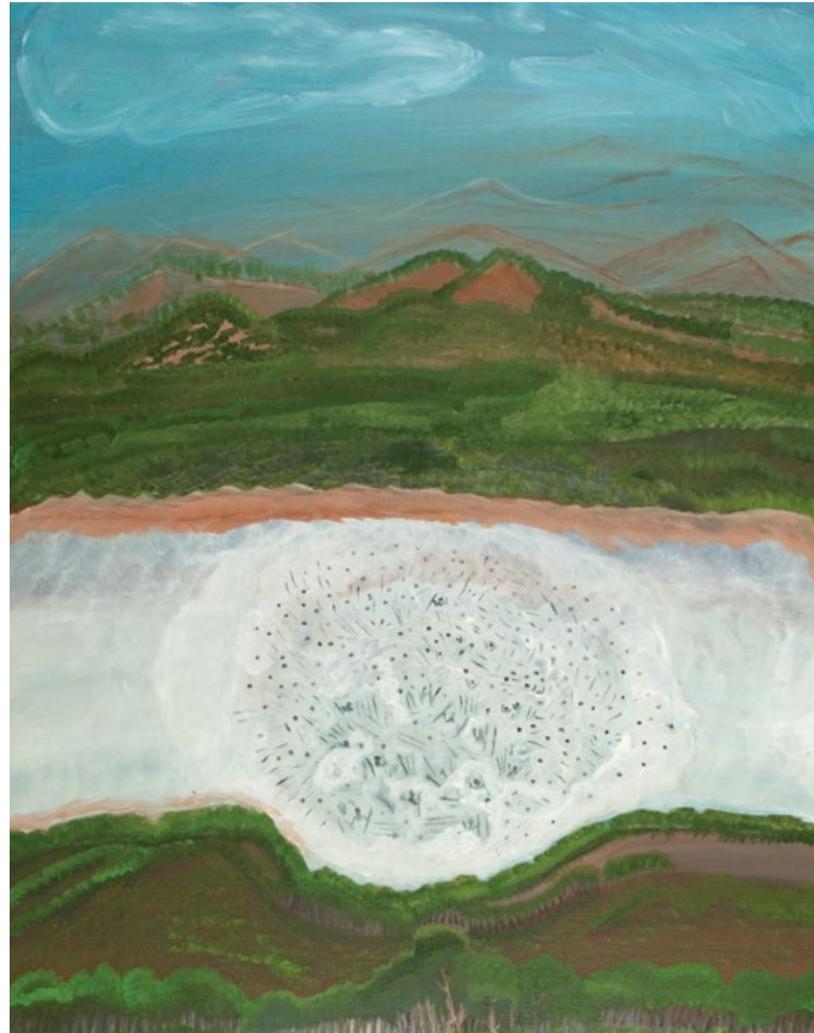


Abie Jangala, *Untitled* 1996, lithograph on Magnani Pesca paper, WP edn 20, 50.5 x 30.5cm [image, irreg], gifted by the artist & the NTU Print Workshop [CDU "Kaltja/Business" Conference], 2002; CDU Art Collection – NTU605



Above: Angelina George, *Rainbow Serpent Dreaming* 2004, acrylic on linen, 121 x 96 cm, acquired by purchase, 2005; CDU Art Collection – CDU1272

Front: Myra Roy, *Aeroplane Dancer* 2007, screenprint, edn 9/12, 29.5 x 17cm [image, irreg], acquired by purchase, 2007; CDU Art Collection – CDU 1477

