee and Linda Jackson selected Tiwi Design fabrics to be made into fashion garments. During the late twentieth century through various artistic and cultural exchanges indigenous textile designs have become available to the wider Australian community.

The success of Tiwi Design provided inspiration to other Aboriginal communities to use the silk screen process. This has led to the establishment of printing enterprises in many other remote communities. For example, Tennant Creek (Julalikari Arts and Crafts), Alice Springs (Keringke Arts) Ernabella (Ernabella Arts Inc.), Fregon (Kaltjiti Arts and Crafts), Amata (Minymaku Arts), Gunbalanya (Injalak Arts and Crafts) and Utopia (Urupuntja Artists) as well as other centres on Bathurst Island (Bima Wear)and Melville Island (Jilamara Arts and Crafts and Munupi Arts and Crafts).

In the short time the Tiwi have been creating silk screened fabric they have managed to create an Australia wide impact. Their fabric has been showcased in many exhibitions and is part of museum collections today. The Powerhouse Museum in Sydney holds a substantial collection of Tiwi printed fabric as does the National Gallery of Victoria. Initially the colours used for printing were in the warm range of yellow, red, orange, brown and black. Later, use was made of a much expanded colour palette with the use of brighter colours by the women at Bima Wear. Print designs produced by the Tiwi in the twentieth century reflect the intricate patterns and designs used in ancient body decoration. However, patterns belonging to specific families and clans are not replicated in the designs.

My thesis by examining the print designs produced by the Tiwi in the twentieth century for silk screen printing shows that patterns are a type of meta- media and an expressive form of thought. The designs printed on fabric are forms expressing relationship to land, ancestors and culture. They are a means by which the old is linked to the new, and notions about culture are reinforced at a time of great change.

On the Tiwi Islands silk screen print designs have worked as a linking mechanism, carrying forward ideas about land, culture and memory through the new materials available in the twentieth century. In the twentieth century the Tiwi silk screen print became a resource for conceptualising and articulating Tiwi world views. This was at a time when white settlement threatened to obliterate the traditional Tiwi culture and way of life. The arrival of cloth on the islands at the beginning of the twentieth century with the coming of Father Gsell created a huge change in how the Tiwi presented visually to the outside world. No longer were Tiwi women presenting themselves covered in bark aprons. Initially bark aprons were exchanged for simple plain calico skirts which were eventually adorned with printed motifs such as birds and crocodiles. These simple prints initially used the wood block method of printing. They were later transferred to the silk screen method which was developed substantially to all- over printed fabric lengths.

Printmaking as a contemporary creative practice which is informed by traditional culture helps to promote an understanding of Aboriginal culture and represents a coming together of many things. As a result of funding from a Government cultural institution, The Arts Council of Australia, the Tiwi adopted techniques from various craft advisors which were not traditionally their own, producing designs that incorporated traditional elements. The development of Tiwi silk screen print designs in the twentieth century is an example of development without the loss of cultural identity. The commercialisation of Tiwi culture through fabric prints has left Tiwi identity intact and stronger as this new material culture item has been incorporated into their lifestyle. The Tiwi attempt to enter the twentieth century and a Western economy has been a success with no loss of identity. Theirs is a constantly evolving and living culture that has not stood still with time. They have retained a powerful sense of

self, who they are and where they come from. In fabric printing they have found a vital connection between the past and the present. Their cultural roots have not been lost with economic development. Through culture they have explored who they are and what they know from their own experience, and have retained that critical and important thing – identity in a world that is changing very quickly. In the twentieth century Tiwi print artists have identified aspects of traditional aesthetics and culture and have selectively chosen from this body of knowledge to construct an image of Tiwi identity. Culture has left the Tiwi with something to hold onto in the confusion of the new and different in an ever changing modern world. The Tiwi have absorbed everything that has invaded their culture and are still firmly in control of their own destiny.

Silk screen printing, an introduced technique is no longer seen as 'inauthentic'. There has been a change in attitude by the colonising people of Australia towards the creativity of the original inhabitants of the land. It has been recognised that Aboriginal life in Australia is not static and unchanging, but constantly evolving and adapting to new situations and circumstances. It is no longer seen as a culture of the 'primitive' frozen in time at the moment of contact with the coloniser. It is recognised that Australian Aboriginal culture is capable of a dynamic response to new conditions and situations.

In What is Art For? Ellen Dissanayake states:

> *Perhaps the most outstanding feature of art in Primitive societies is that it is inseparable from daily life, also appearing, prominently and inevitably in ceremonial observances….For some primitive societies the observance of ritual permeates the whole of life in aesthetic ways so that their existence is referred to by anthropologists who describe it as itself a work of art. In such groups it is difficult to separate art from the life that contains it (Dissanayake 1988: 44-45).*

This position has recently been confirmed by contemporary Australian Indigenous Yolgnu artist Yimala Gumana when he stated in an interview with Amos Aikman for

Weekend Australian Review regarding the upcoming Yolgnu Art's U.S. Madayin exhibition at Kluge-Ruhe, Charlottesville, Virginia:

> *Art is our madayin, our foundation, our eternity. It's also our discipline….for example, when someone goes to men's business area, they have that discipline to paint their chests and their bodies in Yolgnu society, it's important to have that discipline not to do wrong way, to be confident and learn to get more knowledge and go deeper into that area where Yolgnu people survive now today (Gumana in Aikman 2017:70).*

For Australian Aboriginal artists their creative expressions are more than art or anthropology, it is their essence, their life. The perspective for Indigenous Australian artists is such that their art transcends the narrow boundaries imposed by Western academics. Theirs is a cultural and much wider perspective. Initially Western attitudes to Australian Aboriginal art focused on the functional and religious significance of artefacts collected from Aboriginal Australia. Function or religious significance was stressed, rather than the aesthetic qualities. This was despite the fact that the aesthetic considerations played a huge part in the production of these artefacts for ceremony. Beauty became incidental to primary function. The individuality of the maker was ignored. The makers were given the status of anonymous crafts people.

A change in attitude came in the 1950s when Western audiences had been exposed to more Aboriginal creative production and the culture that produced these creations. A more enlightened attitude to this dilemma was made by anthropologists Catherine and Ronald Berndt with their 1957 exhibition *The Art of Arnhem Land* in Perth. Alongside the works exhibited in this exhibition, the names of the twenty three artists exhibiting were included.

Howard Morphy in *Becoming Art* has said:

> *….the art was lost in the ethnography….It was not seen as art because of where it was housed and how it was exhibited (Morphy 2008: 184).*

Once Aboriginal aesthetic objects began to be exhibited in gallery space, a gradual appreciation grew of the *"power of the aesthetic impulse in primitive art"* (Jones 1988: 161). The discovery of "primitive" art by Western artists in the early twentieth century was contributed to by museum exhibitions, by widening the perceptions of Western audiences to the ethnographic material of a wide variety of cultures. The material culture of Africa played a major role in the widening of perceptions regarding "primitive" art. Objects such as masks began to be collected by artists for their beauty, rather than their ethnographic value. The "discovery" of tribal art by the avant-garde artists of the early twentieth century created a new interest in the creative and imaginative aspects of indigenous creative products. Australian Aboriginal art was largely unknown at this time. Artists such as Picasso and Matisse found in tribal art a source of innovation for their own work.

The 1912 publication of Guillaume Apollinaire's essay *Exoticism and Ethnography* was one of the first aesthetic evaluations by an established art critic of the art of indigenous people. This work provided balance to the functional and aesthetic considerations regarding indigenous creativity.

The study of Aboriginal creative expression needs an alternative approach which is located within the visual culture itself. Indigenous art in Australia has roots in a time long ago and owes little to the familiar aesthetics of the Western canon. Work produced in the twentieth century refutes the notion that Aboriginal art traditions are bound and incapable of change and therefore doomed to extinction.

My study of silk screen print designs from the Tiwi Islands shows that a relationship existed between Western and non-Western worlds in the twentieth century in Australia. My thesis challenges the notion that the experience of modernity is located

exclusively in the West. For the Tiwi modernity had its origins in the interaction between two worlds, in the colonial encounter.

The Tiwi silk screen print is an example of a successful model of cross cultural exchange between the Tiwi and non-Tiwi art/craft advisors and artists. The transition from ephemeral forms of mark making to modern styles of screen printing has been embraced wholeheartedly by the Tiwi people. Drawing inspiration from their natural environment and creation stories, Tiwi silk screen prints have become a recognisable Tiwi product of the late twentieth century. The Tiwi silk screen print documents how one select group of Australian Aboriginal people have negotiated the changes twentieth century life has imposed upon them and how they have adapted to these changes and linked their past to the present.

As the world moves towards a homogenised global culture there has been a recognition of both the benefits and the negative effects of this. As Vaclav Havel (1995), former President of the Czech Republic (a country striving to maintain its identity) has said:

> *….we now live in a single, global civilization. The identity of this civilization does not lie merely in similar forms of dress, or similar drinks, or in the constant buzz of the same commercial music all around the world, or even in international advertising….our planet has, for the first time, in a long history of the human race, been covered in the space of a very few decades by a single civilization – one which is essentially technological (World Policy Journal Vol. xii No.3).*

The struggles of cultural groups to assert their cultural differences from beneath the umbrella of world civilization needs to be recognised. The Tiwi are a wonderful example of the resistance of a 'peripheral' culture to mainstream domination. They are a wonderful example of the important role specific communities play in reinterpreting received styles and ideas to fit their own needs and contexts. Beneath their 'modern' approach there lies a wealth of references to specific contexts and histories that make the cultural production of the Tiwi so rich. The value of looking at Tiwi material culture in the early twenty first century is in their cultural refusal to conform to either tradition or change.

By investigating Tiwi print designs in the early twenty first century, past assumptions can be challenged and new dialogues can be created. To do this one needs an understanding that previous 'theoretical' terminology may not hold true for all cultural interpretation. Therefore, new frameworks need to be created that are more contextually relevant to an understanding of specific cultural developments. In an age of steadily encroaching homogeneity, cultural refusal to be suffocated by globalisation must be admired and applauded.

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Appendix 1 Excerpts from the diary of Diana Wood Conroy 1974

26 February 1974

Bede doing rather indifferent designs for abo Competition. Mad. Says he is not interested in ttrad. Patterns – I wonder. Seemed to respond when I suggested printing in 2 colours, or on coloured paper. Eager for action.

27 February 1974

Later in the afternoon I made an experimental paper screen with Bede, overprinting the cloth with many of the animal screens, turtle, possum, bird to make a repeating pattern. Bede is skilled at printing on the long blanket covered tables, quickly flicking the squeegee through the paint. The rows of paint tins sit on sagging shelves against the cross wall of the workshop, while the tables are near the frosted louvre windows that look onto the garden. The ceiling is so low it is only an inch above our heads. I talked to him about the animals and although we are still shy together he seemed responsive, glancing at me sideways, thoughtfully.[….]A lovely development would be to print calico with straight Tiwi patterns of stripes and dots, with no animal representations [….] But I don't know what he thinks. Sometimes he seems to hesitate over flat pattern, animals have been the main focus. I felt anxious about him, how I was relating to him – I didn't want to force things but didn't want him to be bored either.

4 March 1974

Tried to work out over-all patterns.

5 March 1974

Printed two dragonfly table cloths with Bede. Then tried to get Bede interested in all-over design. But I don't know what he thinks. Sometimes seems to have lack of talent for flat pattern – yet animals good. Felt anxious about him, how I was relating to him – I don't want to force things but didn't want him bored either. Perhaps definite alteration between printing sessions and design sessions, some each morning and afternoon. Printed crabs after tea – all over – looked as though all in place for a football match Bede said.

6 March 1974

Bede does not see strength of old designs – what does he feel?

7 March 1974

Bede prepared big screen and we printed mats. J. talked to him about stripes in a square, for all-over patterns – he did some passable ones. V. delicate, don't want to push him in unnatural styles. Going to take while – but he seems quite happy. So we will continue with basic stock-in-trade, and some searching out for new designs. Must just present the format, state type of design. Perhaps animals better, if work out geometric form. Printed blue circles again – pretty crude, quite enjoyable. J. says I take it too seriously.

11 March 1974

Bede had coffee with us – J. asked him if he was interested in doing bark paintings – "maybe in a few years" he said "just now I want to learn so much".

15 March 1974

Felt quite absorbed in problem of design – perhaps I am manipulating Bede, but no matter.

20 March 1974

Bede needs more direction – he was doing some geom. Stripes – tried to point out the difficulty in repeat patterns. Liz said Giovanni wrote he is not coming back until the new building is up.

27 March 1974

Bede quite cheerful, v. interested in the old book by Baldwin Spencer.

28 March 1974

Set Bede to doing design with circles, turtles, but he seemed rather tired….Bede's approach still very simple.

29 March 1974

Sunny morning. Set Bede to redesigning turtle….talked to Agnes and Gabriel, her husband (Bede's parents). Apparently their son has very little to do with them, he was brought up by his aunt.

1 April 1974

Bede put the cotton on the screen and started painting a turtle.

2 April 1974

Printed new turtle pattern, quite good. Bede working on new design of circle. Printed one table cloth with crabs, 2 turtle printings. Lots of combinations possible.

4 April 1974

Bede working on fish design.

10April 1974

Bede printed his fishes – O.K. in repeat.

17 April 1974

Terry brought books over – Mountford – looked at it with Bede, who kept it with him all day and copied a design from it, which I thought very good.

18 April 1974

Bede did nice design, gently helped.

19 April 1974

Printing fish table cloths, finishing off new design. Too much to do for just Bede. So difficult to print quickly with just 2 people and a small table.

22 April 1974

Printed Bede's new design – looked good.

30 April 1974

Bede's designs are so altered by my taste, yet I am only the 'supervisor'? Bede so much more reserved – I really appreciate it. Seemed very pleased with the new circle design, I forgot the "degeneration of Raphael" in working in T. D. Talked to getting a secretary to take over bookwork when we go etc. – training Bede in keeping books.

2 May 1974

Bede seemed keen – is it because I gave him a cheque for $200 for a boat? – he does seem pleased with his designs.

3 May 1974

Bede very happy, having lent him the money. Fran [his wife] came at 10, all upset over the school kids – Bede went back to school with her and told them off, but she still looked tired and dejected when he saw her after school. Bede said Fran wanted to work at T. D. I encouraged this, stressing how we need someone for paperwork, orders etc. I could train Fran, what a solution it would be to the problem of leaving – but she seems badly needed at school. T. D. would only need a minimum of supervision then. Bede v. pleased with the designs – printed cloth for Jane Burns.

22 May 1974

Quite a lot of printing. Bede did woodcut prints of possum to make a design.

28 May 1974

Bede happy doing possum and butterfly design.

31 May 1974

Came down to set out calicos for Bede's new butterfly design….Thought of that vulnerability of Bede's, the way he looks up hopefully, the little jokes. Bede is real. Printed Bede's butterflies which were very nice.

13 June 1974

Printed cards.

14 June 1974

Bede very cheerful, designed a lizard on striped background.

18 June 1974

Made a great difference having G. help Bede. I could do other things. Seem to have a very affable relationship, tho Bede definitely the leader.

19 June 1974

Giovanni is different to Bede, seems more superficial (if that's the word) – his designs so childish. Bede is really exceptional – I don't think I will get so attached to Giovanni.

21 June 1974

Giovanni has no real concept of all-over pattern.

25 June 1974

Bede doing turtle design.

4 July 1974

Giovanni's new circle design very good, printing it, and Bede's new flower – this is very exciting, what I am here for

8 July 1974

Printed table cloths with Bede, cards, t shirts.

9 July 1974

Giovanni still not back. Helped Bede, who looked a bit lonely. He is so amazingly reliable – T D. would collapse without him.

19 July 1974

Bede told us today about when he was in Sydney, they were taken to a southern beach, and walked on a jetty – they met some children who questioned them about why their skin was so dark. "You must have got cooked up like toast." Bede thought it very funny.

23 July 1974

Bad atmosphere in the morning. Bede not there, didn't want to print – great effort somehow. So hot. Felt discouraged, but it's really only natural. So in the afternoon, just let them design. Bede's new 2 colour patterns turned out well, he seemed to come to life for a bit. Seems very preoccupied.

29 July 1974

Printing all-over new patterns with Bede, who was very pleased with himself.

8 August 1974

B. and G. doing good designs.

Appendix 2 Gerardine Tungutalum

A Tiwi account of the arrival of Father Gsell 8 July 1911 by Gerardine Tungutalum

When Father Gsell first arrived at Bathurst, he landed and found no-one. He walked on the beach and found a cement notice with writing on it from a long time ago. The name on the notice was Mister Bathurst. Father Gsell found that name.

He had a dog called Yirruwu, he took his dog with him. One evening he camped up, looked around, found no persons, and so he burnt some grass. He was marking the ground using string and axes.

The next day he found that man from over on Melville Island. He was coming across with his canoe, his name was Mulankinya. The man found Father cooking something, cookin damper. So the man came and said, “Hello”. And Father looked at the man and said,”Who are you?” “My name is Mulankinya. I’m working with that man on the other side, Joe Cooper.”

Father said, “Come here. Sit next to me.” He gave the man some tucker, damper. “I want you tomorrow to go and bring all the people in,” Father said.”I want you to go the bush and bring all those people in.” And the man said, “Yes. I will.”

So he gave him a big bundle of tobacco sticks wrapped in paper. And he gave him a magnifying glass. The man, who was jiyijini, walked off with his wife Marawunyirrawanga, who was jilarringa. Also, another man, Scissors, who was marntuwupwani, was with him.

They found some people and they said, “A person is there. A white man with a big beard.” “Who is he?” the others asked. “He said he is a missionary from heaven.” Alright. So they walked again.

And found another mob in Jikilaruwu country. They told that mob, “All of us will go to Nguiu.” “What for?” “A man is there. White man. He wants you and your children. You better go, all of you, go down there.” “Who is he?” “He is priest, missionary, from heaven.”

Again another man walked, to Warankuwu. He told those people, “We better all go down.” “What for?” “A white man is there, a missionary.” So those Wurankuwula began walking down to meet with the others at Dinner Camp, which is the place called Pipiyanyuwumili.

He gave them sticks of tobacco. He went to the other mob, Malawila, and told them the same words. And so he brought all those people down, a big mob to the place, Pipiyanyiwumili. They were waiting for one another there.

One morning they painted up. They danced. All of them were dancing. They had spears. Each one had spears. They walked down, all the mob going down, from the bush towards Nguiu. They slept half-way, and the next morning they began walking again. About three o’clock they arrived near Nguiu, and waited at First Creek. They waited there for some others who were yet to come. They were all painted up.

One man came down and told Father. All the mob are waiting there. I brought all the people in here. Alright? All naked he said. I’ll give you these, Father said. He made some pieces of calico. Some of them didn’t have clothes, but paperbark. First woman to use the calico was Wumala, maninga.

All the people then came towards Nguiu, dancing on the way, and singing. “Wiya. Wiya. Wiya.” They thought there were strange people, some of them hiding, so they had spears with them.

