





**Object number:**  
**00033811**

**Title:** Baru at Murrmurrna I  
**Date:** 1999



**Object number:**  
**00033780**

**Title:** Baru at Murrmurrna II  
**Date:** 1999



**Object number:**  
**00033802**

**Title:** From Biranybirany  
**Date:** 1999



**Date:** 1998

**Primary Maker:** Miṇiyawany Yunupinṁ

**Medium:** Natural pigments on bark

**Name:** Bark painting

**History:** The Yolṁu people of Arnhem Land inhabit a landscape that was formed by the actions of ancestral beings, who can take both human and animal form. For instance water now flows where these creatures walked and hills have formed where they died. Ancestral time is not just in the past but also the present and future. In light of this the sacred landscape and stories of East Arnhem Land are central to the Yolṁu people's way of life and prominent themes in their bark paintings. The Saltwater Project began in 1996 when an illegal fishing camp was discovered at Garranali, a sacred Aboriginal site in East Arnhem Land. This sacred area is home to the ancestral crocodile Bāru and found among the litter of the illegal camp was the severed head of a crocodile. This discovery prompted the local Yolṁu people to produce a series of bark paintings that expressed the rules, philosophies and stories of their region. The project culminated in the production of 80 barks and allowed the Indigenous community to educate



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**Medium:** Natural pigments on bark

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**History:** In 1996 an illegal fishing camp was discovered at Garranali, a sacred Aboriginal area in East Arnhem Land. The sacred area is home to the ancestral crocodile Bāru and found among the litter of the illegal camp was the severed head of a crocodile. It instigated the local Yolṁu people to begin painting a series of barks that demonstrated the rules, philosophies and stories of their region. The end result was the production of 80 barks portraying the Saltwater Country of East Arnhem Land. The Yolṁu people are intrinsically linked to the land and the saltwater coastline. In 1963 a Swiss mining company began plans to build a mine in their traditional lands. In opposition the Aboriginal community organised a petition that was signed on bark and sent to Parliament. The Yolṁu went to court to challenge the proposed development of the mining company and Australian government. Their claims of land ownership were dismissed and the development of the mine continued. This historic event highlighted the issue of Aboriginal land

community to educate others about the social history, geography and personal stories of their traditional homeland. It also stressed the importance of Yolngu land ownership, laws and codes of behaviour for those who interacted with the landscape and sacred Indigenous places. The Yolngu have been involved in the land rights struggle since the 1960s. They currently are recognised as the traditional owners of northeast Arnhem Land under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act. This act was passed in the Northern Territory in 1976 and is seen as the benchmark for the recognition of Aboriginal land ownership in Australia. Despite this the issues of Indigenous land ownership, rights, customs and law continue to be contentious in the Australian legal system and wider community.

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the issue of Aboriginal land rights to the Australian public. In 1976 the Aboriginal Land Rights Act was passed in the Northern Territory, now seen as the benchmark in the recognition of Aboriginal land rights. The Yolngu were decreed the legal owners of northeast Arnhem Land, however their ownership did not extend into the Saltwater coastline. Only in July 2008 have Indigenous rights and use of the Arnhem Land coast been given precedence over commercial interests and fishing. The issue of Aboriginal land rights, customs and laws continues to be contentious in the Australian legal system and wider community.



**Object number:**  
**00033790**  
**Title:** Nanydjaka  
**Date:** 1999



**Date:** 1998

**Primary Maker:** Miṇiyawany Yunupingu

**Medium:** Natural pigments on bark

**Name:** Bark painting

**History:** The Yolṟu people of Arnhem Land inhabit a landscape that was formed by the actions of ancestral beings, who can take both human and animal form. For instance water now flows where these creatures walked and hills have formed where they died. Ancestral time is not just in the past but also the present and future. In light of this the sacred landscape and stories of East Arnhem Land are central to the Yolṟu people's way of life and prominent themes in their bark paintings. The Saltwater Project began in 1996 after an illegal fishing camp was discovered at Garranali, a sacred Aboriginal site in East Arnhem Land. This sacred area is home to the ancestral crocodile Bāru and found among the litter of the illegal camp was the severed head of a crocodile. This discovery prompted the local Yolngu people to produce a series of bark paintings that expressed the rules, philosophies and stories of their region. The project

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and codes of behaviour for those who interacted with the landscape. The Yolngu have been involved in the land rights struggle since the 1960s. They currently are recognised as the traditional owners of northeast Arnhem Land under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act. This act was passed in the Northern Territory in 1976 and is seen as the benchmark in the recognition of Aboriginal land ownership in Australia. Despite this the issues of Indigenous land ownership, rights, customs and law continue to be contentious in the Australian legal system and wider community.