Common Ground



- 1 Professor Barney Glover, CDU Vice-Chancellor, Preface, *ACIKE Works on Paper Portfolio 2013*, Charles Darwin University, Darwin, 2013, p.1.
- 2 Professor Andrew Reeves, Chairman, CDU Cultural Collections Advisory Board, Introduction, *ibid*, p.2; Professor Steve Larkin, CDU PVC Indigenous Leadership & ACIKE Director: cdu.edu.au/acike/welcome-acike
- 3 Professor Steve Larkin, *ibid*.
- 4 Michael Duffy, *From Our Communities: Artists-in-Residence at Batchelor College and the Coomalie Cultural Centre*, Batchelor College Arts Committee, Batchelor College, Batchelor, NT, 1997, pp.9 & 28.
- 5 David McClay, "Evolution of the Batchelor Institute Art Collection", unpublished paper, n.d.; Steve Anderson, "The Batchelor Institute Art Collection", briefing paper for CDU Cultural Collections Advisory Board, 23 November 2011.
- 6 David McClay, "Evolution of the Batchelor Institute Art Collection"; Joanna Barrkman, "The Batchelor Collection, 1994-2004: an exhibition of works from the Art Collection at Batchelor Institute", Supreme Court of the Northern Territory, Darwin, 15 September – 13 October 2004, exhibition catalogue, n.p.
- 7 *Ibid*.
- 8 *Ibid*; Michael Duffy, *From Our Communities*, pp.10-18.
- 9 Coomalie Cultural Centre closed in 2009, but "many of its components have continued on in other forms" through Batchelor Institute's teaching programs: Steve Anderson, telephone communication, 14 April 2015.
- 10 *Aboriginal Cultural Learning in a Tertiary Context*, submission to DEET, 1994, referred to in: Michael Duffy, *From Our Communities*, pp.19-21. Its 15 objectives are outlined at pp.21-26.
- 11 The policy of acquiring at least one work of art from each Artist-in-Residence has meant that holdings in this category today number 220 items, almost one third of more than 760 catalogued Collection works in total: Steve Anderson, "The Batchelor Institute Art Collection", briefing paper.
- 12 Steve Anderson, telephone communication, 14 April 2015.
- 13 Stephen (Steve) Anderson, "Art and Craft at Batchelor Institute" in *Ngoonjook: A Journal of Australian Indigenous Issues*, Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, Batchelor, December 2005, pp.47-57 at 56.
- 14 See: Joanna Barrkman, "The Batchelor Collection, 1994-2004" for an inventory of Artists-in-Residence between 1995 and 2004. The Residency Program ran until c.2007 and is currently operating in a restricted form due to budgetary constraints: Steve Anderson, telephone communication, 14 April 2015.
- 15 Joanna Barrkman & LeeAnne Mahaffey, "Bark Paintings: an exhibition of barks from the Art Collection of Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education", 10 July – 17 August 2002.
- 16 David McClay, "Evolution of the Batchelor Institute Art Collection".
- 17 *Ibid*.
- 18 The initial task of cataloguing was undertaken by LeeAnne Mahaffey, Learning and Engagement and Steve Anderson, initially Lecturer then Senior Lecturer in Art and Craft, who established the Art and Craft course in 1994 and was involved in the Artists-in-Residence Program. In c.2008, Anderson was appointed Curator of the Collection (part-time, based in Alice Springs) with staff on Batchelor campus (Mahaffey and Jacki Fleet, Senior Lecturer, Arts & Crafts) continuing to assist in collection management.
- 19 Felicity Green, "Commissions", unpublished paper, n.d.; Steve Anderson, "The Batchelor Institute Art Collection".
- 20 See: Joanna Barrkman, "The Batchelor Collection, 1994-2004" for an inventory of Master Artists, between 2002 and 2004.
- 21 Steve Anderson, "The Batchelor Institute Art Collection". During the past 12 months, the Committee has met informally and is being re-established under the supervision of current Chairperson, Claire Kilgariff, Head of Faculty of Education, Arts & Social Sciences.
- 22 The first public exhibition was held in 1995 at 24HR Art – the NT Centre for Contemporary Art, Parap and the second in 2004 at the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory, Darwin. Coomalie Cultural Centre also held an important exhibition of bark paintings in 2002.