And then Father began to talk to them. “Hello. I’m a priest,” he said, I’m a missionary. I’m belong to God.” “I think this man is from heaven.” They joined hands, imitating him, and copied him making the sign of the cross. Father Gsell got hold of one stick with three leaves on it. He showed them the three leaves on the stick and told them about God and Trinity.”Hey. This man is different,” they said. But someone said, “He’s he got his wife there?” Someone else said, ”No. He belongs to God. He is from heaven.”

So that night they slept. Morning came. They were talking to one another about Father Gsell. My three uncles went and found him burning grass, marking out places near the present Xavier School. “Hello.” They said. “Hello missionary, you missionary?” they said. “Yes.” He said. “Better go down and get tucker” they said. They brought him down, and he gave them flour, which at first they put on themselves as if it were white paint. He made damper. He showed them how to make damper, and how to boil flour soup. They ate damper and soup. ”Good for us. Good tucker,” they said.

“Alright now you can go out. Take your tomahawk, axe. Cut some logs for fence. Bring them in and count how many you have. Bring them down. Alright.” All that mob went then. They took axes, and cut a lot of logs down. Some of them brought 5, some 6, some 3, some 2, some cut 11,12.”Alright. Stand beside your logs” Father said. “How many did you carry? Alright. You got 12. You got 11. Ten. Eight. And where’s your Marapuwanuwiyi?” he said to Emily’s father. “I got eight,” he said. But he didn’t. He got only three logs. ”No. You got only three,” Father said. And so they made a fence.

“Alright. Go out and cut some timbers now. Alright.” The Jilawula and Wurankuwula went to Jipipina to cut timbers. They made them into rafts and brought them in. Some Malawula went to Euro to cut timber and tied them up as a raft between canoes.

They brought a lot of timber into the Mission. After that Father Gsell used to give them rations, flour, sugar, treacle, tea leaves, tobacco. And a boat brought an engine for a saw mill. It came from a German maker. They built a house for cutting timber. The saw mill. They used to cut timber there. It was down on the beach.

Some other young ones used to tell Father Gsell, and he used to ask the old man for the young ones. The old men used to say yes, because they used to want flour, blankets, tomahawks. Children were baptised now. They used to bring young girls to the convent. “One wife. One man, one woman. God made one wife. Not two or three.” He used to say. ”You’ve got three wives,” some said, “No. He’s a priest. He belongs to God” “Cabbagie’s mob said this. They used to understand. ”He belongs to God.”

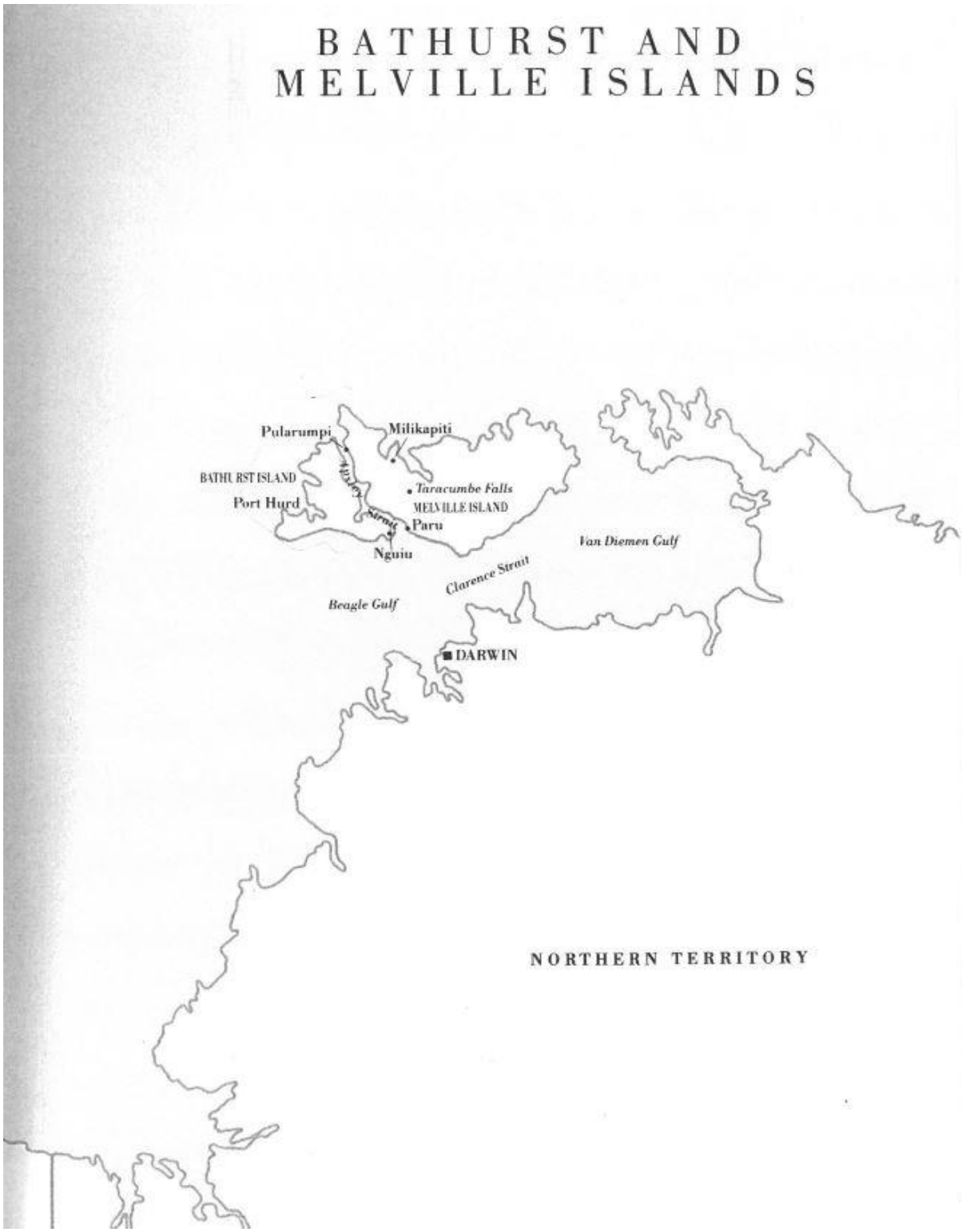
They built the old presbytery, and then the convent, the church, the school, the dormitory. We didn’t have a hospital in those days.

The people used to bring their children along to the convent, to sell.” I want these young people to come. The sisters will look after them. “ Some men used to hide their wives.

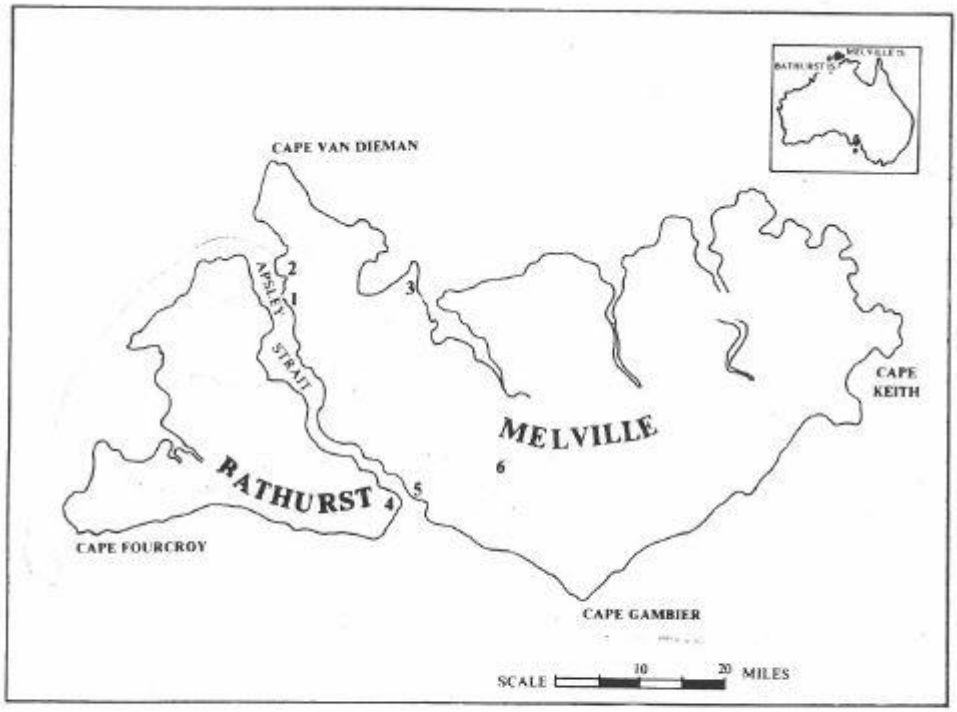
Fifty wives. Those fifty wives stayed in the convent in the early days. We found that mob married. Another mob was in the convent when we went there. We found that mob. Hilda and her mob were big girls when we went there. My mother sent me. Sister Gerardine wanted me

to stay in the convent. She gave me that name. I was born a Christian. I was promised to an old man. I didn't see his face. He passed away before I was born. So my mother brought me to the convent. As children we used to climb up on Father Gsell's lap. He used to give us lollies, bananas. "Father gave us banana,we said. Thank you." When he had built the mission, Father Gsell went to England. He got that medal for his place from King George (Tungutalum 1983: no pagination).

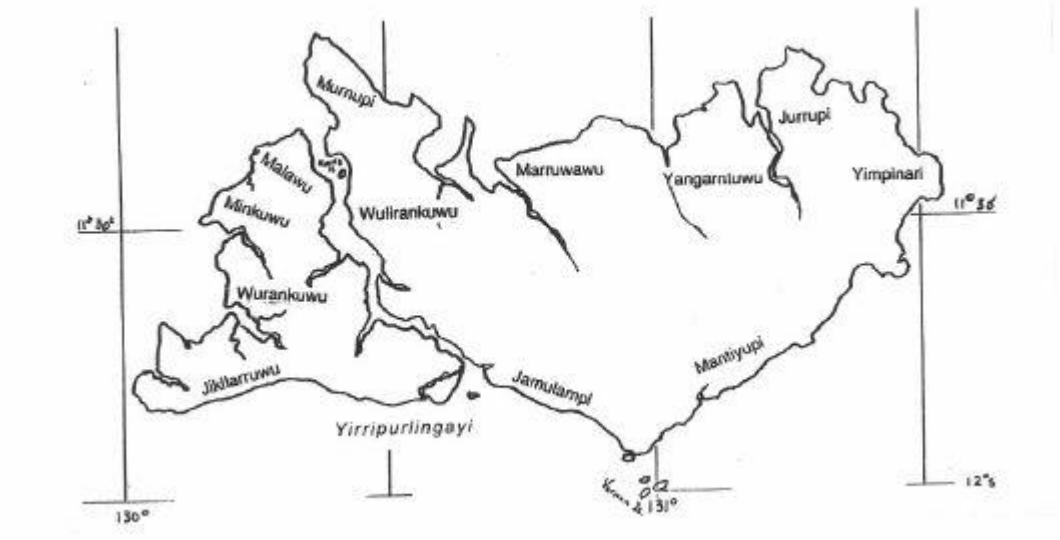
Appendix 3 Maps, Tables, Plates and Figures



Map 1: Bathurst and Melville Islands (Smith 1990: frontispiece).



Map 2: Melville and Bathurst Islands (Pye 1977).



Map 3: Land Ownership on Melville and Bathurst Islands in 1990 (Ward 1990:11).

THE SPENCER COLLECTION

OBJECT	NUMBER
Axe	2
Bark bag	56
Basket (palm leaf)	33
Belt	19
Bark (sheet)	1
Stick	1
Club	159
Digging implement	1
Ceremonial item	1
Grave marker	24
Tassels	6
Instrument (didgeridoo)	9
Mineral sample (white pipeclay)	1
Mourning ring	7
Arm cane ring ornament	110
Arm plaited palm leaf ornament	340
Armband (bark)	32
Head ornament	33
Neck ornament	61
Hair ornament	16
Resin	5
Scraper (shell)	3
Spear	197
Hair string	1
String (bark)	1
Watercraft (dugout canoe)	1
Stone (flake)	1
Total	

Source: Museum of Victoria

Table 1: The Spencer Collection

THE SAYERS COLLECTION

OBJECT	NUMBER
clothing	11
hat	4
bag	20
basket	26
armlet	93
ornament	18
head ring	5
head dress	2
mourning ornament	30
biting bag	2
grave object	2
grave post	13
plume	18
cord	1
musical object	10
paddle	7
canoe (bark)	1
canoe wooden	4
container	18
girdle	2
shell	1
plaited belt	8
bark bracelet	7
carving stick	1
spear thrower	5
club	75
spear	197
Total	501

Source: South Australian Museum

Table 2: The Sayers Collection

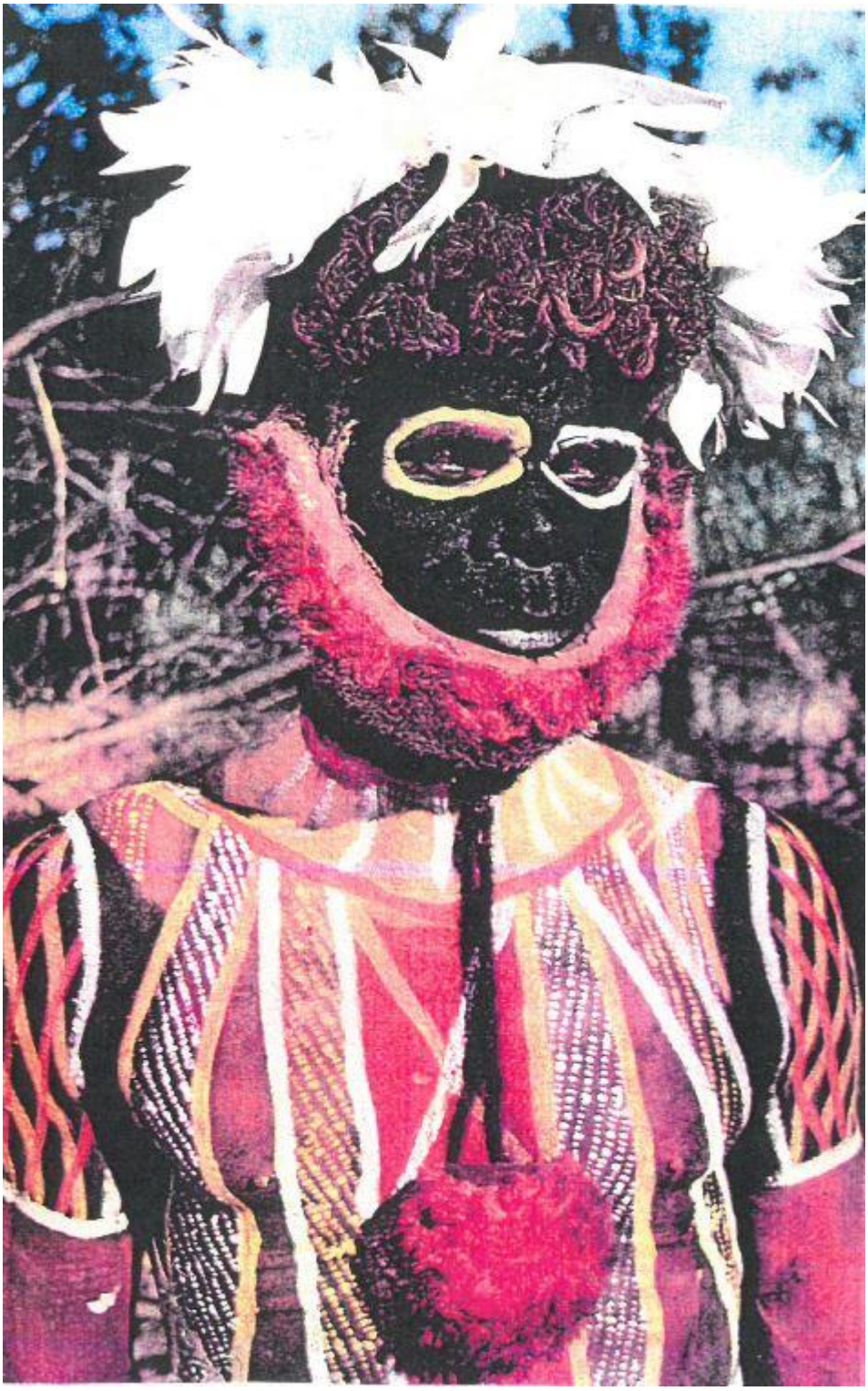


Plate 1: Tiwi man in full ceremonial regalia (Mountford 1958: frontispiece).

Plate 2: Tiwi women dressed for a mourning ceremony (Spencer in Vanderwal 1982: 177).

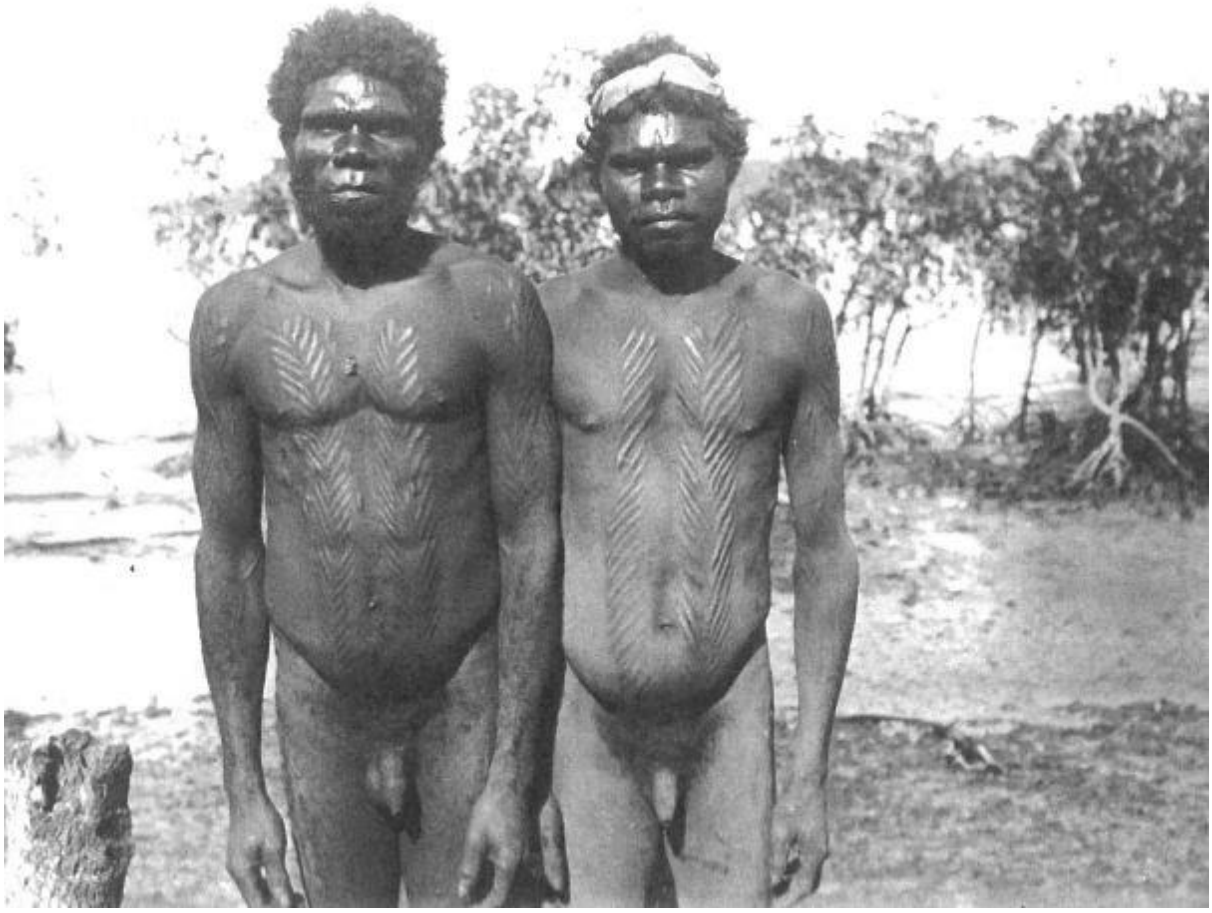


Plate 3: Tiwi men showing cicatrices *(miunga*) (Spencer in Vanderwal 1982: 161).

