

Artback NT in
partnership with
Godinymayin Yijard
Rivers Arts and
Culture Centre present

NT
CURATOR
PROGRAM

SPARK
AN ARTBACK NT INITIATIVE

SPARK NT SYMPOSIUM

Curatorial practice unpacked

Saturday 7 July 2018

GYRACC

LOT 3238 Stuart Highway

Katherine East

- 9.00** **Registration and viewing of *Fecund: Fertile Worlds***
- 10.20** **Welcome to Country**
- 10.30** **Keynote**
The Go-Between: the role of a curator
Wendy Garden, Acting Manager of Exhibitions, MAGNT
- 11.00** **Curatorial Case Studies 1**
- Investigating an artist's practice**
Yidumduma Bill Harney, Bush Professor
Margie West, Independent Curator
- Exploring a specific medium**
Tell: Contemporary Indigenous Photography
Jessica Clark, Independent Curator
- Expanding on a theme**
Fecund: Fertile Worlds
Clare Armitage, Inaugural SPARK NT Curator
- 12.00** **Q&A**
Chair: Wendy Garden, Acting Manager of Exhibitions, MAGNT
- 12.20** **Lunch**

- 1.20** **Curatorial Case Studies 2**
- Working with community**
NGURRA: Home in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands
Glenn Iseger-Pilkington, Curator and Creative Arts Consultant
- Working with a collection**
Tjungunutja: from having come together
Bobby West Tjupurrula, Artist and Co-Curator and Luke Scholes, Curator of Aboriginal Art, MAGNT
- Starting with a project**
Djalkiri: We are standing on their names – Blue Mud Bay
Angus and Rose Cameron, Co-directors
Nomad Art Productions
- 2.20** **Q&A**
Chair: John Waight, Educator and Arts Professional
- Professional Pathways**
- 2.40** *The Accidental Curator: a personal perspective*
Cath Bowdler, Curator and Writer
- 3.20** **Afternoon tea**
From Idea to Exhibition: lightbulbs and logistics
Panel discussion followed by break out group sessions
- 4.40** *SPARK NT Information Session*
Jo Foster, Artback NT and
Clare Armitage, inaugural SPARK NT Curator
- 5.00** **Break**
- 5.30** **White Cockatoo performance by Djilpin Dancers**
- 6.30** **Evening meal**

KEYNOTE

The Go-Between: the role of the curator**Dr Wendy Garden, Acting Manager of Exhibitions, MAGNT**

The role of the curator has developed over the centuries. Once largely a keeper of collections, curators today more actively engage with artists and audiences facilitating encounters in a variety of exhibition formats. This talk will chart these changes and consider a range of curatorial approaches both within and beyond the gallery context.

CURATORIAL CASE STUDIES 1

Investigating an artist's practice - *Yidumduma Bill Harney, Bush Professor***Margie West, Independent Curator, GYRACC touring exhibition**

Exploring an artist's practice looks at the inter-relationship and differences between Yidumduma Bill Harney's imagery and the region's rock painting and the way in which he has established a singular narrative to make the work accessible to outside viewers as well as other Wardaman. As the last fully initiated Wardaman, who's now in his late 80s, Yidumduma is extremely conscious of preserving his artistic and cultural legacy. As he says, 'I've been giving the story out about what the Dreaming is. That's what motivated me all the way ... I've got to show all this in my painting before I finish!'

Exploring a specific medium - *Tell: Contemporary Indigenous Photography***Jessica Clark, Independent Curator**

In 2017, the Ballarat International Foto Biennale hosted *Tell* – an exhibition that explored Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life, history and culture through a focus on photography and its expanded field. The exhibition presented a collection of works that harnessed the photographic medium as a powerful mode of self-expression; taking it up as a communicative device to reframe, redefine and re-present. Curator Jessica Clarke will share her approach to developing the exhibition through focusing on relationships between a selection of the exhibited works.

