ITINERARY

2018
Godinymayin Yijard River Arts and Culture Centre, Katherine, NT
Charles Darwin University, Darwin, NT

2019
Araluen Arts Centre, Alice Springs, NT
South Australian Museum, Adelaide, SA

2020
Geraldton Regional Art Gallery, Geraldton, WA
Fremantle Arts Centre, Perth, WA
Blue Mountains Cultural Centre, Katoomba, NSW

2021
Drill Hall Gallery, Australian National University, ACT

For up-to-date itinerary information visit artbacknt.com.au/what-we-do/visual-arts/currently-touring

AUTHORISATIONS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WARNING: Indigenous people are respectfully advised that names and images of deceased people may appear in the Still in my mind catalogue and Education Resource.

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The artists in Still in my mind are from various language groups including Mudburra, Bilinarra and Gurindji, however only Gurindji and English are used in this document.

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Project Manager: Jo Foster, Artback NT Visual Arts Manager
Writers: Angus Cameron, Nomad Art Productions; Jo Foster, Visual Arts Manager, Artback NT; Brenda L Croft, Curator
Editorial Support: Felicity Meakins, Linguist UQ; Brenda L Croft, Curator; Kate Rendell, Communications Manager, Artback NT; Liz Rogers, Acting EO, Artback NT
Design: Oscar Waugh
Video: Elise Fredericksen and Yasmin Smith
Photographers: as credited
Translators/transcribers: as credited

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Cover Images
Biddy Wavehill Yamawurr Nagala and Jimmy Wavehill Ngawanyja Japalyi, Aerial View of Jinparrak (Old Wave Hill) Station, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, image courtesy of Karungkarni Art and Culture Aboriginal Corporation
Brenda L Croft, Self-portrait at Malyalyimalyalyi/Lipanangku (original Wave Hill Station site, 1883 – 1925), 2014, Inkjet print on archival paper, image courtesy of the artist and Niagara Galleries, Melbourne
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INTRODUCTION

The Exhibition

My name is Vincent Lingiari, came from Daguragu, Wattie Creek station.

Yala-ngurlu nguna yanana, Wattie-Creek-ngurlung, nguna yani, murlangkurra; ngunanyjurra yani. Ngunayini yani jarrakapku jangkadakami kartiya-wu, murlangkurra, well nyawa na nguna marnana jarrakap [Then I’m travelling, I came from Wattie Creek, here; I came to all of you. I came to talk to the big (important) kartiya here, well this is what I’m saying]

That means that I came down here to ask all these gentleman here about the land rights. What I got story from my old father or grandfather, that land belongs to me, belongs to Aboriginal men before the horses and the cattle come over on that land where I am sitting now. That is what I have been keeping on my mind and I still got it on my mind. That is all the words I can tell you.

Gurindji/Malngin leader Vincent Lingiari spoke these words as the introduction to the song, ‘Gurindji Blues’, written by Ted Egan in 1969 and recorded by Yolngu leader, Galarrwuy Yununpingu in 1971.

Listen to ‘Gurindji Blues’ by downloading audio [MP3 2918kb]

For curator, artist and researcher, Brenda L Croft, whose patrilineal heritage is Gurindji/ Malngin/ Mudburra/ Chinese and Irish, Lingiari’s succinct, yet profound declaration of connection to his Country was the inspiration for the exhibition Still in my mind: Gurindji location, experience and visuality.

For Croft, the descendant of Stolen Generations’ family members, Lingiari’s statement is the exhibition’s touchstone, providing the framework upon which to build her collaborative, practice-led doctoral research exhibition project, which, among many issues, considers the ongoing impact of the Gurindji Walk-Off, a seminal event in national history that continues to resonate today.

The Walk-Off began in 1966 when Lingiari led over two hundred Gurindji and associated people off Jinparra (Old Wave Hill Station) in the Northern Territory to protest against poor wages and deplorable living and working conditions.

This initial strike action grew into a nine-year act of sovereignty and self-determination, sparking the birth of the national land rights movement, building on earlier strike action at Newcastle Waters near Elliott, NT, and three years after the Yirrkala Bark Petition in north-east Arnhem Land.

Acknowledged as one of the ‘100 Defining Moments in Australian History’ by the National Museum of Australia, the Gurindji Walk-Off is an event of localised significance that carries national and international relevance.

Croft collaborated with family and community members from the Kalkaringi and Daguragu communities while consecutively working closely with family and community members whose lived experience of the continuing negative impacts of assimilationist policies echoed her own family’s experiences of cultural dispossession. Weaving these elements together, the exhibition is a profound mix of the personal and the political combining intra- and intercultural and cross-generational perspectives and experiences.

The exhibition encompasses history paintings on canvas and board, works on paper, textiles, photo-media and an experimental audio-visual installation. These works are shown alongside significant materials drawn from extensive private and public archives, from the early 20th century to the present day, comprising historical still and moving images, oral recordings and repatriated cultural material and objects.

Through this richly layered tapestry of diverse media the artists and their communities reflect on distinct, yet connected experiences of dispossession of their homelands, languages, families and communities over many decades. Manifest of long-standing political
activism, the exhibition also highlights how Gurindji people sustain and adapt cultural practices and kinship connections, ensuring their shared history not only reflects on significant events of the past, but encompasses the experiences of contemporary and future generations.

Croft's work as an artist, curator and creative-led researcher - combining visual representation and theoretical methods - highlights complex concepts of community and connection to Country, challenging the context of a single geographical location denoting ‘home.’ Croft developed the exhibition in partnership with Karungkarni Art and Culture Aboriginal Corporation, UNSW Galleries, UNSW Art & Design and UQ Art Museum, with support from the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the Dynamics of Language.

The Education Kit
The Still in my mind education kit includes:

**Teachers’ Notes**
- Background Information about Gurindji Country, Gurindji Stolen Generations' experiences, Gurindji Walk-Off, Activism and Land Rights
- Q&A with Brenda L Croft
- Recommended References List
- Resource Sheets

**Student Activities**
- Pre-Visit Classroom Activities
- Exhibition Activities and Worksheets
- Key Artworks
- Post-Visit Classroom Activities

The Student Activities are designed to promote student engagement with the exhibition and to enhance self-expression, self-directed learning, cooperation, social understanding and cultural awareness.

The Exhibition Activities facilitate students to gather a broad range of material during their visit to the gallery through looking, discussing and then recording their observations, thoughts and insights. This collected material may then be used for further engagement back in the classroom.

The Pre-Visit Activities introduce students to some of the key themes and concepts underpinning the exhibition while the Post-Visit Activities facilitate further engagement and exploration of these themes. The classroom activities can be linked or sequenced in a variety of ways to develop units of study or used as independent activities.

The Background Information has been written to enable direct use with senior students.

Three broad themes can be drawn out for student engagement:

**ART and IDENTITY**
- Family Heritage
- Stolen Generations
- Mapping Home
- Seeing Self

**ART and SOCIAL HISTORY**
- Life at Wave Hill
- Aboriginal Activism
- Aboriginal Leaders

**ART and STORYTELLING**
- Unwritten Histories
- Exhibitions as storytelling

Along with the exhibition catalogue Still in my mind: Gurindji location, experience and visuality we strongly recommend referring to the key companion resource Yijarni – True Stories from Gurindji Country, produced with Gurindji Knowledge Holders, including bilingual translations and transcriptions of oral histories covering pre-colonial contact in the late 19th century, through to the 21st century. Extracts from these resources are embedded in the Background Information.

Curriculum Links
The Australian National Curriculum identifies Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures as a key cross-curriculum priority, recognising the fundamental and holistic relationships between PEOPLE, CULTURE, COUNTRY and IDENTITY.
A visit to *Still in my mind* will provide students with a profound engagement with Gurindji cultural perspectives and worldview with particular relevance for studies of Humanities and Social Science (HASS) and The Arts, from Foundation through Year 12.

**CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Culture**

**Key Concepts**

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities maintain a special connection to and responsibility for Country/Place
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have holistic belief systems and are spiritually and intellectually connected to land, sea, sky and waterways
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ ways of life are uniquely expressed through ways of being, thinking, knowing and doing
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders societies have many Language Groups
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Peoples’ family and kinship structures are strong and sophisticated

**GENERAL CAPABILITIES**

- Critical and creative thinking
- Intercultural understanding
- Information and communication technology capability
- Personal and social capability
- Literacy
- Ethical understanding

**Intercultural Understanding**

Through intercultural understanding students learn to value their own cultures, languages and beliefs and those of others. They come to understand how personal, group and national identities are shaped and the variable changing nature of culture. This capability involves students in learning about and engaging with diverse cultures in ways that recognise commonalities, create connections with others and cultivate mutual respect.

**NATIONAL CURRICULUM: Humanities and Social Sciences syllabus**

**Key Ideas**

- Who we are, who came before us, and the traditions and values that have shaped us
- The ways people, places, ideas and events are perceived and connected
- How people exercise their responsibilities, participate in society and make informed decisions

**Geography**

- The influence of culture on the organisation of places and their representations
- The role of people’s environmental worldviews in shaping societies
- Peoples’ perceptions of places and how these influence their connections to different places
- The ways in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people maintain special connections to particular Country/Place

**History**

- Family identity and family stories
- How stories shape culture and history
- The diversity of Australia’s first people and their long and continuous connection to Country/Place
- The importance of historical sites and events and what they reveal about the past
- Different perspectives on the arrival of the First Fleet and the colonial presence
- The nature of contact between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and others and the effects these interactions had on people and environments
- The development of rights in Australia for women, children Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and other groups

**Civics and Society**

- How groups in society perceive each other and relate to one another

**NATIONAL CURRICULUM: Visual Arts syllabus**

**Making**

- Using and experimenting with different materials technique and technologies
- Exploring different ideas, experiences, observations and imagination
- Engaging with critical and creative thinking to produce artworks that communicate ideas

**Responding**

- Considering viewpoints of artists and audiences
- Identifying visual conventions
- Investigating societal, historical and cultural contexts for the production of artworks
- Analysing and interpreting artworks
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

GURINDJI COUNTRY

The People

First Nations/First Peoples have lived on the vast continent now known as Australia for at least sixty thousand years. However, different areas of Australia were settled at different times as people gradually moved from the abundant coastal areas in the north to the inland and southern regions.

Gurindji people have a long-standing connection to their land and all living things which is shown in the stories and travels of the creation beings. This is known as the Puwarraja – the foundation of life and society. According to Gurindji people, the landscape was created by Ancestral Beings. In the time of Ancestral Creation, creatures travelled across the land, creating its features during epic journeys, known as Ancestral tracks or song lines. Creation beings took many forms, including animals, humans or natural events and were responsible for the creation of the known world and everything in it.

Various Ancestral tracks crossover Gurindji Country including Ngawa (Rain), Yiparrartu (Emu) and Wampana (Hare-wallaby). Ancestral sites are owned by ngurramala (traditional owners) and maintained by kurtungurlu (caretakers). Caring for these tracks and associated sites is central to the physical and spiritual well-being of the Gurindji people. The land and its ‘complex of meanings’ is constantly active around them.

Land and language are closely linked. The Ancestral creatures sang the land into being and the stories of the Ancestral times are recounted in word and song.

Gurindji Culture

In our communities we are ‘one mob’ with Gurindji, Malngin, Bilinara, Mudburra and Ngarinyman speakers from nearby. Together, we call ourselves Ngumpit, and share most of our languages and culture. Wirlipiri people have also lived with us for generations.