Plate 4: Tiwi women wearing bark aprons (Spencer in Vanderwal 1982: 161).

Plate 5: Burial poles surrounding a grave (Smith 2008: 81).

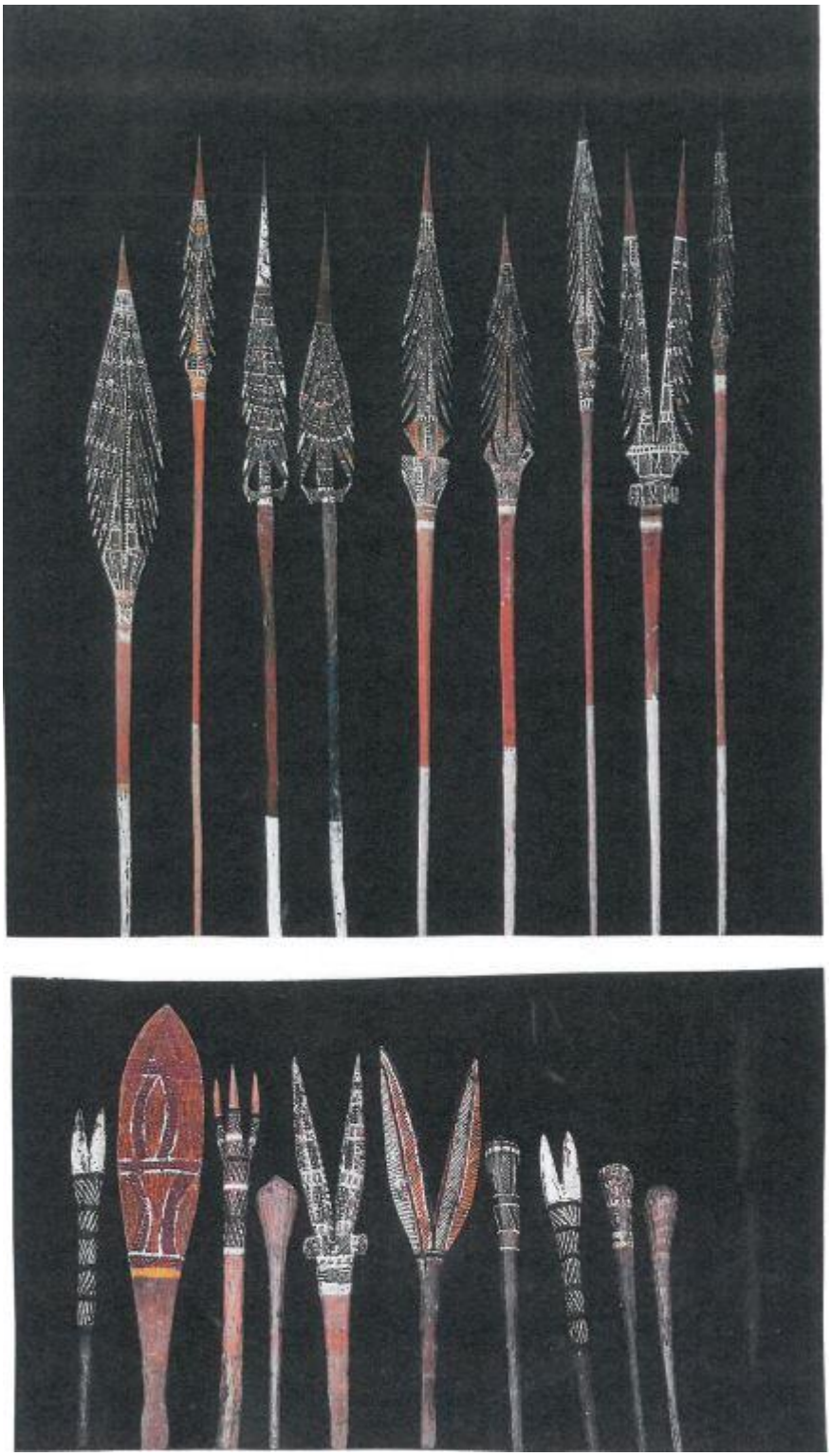


Plate 6: Ceremonial spears and clubs used in rituals (Holmes 1995: 122-123).

Pamijini

Jukuti

Tapaligini

Marikwani

Plate 7: Ceremonial ornaments (Bennett 1965: 156).

Plate 8: Bark basket (*tunga*) (Holmes 1995: 119).

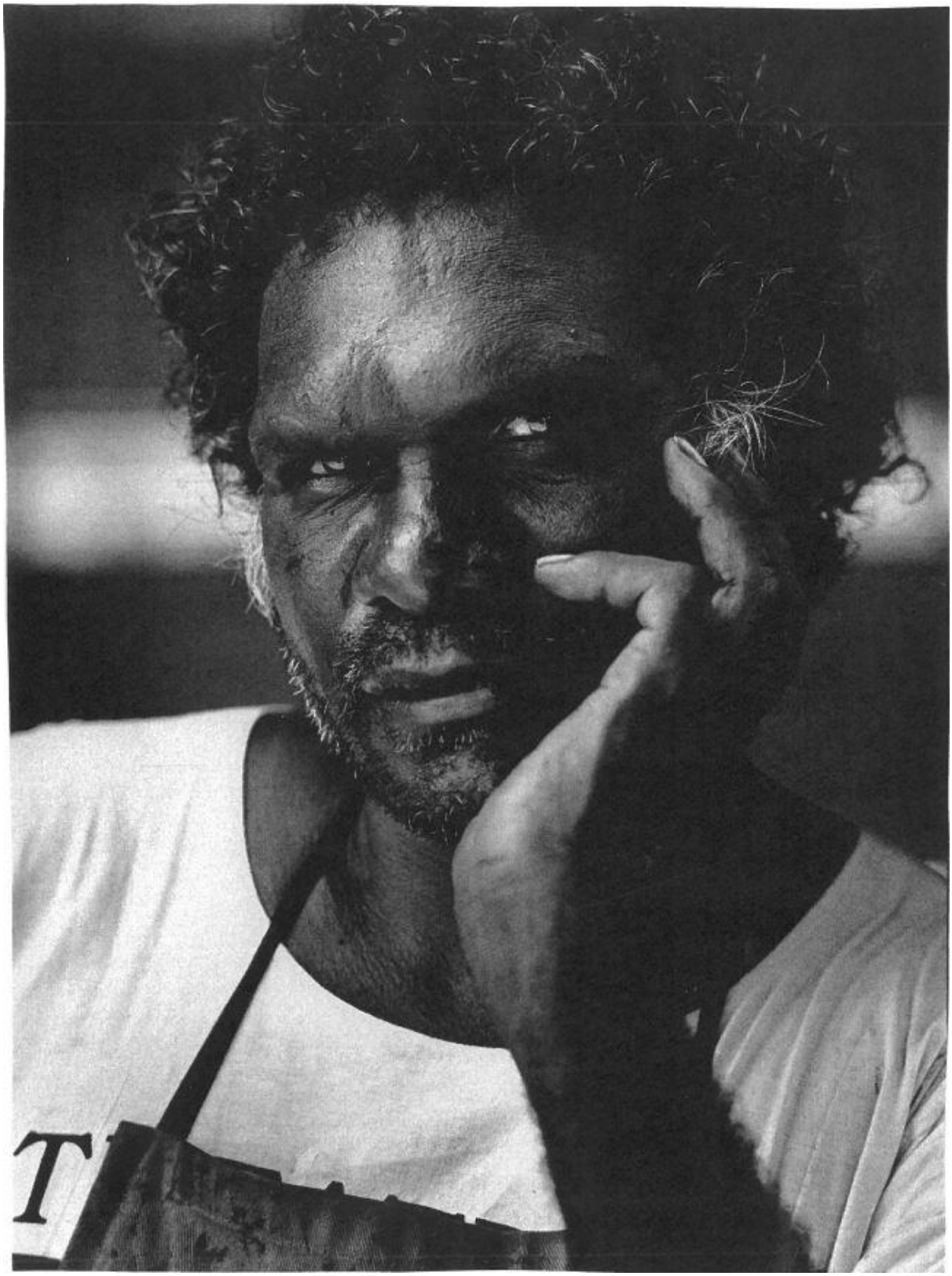


Plate 9: Tiwi Design artist Bede Tungutalum (Smith 1990: 67).

Plate 10: Linocut, Self-Portrait, Owl Man, artist Bede Tungutalum (Lendon 1996: 7).

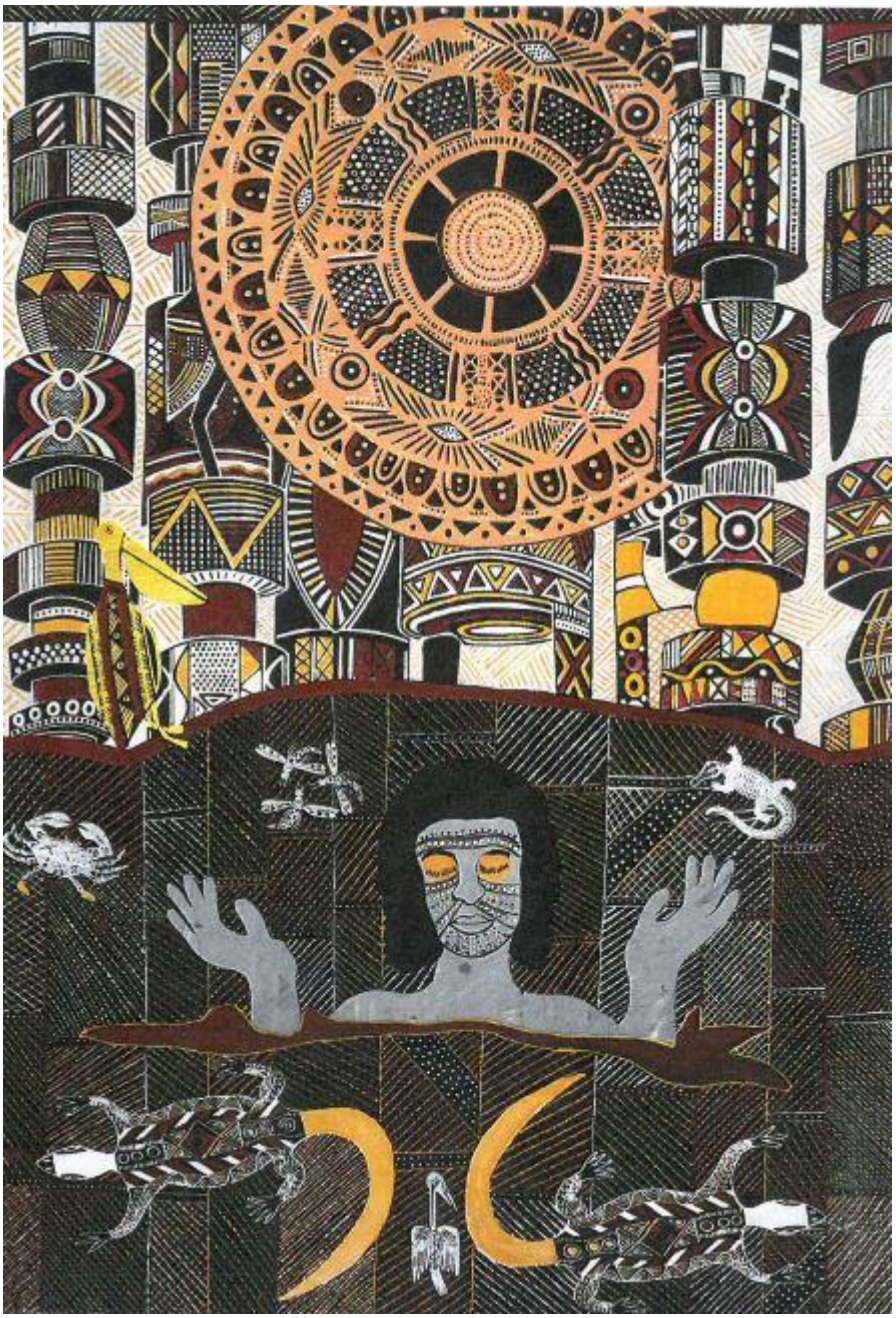


Plate 11: Murtankala – Creation Story, screenprint, ochres on cotton, artist Bede Tungutalum (O'Ferrall 1989: 29).

Plate 12: Tipungwuti finds the Nyingawi, screenprint, ochres on canvas, artist Bede Tungutalum (O'Ferrall 1989: 28).

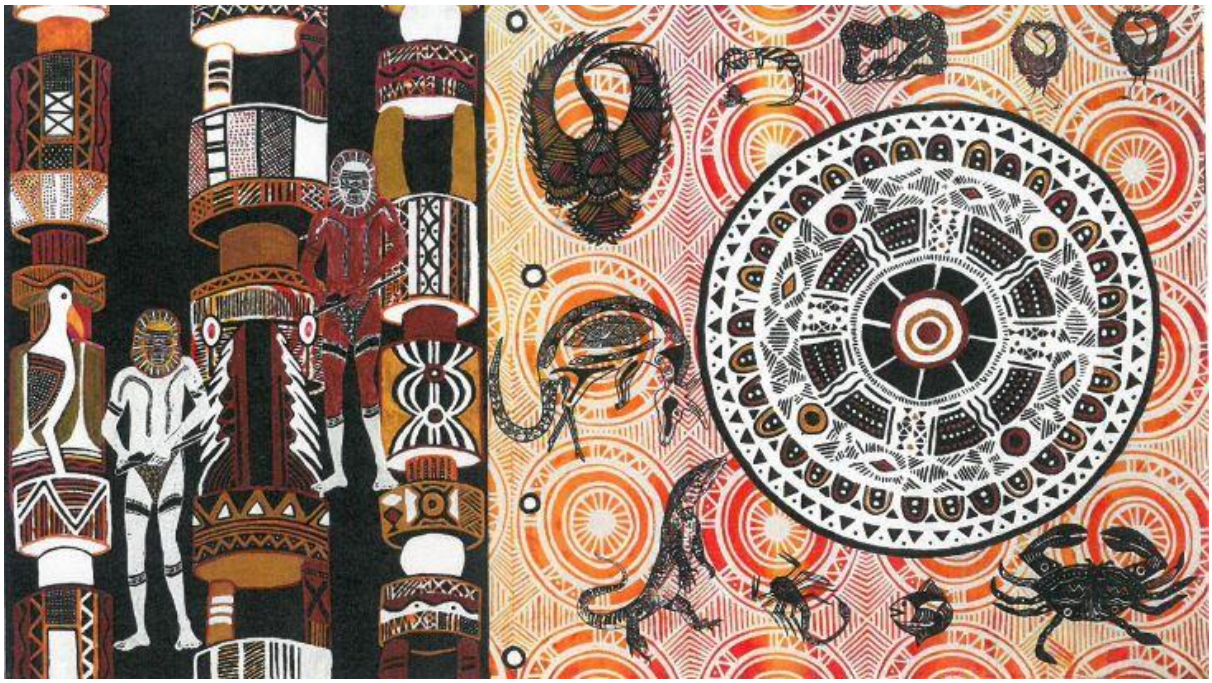


Plate 13: Pukumani Posts and Dancing Figures, screenprint, ochres on cotton, artist Bede Tungutalum (O'Ferrall 1989: 23).

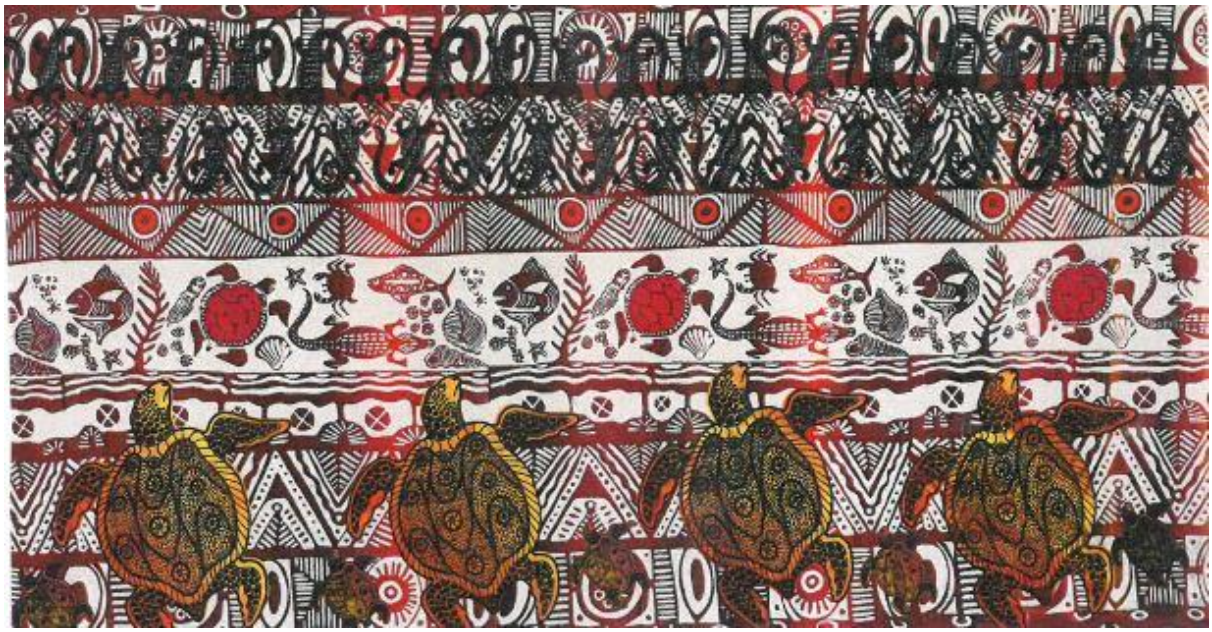


Plate 14: Sea Life, screenprint on cotton, artist Bede Tungutalum (O'Ferrall 1989: 22).