Expanding on a particular theme - *Fecund: Fertile Worlds***Clare Armitage, Curator and Retail Manager, GYRACC and inaugural SPARK NT Curator**

Fecund: Fertile Worlds presents a collection of contemporary works that inspire conversation and contemplation. Bringing together artists from all over Australia at different stages of their careers, the works are connected by the notions of fertility and the capacity to transform. *Fecund: Fertile Worlds* is the first exhibition outcome from the SPARK NT Emerging Curator Program, initiated by Artback NT and supported by regional gallery partners. Curator Clare Armitage will share her experience and process in developing and touring *Fecund: Fertile Worlds*.

CURATORIAL CASE STUDIES 2

Working with community - *NGURRA: Home in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands***Glenn Iseger-Pilkington, Curator and Creative Arts Consultant**

Ngurra, in the spoken languages of the Ngaanyatjarra people of the Western Desert, translates roughly to 'home.' However, the term is far more complex than the definition offered by a simple translation. Ngurra means Country, camp, birthplace and belonging, but it is a term which is expansive and inclusive. It has nuance and inflection and has collective and individual resonances depending on context. Ngurra can be where you camp for the night, or where you belong forever. Ngurra is also, always, about other people: it encompasses the relations – both historic and contemporary – between people and the places that define them.

NGURRA: Home in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands was an exhibition that challenged conventional approaches to Aboriginal art and cultural expression. This was not a show about art but rather a show about where that art comes from and the homelands it speaks to. *NGURRA: Home in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands* was an expression of Ngaanyatjarra life and experience, it highlighted the creativity, productivity, and ingenuity of Ngaanyatjarra people, not just through their art, but through their art of living.

Working with a collection - Bobby West Tjupurrula, Artist and Co-Curator and Luke Scholes, Curator of Aboriginal Art MAGNT
Tjungunutja: From having come together

In 1971 at the Government settlement of Papunya in the Northern Territory, a group of Aboriginal men began to paint depictions of their ceremonial lives onto scraps of discarded building materials. These paintings marked the beginnings of the Western Desert art movement and are now regarded as some of Australia's most treasured cultural, historical and artistic items. The following year, the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory made a visionary purchase of over 100 of the most significant early examples. Throughout the 1970s dozens more historic acquisitions were added to what is now the largest and most important collection of early Papunya paintings in the world.

This exhibition reveals a collection that has been shrouded in mystery, controversy and intrigue for over 40 years. Comprising of over 130 paintings, rare cultural artefacts and historical ephemera, *Tjungunutja* provides an extraordinary insight into the genesis of the contemporary Aboriginal art movement.

Starting with a project - Angus and Rose Cameron, NOMAD Art Productions
Djalkiri: We are standing on their names - Blue Mud Bay

Djalkiri: We are standing on their names - Blue Mud Bay was the culmination of a vibrant and intensive cross-cultural exchange between five highly respected Yithuwa Madarrpa artists and four renowned artists from across Australia. In 2009 Djambawa Marawili, Marrirra Marawili, Liyawaday Wirrpanda, Marrnyula Mununggurr and Mulkun Wirrpanda participated in a printmaking workshop with master printmaker Basil Hall at the community of Yilpara, working alongside Fiona Hall, John Wolseley, Jörg Schmeisser and Judy Watson. The resulting works capture essential aspects of Country at Blue Mud Bay in Eastern Arnhem Land, recognised as one of the most pristine and culturally significant places in Australia.

The objective of this project was to bring a group of artists, scientists and print makers together in a cross-cultural, cross-disciplinary, creative exchange. To juxtapose Western scientific view-points and knowledge with the holistic perspective of Yolngu people. The title, *Djalkiri: We are standing on their names, Blue Mud Bay* are words spoken by Djambawa Marawili. It is an acknowledgement of cultural inheritance based on understanding and mutual respect. It is about walking together in the footsteps of the ancestors.

PROFESSIONAL PATHWAYS

***The Accidental Curator: a personal perspective* Dr. Cath Bowdler, Independent Curator and writer**

During a career that spans thirty years Cath Bowdler has been an artist, art history lecturer, independent curator, arts writer and the Director of a number of arts organisations. With reference to these experiences she will discuss a variety of professional pathways and offer some personal insights into her experience as a curator.

From Idea to Exhibition: lightbulbs to logisitics

Panel discussion followed by break out group sessions.