**CHARLES
DARWIN
UNIVERSITY**



**Batchelor
Institute
of Indigenous
Tertiary Education**

A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN CHARLES DARWIN UNIVERSITY
AND BATCHELOR INSTITUTE OF INDIGENOUS TERTIARY EDUCATION

Charles Darwin University Art Collection and Art Gallery

Chancellery Building Orange 12.1.02 Casuarina Campus Darwin Northern Territory 0909

Patron Vice-Chancellor Professor Barney Glover

Curator Anita Angel **T** 8946 6621 **F** 8946 7744 **E** anita.angel@cdu.edu.au **W** cdu.edu.au/artgallery

Exhibition dates: 18 April – 28 June 2013

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**Batchelor Institute &
Charles Darwin University**
Art Collections



Nobody can discover the world for somebody else. Only when we discover it for ourselves does it become common ground and a common bond and we cease to be alone. (Wendell Berry, American man of letters, activist, academic, cultural and economic critic and farmer, b.1934-)

A more rewarding approach to painting, in my opinion the only valid one, is to regard it as a deeply personal and private activity and to remember that even when the painter works directly for the public – when there is sufficient common ground to allow him to do so – the real merit of the work will depend on the personal vision of the artist and the work will only be truly understood if it is approached by each in the same spirit as the painter painted it ... This demands the precise honesty from the spectator as was required from the artist in making the painting. It is their common ground, the area within which communication can occur. [Patrick Swift, artist, b.1927-d.1983]

Held to coincide with the opening of the Australian Centre for Indigenous Knowledges and Education (ACIKE) and the *Indigenous Knowledges in a Changing World* Symposium at Charles Darwin University (CDU), *Common Ground* presents a collaborative, collections-focused exhibition comprising more than 100 works of art, drawn from the permanent holdings of Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education and CDU.

A joint initiative of CDU and Batchelor Institute, ACIKE is “a nationally significant educational and research centre”, its principal objective being to “empower and inspire Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to realise their full potential through access to high quality tertiary education, delivered by two institutions with long experience in this field.”¹ Providing “pathways to build the social, human, economic and identity capital of Indigenous people across Australia” through “transformative and innovative teaching and learning programs, excellence in research and a core commitment to community engagement”, ACIKE harnesses the “complementary strengths of its founding institutions.”² Notably, it embraces a “both ways” educational model for “developing intercultural communication, decision making, governance and ways of doing business.”³

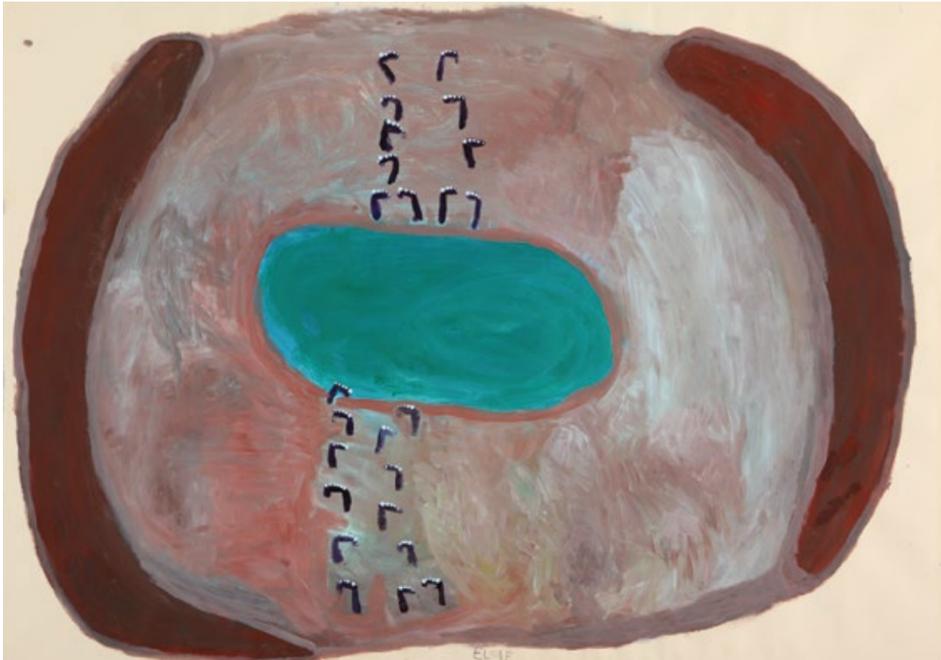
As a cornerstone concept, “both ways” education is when “Aboriginal and Western traditions of knowledge come together, interact and inform both staff and students”, offering more than “a single cultural standpoint” in line with principles of Indigenous self-determination, sharing skills and stories, and reconciliation.⁴ The significant role that contemporary Indigenous art has played and continues to play as a form of cultural expression and intercultural communication enshrines the essential principles of “both ways” education, both within the context of tertiary institutions of learning and in the wider world. In this spirit, recognising the value of art to both the cultural life and livelihood of Northern Australian Indigenous artists, this exhibition connects two of the Northern Territory’s important collections of art in the CDU Art Gallery, where they meet together, for the first time, on “common ground”.