Our country is richly varied and includes the headwaters of the Victoria River. According to our elders, the land is alive with the spirit ancestors who created our country. Jurntakal (snake) is a major Dreaming for us. In the Dreamtime, Jurntakal travelled from Spring Creek in the west, across upper Wattie Creek, and into Mudburra country at Gordie Springs. Before our land was taken up by European settlers, our old people shared our world with Kurraj (Rainbow Snakes), Karukany (mermaids) and other spirits.

Today, people at Daguragu and Kalkaringi mostly speak Gurindji, Kriol and English. Everyone inherits a skin-name at birth. There are four for boys, like Janama and Japarta, and four for girls, like Nangala and Nawurla. We keep our skin names for life and they determine how all Ngumpit relate to each other.

Many of us are successful practising artists, using our art to tell stories about our land, Dreamings and history. The Karungkarni Art and Cultural Centre is a focal point for our community. Local ceremonial life is secret-sacred, though our senior men and women lead the young in wajarra (public) dance every year at Freedom Day.

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Violet Wadrill and Biddy Wavehill

Watch the animation Mungku the Little Turtle made by Serena Donald at Kalkarinji
Image: Young Gurindji girls painted up ready for wajarra. Photo Penny Smith.
which also acts to help maintain the land. These stories and songs are passed down through family lines according to Gurindji social structure.

Gurindji society is divided into two moieties (two parts into which all things are divided): Jalmawuny (Heron moiety) and Warlawurrwuny (Eaglehawk moiety). These two moieties provide the basis for the ownership and management of the land. An area owned by people from one moiety is cared for by people from the other. These moieties are further divided into eight subsections (skin groups) which form the basis of kinship relations, control behaviour between family members and determine marriage partners.

This general description of the Gurindji belief system and social structure applies in similar forms to many Aboriginal groups across the north-central area of Australia. Before kartiya (non-Indigenous) contact, the Gurindji travelled mostly within their nation’s boundaries,
living on seasonally available animal and plant food maximised through carefully caring for Country. Nowadays most Gurindji people live in townships on their Country. Profound knowledge of Country is still vital to Gurindji identity and life, but many non-Indigenous practices and items are also a part of everyday life now.


Country

Curator Brenda L Croft identifies connection to Country as a common thread in the exhibition. She explains Country in its many manifestations, as follows:

Country is the term often used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to describe the lands, waterways and seas to which they are connected.

Country is best represented as a proper noun. The term contains complex ideas about laws, place, custom(s), Language, spiritual beliefs, cultural practices, material sustenance, family (community) and identity.

Country is home. It is the source of knowledge, law, science, spirituality and survival. It is necessary to the transmission of cultural knowledge, skills and practices.

Country is alive. It provides physical and emotional relationships with specific places and the ancestral beings that inhabit them. With the passing of the generations, deceased ancestors often become identified with the landforms, flora, fauna and spirits that animate the Country where they once lived.

Country has Language and Language has Country.

The Place

In 1966 the famous Gurindji Walk-Off led by Vincent Lingiari took place at Wave Hill Station, in the Victoria River region of the Northern Territory.

Today most people live at Kalkaringi and Daguragu (eight kilometres away on Wattie Creek). These two communities are located approximately 470 km southwest of Katherine and 800 km southwest of Darwin. Kalkaringi is also known by the old name of Wave Hill because it is the site of the old Wave Hill Welfare Settlement. Permission from traditional owners, through the Central Land Council, is required to visit Daguragu.

The Victoria River Region is mostly low open woodlands and black soil plains with various types of eucalypt, bloodwood and acacia trees and grasses. But the country varies and there are also stands of pandanus, open shrub lands with spinifex (prickly grass) outcrops, rocky limestone ridges, creeks and rivers.

The climate is influenced from the monsoonal north. The annual rainfall is about 500mm, most of which falls in January and February, which are also the hottest months. The cooler, dryer time is in June and July. During the wet season the roads can become flooded when rivers rise with the monsoonal rain.

Most people in Kalkaringi and Daguragu belong to the Gurindji language group. There are other language groups in the community including Malngin, Nyininy, Ngarinyman, Mudburra, Bilinarra and Warlpiri. The combined population is around seven hundred, which fluctuates during different times of the year.

Gurindji people have great knowledge of the bush plants and animals of their country. In pre-contact times the bush was a supermarket, a pharmacy and a hardware store encompassing everything Gurindji people needed to survive. Bush foods, medicines and materials were collected to eat, to make tools, implements and shelters, or to treat various illnesses.
and conditions. While there are additional sources of food, medicine and shelter available today, Gurindji people still gather foods and medicines from the bush and relish time spent on Country.

For more information visit Bush Foods at Karungkarni Art and Culture website

Much of Gurindji land is now occupied by pastoralists (cattle stations), although some land is held under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act and Native Title. Gurindji value their Country very differently to the people of the pastoral industry. While the Gurindji are spiritually connected to the land and exercise custodial responsibilities to look after Country, the objectives of the cattle stations are to breed cattle for export. This means large herds of cattle roam across the land, sullying streams and devastating native plants and habitats. Introduced grasses for cattle grazing are now growing rampantly across the land, while pests such as the introduced cane toad, are quickly spreading, causing the demise of many native animals such as the kirrawa (goanna), a traditional and much-loved food source.

Judbarra / Gregory National Park is a major feature of the northern part of the region. The park was established in 1986 and is now being managed jointly by Traditional Land Owners and Parks and Wildlife. The Munkurrumurnkurru Gurindji Rangers are based at Daguragu community. The group of six rangers have a strong governance structure including Traditional Owners who help set the work program for the group. The rangers carry out a mix of fire management, cultural site and biodiversity survey work, weed and feral animal management.


Spending Time on Country – Camping at Paperbark Yard

story by Ursula Chubb, Munkurrumurnkurru Ranger

In early July 2018, Rangers along with schoolkids and Art Centre elders camped together at Paperbark Yard with representatives from Artback NT and an editing crew that came from Sydney.

On the day we got there the Traditional Owners held a smoking ceremony for everyone. Kids and adults were being smoked traditional way and also a Welcoming Ceremony was held down the river by the Traditional Owner Robbie Peter who was watering our heads. Rangers took a drive to Fish Hole River with the schoolkids and assisted with water monitoring. On the way back we stopped and placed a sensor camera at the frog dreaming site because we saw three feral pigs. Then we collected firewood for the camp and started preparing dinner.

The next days we did a lot of different things on Country. We collected bush foods that were nearby like partiki (bush nut) and we went fishing and swimming. We made dancing sticks and painted them, and did paintings and in the evenings we sat around the fire telling stories. Helma and Nikita did some interviewing and video recording of elders and kids.

Watch a video about Paperbark Yard Camp here

Image bottom: Kyliah Herbert with her painting, 2018. Photo Angus Cameron.
Ngarrka Karu-Walija - Introducing Children to Country and Ancestors

story by Violet Wadrill, translated and transcribed by Felicity Meakins


When we came from upstream (from Kalkaringi to Gregory / Judbarra National Park), the traditional owner Robbie Peter sprinkled the Gurindji girls and boys with water down (at the river) and the adults. He put water on their arms and heads (to introduce them to the Country) because this is Bilinarra Country and Ngarinyman Country.


Next we smoked the children. We treated them with smoke from river red gum, conkerberry and paperbark leaves. We smoked them so they would get to know the Country. The Country will also get to know the children this way. The old people who died on this Country long ago might not recognise them. Many of our ancestors were from this Country. That’s why we smoked all of the children – so our ancestors can get to know this next generation anytime they come here.


The children will get to know this Country as they get older. That’s how it works when we treat them with the smoke. We smoke them to bring them into the knowledge of the Country. That’s also why we water them. We bathe the adults and kids alike in the smoke from river red gum, conkerberry and paperbark.


Robbie Peter is the Traditional Owner. He grew up at Mt Sanford Station. So he knows all about this Country. He used to ride this Country on a horse. The old people used to take him here so he could learn. This is why Robbie knows his Country. It’s his mother and maternal grandfather’s Country. He’s a Bilinarra child through his mother and maternal grandfather who were Ngarinyman and Bilinarra.

Listen to Violet Wadrill here
Karungkarni Art and Culture Aboriginal Corporation was established in 2010 in the old powerhouse building at the entrance to Kalkaringi. The name of the art centre, Karungkarni, refers to the Child Dreaming place for the Gurindji people, a sacred site imbued with procreative powers. It is represented by two rocks on a hill to the south of the art centre, one male child and one female child.

Karungkarni Arts is a vital hub where people gather to create artworks, screen prints and woodcarvings. It is seen as a place for young people to learn the cultural knowledge, ceremony and history from their elders. It is proudly owned and governed by the artists of Kalkaringi and Daguragu.

The Arts Centre is also home to a collection of heritage objects, historical photographs and archival films, which portray the history and culture of the Gurindji people. In particular, there is information about the iconic political stand against oppression and for Aboriginal land rights for which the Gurindji people are renowned - the 1966 Wave Hill Walk-Off.

Artworks from Karungkarni Arts include richly coloured dot style paintings based on the traditional designs of the region. Themes relate to resources such as bush food and bush medicine as well as Puwarraja stories, which have been passed down to the artists from their ancestors. The senior artists also make a highly prized range of hand-carved wooden artefacts including kawarla (coolamons or shallow dishes), kurrupartu (boomerangs), kurturu (nullanullas or clubs) and mirta (shields).

Local artists have a strong connection to their culture, their country and their Puwarraja stories, as well as to their more recent history which is expressed in their artwork. The artists value the role of Karungkarni Arts highly and continue to work towards strengthening the Arts Centre for their community. Critically, the artists and their supporters have created a place where they can gather together in order to share their stories and knowledge, to paint, to produce their craft and maintain and strengthen the Gurindji culture and language.

**COLONISATION**

The Gurindji occupied their lands continually for tens of thousands of years, but in 1788 there was a major event that triggered changes that would severely alter the lives of the Gurindji and all Aboriginal people in Australia.

When Lieutenant James Cook, acting under the orders of King George III, commenced the colonisation of Australia, Britain claimed ownership simply by occupying the land. This was considered legal under the notion of terra nullius – a Latin term meaning “nobody’s land”. According to the international laws of Europe in the late 18th century, a country could be claimed by another if uninhabited, so Britain declared the land unoccupied, hence claiming ownership of the land without negotiation. This meant that Aboriginal people were not given any legal rights or recognition, a situation that has devastated First Nations’ communities across the country ever since.

The early period of colonisation was characterised by numerous conflicts with Aboriginal people as kartiya (white people) continually claimed more areas of land. An estimated 20,000 (and possibly many more) Aboriginal people were killed by kartiya from 1788 to the early 20th century. While an estimated 2,500 colonists were killed by Aboriginal people fighting back to protect their ancestral lands from the occupying pastoralists and squatters.

For more information see:
- The Names of Places – a multimedia mapping project developed by renowned Waanyi artist Judy Watson as an ongoing research project gathering information about massacre sites across Australia. View the map at the link below, [https://namesofplaces.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=1fca23b6fd87494e8f98ff2e29c71b4b](https://namesofplaces.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=1fca23b6fd87494e8f98ff2e29c71b4b)

The first colonial explorers to appear in Gurindji country, what is now called the Victoria River District, were Augustus Gregory in 1854 and later Alexander Forrest in 1879 during his journey from the coast of Western Australia to the Overland Telegraph Line.

