



**Artback NT**

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– Media Release – **Ramingining songman and multi-artform creative Bobby Bununggurr returns to Darwin after a six-week residency in Rinari, Taiwan.**

As the Northern Territory artist for the **2019 Taiwan – Australia Indigenous Artist in Residence**, Bobby Bununggurr aspires to share his culture with audiences and be a role model for the next generation. Through his artistic practice and collaborations, the residency has enabled him to develop and work on a suite of new projects.

“It is important to me as an Elder to find opportunities for our young adults going out into the world [to see what I am doing]. My message is cultural support and unity for all people. The things that are important to me are what I sing and talk about” said Bobby Bununggurr.

As a First Nations’ arts practitioner, Bununggurr operates his practice through Bula’bula Arts in Ramingining. He has exhibited extensively and is represented in private and public collections nationally and internationally. As part of the residency Bununggurr was asked to present a talk at the National Taiwan Museum for *Old Masters: Australia’s Great Bark Artists*, a National Museum of Australia travelling exhibition, showcasing the work of Aboriginal painters from Arnhem Land, who carry one of the oldest continuing traditions of art into the modern era.

Before leaving for Taiwan Bununggurr said, “I want to make connections with people from all places in the world, that’s what will unite us in the end. Music and painting are how I spread the message. I’m looking forward to getting [to] and understanding of Taiwan culture. There is a link with Yolŋu people.”

As a part of the cultural exchange in Taiwan, Bununggurr has been producing a film with Remix Studios who collaborated with Nhulunbuy dancer and choreographer Rachael Wallis as part of the 2018 Taiwan – Australia Indigenous Artist in Residence program. With producer and musician Allen Murphy he has also been collaborating on some new music with Taiwanese Indigenous musicians during his residency in Rinari. At this years’ Darwin Festival they met Suming Rupi, Director of the Amis Music Festival and as a result were guest performers at the Festival to a crowd of 5,000 people.

Not only have Bununggurr and Murphy toured the United States, they record traditional and contemporary songs and mix in beats, rhythms, acoustic drums, loops and spoken word. Together they have been creating a new body of work *Longrass Symphony* which will include pieces written for strings and a full rhythm section. As an ambassador and cultural leader for his community and clan, Bununggurr has taken this new body of work to Taiwan to develop and



include multi-cultural collaborations. Some musical scores were produced and pre-recorded in Ramingining and Darwin to develop, mix and dub during the cultural exchange. Bununggurr has been collaborating and working with Paiwan singer Sang Mei-Chuan, the 2018 Taiwan – Australia Indigenous Artist in Residence.

Reflecting before he left Darwin, Bununggurr said “In Japan I worked with Japanese traditional musician Oki Kano and visited Oki’s homeland in Japan for live performance and collaboration. I am excited that this residency in Taiwan is an opportunity for me both as a traditional singer and painter to develop as a true cultural and artistic ambassador and to work internationally again.”

Louise Partos, Artback NT Executive Officer said “With Bobby and Allen due to arrive back in Darwin next week, we are incredibly excited to hear about the outcomes from Bobby’s cultural exchange in Taiwan.”

“I am also delighted to announce that the Northern Territory Government will continue their support of the Taiwan – Australia Indigenous Artist in Residence program in 2020. The rich cultural fabric and layered histories of Taiwan and Australia provide a framework for First Nations artists to develop their practice culminating in new work and providing real outcomes for the Creative Industries in the Territory,” said Partos.

For the third consecutive year, the Taiwan – Australia Indigenous Artist in Residence will be co-funded by the Northern Territory Government, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Taiwan Indigenous Peoples Cultural Development Centre.

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Culture, Lauren Moss said, “The Territory is home to the world’s oldest living culture and the Territory Labor Government is proud to support the Australia – Taiwan Indigenous Artists Exchange Program for 2020 to share and promote the cultures of our First Nations’ people.”

“I encourage Aboriginal artists from the NT to apply for this exchange program in January which offers Territory and Taiwanese artists the opportunity to work together towards a mutual respect and understanding of the rich and unique heritage of both countries,” said Minister Moss.

The ongoing support from the Northern Territory Government will allow the exchange to continue to promote Indigenous cultures and histories within Australia and Taiwan and provide audiences with contemporary representations of First Nations perspectives through the arts. Expressions of interest for the 2020 Northern Territory Indigenous artist will open in January.



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## ABOUT THE EXCHANGE

The Taiwan – Australia Indigenous Artist in Residence program offers an emerging or established Indigenous artist from Taiwan and the Northern Territory a 6-week residency in each other's respective country. To learn more about the program and artists go to <http://bit.ly/2EqaLYl>

***Bobby Bununggurr, is available for interview upon request.***

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*The Taiwan – Australia Indigenous Artist in Residence is a collaboration between Artback NT and the Indigenous Peoples Cultural Development Centre, Taiwan and is generously supported by the Northern Territory Government, Taiwan's Council of Indigenous Peoples and the Australian Office in Taipei.*