

Basic Detail Report



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Title

Ganalpingu Cosmology

Date

c 1994

Primary Maker

John Bulun Bulun

Medium

Ochre, canvas

Dimensions

2720 x 1290 mm, 2 mm, 1.6 kg Display Dimensions: 2320 x 1192 mm

Name

Painting

History

This painting, 'Ganalpingu Cosmology', can be read as a map of Ganalbingu land. John Bulun Bulun has incorporated all the elements that are important to be passed on to a stranger visiting the area. Unlike European maps that usually only refer to the features of the physical landscape, this map also incorporates the travels of the dreaming ancestors as the land was formed as well

as how the Makassans are incorporated into Ganalbingu society. It explains to the Makassans the spiritual relationship between ancestors, land and the land owners. John Bulun Bulun refers to the painting as a passport, the ceremony as a visa to be renew with each visit. In the top left hand corner of the painting, Gumumungumuk and the landowners are on the site where the welcoming ceremony takes place. The ceremony aims to reaffirm friendly relationships with different groups, such as in this case the Macassans. Painted on top right are Makassan trade goods, guns, knives and tobacco. John Bulun Bulun talks of these objects as part of the dreaming landscape of his clan because during the welcoming ceremony, the Makassans become part of the Ganalbingu world. The top features a depiction of the north-west trade wind, the Lunggurruma, that brings the Macassan Traders from Sulawesi. A Djarrawitjibi body painting design is featured at centre right. Beneath it is a billabong surrounded by various frogs, the lunggurruma and the lunggurruma tree. The lower right corner features a body painting design that is used by the Ganalpingu men to represent a log across a river. Another body painting design with flying fox droppings is

featured at the lower left. The image the magpie goose icon is featured with two Wandjirr sand sculptures made during the Bukubot mortuary ceremony. An image of the Wandjirr is featured beneath the sculptures, as does a spear used in the turtle dance. The Wandjirr are associated with the long necked turtle. Above the magpie goose is a beehive shaped paperbark shelter, called the Ngorlorr or Mirdiga.