Just four years later in 1883, the Northern Territory colonial government granted almost 3,000 square kilometres of land, (now known as Wave Hill Station), to the explorer and pastoralist Nathaniel Buchanan. The Gurindji had no concept, nor any say in the fact that their land had been taken from them and that someone from outside their tribe now owned their country.

One year later, Buchanan drove 1,000 cattle onto the area and by 1894 there were 13,000 cattle grazing on Gurindji land. The presence of cattle and increasing numbers of stockmen and workers had a dramatic effect on the culture, livelihood and environment of the Gurindji and the system of land management they had developed over tens of thousands of years.

This practice was repeated across Australia as pastoralists forcibly took possession of Aboriginal lands and stocked them with cattle and sheep. The traditional existence of Aboriginal people came under intense pressure in this clash between pastoralists and Aboriginal people over land, occupation and use.

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**Aboriginal Lands**

Pincher Nyurrmiari remembers

This is Aboriginal land. It belongs to Aboriginal people from all different language groups and different tribes. There weren’t kartiya here before. They only came later. Aboriginal people were the only ones who owned the land before. This land didn’t hold horses or cattle in the past. There only used to be kangaroos, emus, fish and goannas here before. Now the horse has taken.

Kartiya exterminated our Gurindji ancestors. Then they put up their station houses, yards and stock camps. When the land just belonged to Aboriginal people, life was more ordered. The kartiya didn’t occupy the land back then. Mudburra, Bilinarra and Gurindji used to travel around here with each other in the old days — northwards and down towards the east, just like that, travelling around together.

Now the monsters are trying to wipe us out. But they haven’t succeeded in getting rid of us. Aboriginal people still recognise the traditional owners all around this area — to the north and south. The law has always been here. It only used to be Aboriginal law right here. This place wasn’t for the kartiya at all.

Ngumpit used to trade with each other. Gurindji people used to trade in the north, south and east with other tribes like the Mudburra. There used to be Mudburra living around Kalkaringi too. The land all along the Victoria River only belonged to Aboriginal people back then. There weren’t kartiya there before. No cattle roaming around, and no horses. Nothing like that at all. Now there’s horses and other foreign animals getting about because the kartiya brutally removed our people from their land.

Pincher Nyurrmiari in Yijarni - True Stories from Gurindji Country, p 31

Transcribed and translated by Norm McNair, Ena Oscar, Sarah Oscar and Felicity Meakins
Killing Times

Kartiya (European people) didn't try to like ngumpit (Aboriginal people). They just shot them......They just massacred them on their own country. And what for? Because kartiya came and found a big mob of ngumpit living here on this country. They had to shoot them. Aboriginal people weren't always as few in numbers as today...Wherever they lived, they were shot in the early days. There were thousands but half of them are gone..they slaughtered them...they cut them down on their own country.

Ronnie Wavehill in Yijarni - True Stories from Gurindji Country, page 32

The fertile plains of the Victoria River District were considered valuable grazing country by the colonial pastoralists and, as the cattle numbers increased, the land became contested ground with devastating results for Gurindji people.

Paddy Doolak, Ronnie Wavehill, Thomas Monkey, Peanut Pontiari and Steven Long describe the massacre which occurred at Wirrilu to Gurindji ranger Ismael Palmer, 2014. Photo Brenda L Croft.

First-hand accounts of the arrival of Europeans tell of the massacres that occurred during the establishment of Wave Hill and Limbunya Stations. Gurindji elders recount how white stockmen 'shot them like dogs', sexually abused women and forced children to witness the murder of their family. This period continued from the late 19th and early 20th century and is referred to by Gurindji people as the 'killing times' or simply 'early days'.

Some early pastoralists, station workers and police were particularly violent and abusive towards Gurindji people, committing multiple murders, massacring whole family groups, maltreating men and molesting women over several generations.

The Gurindji fought back to defend their lands by attacking mustering camps and at one point burning down the station homestead while the newly established inhabitants were out in stock camps. But the kartiya reprisals were brutal and far outweighed any acts of defiance by the Gurindji.

Suggested reading: Yijarni - True Stories from Gurindji Country, Historical accounts by Gurindji people, Chapter 3: The Killing Times

The Coming of Europeans

Pincher Nyurriemari remembers


Kartiya exterminated our Gurindji ancestors. Then they put up their station houses, yards and stock camps. When the land just belonged to Aboriginal people, life was more ordered. The kartiya didn't occupy the land back then. Mudburra, Bilinarra and Gurindji used to travel around here with each other in the old days — northwards and down towards the east, just like that, travelling around together.


The land all along the Victoria River only belonged to Aboriginal people back then. There weren't kartiya there before. No cattle roaming around, and no horses. Nothing like that at all. Now there's horses and other foreign animals getting about because the kartiya brutally removed our people from their land.

Pincher Nyurriemari in Yijarni - True Stories from Gurindji Country, pp 43-44
Transcribed and translated by Norm McNair, Ena Oscar, Sarah Oscar and Felicity Meakins

An Artback NT Education Resource
Blacks’ Camps and Station Labour

With the arrival of Europeans came many devastating changes to everyday life that impacted on the ability of Gurindji people to maintain language and ceremony, and connections to their land and family.

It is clear that the physical brutality of some kartiya was only part of the assault on the Gurindji — the destruction of natural resources meant that a return to traditional ways was well nigh impossible, and the restraints on people’s time and movement placed limits on their ability to maintain Country and carry out cultural responsibilities.

Felicity Meakins in Yijarni – True Stories from Gurindji Country, pp 99 & 173

The number of cattle stations grew as properties were leased or sold to individuals and large companies. These included Wave Hill Station which was bought by British pastoralist, Lord Vestey in 1914.

Having taken the land and displaced the people, white pastoralists like Vestey turned to Aboriginal people for free or cheap labour as cattle stations grew and became more established.

At the same time Gurindji people continued to maintain a deep connection to the land and were determined to stay on their ancestral country. This desire to remain played into the hands of pastoralists and over the next eighty years Aboriginal people became an essential and highly skilled but exploited part of the cattle industry across northern Australia.
Cattle stations had a devastating impact on the land and culture of Aboriginal people. Rivers, streams and waterholes were trampled and fouled by the cattle. The harvesting of seeds, fruit, tubers and animals became unmanageable as the new regime of land use was introduced and native habitats diminished or destroyed.

As they continued to be unsafe living in the bush, most Gurindji people settled in the ‘blacks’ camps’ on the stations, only returning to the bush during the wet season, which was the station lay-off time.

Aboriginal stockmen at the time were paid one fifth of the wage of non-Aboriginal stockmen. However, many were not paid at all and lived off rations of dry salted beef, tea sugar and tobacco and living conditions were appalling.

References:
Felicity Meakins and Erika Charola, Introduction in Yijarni - True Stories from Gurindji Country, pp 1-4
Penny Smith, Resilient spirit, in Still in my mind, Gurindji location, experience and visuality exhibition catalogue, pp 65-67
Creative Spirits - https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/politics/aboriginal-people-strike-walk-off-at-wave-hill
The Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House, Celebrating 50 years since Wave Hill by Libby Stewart

**Life on cattle stations**

**Wankaj they can make you no good kwurru you know.’ (‘It was no good for our sense of well-being.’)**

Biddy Wavehill
in Yijarni - True Stories from Gurindji Country, p 184

Life on cattle stations in the Northern Territory was typically hard and the living conditions for Aboriginal workers were extremely basic before and during the Gurindji Walk-off. The best housing being little more than an open corrugated iron shed. Aboriginal people lived in so called ‘blacks’ camps’ on the edge of the station compound. Few of the ‘blacks’ camps’ had running water or cooking facilities. On most stations Aboriginal people would be required to supply their own firewood. This task usually fell to the old men, women and small children, who frequently had to scavenge for firewood up to four kilometres from the homestead. They then bundled it together with a rope, swung it on to their backs and carried it back to the camp.

Cooking utensils were limited to one or two billycans per household, and an occasional frying pan. Frequently the billycans were discarded jam tins with a wire handle threaded through a hole in the side, which had been punctured with a nail. Some stations refused to issue any cooking utensils at all. Rarely was any furniture provided. Kerosene lamps were sometimes used but there was little available fuel.

The skills of Aboriginal stockmen in handling horses and cattle was exceptional and relied upon by their white employers, rarely were they given recognition or proper payment for their labour. Aboriginal stockmen were also given the most dangerous jobs. None were paid full wages, many were lucky if they received any cash wages at all, almost all lived in terrible conditions and many were subjected to physical violence.
Station jobs for Aboriginal people included the cook, housekeeper, stockman, cowboy (cow herder), garage mechanic’s offsider, bore mechanic’s offsider, driver, gardener, woodcutter, general hand, yard builder, handyman, boundary rider, butcher, fencer’s offsider. Salaries for these positions varied from about two-eight pounds per week. Women or girls were required to do jobs like milk the cows and churn butter (to provide supplies for the white workers) and clean out the latrines, often without a wage.

Station life was dominated by hard work and in the Northern Territory the harshness of the climate made the work day even harder. Breakfast was typically served around 6am, but the waking hour of the Aboriginal employees who prepared the breakfast was much earlier.

Stations like Wave Hill would have two or three cattle camps of up to twenty men at various points on the property at various times during the Dry Season. Invariably the camp boss was non-Aboriginal, while the majority of workers were Aboriginal stockmen. Life on stock camps involved mustering and holding the cattle, branding, castrating, and weaning calves from their mothers, drafting the sale cattle, then droving the cattle to market.

On the mustering camps workers were expected to work six or seven days a week which might involve a ten to twelve hour day. The day began at around 4am as the cook prepared food. The stockmen would be up waiting for the first glimpse of light so that they could unhobble the horses and ride to the mob at dawn.

Once the horses were saddled up they rode throughout the day mustering, throwing calves, branding, castrating bull calves and drafting the sale stock. Around 9.30am work would stop for ‘smoko’.

By 10am the flies had appeared, buzzing into nostrils and eyes, laying eggs which could break out into trachoma or other infections.

Lunch was eaten amongst the flies and dust. In the hotter summer months there was a two-hour break as the men propped themselves up against trees or lay under scrappy shrubs to escape the heat. Except for the days on which fresh beef was brought into the camp most of the meals consisted of salt beef, which was kept in damp hessian bags and cut off in large chunks. The food supply was either kept under a tree or hung on a low branch. There were rarely any green vegetables, so potatoes, salt and flour were often combined to make a simple stew. Damper cooked on the coals of the fire completed the meal.

By mid-afternoon it was back in the saddle again and back to work until evening when the fading light called a halt to the day’s work. Sometimes the workers spent as long as fourteen hours in the saddle. On receiving their allocated share of the inevitable beef, the Aboriginal workers would settle on their swags or sit some distance from the head stockman who would eat alone.

Stock watering points were located on various parts of the property and operated by Aboriginal workers continually for most of the year. These underground bores and windmill could be located as much as 100 kilometres from the station homestead.

A supervisor would visit pump sites every week or so and would deliver food to the worker on site. Rations consisted of salted beef, flour, sugar and tea; again fresh beef was a rarity. There was no accommodation provided at the pump sites not even a bed or a chair. At night the employee would sleep either on two hessian bags slung between saplings or on the ground in a swag or ground sheet.