***SPARK NT Curator Program Info Session* Jo Foster, Visual Arts Manager, Artback NT**

The SPARK NT Curator program provides independent, emerging and aspiring curators the opportunity to develop an exhibition for tour throughout the NT. This session will provide information about the application and assessment process and a chance to workshop ideas for potential exhibition projects.



Wendy Garden is Acting Exhibitions Manager at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT). She has held numerous curatorial positions over the past 20 years including most recently Curator of Australian Art at MAGNT and Senior Curator at the Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery. She was Gallery Curator at Maroondah Art Gallery

and Banyule Art Space and held Curatorial Assistant positions at the Performing Arts Museum and National Gallery of Victoria.

Wendy has curated over 25 exhibitions including solo exhibitions, group shows and touring exhibitions and written extensively on contemporary Australian art. She holds a doctorate in art history from the University of Melbourne together with a Masters of Arts research degree and a Graduate Diploma in Museum Studies. She has served on the Board of the Public Galleries Association of Victoria and several committees for Museums Australia Victoria. Currently she is the Northern Territory representative for the Executive Committee of the Art Association of Australia and New Zealand.



Margie West AM is a graduate in Anthropology from the Australian National University, with over forty years' experience in the public gallery sector. She was Curator of Aboriginal Art and Material Culture between 1978-2005 at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT), where she now holds the honorary position of Emeritus Curator.

She is also an independent curatorial consultant. She founded MAGNT's National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Award (NATSIAA) in 1984 and has delivered extensive curatorial programs, including international and national touring exhibitions. The most recent exhibitions/publications include, *Yalangbara: Art of the Djang'kawu* (MAGNT), *ReCoil: Change & Exchange in Coiled Fibre Art*, *Yulyurlu, Lorna Fencer Napurrurla* (Artback NT) and *Yidumduma Bill Harney: Bush Professor* (GYRACC).



Yidumduma Bill Harney is the only senior initiated Wardaman artist, who started painting in the late 1980s. He draws a lot of his inspiration from the extensive rock art galleries in the Victoria River District that he visited constantly as a young boy, saying, 'That's how I paint, I see them (rock images) in my mind all the time.' Over the years he's worked

as a stockman then cattle station manager, fencer, tour manager,

didjeridu player, raconteur and artist, while also advising a range of scientists on ethno-botany, health, astronomy, site recording and so on. He won the 2013 Rona Tranby Award for the online 'Yabulyawun Dreaming Project' that documented his prodigious knowledge over the past 15 years, and the NT Brolga Tourism Award in 2004. He's published several books and sits on numerous committees while also managing his cattle station/outstation at Menngen, southwest of Katherine.



Jessica Clark is a proud Palawa woman with English, Irish, Turkish and French ancestry currently living and working in Naarm (Melbourne). Her curatorial practice is driven by an intrinsic passion for art, sharing knowledge, working closely with artists and bringing people, art and ideas together. Recent curatorial projects have focused on promoting

new dialogues, challenging preconceived ideas/ideals and exploring the transformative and performative nature of art and curatorial practice. Jessica is alumni of UNSW College of Fine Art, Australian Catholic University and RMIT University having completed a Bachelor in Art Theory, postgraduate studies in Education and a Master of Arts Management respectively. She is currently undergoing confirmation of candidature in a PhD of Media and Communications at RMIT University that is focused within the field of curatorial research.



Clare Armitage was born in Sydney and has lived in the Northern Territory for six years. She has worked in commercial art galleries in Sydney, Darwin and Canberra, as well as public exhibition spaces. In 2014/2015 Clare undertook an Australia Council for the Arts Curatorial Fellowship at the Godinymayin Yijard Rivers Arts and Culture Centre (GYRACC), and in 2017 returned to work at GYRACC as Curator and Retail Manager. Clare has a particular interest in cross-cultural curatorial practice and story-telling and has curated two major cross-cultural shows. *Garnkiny to Ganyu - Artists who capture the night* was exhibited at GYRACC in 2015. In 2017 Clare was named the inaugural Artback NT SPARK Curator and *Fecund: Fertile Worlds* commenced touring the Northern Territory in March 2018.