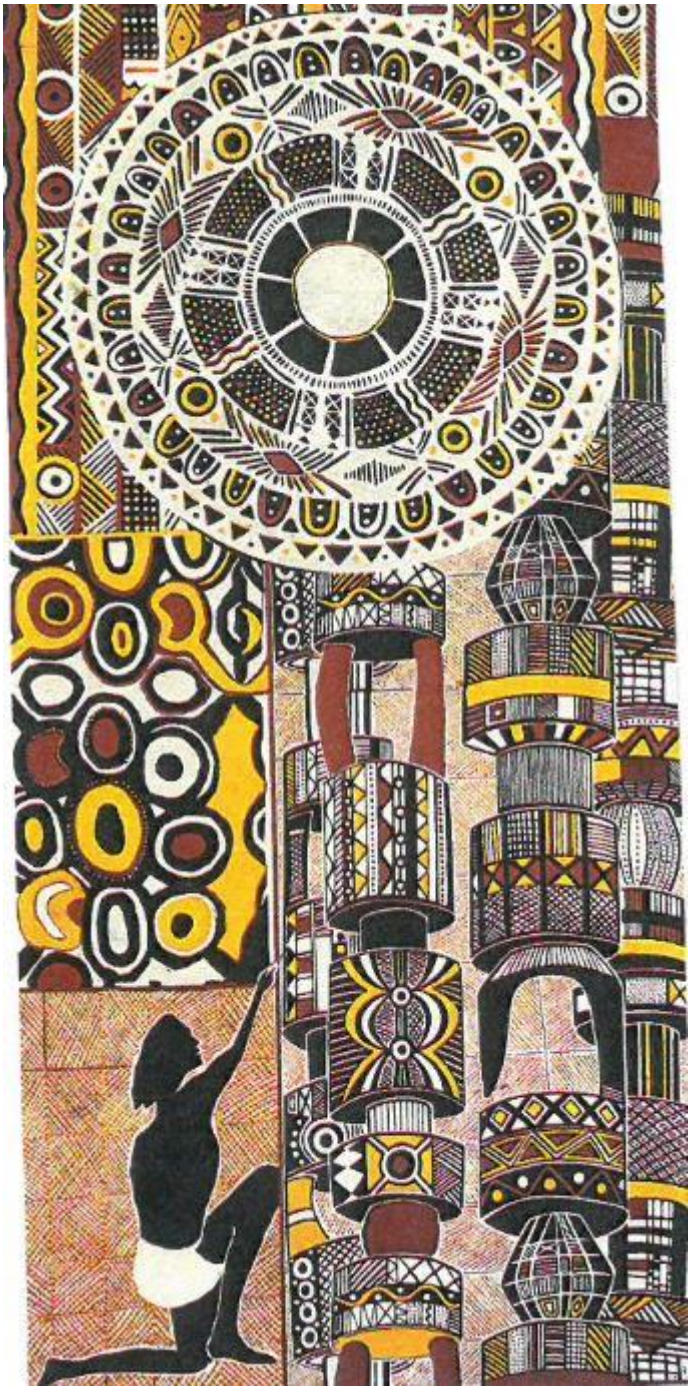


Plate 15: Pukumani Poles with sun and stone design,screenprint and handpainted on cotton, artist Bede Tungutalum (West 1988: 75).

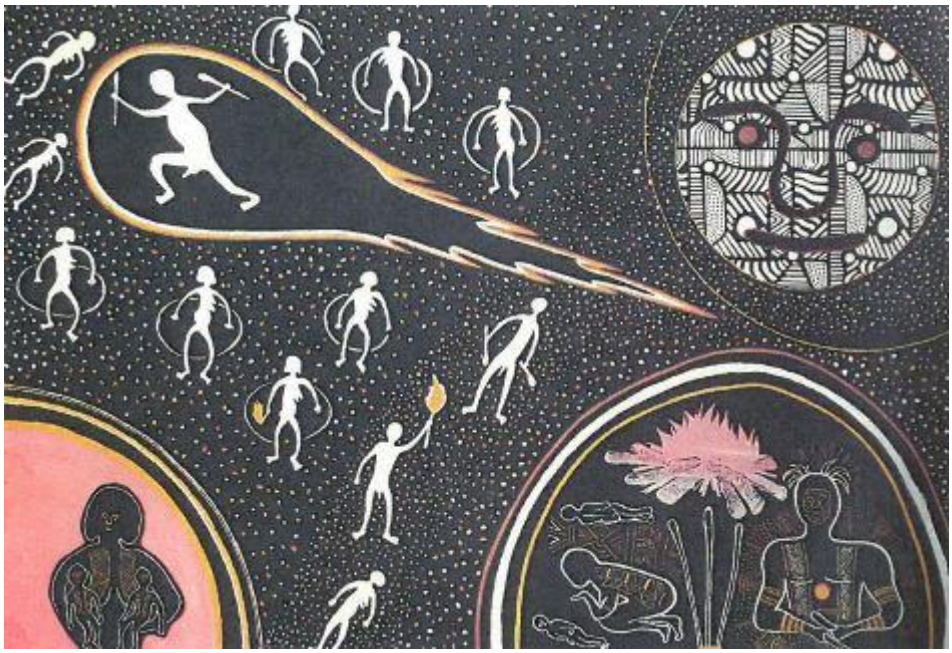


Plate 16: Night Sky, artist Bede Tungutalum (Greet and Harrex 1991: 300).

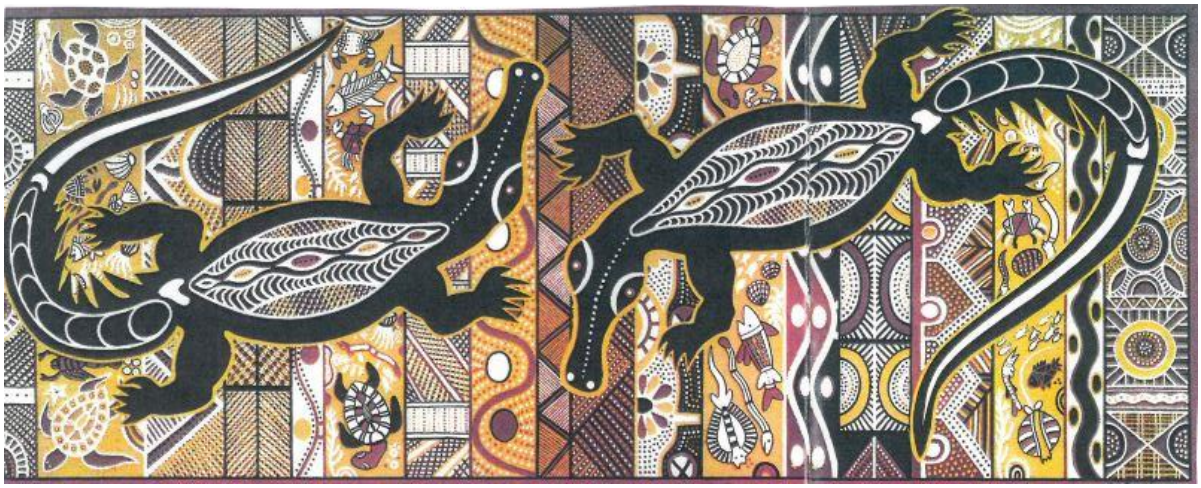
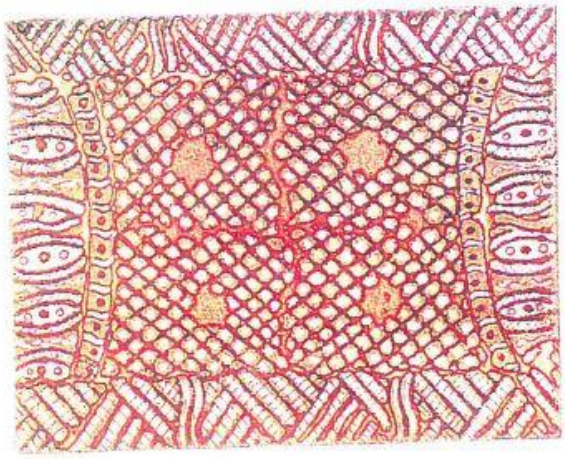
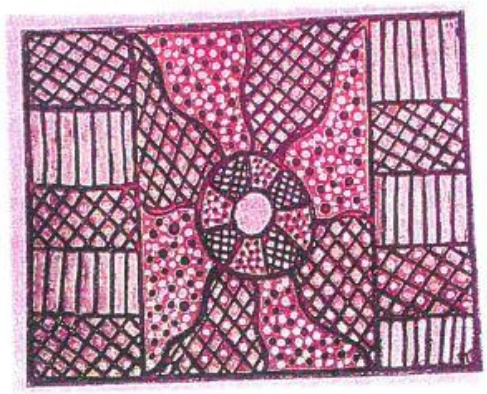


Plate 17: Irrikipayi – The Crocodile, mural at Sydney International Airport, artist Bede Tungutalum (Craft Art International 1994: 62-63).

Maria Iosette Orsto
Armband and lilamara - 1994



Cyril James Kerinaiua
Pikaranga - 1994

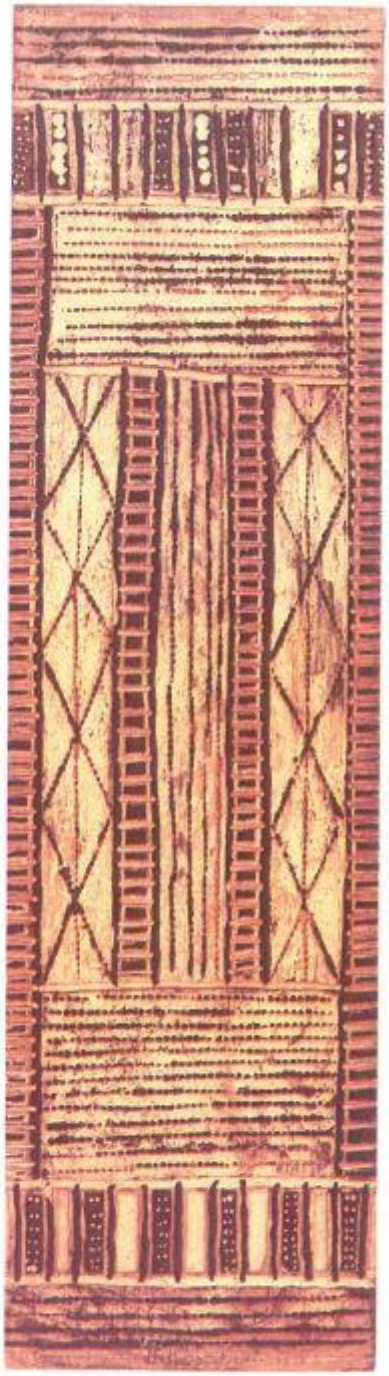


Maria Josette Orsto
Kurlama and lilamara - 1994

Plate 18: Etchings from the NTU Collection, artists Maria Josette Orsto and Cyril James Kerinaiua (Art Back 1996:36).

Plate 19: Pwoja 2014, artist Raelene Kerinauia (Bullock N. and Munro K. 2015: 70).

↑ Pedro Wonaeamirri
Yirrinkrupwoja (Body Painting #3) 2004
lift-ground etching in two colours, printed from one copper plate, with colour roll-up
64.5 x 17.7 cm



↑ Pedro Wonaeamirri
Yirrinkrupwoja (Body Painting #4) 2004
lift-ground etching in two colours, printed from one copper plate, with colour roll-up
64.5 x 17.7 cm

Plate 20: Body Painting, artist Pedro Wonaeamirri (Bullock N. and Munro K., 2015: 128).

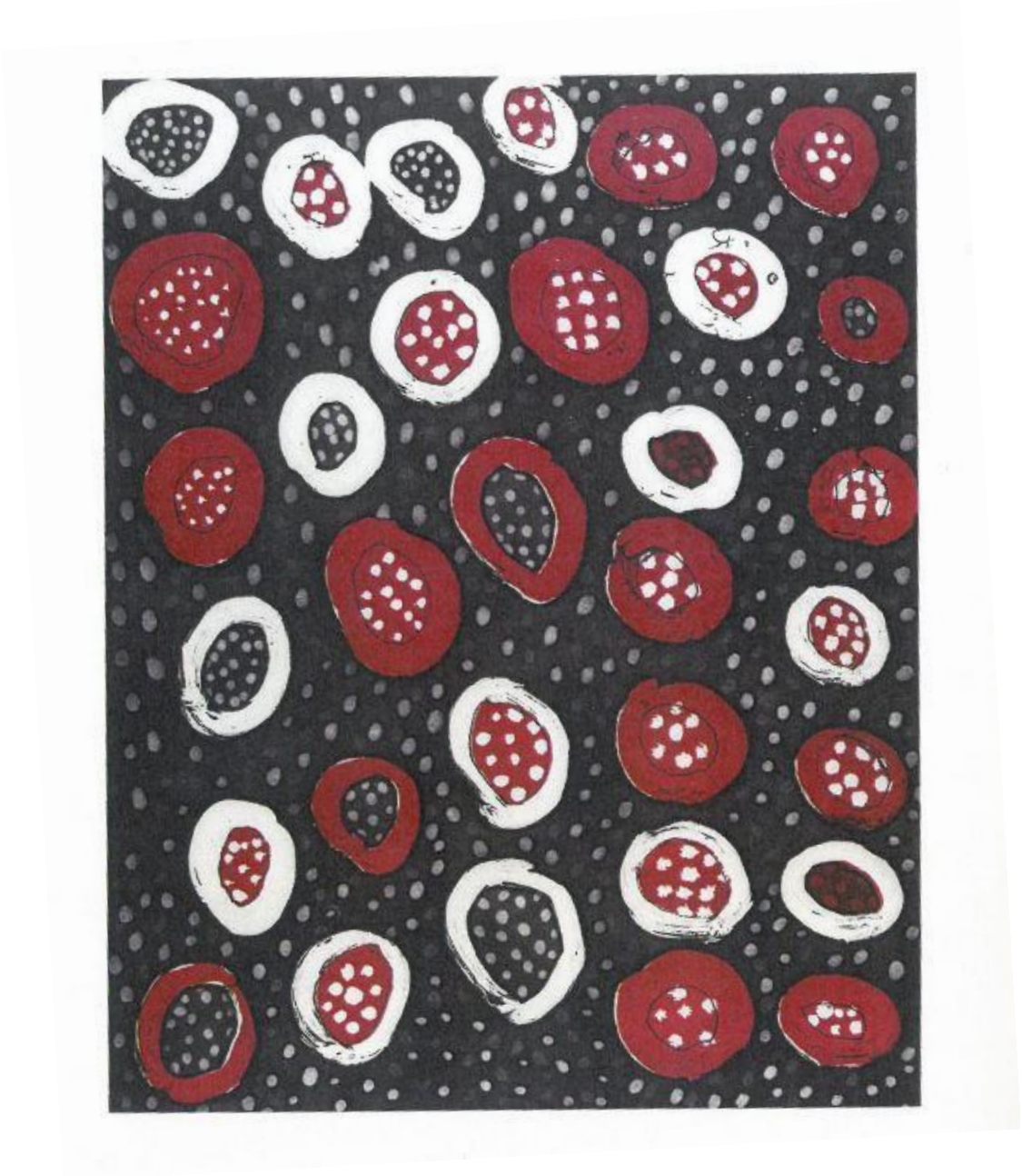
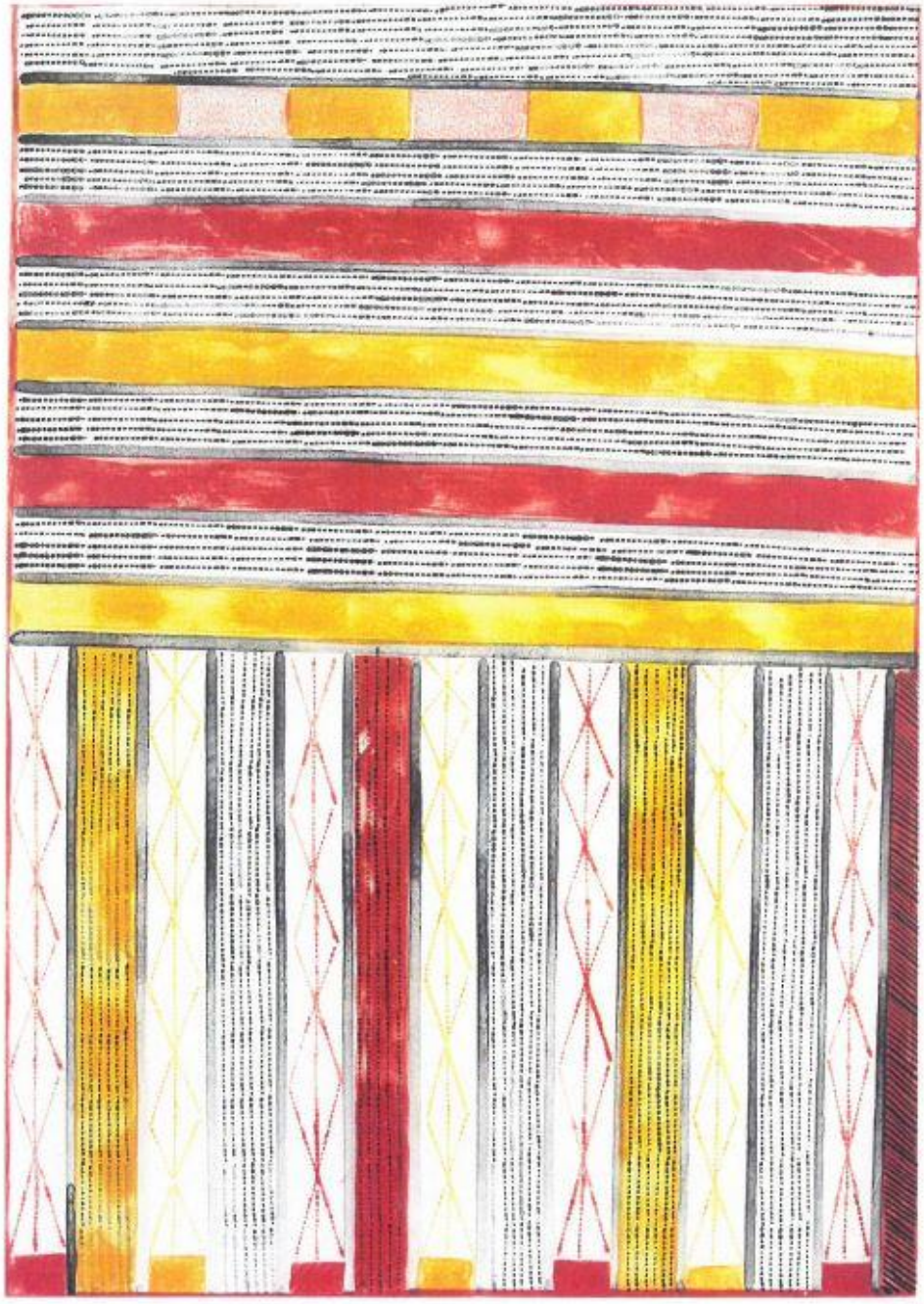


Plate 21: Kulama, artist Timothy Cook (Bullock N. and Munro K., 2015: 56).



