

CAIRNS
ART
GALLERY

20 JAN -
29 FEB 2024

CARVING COUNTRY

*INDIGENOUS PRINTS FROM
THE COLLECTION*

ARTWORK LABELS

Arone MEEKS

1957 - 2021

Kuku Midigi

Celebration

2001

linocut

Cairns Art Gallery Collection. Commissioned, 2001

The rainforest, depicting plant life such as the wild ginger, frangipani, flowering gums and lawyer cane, through to the scrub hen mounding the rainforest mulch for its nest and the footprints of the cassowary were all part of Arone Meek's world growing up in Cairns.

As Arone explains:

'These images of the rainforest are connected by an extended dancing/singing figure decorated with fertility designs and embracing his environment. To the left of the dancer begins the mangrove with its rich bed of organic sea-life and precious sea-grasses, vitally important to the dugong that mate here. Above, three small sea turtles begin their journey. To the right a bush spirit bends and weaves through the rainforest. His flowering leaves move in the breeze towards the centre of the print as he caresses the boy's head. He draws the youth towards a greater spiritual and compassionate understanding of his cultural identity.

Spanning the artwork floats a figure adorned with skin designs held together with a membrane-like fish trap, reminding us of human frailty. Overall, this work is about our relationship to the environment and, on a personal level, is a documentation of life in Far North Queensland as an indigenous person. The voice of cultural awareness from the boy announces the beginning of his growth, and identifies his connection to the spirit of the natural world'.

Sammy CLARMONT

b. 1972

Lama Lama of the Lockhart River region

Sugarbag

1998

screenprint

Cairns Art Gallery Collection. Gift of the Lockhart River Art Gang and Geoff and Fran Barker, 2000

Clarmont is best known for his screen-prints that reflect his connection to country, as he says

'My works are about my country and the animals and stories. My art works are contemporary but reflect the traditional culture and isolation of my Community.'

Alick TIPOTI

b.1975

Kulkalgal (Central Torres Strait)

Gubau Aimai Maibagal (four winds)

2006

vinylcut

Cairns Art Gallery Collection. Donated by Editions Tremblay through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2012

'The story of Gubau Aimai Mabaigal means "Wind Makers" in the Maluilgal Zenadh Kes language. They are the Zugubal who create and control the four winds that clear the airways of the islands. The print depicts the yearly seasonal calendar of the the Maluilgal people. Sydney H. Ray was the first Westerner to document this information, he was part of the anthropology expedition to Mabuaig Island lead by Alfred Cort Haddon in 1898. I have now transformed some of the written information as the images you see before you.

My translation takes its inspiration from these historical documents. The small circles along the bottom border represent the twelve Kisai/ Moelpal (moons/months) of the year. All the different images along the print are placed as if on a timeline, in this way the print represents what we call the Wiath (year). The four great Zugubal figures are responsible for controlling the four seasons/winds of the island world. My ancestors referred to these winds as Kuki (North westerly winds), Wour/Sager (South easterly winds), Naigai (North easterly winds) and Zay (South westerly winds).'

Alick Tipoti

Joey LAIFOO

b.1978

Kala Lagaw Ya people

Solar thonar (Turtle mating season)

2007

linocut

Cairns Art Gallery Collection.
Gift of Robina Cosser, 2008

Solar Thonar [Turtle mating season], which is in the Western Island language of Kala Lagaw Ya, refers to the annual turtle-mating season throughout the Torres Straits. One of the most intriguing aspects of this work is its depiction of the lifestyle of green turtles from migration to mating to hatchlings as well as the gathering of turtle eggs and turtle hunting.

Alick TIPOTI

b.1975

Kulkalgal (Central Torres Strait)

Ainga Uthuy Mabiag

2006

linocut, coloured

Cairns Art Gallery Collection. Purchased with the assistance of Robina Cosser, 2006

The title translates as 'gardener'. It is based on a person who spends most of his days working hard planting crops in his garden beds. He must understand the weather patterns to know when to plant his food. This print shows a dedicated gardener performing a sacred ritual dance to call the rain before he plants.

Rosella NAMOK

b. 1979

Kanthanampu and Aangkum

Wiimumu paampaanyya, Mayi

1997

screenprint

Cairns Art Gallery Collection.

Gift of the Lockhart River Art Gang, 2000

'I paint about country and people around me...about traditional culture...about things that happen...things we do ...the weather...our isolated community. My recent paintings have been about how people live in our community and about our country.'

Rosella Namok

Zane SAUNDERS

b.1971

Badtjala (Butchulla)

Rainforest maze

2009

linocut

Cairns Art Gallery Collection. Gift of the artist, 2010

Billy MISSI

1970 - 2012

Wagadagam, Geomu, Panai

Gartha Nurika (a falling tide)

2010

linocut

Cairns Art Gallery Collection. Donated by Editions Tremblay through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2012

Billy MISSI

1970 - 2012

Wagadagam, Geomu, Panai

Waru Thural

2009

linocut

Cairns Art Gallery Collection. Donated by Editions Tremblay through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2012

Roy McIVOR

1934 - 2018

Binthi

Babu gunbi (Earth-blood – dry)

2010

screenprint

Cairns Art Gallery Collection.

Donated by Roy McIvor through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2012

Roy McIVOR

1934 - 2018

Binthi

Buurraay milbaal (Water tears – wet)

2010

screenprint

Cairns Art Gallery Collection.

Donated by Roy McIvor through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2012

Evelyn McGREEN

b.1942

Gugu Yimidthirr people

Wawu djimburr waadthurr and mulun (horned basket for collecting cone shells and quondong fruit)

and

Wawu bajin bulganghi dhangay (Strainer for washing clams and shellfish)

2009

linocut with acrylic wash

Cairns Art Gallery Collection. Purchased, 2017

Leon NAMAI

b.1984

Warrangu, Kaanju and Kaurareg

Sacred hunting ground

2010

linocut

Cairns Art Gallery Collection. Donated by Editions Tremblay through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2012

Matatia WARRIOR

b. 1979

Kala Lagaw Ya people

Mabiag gathia ulaik wapika naka (Man walking on the reef looking for fish)

2003

linocut

Cairns Art Gallery Collection.

Gift of Anna Eglitis, 2007

Sid Bruce SHORT JOE

b. 1964

Wik-liyanh

Morning feast (Ghostfish)

2011

screenprint

Cairns Art Gallery Collection. Donated by Editions Tremblay through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2012

Paul (Bindur-Bullin) BONG

b. 1963

Yidinji

Untitled (Yidinyji cultural items)

1993

lithograph

Cairns Art Gallery Collection.

Gift of Anna Eglitis, 2007

Laurie NONA

b. 1974

Kala Lagaw Ya

Giethalay Dhibadhib

(Mud crab chest plate)

2017

etching

Cairns Art Gallery Collection. Purchased, 2018

Robert MAST

b. 1976

Kala Lagaw Ya

Totemic cycle

1997

linocut, hand coloured

Cairns Art Gallery Collection.

Gift of Anna Eglitis, 2007

Glen (Kei kalak) MACKIE

b. 1975

Kala Lagaw Ya

Waru

2009

linocut

Cairns Art Gallery Collection. Donated by Editions Tremblay through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2012