Clare comes from an academic background in Art History and Philosophy. She has a Bachelor of Art Theory (Hons.) from the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, and a Master of Art History and Curatorial Studies from the Australian National University.



Glenn Iseger-Pilkington is a Nhanda, Wadjarri and Nyoongar man and also a member of a Dutch and Scottish migrant family. Glenn has worked across the galleries and museums sector in curatorial roles for more than a decade in organisations which include the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Western Australian Museum and the South Australian Museum, where he recently curated *NGURRA: Home in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands*.

Glenn is now a creative arts consultant, working closely with remote art centres on exhibitions and career development opportunities for arts workers and artists. Glenn has refocussed his attention to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander photographers, developing creative development opportunities and curating exhibitions. One of these projects is *EXPOSURE: New Voices in Western Australian Photography*, which offered training and professional development for photographers living, and working in remote Western Australian communities. Other current projects Glenn is working on include a survey exhibition of contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art from Far North Queensland and the Torres Strait Islands, and *Recurrence*, an exhibition of contemporary Indigenous photography which will feature in the Ballarat International Foto Biennial in 2019.



Born in the bush at Tjammu Tjammu, east of where the Kiwirrkura Community now stands, **Bobby West Tjupurrula** is the son of founding Papunya artist Freddy West Tjakamarra. Tjupurrula and his extended family group migrated from their ancestral homeland to Papunya in August 1963 after encountering a Northern Territory Welfare Branch

Patrol. Since the passing of his father in 1994, Tjupurrula assumed the mantle as a strong leader and advocate for the Kiwirrkura community and its people. He served as Chairman of the Kiwirrkura Council for over a decade during the 1990s and has been a long-term board member and chairperson of Papunya Tula Artists. Tjupurrula started painting regularly in the early 1990s and has since participated in solo and group exhibitions in Australia and overseas. In August 2000, Tjupurrula participated in the formation of a large ceremonial ground painting to mark the opening of *Papunya Tula: Genesis and Genius* at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. He also attended the *Icons of the Desert* exhibition at the Herbert F. Johnson Museum at Cornell University, NY, USA in 2009. Tjupurrula has acted as a consultant on many exhibitions and projects, most notably for

the National Gallery of Victoria's *Tjukurrjtjanu: Origins of Western Desert Art*, which opened in Melbourne in 2011 prior to travelling to the Musée du Quay Branly, Paris in 2012. In 2012, he was engaged as a consultant by the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority to determine the suitability of the MAGNT collection of early Papunya Paintings for public display. Since December 2014, Tjupurrula has been engaged as a curator of the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory exhibition *Tjunguṁutja: from having come together*.



Luke Scholes is Curator of Aboriginal Art at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory. He was a co-curator of the exhibition *Tjunguṁutja: from having come together* and is the curator of the Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Awards. Between 2003 and 2007 he worked as a travelling field officer and later as Assistant Manager

at Papunya Tula Artists. In 2008 he worked for Martumili Artists in the Pilbara region of Western Australia. During 2010–11 he was Project Officer, Indigenous Art at the National Gallery of Victoria. Luke has contributed to many books, journals and magazines including: *Tjunguṁutja: from having come together*; *Beyond Sacred: Australian Aboriginal Art, the Collection of Colin and Elizabeth Laverty*; *Tjukurrjtjanu: Origins of Western Desert Art*; *No Boundaries: Contemporary Australian Aboriginal Abstraction from the Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection and Art & Australia*.



Rose Cameron has resided in Darwin since 1997 and has been involved in the art industry as a community artist, festival and project coordinator since the early 1980s. She has a Graduate Diploma in Arts and Entertainment Management. Through 1999–2004 Rose was Business Manager at Northern Editions Print Studio, Manager of Tiwi Art Network and also

coordinator of the 2001 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards (NATSIAA). Through these positions Rose facilitated the development of exhibitions, projects, sales and marketing activities of Indigenous art and limited edition prints. After 20 years' experience in the arts Rose and her partner Angus established Nomad Art Productions in 2005, a business enterprise dedicated to the exhibition and marketing of limited editions and collections of fine art and craft from the central and northern Australia.