Working on Wave Hill Station

Most Gurindji people lived and worked at Jinparak (old Wave Hill Station) along with Mudburra, Warlpiri, Bilinarra, Maingin and Ngarinyman people. This station was owned by the English lord, William Vestey, who was the largest land holder in Australia at the time, owning a number of cattle stations across the north of Australia. The conditions of the Aboriginal people working and living on the stations were appalling.

Two-hundred-and-fifty people, including ninety-two men, lived in a small area. Gurindji people received no wages for their work. They worked as station hands and stockmen in exchange for goods such as tobacco, salted meat, flour, sugar and tea, and occasionally clothes and blankets. Serious food shortages are routinely mentioned in Gurindji descriptions of station life at the time.

Fresh food was available at the station, but was only for kartiya. For example, there used to be a vegetable garden at the homestead in the western area which was tended by Aboriginal labour, however ngumpit were not allowed to eat vegetables from the garden. Women would pick the vegetables and prepare them for lunches and suppers, but only for the kartiya station people.

Biddy Wavehill’s mother’s three sisters worked in the garden tending cabbages, potatoes, tomatoes, pumpkin or whatever was growing. Her mother, Mariah Yakngarri Nangari worked the milk churn in the dairy from a young age with Violet’s mother ‘Milker’ Daisy Jalpngarri Nampijina. They would do the milking, carry the milk back to the churn in buckets with a yoke, then churn the milk to make butter for the white station workers.

Ena Oscar’s ngapuju (father’s mother) carried waste from the kartiya toilets, as Ena portrays in her painting.

Felicity Meakins
in Yijarni - True Stories from Gurindji Country, p 183

Life in the stock camps

Biddy Wavehill Yamawurr remembers

A long time ago we used to work here for Vestey. This was the Number two Camp. My husband (Jimmy Wavehill) was working with Sabu (Peter Sing). He was working here too. Alright, they were mustering cattle this way. We used to come this way a long time ago. Us women used to come with them. We used to wait for them at camp in the east of the yard while they branded the cattle there.

We stayed here then, in the late afternoon, they would return to us and us women would cook some bread and meat for them. This was when Vestey was running the station and he used to send us here. Sabu was working at Number 2 camp. Righto, then we used to go back north to Number 7 Yard, called Lunyjawurr. We went back to dismantle the camp. Alright, we didn’t get any money there, nothing. When Vestey was running the station we only worked for rations. Like that, and blankets too, that’s all.

Biddy Wavehill in
Mayarni-kari Yurrk: More Stories from Gurindji Country, Chapter 6

Billy Bunter Jampijinpa remembers

Kula-malu nyangani mangarri punyurru.
Lawara kula-ngantipai jayingani kartiya-lu-ma
Vestey-lu-ma. Kula-ngantipangulu treat ‘em
manani properly way, nothing.

We didn’t have good food (at the station). Vestey didn’t give us any. He didn’t treat us at all well.

We were treated just like dogs. We lived in humpies. You had to crawl in and out on your knees. There was no running water. The food was bad — just flour, tea, sugar and bits of beef — like the head or feet of a bullock.

Kula-ngantipa-kulu punyuk jayingani mangarri-
ma nyampa-ma nyl-ma money-ma lawara.
Ngungantipangulu treat ‘em manani warlaku-
marraj, kempririjang-payin-ma, ngayiny-ma ngaji-
ma, ngumimi-ma ngaviny-ma. Ngumayijang-ma
ngumalu jirtart-parla karrinya kuya-wu-ma.

They never gave us enough food and that kind of thing, and no money. They treated the older people — my fathers and my mother’s brothers — like dogs. We younger ones got angry about that.

Billy Bunter Jampijinpa
in Yijarni - True Stories from Gurindji Country, p 183
Violet Wadrill remembers

A lot of children were taken from old Wave Hill Station. They were taken away to Croker Island. ‘Another land’ is what they say for that place. A long time ago they used to take our pilyingpilying (mixed descent children) to another place entirely. That’s right, they took them there — a lot of children from Jinparrak. There were two of ours, from my sister Lizzie Yanyjaya — Mauie Ryan and Jamie Brown. They’re both family. We all grieved for those children — all of the mothers, grandmothers and grandfathers on the mother’s side. We thoroughly missed those children when they took them away to the island. ‘Hey, they’re taking the children away from their country to somewhere far away. Poor little things. We’ll only see them all again when they’ve grown up. That’s when they’ll come back.’ The two Welfare officers (Ted Evans and Creed Lovegrove) took them then in a large truck with wooden slats on the back. It was a large International truck. There was a welfare place here too at Kalkaringi which had a similar car with wood bars on the back which they used to use for taking kids to school too. But those kids went first — big kids and little kids with kartiya fathers. They took them to the north over the sea to Croker. That’s all.

The early history of station life includes the forced removal of the children from their families. First Peoples who were removed — including women and children — are collectively known as the ‘Stolen Generations’. Between 1910 and 1970 about one in three children were removed from First Peoples’ families under government policies in Australia.

In 1937 the Commonwealth Government decided that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be ‘assimilated’ into the wider population. The aim of the assimilation policy was to force Aboriginal people to be absorbed into the wider community, discarding their Aboriginal culture and languages.

Under the policy, First Peoples’ children of mixed heritage were forcibly removed from their families and incarcerated in institutions or foster homes; in many cases these children were never to see their family again.
The policies of child removal left a legacy of trauma and loss that continues to deeply affect Indigenous communities, families and individuals today. Children taken from their parents were taught Western cultural values and to reject their Indigenous heritage. They were forbidden to use their traditional languages or take part in cultural activities, leading to a loss of traditional knowledge and cultural identity.

The conditions in homes and institutions were often austere and harsh with strict routines and cruel punishments. This forced separation, broke important cultural, spiritual and family ties and left people traumatised and lost in society with no identity or family connections.

In 1997, ‘Bringing them home’, Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families was conducted by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (now called the Australian Human Rights Commission). The 689 page final report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families was tabled in Parliament on 26 May 1997. It traced the past laws, practices and policies that resulted in the forced removal of children and makes recommendations to support healing and reconciliation for the Stolen Generations, their families and the Australian public more broadly.

Over two decades on from the report’s tabling intergenerational trauma experienced by Stolen Generations’ members and their descendants has been widely acknowledged:

Most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been affected by the Stolen Generations. The resulting trauma has been passed down to children and grandchildren, contributing to many of the issues faced in Indigenous communities, including family violence, substance abuse and self harm.
Two decades on and the majority of the Bringing Them Home recommendations have not yet been implemented. For many Stolen Generations members, this has created additional trauma and distress.

Failure to act has caused a ripple effect to current generations. We are now seeing an increase in Aboriginal people in jails, suicide is on the rise and more children are being removed.

Addressing the underlying trauma of these issues through healing is the only way to create meaningful and lasting change.

I Was Taken

Maurie Ryan remembers

I was born in 1948 which makes me 67. I was born at Wave Hill Station — they called it Jipparra — under the birthing tree where my mothers, sisters, and my grandmother brought me into this world. My father was Michael Patrick Ryan and my mother was Mary. For three years I lived in the camp with the other tribes that made up people at Wave Hill Station — the Gurindji, the Mudburra, the Bilinarra, the Ngarinyman and the Warlipirri... I was there for three and a half years.

Then one time we were down at what they call Policeman’s Waterhole. I was sitting on a log with my two uncles, Uncle Mick (Rangiari) and Uncle Horace (Walmiri), both deceased now. So there was a patrol man there...[h]e came and picked me up. His name was Ted Evans... (some of our family) chased the vehicle up the side of the hill until they couldn’t catch it.

I was placed in Darwin at Bagot and Retta Dixon and then taken to Croker Island in ...Arnhem Land. Croker was one of the seven institutions that was where the Stolen Generations children were taken to... There was about two hundred children, aged from babies til they were sixteen years of age. Children of mixed race, namely a white father and a black mother.

...I was there till I was eight years of age and then I moved to an orphanage in Adelaide...There’s no such thing as an orphan in traditional Aboriginal society. It might be in European society but not here 'cause I had my mothers and other mothers that look, would have looked after me if my mother had passed away.

I was there (in Adelaide) until I turned eighteen...[and] I joined the army. In 1966 I went to Wagga...to North Head Sydney..., then...back to Adelaide and then...Darwin to... In 1966 I met... Uncle Mick Rangiari, ...[Uncle] Donald Wangkali, and...[Grandfather] Vincent Lingiari. They were coming into town to talk to the waterside workers’ union and I would have gone with them except that I would have gone AWOL and I would have been discharged. But I continued to see them in 1967 when they walked off Wave Hill Station and walked off into history...

I came back here when I was about 24. My mother was here at Daguragu and my grandmother was here, Mona... and they cried. We never talked about it to Mum — about being removed — because it hurt them too much. But I couldn’t understand why they’d take somebody because of the colour of his skin. And then remove you from everything that’s around you, you know — your culture, your language, your law, your family, and being part of a group of people.


Image: Maurie Ryan Japarta, Justin Paddy Japarta and Michael Paddy Japarta, at Victoria River, near the site where Maurie was removed as a 3 year-old by Native Affairs Patrol Officer, Ted Evans, c. 1953/54. Photo Brenda L Croft, 6 April, 2015.


References:
The Stolen Generations - The forcible removal of Indigenous children from their families.
The Policy of Assimilation
ACTIVISM – FIGHTING FOR COUNTRY

Across the Northern Territory in the early 1960s, Aboriginal stockmen were starting to talk about getting equal pay. The men worked on isolated stations but came together in Darwin at times. At a meeting in Darwin, Aboriginal people set up the Northern Territory Council for Aboriginal Rights and drew up a list of problems they wanted fixed: equal pay for Aboriginal workers, government welfare payments made directly to Aboriginal people, better housing and better food, protection of women by law, laws against racist slurs and, finally, Aboriginal control of reserves.


Vincent Lingiari and the Gurindji Walk-Off

Vincent Lingiari was a Malngin and Gurindji man, born in about 1919 at Victoria River Gorge in the Northern Territory. His mother and father were employed on Wave Hill Station which was owned by Lord Vestey. Lingiari received no formal education so never learnt to read or write and English was his third or fourth language. At about twelve years of age he went to work at the stock camps where cattle were mustered, branded and drafted to be driven to meatworks at Port Darwin.

After a time, Lingiari became a head stockman at Wave Hill, but initially he had received no financial payment for his work. Over the same period, he was becoming a respected Gurindji ‘law (ceremony) man’.

Lingiari understood the situation was very unfair and decided to stand up for what he knew was right. His requests for better pay and working conditions for the Aboriginal stockmen were refused and eventually Lingiari with the support of Brian Manning and Dexter Daniels from the North Australian Workers Union, led the stockmen to withdraw their labour in protest.

On 22 August 1966 Vincent Lingiari led a walkout of two hundred Aboriginal stockmen, station workers and their families from Wave Hill Station to Gordy Creek before setting up camp on the Victoria River near the Wave Hill Welfare Settlement (now Kalkaringi). They camped on higher ground during the wet season and in early 1967 moved to Wattie Creek, where they established the community of Daguragu, which was chosen because it was near several important Gurindji sacred sites and a permanent source of water.

