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Title

Yawkyawk

Date

1995

Primary Maker

Crusoe Kurddal

Medium

Ochre, Kurrajong wood (*Brachychiton diversifolius*)

Dimensions

Overall: 940 x 140 x 100 mm, 6.3 kg

Name

Sculpture

History

A Yawkyawk, shown here as a mermaid, is a water spirit associated with the daughter of the original creator, Yingarna, the Rainbow Serpent. The daughter's name is Ngalkunburruyaymi, but she is also often referred to as Yawkyawk, meaning young girl. The Yawkyawks that form part of Crusoe Kurddal's Dreaming live in a creek off the Liverpool River at a place called 'Dreaming Ladies'. Small creatures in the water, similar in appearance to the larvae of the dragon flies, are the visible form of these spirits who metamorphose and fly away, and at other times walk on land. Yawkyawk stories are told around the camp fire at night. Their exploits are often used as a means of reinforcing good behaviour by exposing the scandalous activities of these beings and the dreadful things that happen to them as a result. Parents use the presence of Yawkyawks in the surrounding bush to stop children straying too far.