The Batchelor Institute Art Collection grew “organically” from humble beginnings in the 1980s, when staff and supporters of the then Batchelor College assembled works of art and artefacts (weavings, boomerangs, clap-sticks and student art work, acquired chiefly by donation) for display in offices and teaching areas.⁵ Two murals by students, in paint and ceramic tiles, also adorned the College walls. Examples of Indigenous art personally acquired by staff and displayed in their offices also prompted general consideration of how art could play a “place-making role” in the College – aesthetically enhancing public spaces and teaching areas, acting as cultural markers of Indigenous identity for its student constituency, and fostering an “Indigenous environment”. There was a growing realisation that as a means of transmitting Indigenous cultural knowledge, art could function as a valuable learning resource, one that focused “attention on a central aspect” of the College’s philosophical underpinning – “the Aboriginal side of ‘both ways’ education.”⁶

A “coherent art collection” did not, however, begin to take shape and direction until the early 1990s, its “initial vision” stimulated and supported by the College’s former Deputy Director, Dr David McClay, Inaugural Chairman of the Batchelor College (later Institute) Art Committee, formed in 1992.⁷ The decade was one of rapid growth and change, when student numbers increased, a greater range of courses were offered, novel modes of delivery were developed and new governance and organisational structures appropriate to a tertiary institution of learning were put in place. Significant events during this period, such as the *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody*, the establishment of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, the Mabo decision and ensuing *Native Title Act*, and a report from the National Review of Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and subsequent findings, emphasised “the need for [Indigenous] cultural knowledge and traditions to be recognised and actively supported.”⁸

In response to these developments, Batchelor College initiated an Indigenous Artists-in-Residence Program in 1993, laying the groundwork for an “Aboriginal Cultural Learning Centre” (officially opened in 1999 as the Coomalie Cultural Centre), itself an extension of the College’s policy initiative “Aboriginal Cultural Learning in a Tertiary Context Project” (1995). With principles of action in place and funding support from the Commonwealth Government for infrastructure and delivery (matched by internal funding and resourcing), the Artist-in-Residence Program flourished during the 1990s and beyond within the new framework of its Cultural Centre,⁹ complementing and enhancing the then *Certificate II in Art and Craft* course. Guided by “both ways” philosophy, an holistic educational “arts package” of program, place, practitioners and policy provided:

*opportunities for Aboriginal people to release their knowledge within a culturally-supportive environment which asserts the primacy of that knowledge in the learning process and which allows non-Aboriginal people to come to an awareness and appreciation of Aboriginal knowledge systems.*¹⁰



Mayapu Elsie Thomas, *Mother’s Country on the Canning Stock Route* 1994, acrylic paint on Velin Arches paper, 75 x 105cm; Batchelor Institute Art Collection – BCAC00900

The Art Collection benefited from these developments, acquiring significant works by gift and purchase from resident artists,¹¹ who in turn enriched the teaching and learning experiences of staff and students, engaging with programs in writing, editing, broadcasting and film-making, as well as the visual arts.¹²