The Vestey group began making promises of better pay, but this did not sway the resolve of Vincent Lingiari and the Gurindji people. They wanted a school to be built, access to clean water and electricity and most of all, they wanted their people to have rights over their own land and run their own cattle station.
From Walk-Off to land rights

The walk-off started as a strike over wages and conditions, but it soon became clear that Vincent Lingiari and the Gurindji people were on about something more important, they were fighting to win back their land.

In April 1967 the Gurindji (together with writer and activist Frank Hardy) sent a petition to the Governor-General, R. G. (Lord) Casey, asking that their land be returned to them so that they could establish their own cattle station.

The petition stated in part:

‘(We) feel that morally the land is ours and should be returned to us’. The Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI) supported the petition, pledging to support ‘the possible legal action to establish their rights to their traditional lands and sacred places’. Federal Cabinet rejected the interpretation of land rights contained in the petition, and Governor-General refused the request for the lease of land.

The Gurindji continued their strike for nine years – the longest in Australian history. They withstood harassment, threats of violence and evictions, efforts to cut off their food supplies and bribery, but the Gurindji stood strong. During this time Lingiari travelled to Melbourne, Sydney and Darwin to tell Australians about the struggle of his people. Support for the Gurindji people slowly grew as people began to understand the plight of Aboriginal people and a changing political mood in Australia began to take effect.

In 1972 the Whitlam Labour Government was elected with the promise to instate Aboriginal land rights. Action was swift and after negotiation with Vestey, the then Prime Minister Gough Whitlam symbolically handed over leasehold title to the Gurindji people at

Gurindji Make a Stand

Rachael Morris’ story

Rachael was a 2-year old child at the time of the Wave Hill Walk-Off in 1966. This screen print is her interpretation of the 9 years leading up to the handover by Gough Whitlam in 1975. The stockmen stand in Daguragu under the sign announcing their Gurindji mining lease and cattle station. The group standing below the stockmen represents Gough Whitlam and his cabinet. She proudly refers to the strong stand taken by the Gurindji people against the appalling treatment of Aboriginal men and women on the cattle station. She recollects how Vincent Lingiari and Violet’s husband, Donald, and other men from the new community travelled to Canberra to gain support. The union movement also supported the Aboriginal people, using an old Bedford truck to carry rations and building material.

Listen to Rachael Morris talk about her painting here

Listen to Topsy Dodd talk about working on the stations and walking off in protest here
Daguragu on 16 August 1975, (later in 1986 the land was converted to freehold title).

During the ceremony, Prime Minister Gough Whitlam made a speech to congratulate the Gurindji people on the victory that they had achieved after nine years of protest. Prime Minister Whitlam then picked up a handful of earth and poured it into Vincent Lingiari’s hand saying:

Vincent Lingiari, I solemnly hand to you these deeds as proof, in Australian law, that these lands belong to the Gurindji people and I put into your hands part of the earth itself as a sign that this land will be the possession of you and your children forever.

Vincent Lingiari replied (in part): The important whitefellas are giving us this land in ceremony... The [government men] came from different places; we do not know them but [we understand] they’re on our side. We want to live in a better way together, blackfellas and whitefellas. Don’t let us fight over anything. Let us be mates... They took our country away from us but now they have given it back.

For more information see:
http://ia.anu.edu.au/biography/lingiari-vincent-14178
See full petition - Still in my mind: Gurindji location, experience and visuality, exhibition catalogue, page 11

Handover History

Michael George ‘Nutwood’ Tulngayarri Japalyi’s story

This painting is about something very important to Gurindji people. They didn’t like the way they were treated at Jinparrak. So Vincent Lingiari went up to the Vestey’s, the owners of the station, and told them they weren’t going to work for them anymore. That’s why I put that set of footprints there. Then Lingiari went back to the camp and gathered everyone – that’s the other footprints. They collected their boomerangs and spears and walked off. The white men standing there are the manager Tom Fisher and the Vestey’s owner. Vincent and one of the Gurindji people are also there. That’s when they were talking about leaving. I also painted the handover from Gough Whitlam to Vincent.

Nutwood Japalyi in Still in my mind exhibition catalogue, p 61


Lawi at Wattie Creek, 2014. Photo Brenda L Croft.
National Aboriginal Land Rights Movement

The Wave Hill Walk-Off was instrumental in heightening the understanding of Indigenous land ownership in Australia and was a catalyst for the passing of the Northern Territory Aboriginal Land Rights Act in 1976 resulting in almost 50 per cent of Northern Territory land being returned to First Peoples.

The Wave Hill Walk-Off is still celebrated today for the role it played in the national Aboriginal land rights movement, with the anniversary of this event celebrated annually in the Freedom Day Festival at Kalkaringi and Daguragu.

Listen to Rosemary Johnson talk about the Walk-Off and Freedom Day here

Gurindji families had suffered decades of denigration and degradation on Wave Hill Station, but they had maintained connection to their country through involvement in station activities and an annual ‘walkabout’ season. They also continued their rich tradition of transmitting cultural knowledge and stories of all types to younger generations. A selection of stories — described as yijarni (true) — appear in Yijarni: True Stories from Gurindji Country (Charola & Meakins, 2016). Of course the publication presents only a small selection of the stories that are still common knowledge among Gurindji people today.

Vincent Lingiari was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 1976. A Foundation in his name was formed in 2001 to promote reconciliation and Indigenous rights and to develop Aboriginal leadership and the Vincent Lingiari memorial lecture is delivered annually in Darwin. A Federal electorate in the Northern Territory is named after him, and a memorial to him in Reconciliation Place, Canberra, was unveiled in May 2004. He had six sons and two daughters with his wife Blanche Jingaya and died on 21 January 1988 at Daguragu.

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Introduction page in Mayarni-kari Yurrk, More Stories from Gurindji Country
National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, Australian Dictionary of Biography
http://ia.anu.edu.au/biography/lingiari-vincent-14178
Caleb Cluff, Gough Whitlam – Great speeches of rural Australia, ABC Rural
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Q&A WITH
BRENDA L CROFT

Practice-led research and the making of an exhibition

Tell us a bit about your research and what you’ve been exploring?

As a First Nations woman of mixed heritage (Gurindji/Malngin/Mudburra/Chinese/Irish-Australian on my father’s side; Anglo-Australian/English/Irish/German on my mother’s side), the practice-led research I have been undertaking since 2011 has been informed and framed by the complex context that this encompasses and which I literally and metaphorically embody.

I have been involved in the contemporary First Nations and mainstream arts/cultural sectors for over three decades as an artist, curator, educator and consultant. As an artist my work initially focused on photo-media, particularly the representation of Australian First Nations living in urbanised regions, which was my lived experience. Within my work I have continually drawn on personal and public archives relating to my immediate and extended family’s experiences as members of the Stolen Generations, and the impact of this long-standing policy on the descendants of those people.

My work references home, place, location and Country (with a capital ‘C’) as key foundations of my creative research. Continually assessing the context of belonging to home, Country and family is intrinsic to how I understand the meaning of being First Nations and human. If a person has been disconnected from these key elements, does that leave one homeless, displaced, without family?

Still in my mind: Gurindji location experience and visuality, the title of the exhibition is also the title of my practice-led PhD research project which has been conducted through UNSW Art & Design, UNSW undertaken in collaboration with my patrilineal family and community and in partnership with Karungkarni Art and Culture Aboriginal Corporation at Kalkaringi, NT, UNSW Galleries, UNSW Art + Design, Sydney and UQ Art Museum, Brisbane.

While this particular project commenced in 2012, I first went to Kalkaringi and Daguragu in 1991 on family history research, 2 years after my father, Joe, had similarly gone back to undertake family history research. He was born at Victoria River Downs around 1926, then, along with his mother, Bessie, was taken to Kahlin Compound in Darwin in 1927. He was incarcerated in a number of government homes in the NT until he was sent to boarding school in Queensland in 1940. We returned to the Northern Territory in 1974 to meet my grandmother and he returned regularly on work and to see family.

When my father died in 1996 my brother Tim and I took his ashes home to Kalkaringi. His funeral service and burial was held the day before the 30th anniversary of the Gurindji Walk-Off event. Since that time we have returned regularly to our father’s country. Still in my mind: Gurindji location, experience and visuality has developed from these ongoing journeys to our traditional homelands and also visiting displaced family and community members, all of which has been integral to my practice-led research project.

For me, through the action of going back to Country (Gurindji Country) I am attempting to un-do myself, un-doing kardiya (whitefella/non-First Nations) learning then re-learning all I have been taught through a Western pedagogy, and then re-doing, re-making myself. I am doing this through the methodologies facilitated by kardiya tools, the tools of the Academy [university, non-First Nations learning), which is also part of my (mixed-up) heritage. But I cannot begin to comprehend Ngumpin/Ngumpit (Gurindji— Aboriginal/wo)man) ontology and epistemology unless actively engaged with, and within my community/ies, wherever they are located.

My hope is that this project is not only for, or about myself—a pointless vanity project providing outcomes only for me, as the researcher. My aim is that this research and methodology/ies can provide tools enabling other First Nations’ peoples who have had to live away from their communities’ traditional homelands, denied knowledge of their peoples’ cultural practices, with a means of reclaiming cultural connections on their terms. Of not having to experience...
shame for the cultural disconnections imposed upon them or their families through the enduring effects of colonisation.

**What was your process for creating work and curating this exhibition?**

I’ve been an exhibiting artist since the mid 1980s and a curator since 1990, including at state and federal cultural institutions, national and international levels over many years, for instance, I was Curator of Indigenous Art at the Art Gallery of Western Australia from 1999 – 2001, then Senior Curator of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art at the National Gallery of Australia from 2002 – 2009, so I have extensive experience in curating complex projects and exhibitions.

This current exhibition, *Still in my mind* was developed from combined long-standing family history research spanning more than 3 decades. I was able to undertake this project because I received a substantial research grant through the Australian Research Council in 2012. This enabled me to travel regularly to the Victoria River region, to Kalkaringi, Daguragu and surrounds, building upon journeys home from 1991 onwards, to interview, film and photograph people and sites, participate in sites visits and cultural events with family and community.

Over the years I have conducted extensive interviews with Gurindji family and community members in Canberra, Darwin, Sydney and elsewhere, all of which were transcribed and provided to participants for approval. A number of sections of these video and audio interviews are included in the exhibition. A significant amount of time was also spent extensively researching public archives collections in the NT, SA and ACT, sourcing material from the 1920s to the present day.

I was also fortunate to project manage the 45th Gurindji Walk-Off from Wave Hill Station commemoration, during my tenure at the University of South Australia, which enabled research and development for *Still in my mind* and I returned to present work-in-progress to the community at the 50th Gurindji Walk-Off commemoration event.

Working through Karungkarni Art and Culture Centre was essential as it enabled me to link in with overlapping language research projects being undertaken by linguist Dr Felicity Meakins from UQ University conducted over many years with Gurindji community members. The history paintings in the exhibition by Karungkarni artists were created during a 2014 artists’ camp and site visits during research for the publication *Yijarni: true stories from Gurindji country*, which was launched at the 50th anniversary of the Gurindji Walk-Off from Wave Hill in 2016. The prints in the exhibition by Karungkarni artists were created during the Wave Hill/Megalo Print Studio and Gallery cultural exchange for Canberra’s Centenary celebrations in 2013, which I helped facilitate. So the exhibition has lots of connections with other linked projects.