Pedro Wonaeamirri
Yimnkrupwaja (Body Painting #1) 2004
lithograph in three colours, printed from three aluminium plates
86 x 61 cm

Plate 22: Body Painting, artist Pedro Wonaeamirri (Bullock N. and Munro K., 2015: 126).

† Pedro Wonaeamirri
Yirrinkrupwoja (Body Painting #2) 2004
lithograph in three colours, printed from three aluminium plates
86 x 61 cm

Plate 23: Body Painting, artist Pedro Wonaeamirri (Bullock N. and Munro K., 2015: 127).

Plate 24: Nguiu, artist Maria Josette Orsto (Bullock N. and Munro K., 2015: 80).

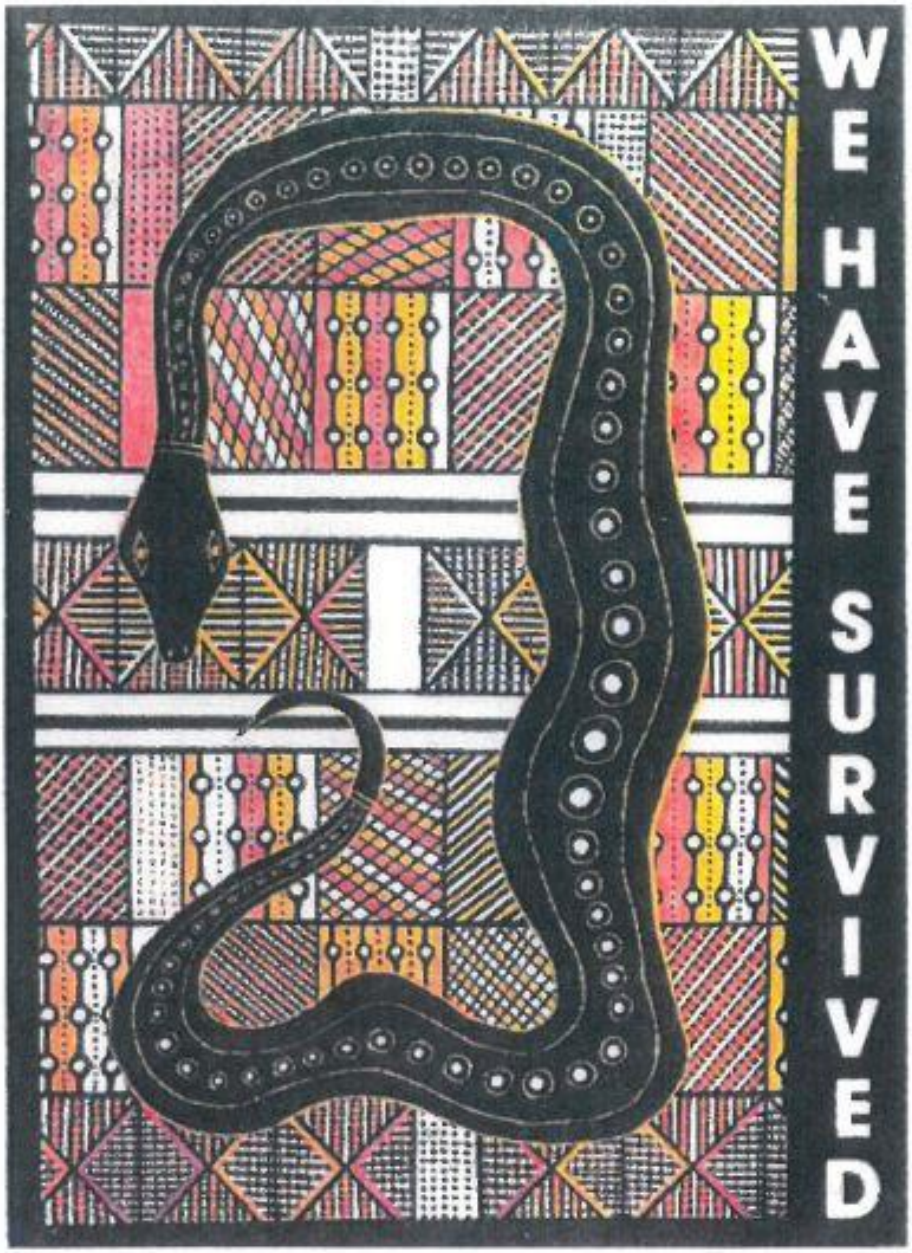


Plate 25: We Have Survived poster, artist Bede Tungutalum (Northern Land Council Investment Corporation pamphlet).

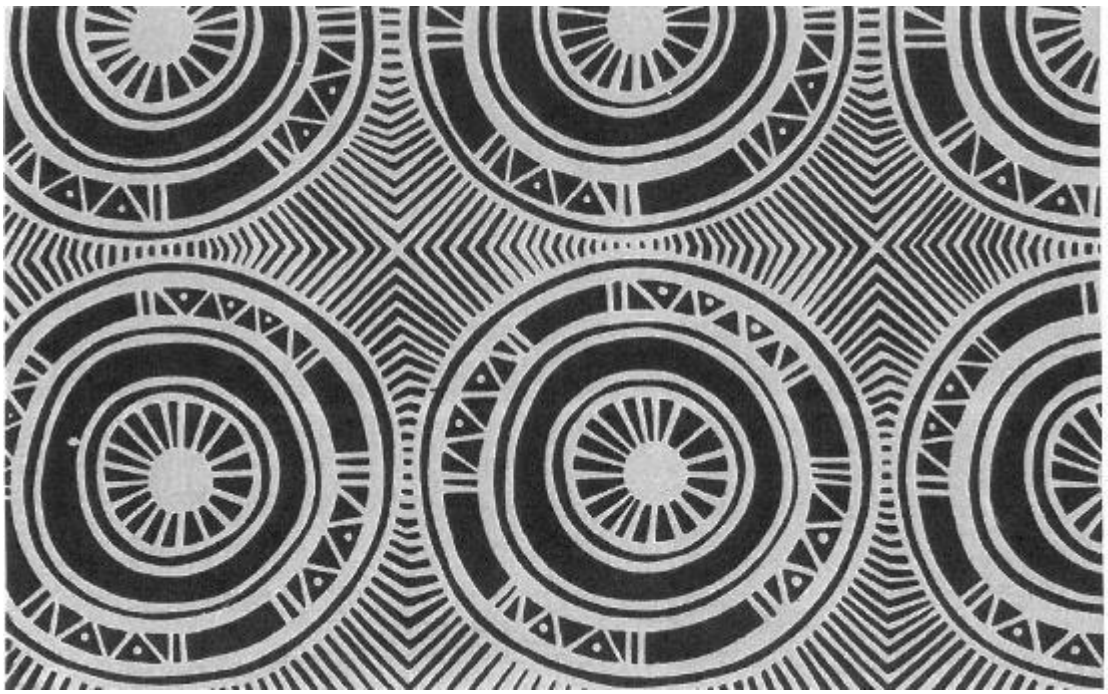


Figure 1: Warnaringa (sun) design, Bede Tungutalum for Tiwi Design c. 1974. (Collection National Gallery of Victoria: www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/59652).

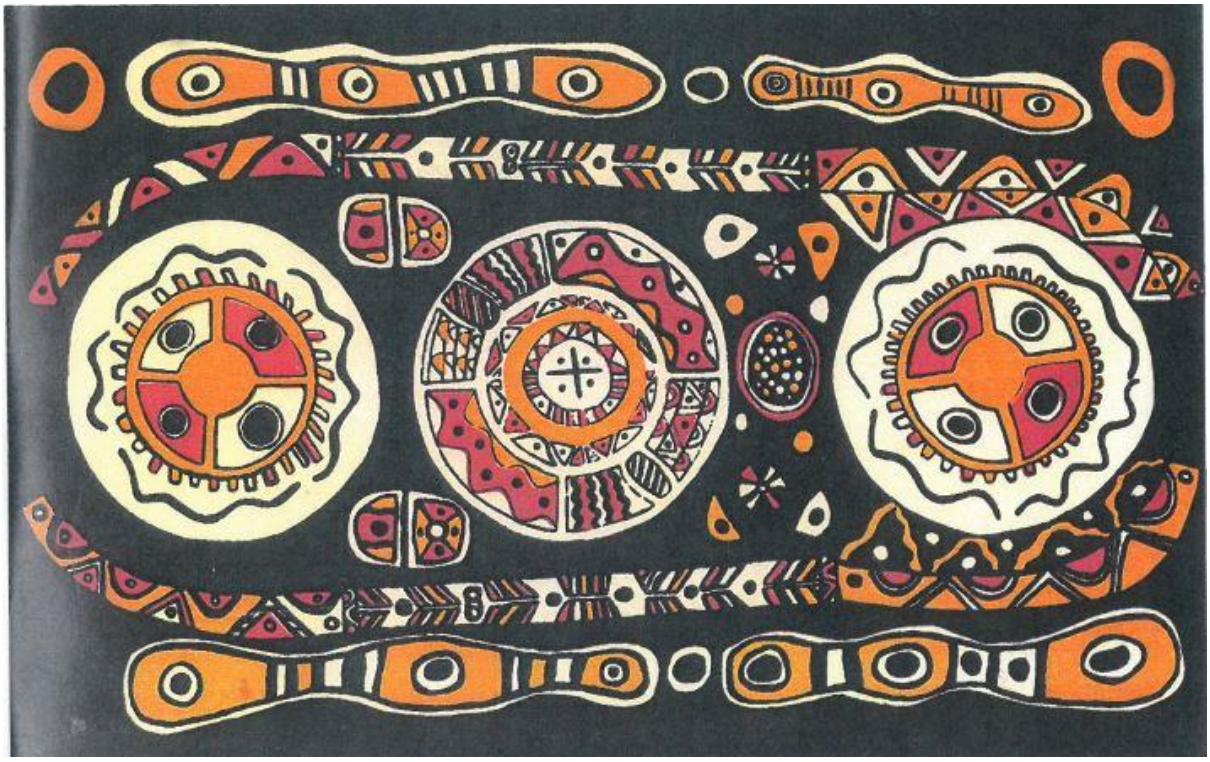


Figure 2: Kurlama design, Giovanni Tipungwuti for Tiwi Design c. 1978. (Barnes 1999: 57).

Figure 3: Spider web design, Vivian Kerinauia for Tiwi Design c. 1974. (Ryan and Healy 1998: 117).

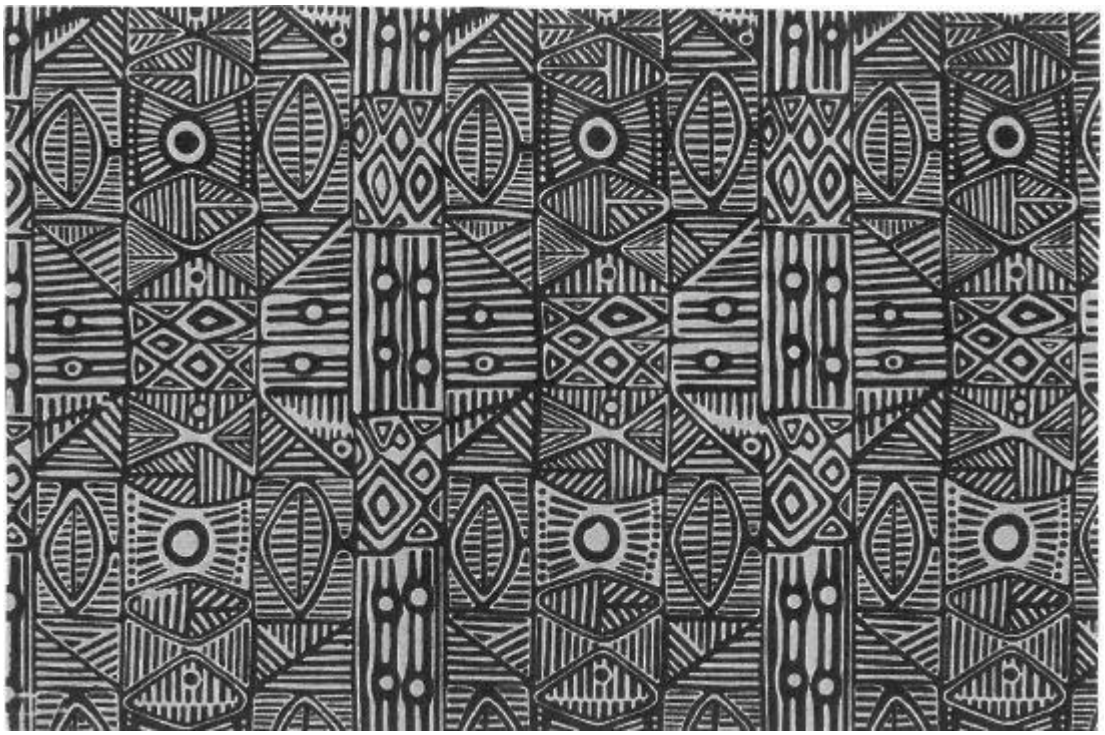


Figure 4: Stone axe design, Jock Puautjimi for Tiwi Design c. 1978. (Collection National Gallery of Victoria: www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/59573).

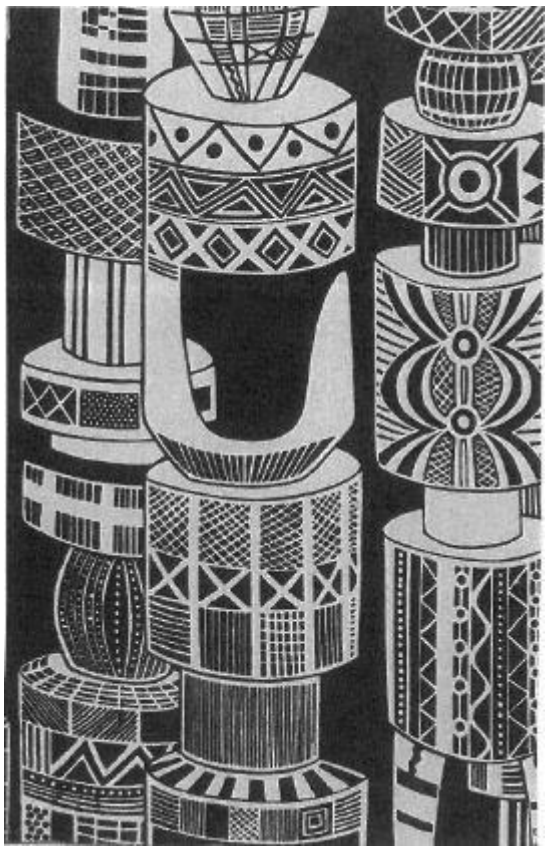


Figure 5: Burial pole design, Bede Tungutalum and Ray Young for Tiwi Design c. 1980 (Collection National Gallery of Victoria: www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/59571).

Figure 6: Burial pole design, Tara Munkanome for Bima Wear c. 1988.. (Barnes 1999: 60).

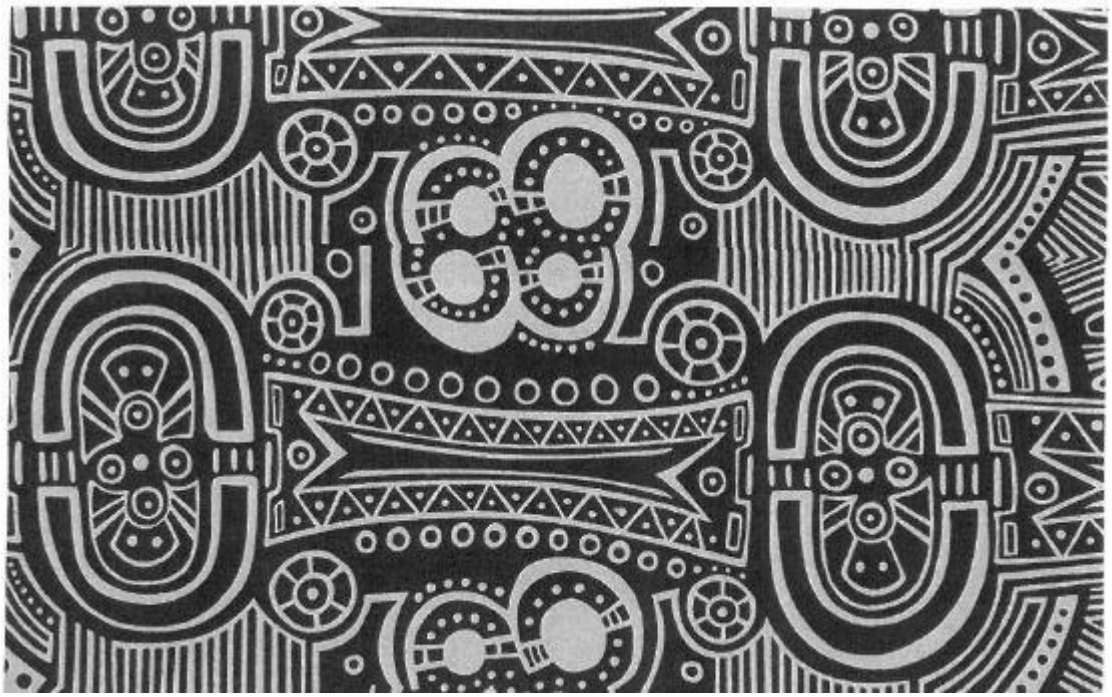


Figure 7: Kurlama (yam) design, Bede Tungutalum for Tiwi Design c. 1974. (Collection National Gallery of Victoria: www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/59640).

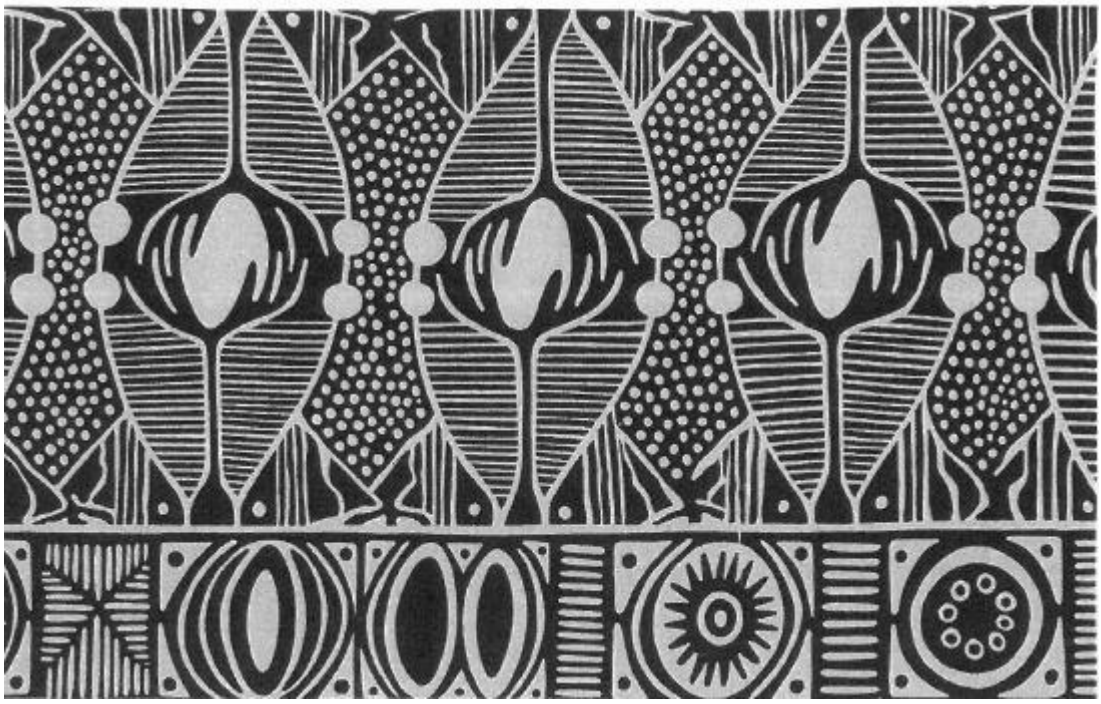


Figure 8: Kurlama (yam) design,Bede Tungutalum for Tiwi Design c. 1974. (Collection National Gallery of Victoria: www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/59653).