From inception, the Artist-in-Residence Program recognised a broad spectrum of Indigenous “life narratives” contained within various forms of artistic and cultural expression. Although there was no expectation or requirement that visiting artists directly “teach” students, they were regarded as professional or career “role models” on campus. The Program encouraged and facilitated interaction and exchange between visiting Indigenous artists and the campus community, as well as broader sectors of the region. It enabled workshops to be conducted in schools and at the then Northern Territory University, along with return visits to artists’ communities, thereby contributing to Indigenous cultural development within a growing “arts industry”. By inviting emerging as well as established artists, the Program also assisted artists needing access to facilities and materials, remuneration and staff support to create and present a body of work to launch their creative practices.¹³

Although the majority of artists invited to participate in the residency program emanated from regional and remote communities in Northern Australia (including the Central and Western Deserts), several came from the southeastern seaboard and metropolitan centres. Residencies were principally held at Batchelor or Alice Springs campuses, usually for a period of two weeks. Between 1993 and 2004, more than 105 artists (including painters, sculptors, ceramicists, textile and fibre artists, printmakers, writers, musicians, broadcasters, theatre artists, storytellers and dancers) participated in the Program.¹⁴ The Institute was a “meeting place” for Indigenous peoples, contributing to “the development of Indigenous cultures and communities”, the scope of its Art Collection, in turn, representing “the living cultures of Indigenous Australians.”¹⁵

In tandem with the evolution of the Artists-in-Residence Program, the Art Collection was initially supported (although resisted to some degree) by Council, with internal funding secured to acquire works of art for display in public spaces – a commitment reflecting institutional “recognition of the cultural and economic value and importance of art work to Indigenous communities”.¹⁶ With Commonwealth support for “cultural initiatives” forthcoming in late 1993, in concert with the College’s own expansion throughout the 1990s, the Collection grew exponentially, allowing the commissioning of two to three major works of art and a number of minor purchases *per annum*. The Collection’s presence and public visibility increased on the principal campuses of Batchelor and Alice Springs, and further afield in annexes in Darwin, Tennant Creek, Katherine and Nhulunbuy.

Within this context of fiscal responsibility and public accountability, the nascent Art Committee’s first task was to turn its mind to formulating a collection policy. The chief criteria developed for acquisitions included: to display the best of contemporary Aboriginal art forms; to illustrate the diversity of Aboriginal art; to stimulate, educate and encourage students

and foster a sense of pride in art and culture; to be representative of regional styles, media and artists reflecting the institution’s Indigenous population of students and staff; and, significantly, “to hold excellent examples of art works in their own right, rather than be seen simply as educational tools”.¹⁷ A database was set up in 1994, and the collection formally catalogued.¹⁸

In 2001, the Art Committee was able to commission works by significant and established Indigenous artists not already represented in the Collection. The Committee’s aim was to acquire works of superlative quality (later known as the “Council Room Commissions”), to “adorn the central hub of the Institute’s decision-making”. The Institute’s reputation as a place where art was respected, collected, exhibited and preserved, meant high profile artists were willingly engaged for a nominal fee. Their generosity in gifting works also reflected their high regard for the Collection’s public stature.¹⁹ The following year, funding from DEST negotiated by the Coomalie Cultural Centre supported a “Master Artists in Residence” program for three years, supporting six artists of national and international repute, significantly enhancing the Institute’s standing, the Collection’s holdings and creative life on campus.²⁰

Historically, the Art Committee had a “flexible membership”, reflecting strong connections with “community based established and emerging artists”. Members participated or “took an active interest in the Indigenous art industry, attending exhibitions, auctions and visiting art centres as opportunities arose”, thereby ensuring the selection process for both Artists-in-Residence and acquisitions of art were well-informed.²¹ Students’ work (in particular from the Certificate II in Art & Craft course), acquired by purchase or gift, featured significantly in the Collection in its early stages, and works were also sought from “a cross-section of students’ communities and regions”. Art was also donated by individuals and organisations. Acquisitions by purchase were transacted by Committee members directly with artists, their art centres or commercial gallery representatives, through the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory’s *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award* in Darwin, arts festivals, community open days and the Coomalie Cultural Centre. Selected works from the Collection have been reproduced as cards and posters, and have featured on the dust jackets of Batchelor Press publications, including its journal *Ngoonjook*. Batchelor Press has also commissioned works of art (later transferred to the Art Collection’s holdings), for reproduction in illustrated instructional and educational publications.