I feel very fortunate that our projects had synergies, which enabled these collaborations. It was important to me that my research had resonance for family and community members, including those who are members of Gurindji displaced communities. Gurindji community elders and younger members were closely involved in translating catalogue texts and exhibition labels, with community members also sharing their stories, customary practices and diverse experiences through video interviews and documentaries.

*Still in my mind* cultivates models for representing specific Gurindji histories, and the contemporary experiences for culturally affiliated Gurindji people – whether on customary lands or part of a broader displaced community. The collaborative nature of this project ensures that living family members maintain Indigenous cultural practices of obligation and responsibility for transmitting knowledge through kinship.

**What was your experience like walking Gurundji Walk-Off Track?**

It was a humbling, stumbling (literally and metaphorically) experience to walk the actual Track, which I did over a number of years, with family and community members who acted as guides. I walked...
sections of it with my cousins, nephew, community Elders and non-Indigenous friends. I walked sections of it solo, and more than once. I often retraced sections of the Track as well. I walked it during different seasons and at different times of the day. I took photos and recorded moving image footage and audio while walking it, which became part of the multi-media installation work Retrac(k)ing country and (s)kin in the exhibition.

I thought about those who had walked the Track before me, although I was not trying to replicate their act of self-determination because the original activists did it under great duress and resilience, women carrying children, looking for water in the heat of August 1966. They were fearful that they would be shot. They camped in the riverbed and had to wait for supplies. I had none of those worries, I had a bed to sleep in every night, I had boots on my feet, I had water.

I walked the Wave Hill Walk-Off Track as an homage/tribute to the following:

- For my grandmothers Bessie Croft, Mona Noonai and my great grandmother Mungayi
- For my father Joseph and uncles, Mick Rangiari and Horace Walman/Wellman
- For my brother Lindsay (who died in 1994)
- For family and community at Kalkaringi/ Daguragu and Yarralin
- For Gurindji community who walked off in 1966, including family members
- For Gurindji dispossessed – those removed from family and community since the earliest days of colonial impact (of the children removed from communities throughout the Northern Territory since the 1910s a very large percentage were from Gurindji associated homelands.

What is the ongoing impact of the Wave Hill Walk-Off - both in a local context and a broader national context?

I can’t speak on behalf of community living at Wave Hill and surrounding regions but their sense of pride in their ancestors being part of the birth of the national land rights movements is evident – just see the annual Gurindji Freedom Day events. I think there is also a sense of frustration that the gains made at the time of the handback (1975) and expectations of self-determination in the years that followed have been undermined, really since the implementation of the NT Intervention in 2007. Ironically, the Wave Hill Walk-Off Track was put on the national heritage register the same year, 2007. To me, that emphasises the tension that exists in the alleged national psyche – we will champion and acknowledge an action of self-determination and resistance on the one hand, while undermining the desire of First Nations/First Peoples to have control over their own lives and futures.

However, I do feel that much of the broader non-Indigenous community wants to better understand and support the aspirations of First Nations/First Peoples. I would argue that the Gurindji are among the most renowned First Nations/First Peoples around the country because of the Walk-Off and its legacy – the anthem by Kev Carmody and Paul Kelly, ‘From little things, big things grow’ emphasises this. The interest in the event hasn’t waned either – you can look up any number of programs and articles in online media archives.

What does home mean to you?

I, like so many thousands of First Nations/First Peoples who have grown up away from Country—removed and dislocated from place and community, dispossessed of traditional homelands, have to internalise whatever concept of home and country is held within one’s body—as a beat, a constant refrain to keep [non-linear] time to, in order to keep in step, not out of [non-linear] time. How is this maintained if one is a foreigner to one’s mother tongue, does not have access to the lyrics or steps required for song and ceremony, is placed outside—literally and metaphorically—country, community and kinship?

For many, journeying home is a series of painful, stumbling missteps, often out of tune with an unseen, inaudible conductor and symphony, imagining what may have been disclosed on missing pages from the archives. Missing, skipping a (heart) beat, an irregular, out of reach murmur, tripping up and over what may never be revealed.

Instinctual nature taking over outside acceptable, known knowledge/s, yet all the while being out of synchronisation with every thing and one that I encounter on my journey. These amorphous, shape-shifting, illusory elements are the foundation stones for creating, making new forms of my Gurindji-specific experience of belonging: to place, family and home/lands.

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http://batchelorpress.com/node/377

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http://batchelorpress.com/node/331

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From Little Things - Part 1
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Gurindji Blues by Ted Egan with Vincent Lingiari
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From Little Things Big Things Grow by Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody

Took the Children Away by Archie Roach
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aywDT6yHMmo
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ewkw3UpB54&index=5&list=RDawDT6yHMmo

My Brown Skin Baby by Bob Randall
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=5&v=v3ytJixoxKzI
STILL IN MY MIND — TEACHERS’ NOTES

My Brown Skin Baby sung by Martin Pascoe
Includes historic Photographs from the Northern Territory Archives - Stolen Generations
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GURINDJI WALK-OFF

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Zach Hope, NT News, August 21, 2016

LAND RIGHTS

The History of the Land Rights Act
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Land rights
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Timeline: Indigenous rights movement

MASSACRES
Colonial Frontier Massacres in Central and Eastern Australia, 1788 – 1930, University of Newcastle,
https://c21ch.newcastle.edu.au/colonialmassacres/map.php

The names of places. A research-based website showing massacre sites across Australia.
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The Vincent Lingiari Story
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STOLEN GENERATIONS
Explainer: The Stolen Generations by Karina Marlow
National Indigenous Television (NITV)

NT Stolen Generations Aboriginal Corporation

Government and church run institutions and missions in the Northern Territory, 1870s – 2010s

There were dozens of homes and institutions operating in the Northern Territory from the late 19th century until the early 21st century. The following are but some of the those relevant to Still in my mind

- St Mary’s Hostel - https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/ref/nt/biogs/YE00008b.htm

GENERAL RESOURCES ABORIGINAL ISSUES
https://www.clc.org.au/
**RESOURCE SHEET**

**LANGUAGE GROUPS**

![Location map](image)

**Ti mor Se a**

- Darwin
- Katherine
- Mataranka
- Daly Waters
- Elliott
- Tennant Creek
- Wyndham
- Kununurra
- Bulu
- Ngaliwurr
- Karrangpurru
- Jaminjung
- Timber Creek
- Top Springs
- Yarralin
- Pigeon Hole
- Bilinarra
- Mudburra
- Halls Creek
- Jaru
- Wanyjirra
- Lajamanu
- Warlpiri

**Western Australia**

0 100 km

**Courtesy: Gurindji to English Dictionary, Published by Batchelor Press in 2013**
Daguragu First Camp and Handover Sites

Kalkarindji Bottom Camp

Wave Hill Walk Off Route

Junani - Gordy Creek Waterhole

Legend

National Heritage List - Inclusion

Place ID: 109899 File: 7050080001

GURINDJI WALK-OFF TRACK

Still in My Mind - An Artback NT Touring Exhibition

Wave Hill Walk Off Track, courtesy of the Australian Government’s Department of Environment and Energy.

Additional Sources:
JINPARRAK - OLD WAVE HILL STATION

Biddy Wavehill Yamawurr Nangala and Jimmy Wavehill Ngawanyja Japalyi
Aerial view of Jinparrak (Old Wave Hill Station)
2015, synthetic polymer paint on canvas
Courtesy of the artists and Karungkarni Art and Cultural Aboriginal Corporation.
Ngumpin workers waited here for the dinner bell, got food and came back and ate it here.

marlarn (river red gum)

pawulyji (swamp box)

milk yard

Nipper Jurlama (Biddy’s jaju) lived here

Biddy’s lamparra lived here

tupa (windbreaks)

Margaret Paddy’s kaku lived here

partiki (nut tree)

Mariah Yakngarri and Cinaman Daisy lived here

Warntarnu (where women performed Jarrarta)

wanyarri (bauhinia) birthing trees

road to No 7 Bore

way to ring place to perform Karungka and Mintiwarra

Mudburra, Malngin, Ngarinyman and Jaru camp

Ngumpin workers waited here for the dinner bell, got food and came back and ate it here.

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Mudburra, Malngin, Ngarinyman and Jaru camp
## Look and Find Word List

How many of these items listed can you find represented in the exhibition?

### People
- **nunghiiny** family
- **ngamayi** mother
- **ngaji** father
- **papa** brother
- **kapuku** sister
- **jaju, ngapuju** grandmother
- **kaku, jawiji** grandfather
- **karu** child
- **malyju** boy
- **wamala** girl
- **ngumpin** man
- **kirri** woman
- **ngumpin** Aboriginal person
- **kartiya** non-Aboriginal person
- **pilyingpilying** person of mixed descent
- **jangkakarni** politician
- **kamparrijang** ancestor
- **ngurramala** traditional owner
- **ngarlaka** hill
- **lungarn** face
- **mila** eyes
- **jitji** nose
- **kangarnta** mouth
- **langa** ears
- **jipuluk** eyes shut
- **pilp** eyes open
- **kartpi** hair
- **yunpa** footprints

### Place
- **pinka** river
- **langkarna** waterhole
- **karnti** tree
- **yuka** grass
- **ngarlaka** hill
- **wumara** stones/rocks
- **kurturru** sky
- **maarn** cloud
- **wurrumu** road
- **partik** fence
- **marru** homestead, house
- **bulumana** cattle
- **yawarta** horse
- **wulngarn** sun
- **yarti** shadow
- **warlu** fire

### Object
- **kurrupartu** boomerang
- **mirta** shield
- **warlmayi** spear thrower
- **kurrwa** stone tool/axe head
- **kawarla** coolamon
BUSH FOODS and BUSH MEDICINES

All the plants and animals in the list below were identified at Paperbark Yard camp.

PLANTS

- partiki: bush nut
- kilipi: bush bananas
- kalngi: bush tomato
- nampula: river fig
- muying: black plum
- ngarlu: bush honey
- wilmurr: wire
- kurntitirn: horseshoe
- parnnga: saddle
- walyjawalyja, makarta: hat
- parnnga: saddle
- ngarin: meat
- ngawa: water
- mangarri: bread
- martiya: bush gum
- kumpulyu: white currant
- ngamanpurru: conkerberry
- kupuwupu: lemon grass
- ngarlu: sugar bag
- parkarli: paperbark
- karrajkarraj: curry orange
- kawurn: ashes
- marlarn: river red gum
- kajkuru: pandanus
- mintaarraj: water-lily
- yawu: fish
- tuku: mussel
- kapirtij: crab
- jalij: prawn
- narrinyjila: turtle
- jalarlka: catfish
- lamawurt: witchetty grub
- jamut: bush turkey
- jipilyuku: duck
- yiparrartu: emu
- ngajukayin: pussy cat
- warlaku: dog
- tamarra: ant bed
- vari: snake
- kirrawa: goanna
- jurlaka: bird
- pingi: ants
The Gurindji Blues
by Ted Egan

My name is Vincent Lingiari, came from Daguragu, Wattie Creek station.
Yala-ngurlu nguna yanana, Wattie-Creek-ngurlung, nguna yani, murlangkurra; ngunanyjurra yani. Ngunayini yani jarrakapku jangkakarni kartiya-wu, murlangkurra, well nyawa na nguna marnana jarrakap
That means that I came down here to ask all these fella here about the land rights. What I got story from my old father or grandfather, that land belongs to me, belongs to Aboriginal men before the horses and the cattle come over on that land where I am sitting now. That is what I have been keeping on my mind and I still got it on my mind. That is all the words I can tell you.
Poor bugger me, Gurindji
My name is Vincent Lingiari, came from Daruragu, Wattie Creek station.
Me bin sit down this country
Long time before the Lord Vestey
Allabout land belongin’ to we
Oh poor bugger me, Gurindji.
Poor bugger blackfeller; Gurindji
Long time work no wages, we,
Work for the good old Lord Vestey
Little bit flour; sugar and tea
For the Gurindji, from Lord Vestey
Oh poor bugger me.
Poor bugger me, Gurindji,
Man called Vincent Lingiari
Talk long allabout Gurindji
‘Daguragu place for we,
Home for we, Gurindji:
But poor bugger blackfeller, Gurindji
Government boss him talk long we
‘We’ll build you house with electricity
But at Wave Hill, for can’t you see
Wattie Creek belong to Lord Vestey’
Oh poor bugger me.