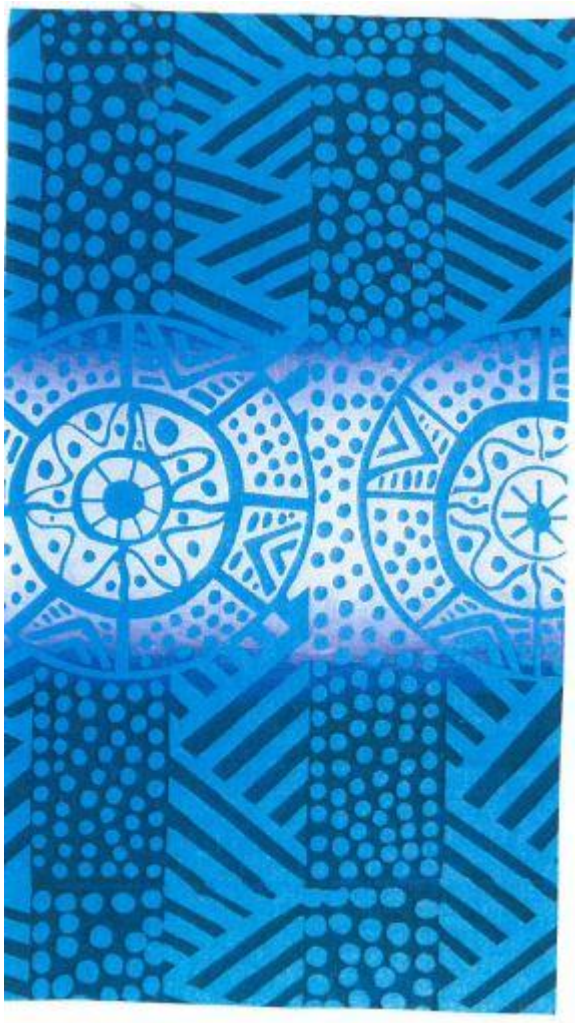


Figure 9: Kurlama (ceremony) design, Thecla Puruntatameri for Munupi Arts and Crafts c. 1996 (Gates 1997: 15).

Figure 10: Jilamara design, Marie Josette Orsto for Tiwi Design c. 1994 (Nugent 2001: 27).

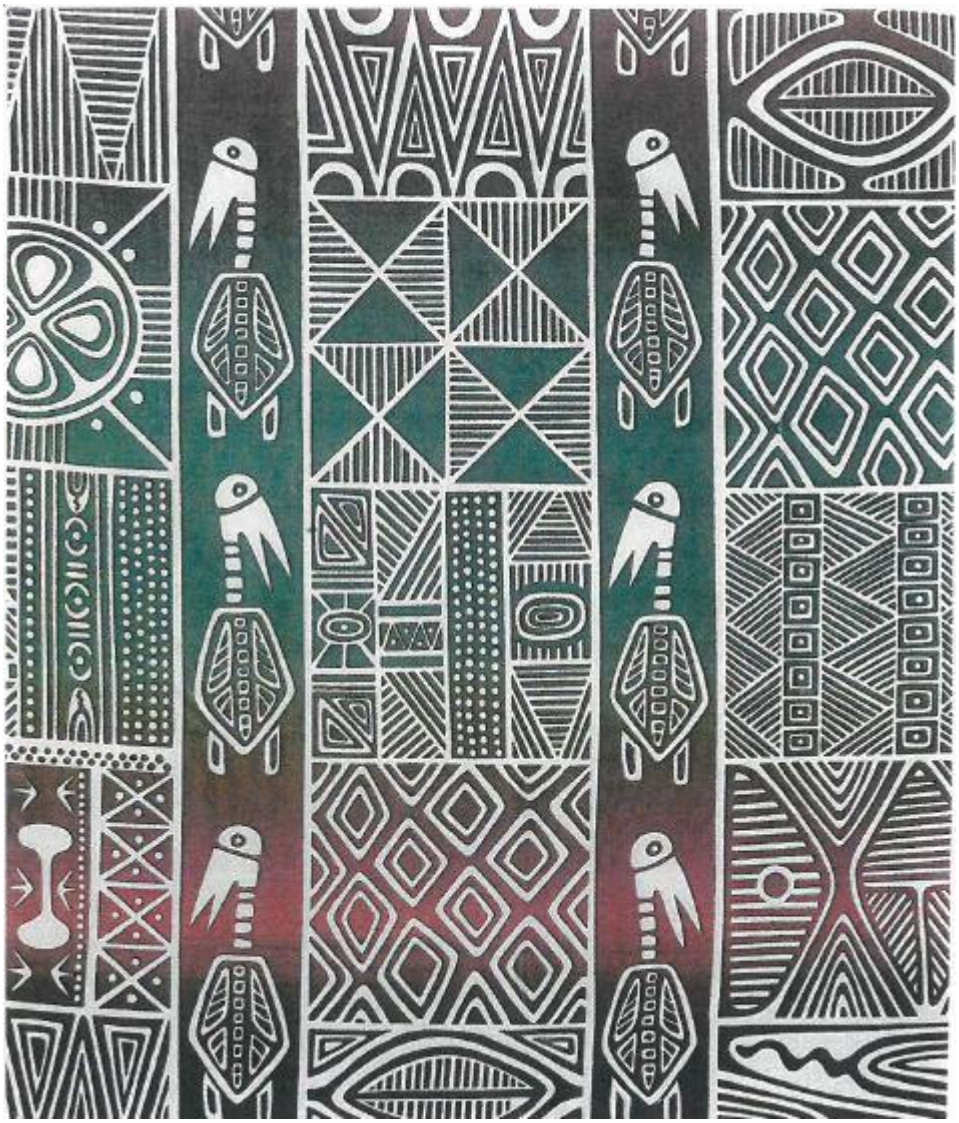


Figure 11: Tiwi bird design, Bede Tungutalum for Tiwi Design c. 1974. (Isaacs 2012: 187).

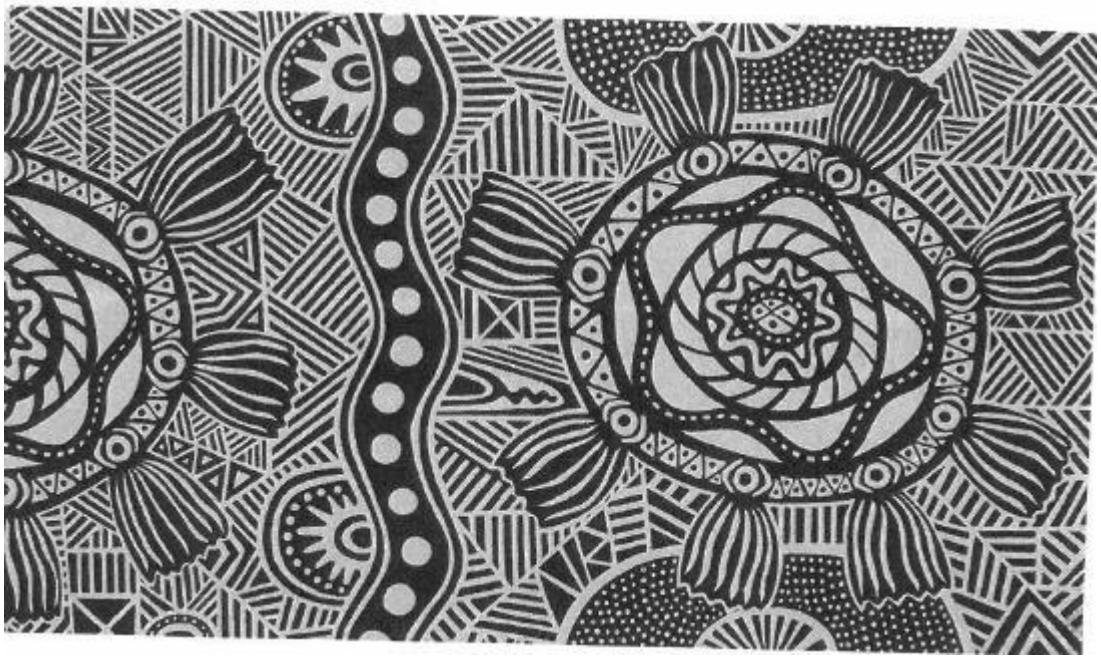


Figure 12: Tapalingini (headband) design, Francine Tungutalum for Tiwi Design c. 1975 (Collection National Gallery of Victoria: www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/59639).

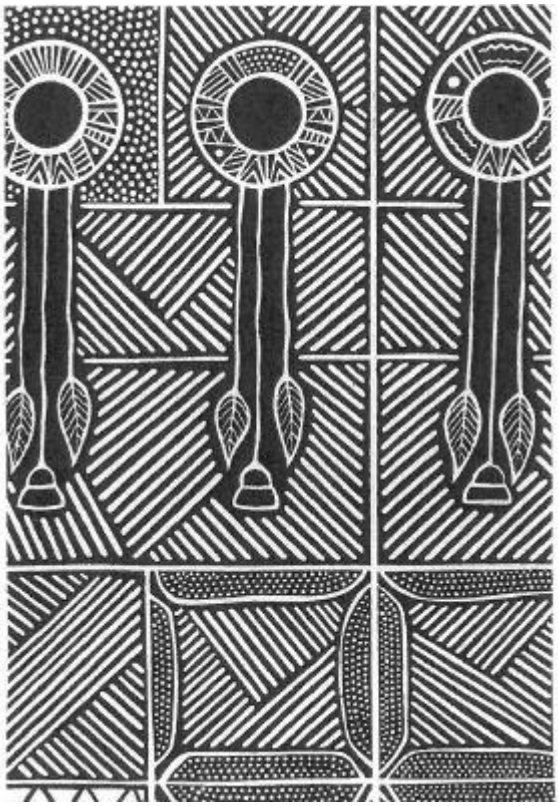


Figure 13: Pamijini (arm and headband) design, Maria Josette Orsto for Tiwi Design. (Ryan and Healy 1998: 117).

Figure 14: Pamijini (ceremonial armbands and headbands) design, Raelene Kerinauia and Raelene Cook for Jilamara Arts and Crafts, c. 1992 (Collection National Gallery of Victoria: www.ngv.vic.gov.au/collections).

Figure 15: Owl design, Giovanni Tipungwuti for Tiwi Design (Barnes 1999: 11).

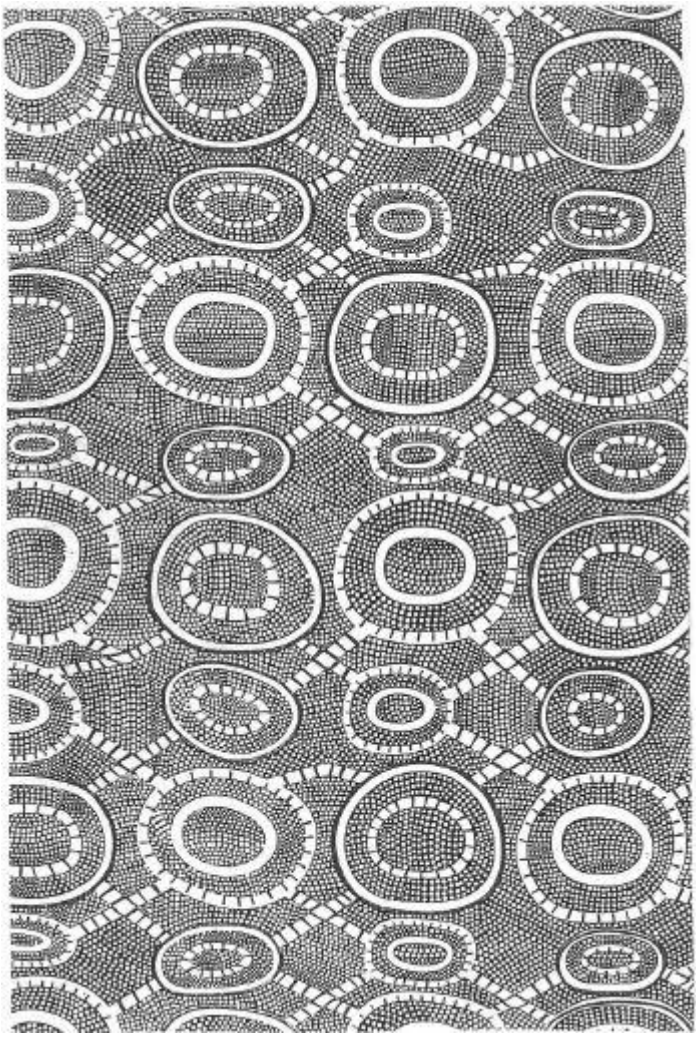


Figure 16: Yilaniga design, Declan Apuatimi for Tiwi Design c. 1987. (Leitch and Rowley 1995: 54).

Figure 17: Bushfire design, Thecla Puruntatameri for Munupi Arts and Crafts c. 1992. (Nugent 2001: 79).

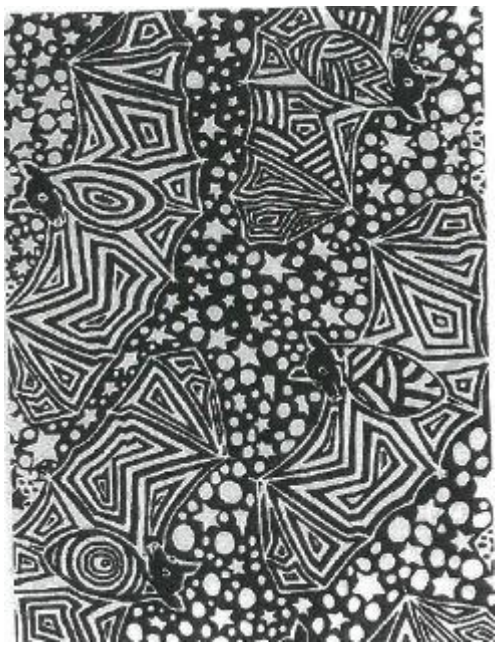


Figure 18: Flying fox design, Fiona Kerinauia for Bima Wear c. 1988. (Barnes 1999: 74).

Figure 19: Pandanus design, Osmond Kantilla for Tiwi Design c. 1986. (Conroy 2004: 11).or (Parkes 2006:254).

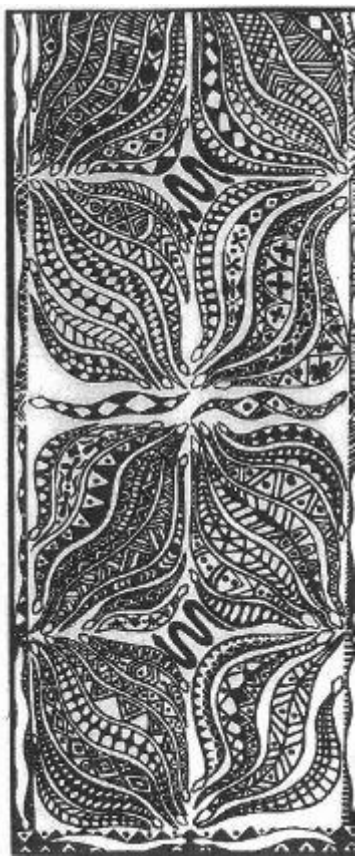


Figure 20: Snake design, Fiona Kerinauia for Bima Wear c. 1988. (Barnes 1999: 74).

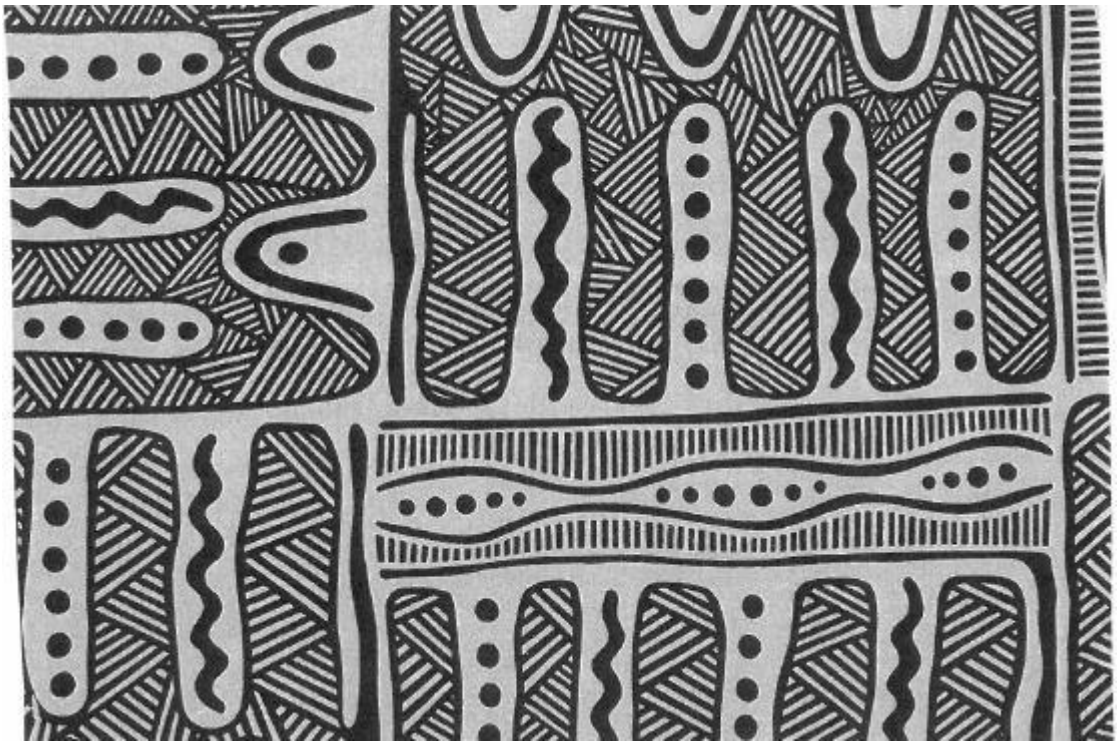


Figure 21: Snake design, Bede Tungutalum for Tiwi Design c. 1974. (Collection National Gallery of Victoria: www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/59641).