Angus Cameron has resided in Darwin since 1997 and has extensive experience in art education, curating exhibitions, project management and arts Industry development. With a Bachelor of Visual Arts (Honours) and Diploma of Education, Angus has been involved in a range of art related positions and projects including publishing, arts management, exhibition development and workshop presentation in a variety of cultural settings. In 1997 Angus was appointed Head of Art, Design and Music at Kormilda College in Darwin, subsequently he has held the positions of Education Manager at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT) and Industry Development Officer for the Association of Northern, Kimberley and Arnhem Aboriginal Artists (ANKAAA).

Nomad Art is well known for facilitating unique projects that foster cross-cultural collaborations with artists nationally. These curated exhibitions promote collaboration, reconciliation and understanding with an educational focus.



Dr Cath Bowdler is an arts administrator, curator and academic who has worked extensively with Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities and artists in the NT and elsewhere. She has been Director of 24HR Art in Darwin, Lecturer at Charles Darwin University and Charles Sturt University, Director of Wagga Wagga Art Gallery and inaugural Director of Godinymayin Yijard Rivers Arts and Culture Centre, Katherine, NT. She has been artistic director of two Women of the World Festivals in Katherine in 2013 and 2014. She holds a PhD from the Australian National University in the field of Aboriginal Art and Culture and has written extensively about Australian art in art journals and other publications.



Jo Foster joined Artback NT as the Visual Arts Manager in 2016 after spending well over a decade working within the Indigenous Arts sector. Jo was the inaugural Co-ordinator of the Warlayirti Culture Centre in Balgo Hills, WA and then worked with Tjanpi Desert Weavers, first as Enterprise Manager and then as Creative Development Coordinator. At Tjanpi she worked closely with artists and arts organisations across 15 communities located in the tri-state region of the Central Desert. Prior to this she worked for seven years within the Public Programs Department of the Art Gallery of New South Wales as Co-ordinator of Secondary Schools Programs. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts, a Post-Graduate Diploma in Education and a Masters in Arts Administration. In her current role with Artback NT she works with artists, curators, institutions and community groups at a local, regional and national level to identify and develop visual arts projects for tour, with a particular focus on developing audience engagement and interpretive materials.



John Waight was born and raised in Darwin and is descended from the Mangarayi people whose country is just outside Katherine. John has extensive curatorial and arts industry experience including seven years as the Indigenous Curator and Liaison Officer, Australian National Maritime Museum, Sydney and three years as Manager, Maningrida Arts and Culture Shop in Darwin. In 2012 John was Acting Curator of Aboriginal Art at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory where he delivered the 29th National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award (NATSIAA). John resides in Sydney where he recently completed a Bachelor of Art Theory at University of NSW Art and Design and is currently undertaking his Masters of Curation and Cultural Leadership, also at UNSW, while working full time as a health education officer at the Albion Centre.

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ARTBACK NT

Artback NT is the Northern Territory's visual and performing arts development and touring agency. Connecting artists with local, national and international audiences we develop and present ambitious, professional and energetic work to and from some of Australia's most remote locations.

Our Visual Arts Program collaborates with artists, curators, organisations and communities throughout the Territory to co-create and co-present touring exhibition projects which showcase the unique talents and perspectives of the region. We tour NT generated exhibitions to remote, regional and metropolitan galleries, sharing quality visual arts experiences with diverse audiences across the country.

www.artbacknt.com.au

SPARK NT CURATOR PROGRAM

The SPARK NT Curator program is an Artback NT initiative that supports an independent or emerging curator resident in the Northern Territory to develop an exhibition project for tour. The program is designed to foster art critical and curatorial practice within the NT and provide NT artists with opportunities to showcase their work within curated touring exhibitions. SPARK NT exhibitions are developed over a maximum of eight months in one year for tour throughout the Northern Territory the following year.

Artback NT has partnered with the Northern Centre for Contemporary Art in Darwin, Godinyamin Yijardi Rivers Arts and Culture Centre in Katherine, Nyinkka Nyunyu in Tennant Creek and Araluen Art Centre in Alice Springs, to support the program. Wendy Garden, Curator of Australian Art at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory has also taken on a mentorship role with the emerging curator.