Ted Egan wrote The Gurindji Blues in 1969 during the height of the Gurindji land rights struggle...a blistering critique of the living conditions endured by the Gurindji and the government’s inaction to resolve many of these issues. It features performances by Vincent Lingiari, Galarrwuy Yunupingu and Ted Egan.

“...In 1971 the Aboriginal Arts Board...arranged for Vincent Lingiari and Galarrwuy Yunupingu to travel to Sydney...to participate in the recording of the song...Egan recalls that Vincent Lingiari had difficulty hitting some of the high notes in the song during rehearsal so the decision was made for Lingiari to do the spoken word introduction and for Egan to take over singing duties with Galarrwuy Yunupingu...
From Little Things Big Things Grow
by Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody, 1991

Gather round people let me tell you’re a story
An eight-year long story of power and pride
British Lord Vestey and Vincent Lingiari
Were opposite men on opposite sides
Vestey was fat with money and muscle
Beef was his business, broad was his door
Vincent was lean and spoke very little
He had no bank balance, hard dirt was his floor

From little things big things grow
From little things big things grow

Gurindji were working for nothing but rations
Where once they had gathered the wealth of the land
Daily the pressure got tighter and tighter
Gurindji decided they must make a stand
They picked up their swags and started off walking
At Wattie Creek they sat themselves down
Now it don’t sound like much but it sure got tongues talking
Back at the homestead and then in the town

From little things big things grow
From little things big things grow

Vestey man said I’ll double your wages
Seven quid a week you’ll have in your hand
Vincent said uh-huh we’re not talking about wages
We’re sitting right here till we get our land
Vestey man roared and Vestey man thundered
You don’t stand the chance of a cinder in snow
Vince said if we fall others are rising

From little things big things grow
From little things big things grow

Vestey man said I’ll double your wages
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Vince said if we fall others are rising

From Little Things Big Things Grow is a protest song co-written by Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody, in the early 1990s. It tells the inspiring story of the Gurindji people’s struggle for equality and land rights. Kev Carmody recounts its genesis...

Paul Kelly and I had gone away on a camping trip in about ‘91 or something and we just kind of pulled it out around the campfire. Paul had a good chord progression and I thought it would be good to tell a little story over it. So, by about 2 o’clock in the morning, we had a six-minute song.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/From_Little_Things_Big_Things_Grow

Compare Gurindji Blues with this song, written over two decades apart. Consider how Ted Egan’s version inspired Paul Kelly in his song writing.

Brown Skin Baby (They Took Me Away)
by Bob Randall, 1964

Ya-weh, ya-weh
My brown skin baby, they take him away

As a young preacher I used to ride
a quiet pony 'round the countryside
In a native camp I'll never forget,
a young black mother, her cheeks all wet.

Ya-weh, ya-weh
My brown skin baby, they take him away

Between her sobs I heard her say,
Police been taking my baby away,
From white man was that baby I had.
Why he let them take baby away?

Ya-weh, ya-weh
My brown skin baby, they take him away

To a children's home a baby came
with new clothes on and a new name
Day and night he would always say,
Oh mommy, mommy, why they take me away?

Ya-weh, ya-weh
My brown skin baby, they take him away

The child grew up and had to go
from the mission home that he loved so
To find his mother, he tried in vain.
Upon this earth they never met again.

Ya-weh, ya-weh
My brown skin baby, they take him away

In the early 70's Bob's song, Brown Skin Baby
(They Took Me Away) became an anthem for the
Aboriginal people. He is the author of two books:
his autobiography Songman and a children's book
Tracker Tjlinji, and is the subject of the recent
documentary film Kanyini.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=5&v=v3ytJioxKzl

Uncle Bob was born around 1929 in the bush of
the Central Desert region of the Northern Territory,
Australia. He is a Tjilpi (special teaching uncle) of the
Yankunytjatjara Nation and one of the listed traditional
keepers of the great monolith, Uluru. At about age
seven, Bob was taken away from his mother and family
under government policy which forcibly removed all
half-caste (half-Aboriginal) children from their families.

He was one of thousands of Aboriginal children who
were placed in institutions throughout Australia and
came to be known as the Stolen Generation. Like
so many, he grew up alone, away from his family,
and never saw his mother again. He was taken to a
receiving home for indigenous children in Alice Springs,
NT, then later was moved to Croker Island Reservation
in Arnhem Land where he, like the other children, was
given a new identity and birth date.

No records were kept of the Aboriginal nation, family
name, or identity of the Aboriginal children who were
stolen. Young Bob was kept in government institutions
until he was twenty when he, with new wife and
baby, was banished for questioning white authorities.
He moved to Darwin and later to Adelaide, South
Australia, working, studying, and looking for his family
and country of belonging. After many years of heart-
wrenching searches, he found his roots and returned
to his mother’s country where he lives today at
Mutitjulu Community beside Uluru (Ayers Rock).

https://kanyini.org/tjilpi-bob-randall/
Took the Children Away
by Archie Roach, 1990

This story’s right, this story’s true
I would not tell lies to you
Like the promises they did not keep
And how they fenced us in like sheep.
Said to us come take our hand
Sent us off to mission land.
Taught us to read, to write and pray
Then they took the children away,
Took the children away,
The children away.
Snatched from their mother’s breast
Said this is for the best
Took them away.
The welfare and the policeman
Said you’ve got to understand
We’ll give them what you can’t give
Teach them how to really live.
Teach them how to live they said
Humiliated them instead
Taught them that and taught them this
And others taught them prejudice.
You took the children away
The children away
Breaking their mothers heart
Tearing us all apart
Took them away
One dark day on Framingham
Come and didn’t give a damn
My mother cried go get their dad
He came running, fighting mad
Mother’s tears were falling down
Dad shaped up and stood his ground.
He said ‘You touch my kids and you fight me’
And they took us from our family.
Took us away
They took us away
Snatched from our mother’s breast
Said this was for the best
Took us away.
Told us what to do and say
Told us all the white man’s ways
Then they split us up again
And gave us gifts to ease the pain
Sent us off to foster homes
As we grew up we felt alone
Cause we were acting white
Yet feeling black

Although not the first song about the enforced separation of Indigenous children from their families, Archie Roach’s 1990 song, based on his own life and experience, was released at a time when there was increasing public focus on the Stolen Generations. The significance of the song also resonated outside the Indigenous community with Roach winning ARIA Awards for Best Indigenous Release and Best New Talent in 1991. Took the Children Away received an international Human Rights Achievement Award, the first time that the award had been bestowed on a songwriter.
Mintaarraj – water lily

Kathleen Sambo, *Mintaarraj*, 2018

Sandra Edwards, *Kilipi*, 2018

Kilipi – bush banana

Kinyjirrka – Red Flowered Kurrajong

Caroline Jimmy, *Kinyjirrka*, 2018

All paintings acrylic on canvas. All photos Penny Smith.
**Resource Sheet**

**Gurindji Bush Foods**

Kathleen Sambo, *Nanyjarrnga*, 2018

Yarla vine - bush potato vine

Kunanturu - bush bean

Timmy Vincent, *Ngamanpurru*, 2018

Rachael Morris, *Kalngi*, 2018

Partiki – bush nut

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**Still in My Mind - An Artback NT Touring Exhibition**
Kalngi - Bush Tomato

The bush tomato is a popular fruit which grows in the desert areas of central and northern Australia. Bush tomatoes are an excellent source of nutrition and a much sought after food. The fruit are eaten after the wet season when they turn yellowish green. When the fruit is opened and the black seeds cleaned out, the flesh and skin are eaten. The small flowers are a bright purple.

Kilipi - Bush Banana

The fruit and leaves of the plant can be eaten. The young fruit, called ngamurrurru, are the best to eat as they are soft and crunchy. They are found in the heavy rain time of the wet season. Older fruit become hard and chewy but they can be softened by lightly roasting on hot coals. The flowers can also be eaten. The leaves are called pindi or yurtu. They are good for you and are like eating lettuce or cabbage.

Kinyjirrka - Red Flowered Kurrajong

The purnku (seeds) inside the pod are edible but not the hairs. The seeds are taken out of the large pod. They are then pounded, winnowed out or burnt to remove the husks, which have fine hairs on the skin. Finally, they are crushed, eaten raw or ground into flour to make johnnycakes. The skin of the inner pod of the fruit can be rubbed on the skin to make it lighter women's skin. When the sunsets in the mid dry season turn red and streaky it tells you that the fruit are ready to be collected.

Mintaarraj - Water Lily

The bulbous fruit of the water lily, mintaarraj, are collected by feeling at the bottom of the water. The skin is peeled off to expose the seeds, which can be eaten. The seeds are very tasty and somewhat oily. The fruit are roasted and eaten or they may be eaten uncooked. The seeds can also be dried in the sun and then ground to make flour to make mangarri (johnnycakes), which are also roasted and eaten. The stem can be eaten after the green outer skin is peeled off. The tuber in the mud may also be eaten after it is roasted.

Nanyjarrnga - Sugar Leaf

These small white scale insect coverings are collected off the back of the leaves of the jartpurru (bloodwood) during the early part of the dry season, when the kapurru (first smoke) is in the air. They are very sweet and tasty. The branches and twigs are broken off and left to dry over a palkiny (calico sheet). The lerp are knocked off the leaves with a stick and then collected and shaped into small johnnycakes or sweets. They can be stored in cake tins for weeks and months.

Ngamanpurru - Conkerberry

There is a Ngamanpurru Dreaming running through Daguragu. At Daguragu itself there is a Dreaming rock. If you cover it with white ochre and brush it with branches, then conkerberries will spring up everywhere. Similarly, conkerberry trees at a Dreaming site near lawi will produce a good crop if you hit the water and splash it everywhere. In the old days, the bushes were also used to make houses. The branches were pulled down and grass such as warra (soft spinifex) or parkali (paperbark) was put over the top to create a house.