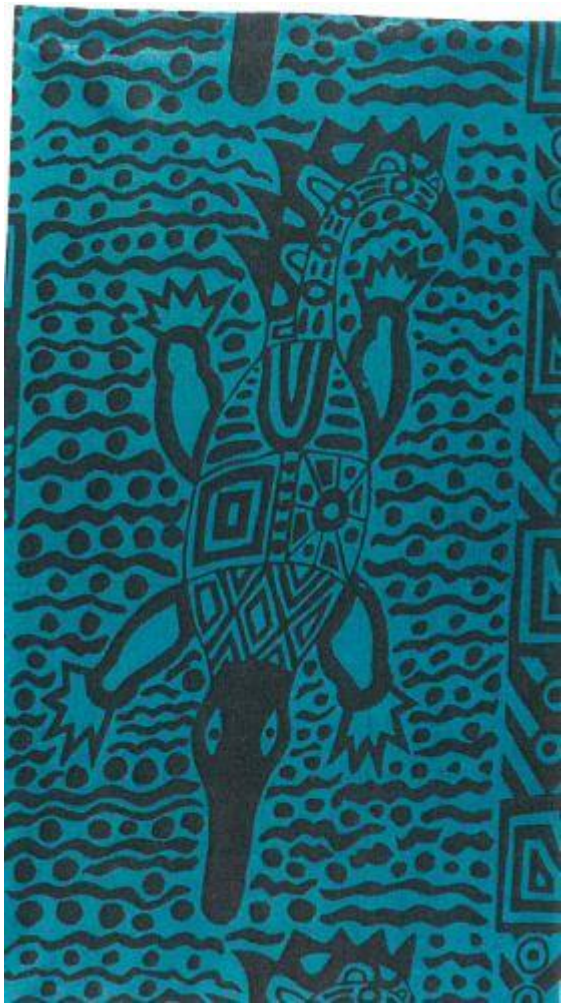


Figure 22: Crocodile design, Fatima Kantilla for Munupi Arts and Crafts c. 1996 (Gates 1997: 15).

Figure 23: Turtle design, Reppie Orsto for Munupi Arts and Crafts c.19 (Nugent 2001: 73).

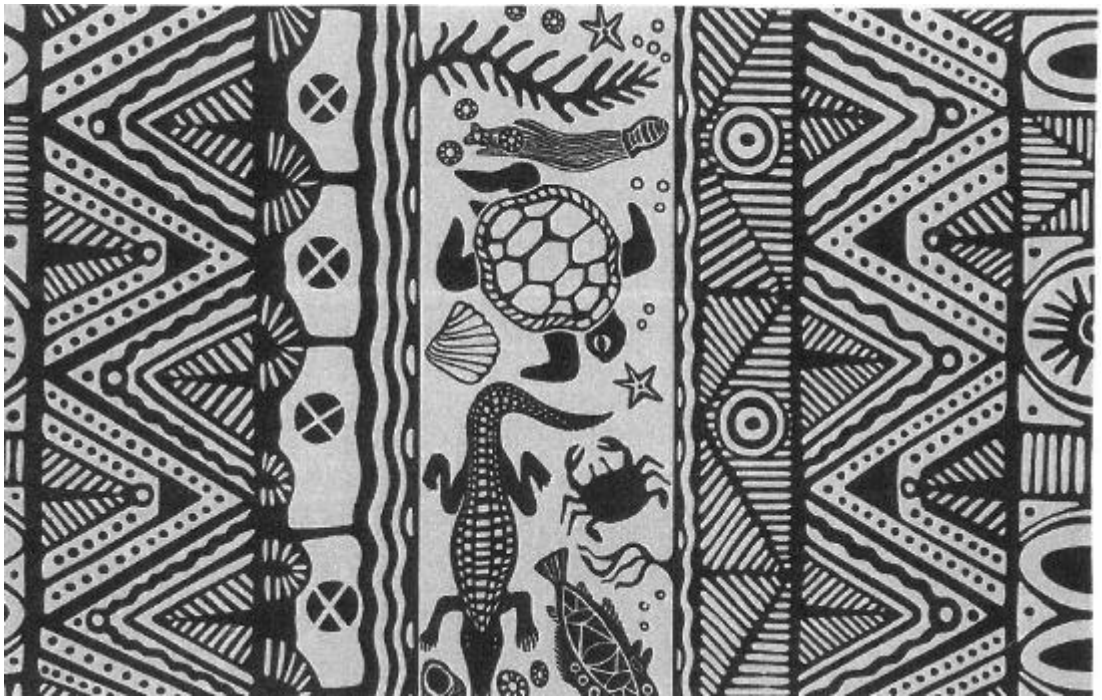


Figure 24: Sea life design, Bede Tungutalum for Tiwi Design c. 1974. (Collection National Gallery of Victoria: www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/59644).

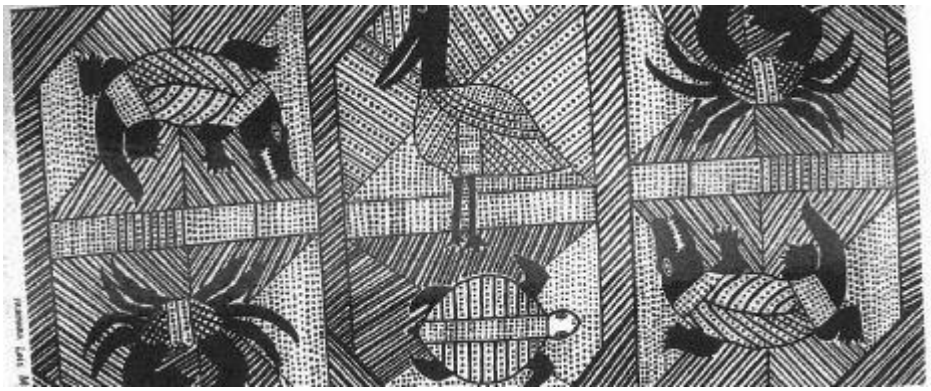


Figure 25: Creatures of the sea design, Lois Mungatopi for Jilamara Arts and Crafts c. 1989. (Collection National Gallery of Victoria: www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/51266).

Figure 26: Fish swimming design, Fiona Kerinauia for Bima Wear c. 1989. (Barnes 1999: 36).

Figure 27: Fish design, Fiona Kerinauia for Bima Wear c. 1989. (Barnes 1999: 58).

Figure 28: Fish design, Angelo Munkara for Tiwi Design c. 1988. (Isaacs 2012: 186).

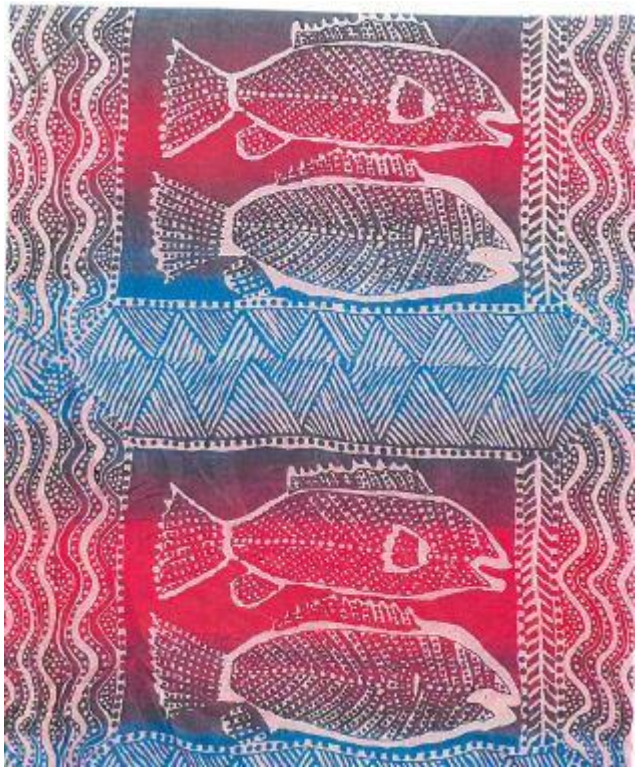


Figure 29: Barramundi design, Ray Bush for Jilamara Arts and Crafts c. 1989. (Vanags 1999: 40).

Figure 30: Cockle shells design, Francine Tungutalum for Bima Wear c. 1986. (Barnes 1999: 132).

Figure 31: Shells design, Sheila Portataminni for Bima Wear c. 1985. (Barnes 1999: 81).

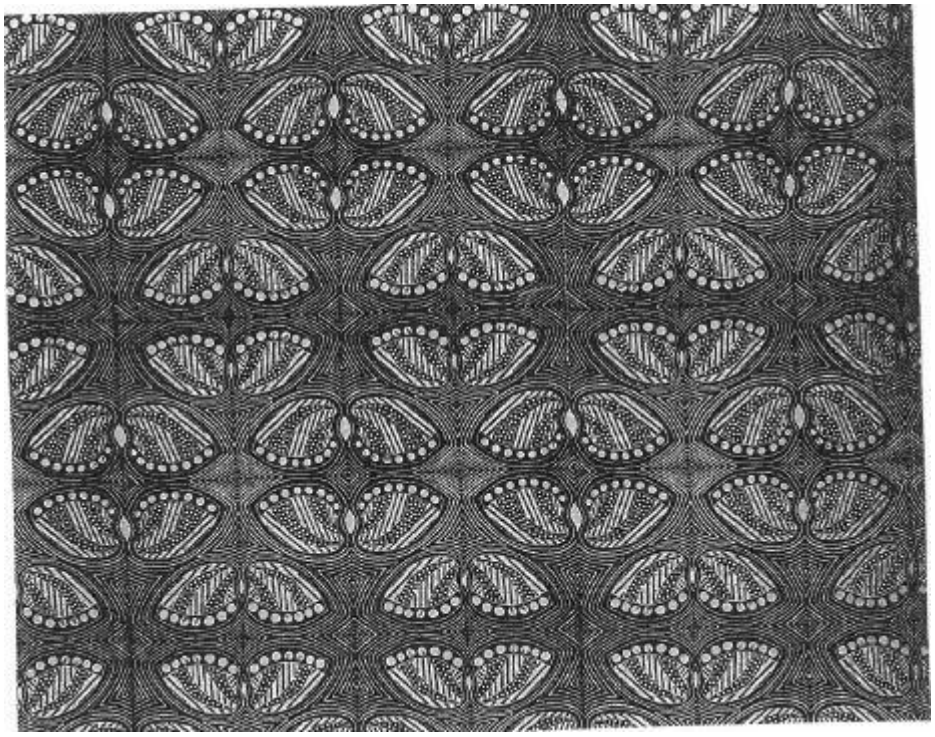


Figure 32: Mussel shells design, Reppie Orsto for Munupi Arts and Crafts c. 1985. (Barnes 1999: 19).

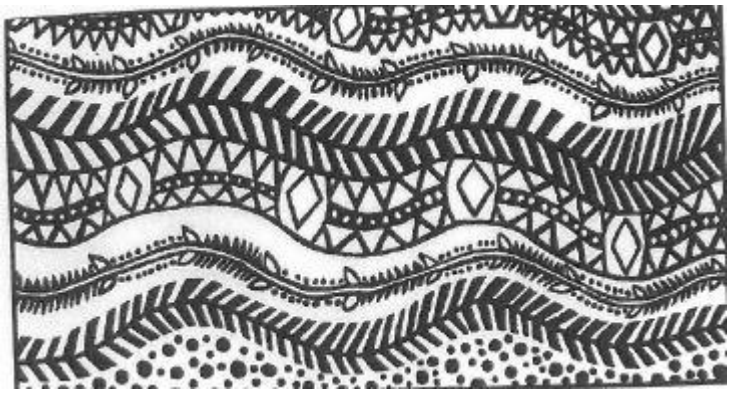


Figure 33: Hermit crab tracks design, Connie Puautjimi for Bima Wear c. 1992. (Barnes 1999: 74).

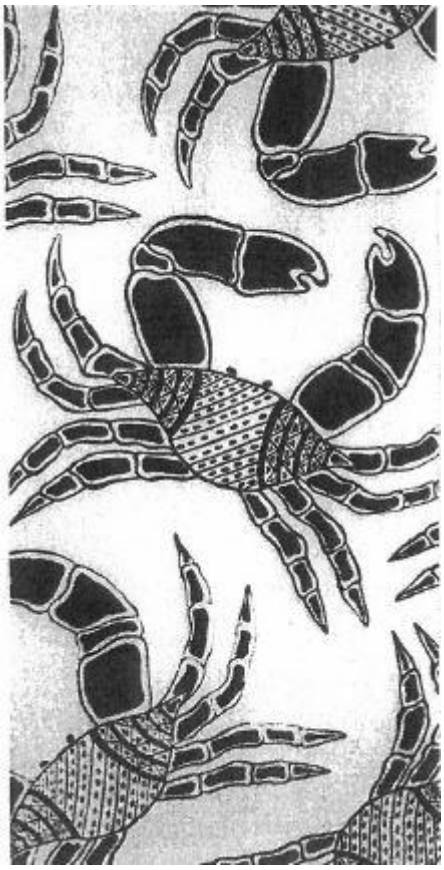


Figure 34: Crab design, Raelene Kerinauia for Jilamara Arts and Crafts c. 1989. (Barnes 1999: 123).

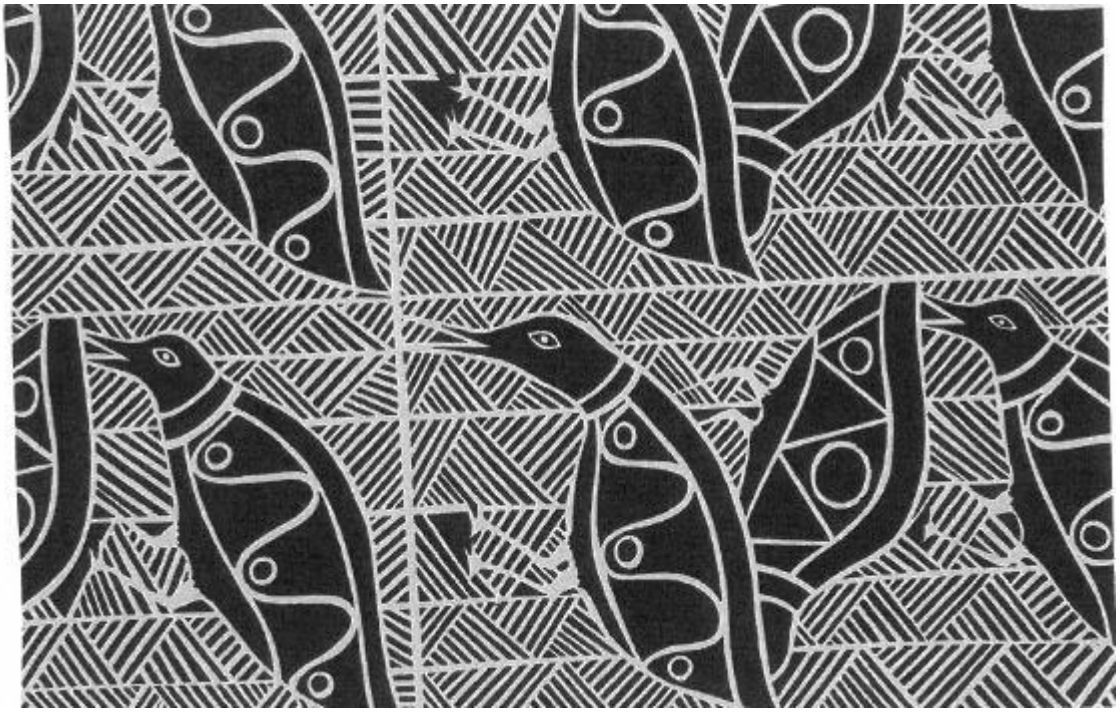


Figure 35: Sandpiper design, Bede Tungutalum for Tiwi Design c. 1985. (Collection National Gallery of Victoria: www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/59655).

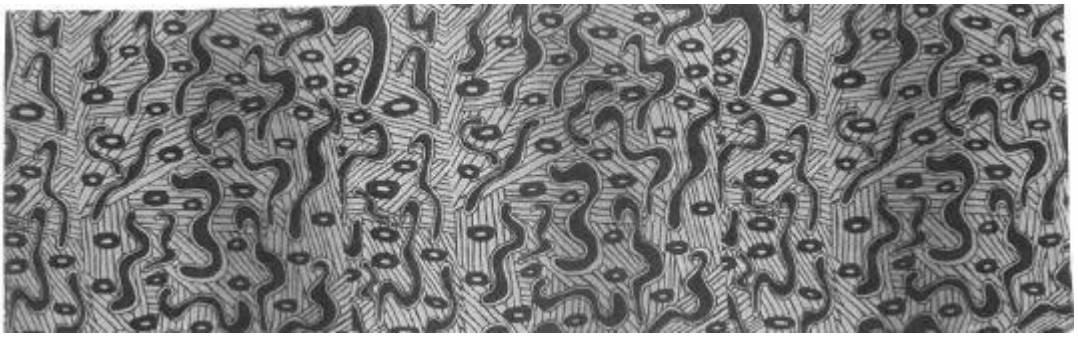


Figure 36: Mangrove worms design, Raelene Kerinauia for Jilamara Arts and Crafts c. 1992. (Collection National Gallery of Victoria: www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/51272).

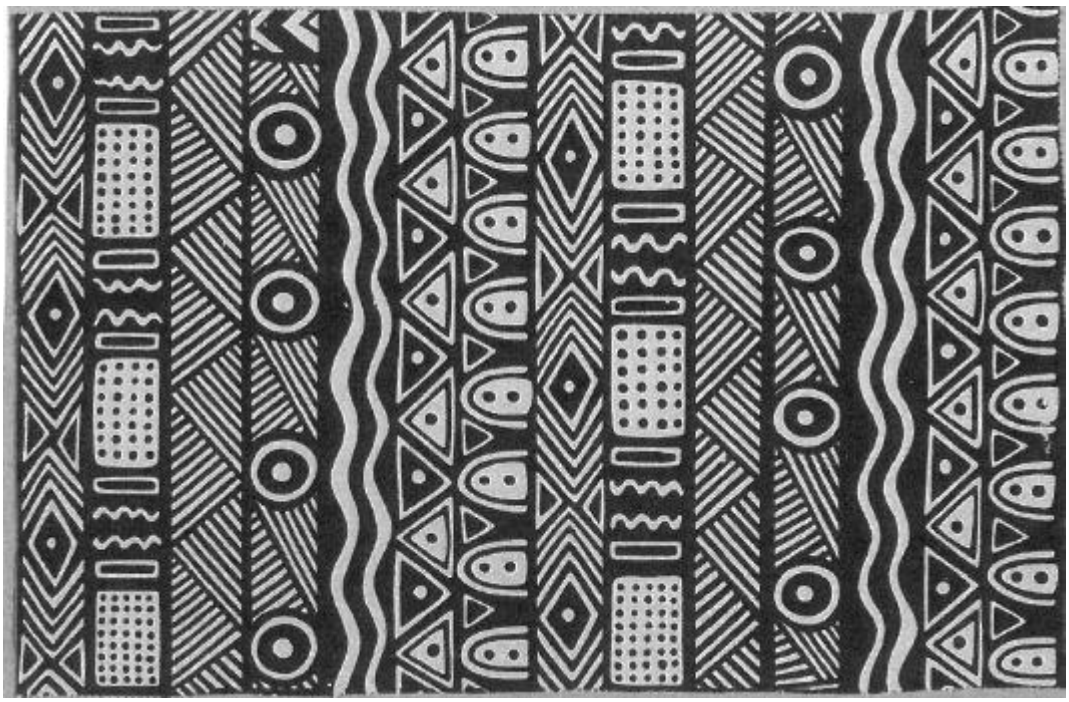


Figure 37: Worm design, Angelo Munkara for Tiwi Design c. 1985. (Collection National Gallery of Victoria: www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/59649).