Common Ground is the third occasion that significant works from the Batchelor Institute Art Collection have been exhibited outside Batchelor in a public gallery in Darwin or elsewhere, and is the Institute’s inaugural collaboration through its collection with CDU.²² This exhibition comprises 56 paintings on linen or canvas, and works on paper, canvas board and wood from the Batchelor Institute Art Collection, principally by artists who participated in the first residencies held in 1994, emanating from Nauiyu (Daly River), Ngukurr and Lajamanu (Northern Territory) and Fitzroy Crossing (Western Australia). Selected works from subsequent residencies between 2000 and 2005 (by artists from Peppimenarti and Borroloola), as well as by individual artists from communities represented in the 1994 residencies, are also included. These works are complemented by 50 works from the CDU Art Collection, chiefly limited edition prints, created by the same artists or those from the same regions and communities.

Common Ground reveals how a similar pathway to that taken by Batchelor Institute, based on an equivalent of “both ways education”, collaboration and cultural exchange, was followed at CDU with the establishment in 1993 of the NTU Print Workshop, known today as Northern Editions Printmaking Studio. Through the delivery of printmaking workshops on campus and to remote and regional Indigenous art centres and communities for 20 years, the University fostered the development of contemporary Australian Aboriginal printmaking, recognising the cultural and economic value, and the aesthetic and educational importance, of art to Indigenous communities. As the beneficiary of workshop proofs of prints editioned at the University’s printmaking studio, the CDU Art Collection embodies the creative expertise and cultural knowledge of more than 200 Indigenous artists, supported and encouraged by University printers for more than two decades. Through complementary and enhanced collection, preservation, exhibition and publication, the CDU Art Collection and Art Gallery extends institutional respect and recognition for the Indigenous knowledge systems that visual art may express or encode.

Visual art, no less than literature, as Virginia Woolf remarked “is no one’s private ground”. It is “common ground”, and we would do well to heed her advice to “trespass freely and fearlessly and find our own way for ourselves”.

Anita Angel
Curator, Charles Darwin University Art Collection and Art Gallery
April 2013



Top left: Lourissa Miller, *Long Yams [Mimuy]* 2002, etching, WP edn 20, 20 x 10.5cm [image], gifted by the artist & Northern Editions Printmaking Workshop, 2002; CDU Art Collection – CDU2146

Centre left: Lily Nungarrayi Hargraves, *Untitled* 1996, lithograph on Arches Rives paper, WP edn 20, 27.4 x 26.6cm [image, irreg], gifted by the artist & the NTU Print Workshop [CDU “Kaltja/Business” Conference], 2002; CDU Art Collection – NTU607

Below left: Karen Rogers, *Untitled [Flower]* 2012, pastels on Cartridge paper, 29 x 22cm [image, irreg], acquired by purchase from “Botanical BIITE”, Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education Student Exhibition, May 2012; CDU Art Collection – CDU2309

Top right: Karen Rogers, *Untitled [Leaves]* 2012, pastels on Cartridge paper, 15 x 15.5cm [image, irreg], acquired by purchase from “Botanical BIITE”, Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education Student Exhibition, May 2012; CDU Art Collection – CDU2311

Below right: Tommy Ngarralja May, *Untitled [Two Styles of Headdress]* 2008, etching, edn 13/15, 64.5 x 44cm [image], acquired by purchase through the CDU Foundation, 2013; CDU Art Collection – CDU2147