Pujtilip - Bush Tea Leaf

The leaves of Lampalamparr or Pujtilip (Bush Tea Leaf) are boiled in water to make tea to drink. It has a strong smell and pleasant taste. The tea made from this plant has medicinal qualities and is used to treat congestion (bad cold) called kulykulya. In the past, this plant was used a lot by old people as a tea called nalija. The liquid can also be used as a wash to treat itchy sores and skin. The drink is also good for sustenance when walking a long way, especially if there is no food to be found. The tea can keep you going until food is found. It makes you strong when you are feeling weak.
KEY CONCEPTS

activism | heritage | public memory
archive | human rights | Puwarraja
colonialism | identity | self-determination
commemoration | kinship | social justice
Country | land rights | Stolen Generations
diaspora | legacy | strike action
dispossession | protest | terra nullius

QUOTES FOR DISCUSSION

Vincent Lingiari

Let us live in peace together as mates. Don’t let’s make it hard for each other... We want to live in a better way together, blackfellas and whitefellas. Don’t let us fight over anything. Let us be mates.

Still in my mind exhibition catalogue, p15

Gough Whitlam

I want to acknowledge that we Australians still have much to do to redress the injustice and oppression that has for so long been the loss of Black Australians.

Still in my mind exhibition catalogue, p14

Gurindji Letter to Parliament

Our people have lived here from time immemorial and our culture, myths, dreaming and sacred places have evolved in this land. Many of our forefathers were killed in the early days while trying to retain it. Therefore we feel that morally the land is ours and should be returned to us.

Still in my mind exhibition catalogue, p11

In August last year we walked away from the Wave Hill Cattle Station. It was said that we did this because wages were poor (only six dollars per week), living conditions fit only for dogs, and rations consisting mainly of salt beef and bread. True enough. But we walked away for other reasons as well.

Still in my mind exhibition catalogue, p12

Brenda L Croft

Accounts of colonial conflict sparked by the arrival of cattleman in the late 1880s are steeped in blood – massacre narratives, festering wounds, carved like scarification marks into the collective corporeal Gurindji soul.

Still in my mind exhibition catalogue, p27

Ultimately, I want to dispel the fear of difference that’s still so inherent in our society, as this is a shared history that affects all of us.

Brenda L Croft in Fran Strachan, Love and Memory, Uniken, UNSW Magazine, Spring 2015

Larissa Behrendt

Croft uses the language of visual imagery for a contemporary and confronting conversation through a creative practice that is deeply rooted in her heritage and culture.

Subalter/N/ative dreams exhibition catalogue, Stills Gallery, 2016
RESOURCE SHEET

Gurindji, Bilinarra, Nyininy, Mudburra, Malgnin, Ngarinman and associated peoples have been traditional custodians of the Victoria River region for over 50,000 years.

1854
Augustus Charles Gregory leads first non-Indigenous exploration through the Victoria River region, followed by Alexander Forrest in 1879.

1883
The original Wave Hill Station is established at Wave Hill by Nathaniel Buchanan and the Gordon Brothers.

1901
Australia becomes a federation. Indigenous peoples are excluded from the constitution.

1911
The Northern Territory Aboriginals Ordinance (Cth) gives the Chief Protector power to assume custody of any Aboriginal or ‘half-caste’ if it is deemed ‘necessary’ or ‘desirable’.

1913
The Kahlin Compound is established in Darwin segregating Aboriginal people from the rest of the population of the town and controlling their lives.

1914
British pastoral company Vesteys buy Wave Hill Station from Buchanan Family. In 1954 Vesteys took out the first pastoral development lease for its Wave Hill property.¹

1914
The Bungalow, established in 1914, became an official institution in 1915. Often referred to as the Alice Springs Half-caste Institution or Half-caste Home, the Bungalow closed in 1942.

1924
The original Wave Hill Station at Malyalyimalyalyi and Lipanangku was washed away in a flood. The new station was established at Jinparrak, occupied until after the 1966 walk-off.

1928
Coniston Massacre
On 7 August 1928, Fred Books, a white dingo trapper, was found murdered on Coniston Station in central Australia. He was killed for ‘breaching Aboriginal marriage law’, according to Aboriginal accounts of the time. Over a period of months at different sites, at least 60 Aboriginal people were shot and killed in reprisals conducted by non-Indigenous people, which collectively became known as the Coniston Massacre, the last known officially sanctioned massacre of Indigenous Australians. No charges were laid against the reprisal party. A Board of Enquiry set up to investigate the killings ruled the party had ‘acted in self-defence’.² Gurindji oral histories document massacres occurring during the establishment of Wave Hill and Limbunya Stations.³

1937
The first Commonwealth/State conference on ‘native welfare’ adopts assimilation as the national policy.

1939
The Communist Party of Australia, formed in 1920, was the first Australian political party to develop policy regarding Aboriginal Australians. The Party provided vital support for the 1946 Pilbara strike and the Gurindji Walk-Off from Wave Hill.⁴

1939
Kahlin Compound closes after all residents were moved to the new Bagot Aboriginal Reserve in 1938.
1944–46
Social anthropologists Ronald and Catherine Berndt investigated labour conditions on Vestey-owned cattle stations in the Northern Territory. The report exposes the conditions faced by Aboriginal workers. Despite legislation, Aboriginal children under 12 are working illegally, accommodation and rations are inadequate, there is sexual abuse of Aboriginal women, and prostitution for rations and clothing takes place. No sanitation or rubbish removal facilities are provided, nor is there safe drinking water.

1946
Retta Dixon Home is established at Bagot Road Aboriginal Reserve in 1946 by the Aborigines Inland Mission (AIM). RDH moved to new cottage style accommodation on the reserve in 1962, where it operated until 1982.

1950s
Aboriginal Scholarships, known as Abschol, begins as a committee of the National Union of Australian University Students.

1953
Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory are made wards of the state.

1956
The Wards Employment Regulations set out a scale of wages, rations and conditions applicable to wards employed in various industries. The ward rates are up to 50 per cent lower than those of non-Aboriginal people employed in similar occupations and some companies even refuse to pay their Aboriginal labourers anything. Vestey Brothers refuse to pay their Aboriginal workers wages.

1961
The Northern Territory Council for Aboriginal Rights (NTCAR) is formed by George and Moira Gibbs, and Brian Manning in Darwin in late 1961. The Darwin waterside workers had maintained their strong support for Aboriginal people’s rights that began in the 1920s. Aboriginal members included Jacob and Philip Roberts, Dexter Daniels and Robert Tudawali with NTCAR played a central organising role in supporting the Gurindji walk-off in 1966.

1965
The North Australian Workers Union, under pressure from the Northern Territory Council for Aboriginal Rights, applies to the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission to delete references in the Northern Territory’s pastoral award that discriminate against Aboriginal workers. Pastoralists meet this proposal with stiff opposition and argue that any increase in wages should be gradual as this would help Aboriginal people to ‘adjust’.

1966
On 22–23 August Gurindji/ Malngin elder, Vincent Lingiari, leads 200 plus stockmen and their families off Wave Hill Station. The Wave Hill Walk-Off segued from a strike for equal wages to a nine-year fight for their traditional homelands, sparking the national land rights movement.

1967
A national referendum is held to amend the Constitution. The 90.77% YES vote confers power on the Commonwealth to make laws for Aboriginal people.

1968
Author and CPA member Frank Hardy’s book The unlucky Australians is published in 1968.

1969
By 1969, all states have repealed the legislation allowing for the removal of Aboriginal children under the policy of ‘protection’. In the following years, Aboriginal and Islander Child Care agencies are set up to contest removal applications and provide alternatives to the removal of Indigenous children from their families.

1970
Frank Hardy speaks at the NSW Teachers Federation, where the Save the Gurindji campaign is launched. The campaigners lead a protest march from Redfern to Martin Place, with Paul Coe, Dexter Daniels, Sol Bellear and Brian Aarons, among others.
1972
The Aboriginal Tent Embassy is established opposite Parliament House in Canberra by four young Indigenous activists, Michael Anderson, Billy Craigie, Bertie Williams and Tony Koorey, representing Indigenous peoples being treated as ‘aliens in their own land’. The Tent Embassy quickly gained thousands of Indigenous and non-Indigenous supporters and had violent clashes against the police.10

1972
The Labor Party comes to power. Prime Minister Gough Whitlam announces in his election policy speech that his government will “establish once and for all Aborigines’ rights to land”. This changes the political landscape.

1973 (March)
The original Wave Hill lease is surrendered and two new leases are issued: one to the traditional owners through their Murramulla Gurindji Company and another to Vestey Brothers.

1975
Prime Minister Gough Whitlam goes to Daguragu and ceremonially pours a portion of Gurindji land into Vincent Lingiari’s hand with the words, “Vincent Lingiari, I solemnly hand to you these deeds as proof, in Australian law, that these lands belong to the Gurindji people”.

1976
The Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act is passed, the first legislation allowing for a claim of land title if the Indigenous claimants can provide evidence of their traditional relationship to the land.

1983
The Aboriginal Child Placement Principal is introduced in the Northern Territory, aiming to ensure that Indigenous children are placed with Indigenous families when adoption or fostering is necessary.

1988
On 26 January, Australia’s bicentennial, 60,000 plus people – Indigenous and non-Indigenous – march through Sydney from Redfern to Hyde Park with banners proclaiming, ‘Our land, our life’ and ‘White Australia has a Black History’, among other statements of social justice and land rights.

1997
The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) releases ‘Bringing Them Home’ its report on the findings of the ‘National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families to the Commonwealth Government’. The report made 54 recommendations, including a formal government apology, monetary compensation and other reparations to members of the Stolen Generations. The parliaments and governments of all states and the ACT issue apologies to the Stolen Generations.

1997

1997
Alec Kruger and others v. The Commonwealth of Australia. Eight inhabitants of the Northern Territory (Australia) who had been taken from their families between 1925 and 1944 under the Aboriginals Ordinance of 1918 (which allowed the forced removal of children of mixed Aboriginal descent), and a mother, Rose Napangardi McClary, whose child had been taken from her under the same law, sought a declaration that the Ordinance was unconstitutional. They instituted legal proceedings in 1995. In July 1997, the High Court rejected all their arguments and held that the Ordinance was not unconstitutional.11 Later cases were also unsuccessful until 2017.
2000
Over 250,000 people participate in the Corroboree 2000 Sorry Walk across Sydney Harbour Bridge on 28 May. Similar walks are held in the other State and Territory capitals.

2007
Liberal government initiates and Labor government implements the Northern Territory Intervention (NTER), allegedly to ‘protect Aboriginal children’ from sexual abuse. Without consultation Aboriginal peoples’ lives were heavily regulated. Despite the allegations of rampant child sexual abuse no prosecutions have been brought down in the subsequent decade. Despite widespread protests the intervention was extended until 2022.

2007
The Wave Hill Walk-Off Route placed on national heritage register.

2008
Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, on behalf of the Australian Parliament, makes a historic national apology to the Stolen Generations. The Senate rejects the Stolen Generation Compensation Bill, which calls for ex gratia payments to be made to the Stolen Generations of Aboriginal children.

2016
On 28 July the Royal Commission into the Child Protection and Youth Detention Systems of the Northern Territory is established, following the intense public outcry at the abuse of Indigenous children in the Don Dale Youth Detention Centre at Berrimah, Darwin, broadcast on Four Corners: ‘Australia’s Shame’ ABC-TV on 25 July.

2016
On 23 August the 50th anniversary of the Gurindji Walk-Off is held.

Further reading
1 http://archivescollection.anu.edu.au/index.php/wave-hill-station
4 http://indigenousrights.net.au/organisations_5
6 http://indigenousrights.net.au/organisations/pagination/northern_territory_council_for_aboriginal_rights
9 Also spelt as Coorey, Coorie.