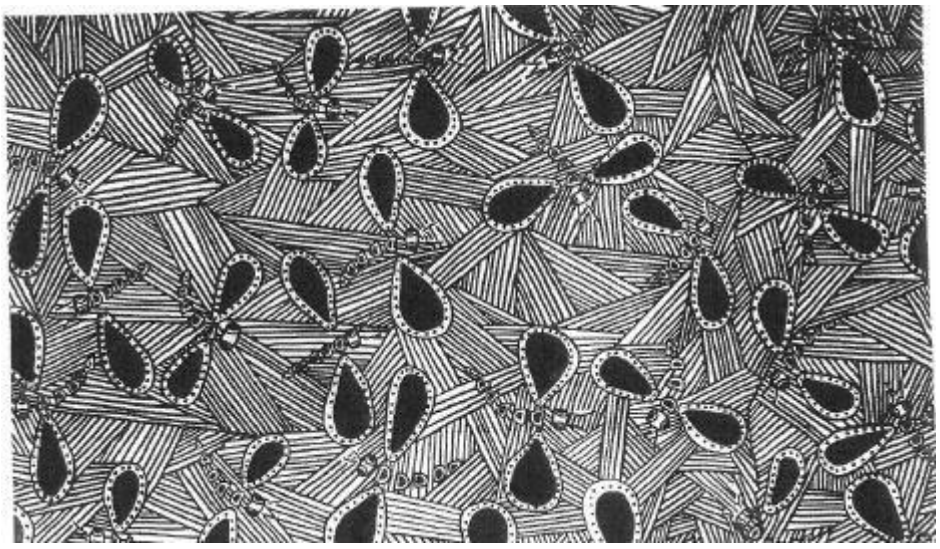


Figure 38: Dragonflies design, Raelene Kerinauia for Jilamara Arts and Crafts c. 1989. (Barnes 1999: 118).

Figure 39: Butterfly design, Tara Munkanome and Fiona Kerinauia for Bima Wear c. 1988. (Barnes 1999: 136).

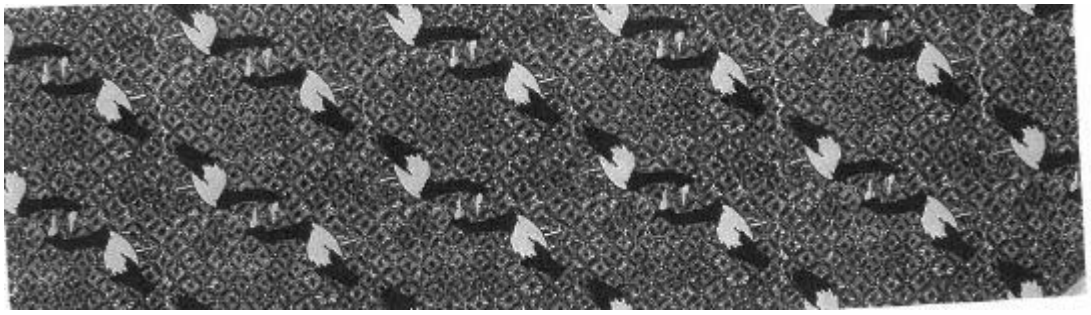


Figure 40: Magpie geese and stars design, Raelene Kerinauia for Jilamara Arts and Crafts c. 1992. (Collection National Gallery of Victoria: www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/51277).

Figure 41: Tutini aminitya arawinikiri (cross spear) design, Leon Puruntatameri for Jilamara Arts and Crafts c. 1992. (Collection National Gallery of Victoria:www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/51271)

Figure 42: Jinani, Aileen Henry for Jilamara Arts and Crafts c. 1992. (Nugent 2001: 60).

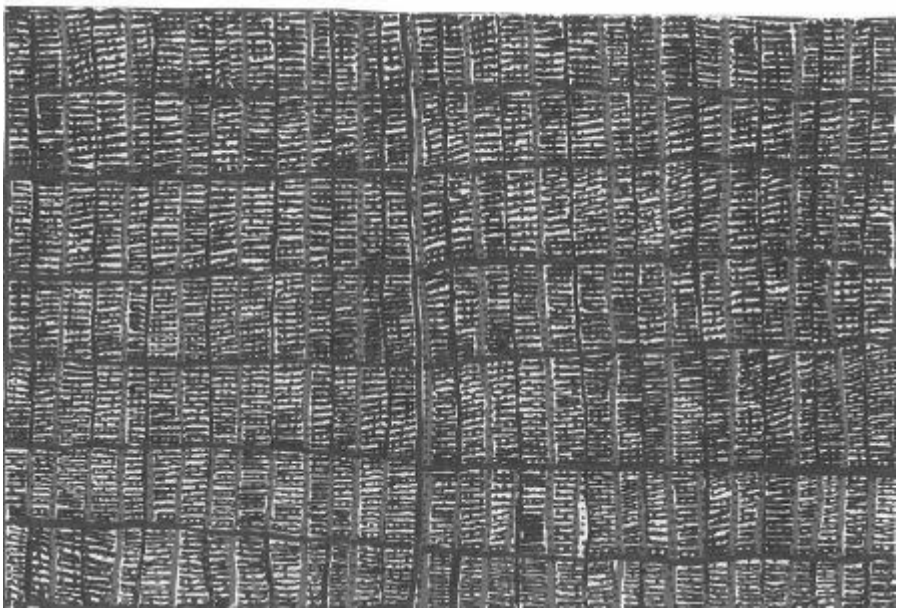


Figure 43: Pumpuni jilamara (good design), Kitty Kantilla for Jilamara Arts and Crafts c. 1998. (Collection National Gallery of Victoria: www.ngv.vic.gov.au/collections).

Figure 44 Jilamara, Jean Baptiste Apuatimi for Tiwi Design c. 1991. (Isaacs 2012: 186).

Figure 45: Old Bark Paintings, designer unknown for Jilamara Arts and Crafts c. 1992. (Nugent 2001: 12).

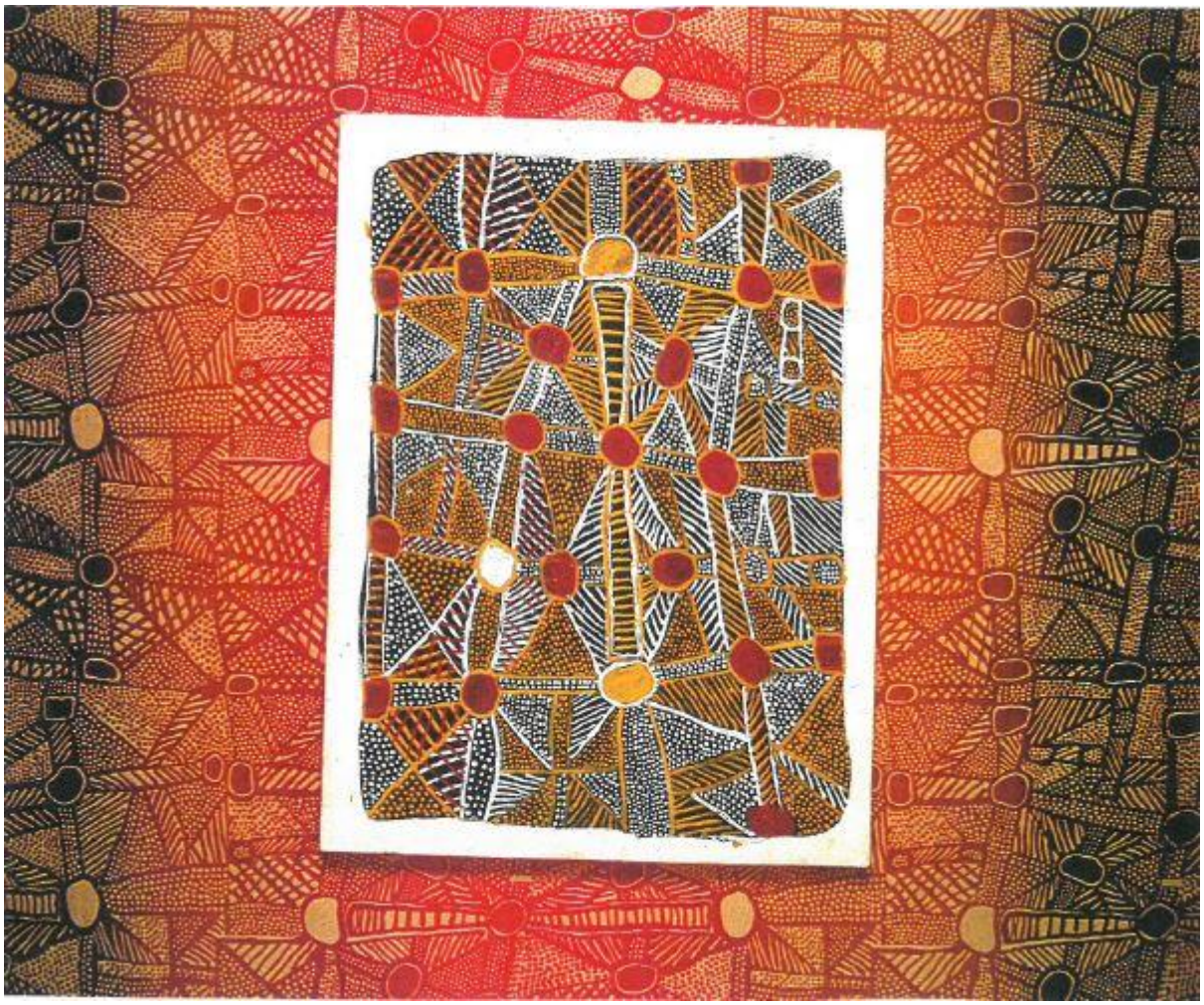


Figure 46: Yoyi, Nancy Henry Ripijingimpi for Jilamara Arts and Crafts c. 1992. (Nugent 2001: 59).

Figure 47: Murrintani country (where white people lived) design, Nancy Henry Ripijingimpi for Jilamara Arts and Crafts c. 1989. (Barnes 1999: 113).

Figure 48: Sky and Upper World, Leon Puruntatameri for Jilamara Arts and Crafts c. 1992. (Collection National Gallery of Victoria: www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/51274).

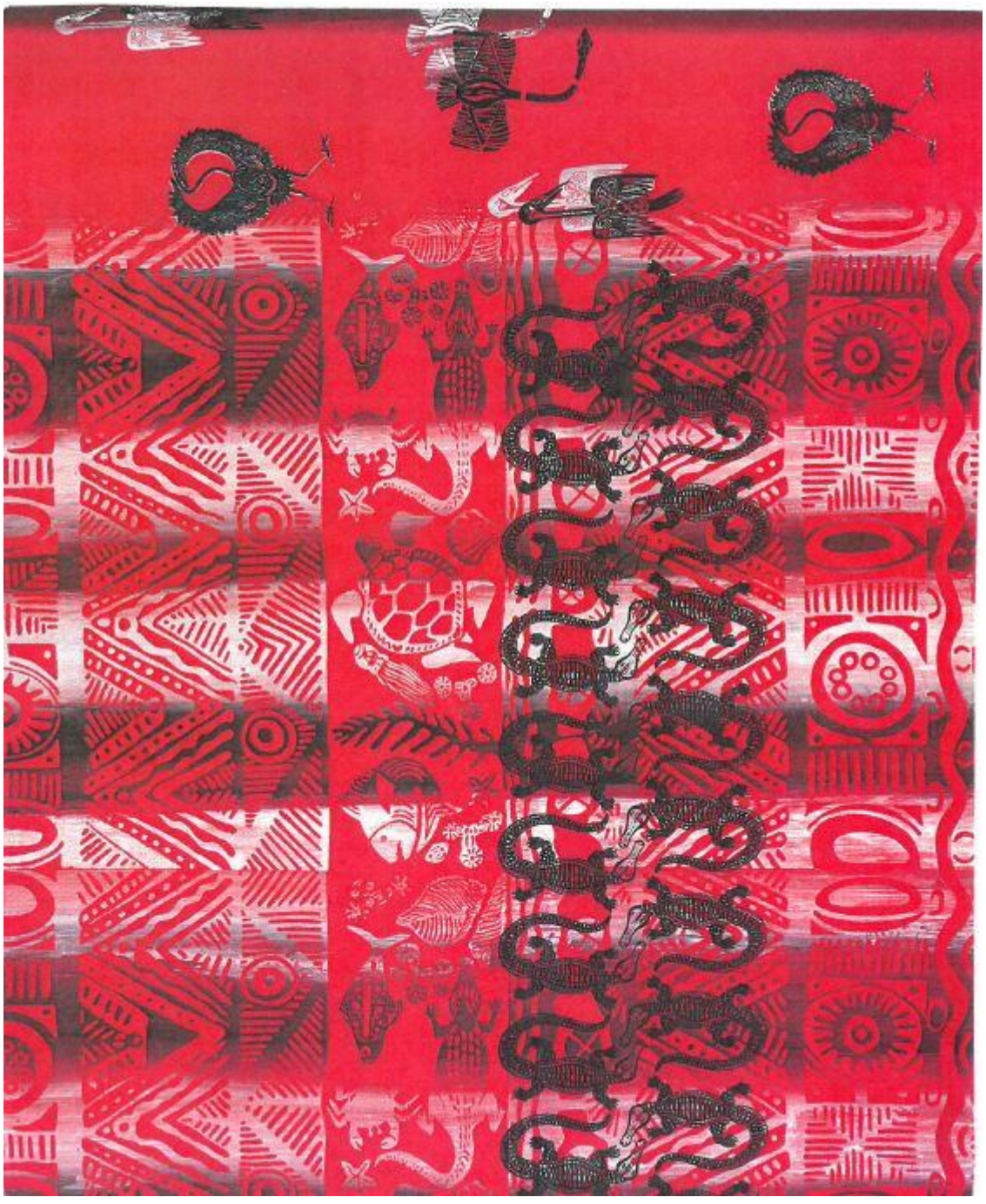


Figure 49: Tiwi Designs c. 1993. (Ryan and Healy1998: 118).

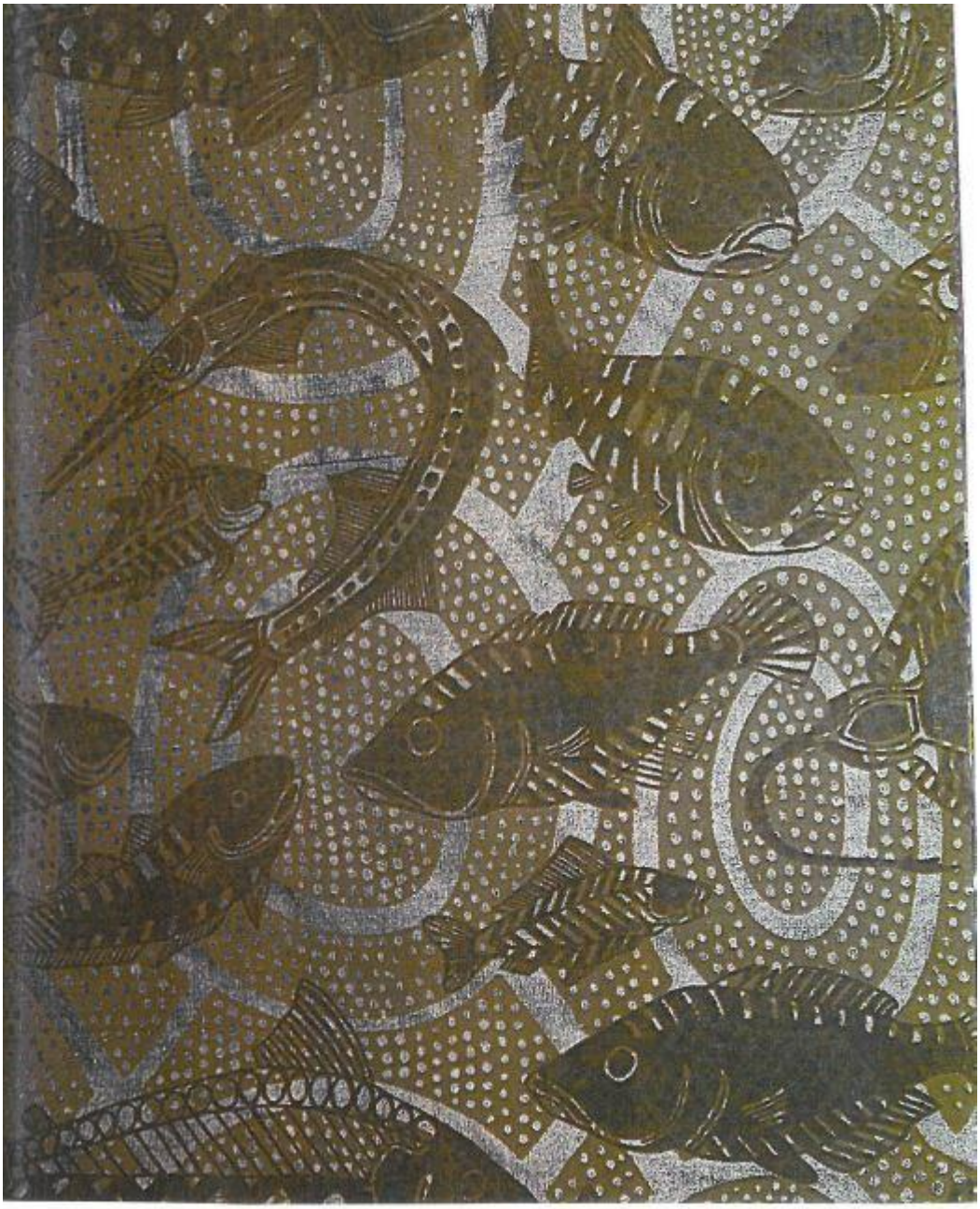


Figure 50: Yilinga (carpet snake) design by Declan Apuatimi overlaid with Muputi (fish) design by Angelo Munkara. (Parkes 2006: 253).