

BIOGRAPHY

Djambawa Marawili AM

Arnhem Land

Art Centre: Buku-Larrnggay Mulka

Baniyala Homeland Studio, Blue Mud Bay

Languages Spoken:

Yolngu Matha, Dhuwala, Dhuwaya, Djambarrpuy, Kriol Gumatj, Anindilyakwa, Nunggubuyo and English

Biography:

As well as being the Chair of Arnhem, Northern and Kimberley Artists (ANKA) since 1998, Djambawa Marawili AM (b.1953) has held numerous other positions, including Chairperson of Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre, Chairperson of Laynhapuy Homelands, Member of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board of the Australia Council and Member of the Northern Land Council board. From 2014 – 2019 Djambawa has sat on the Prime Ministers Indigenous Advisory Council. As ceremonial leader of the Madarrpa clan of North East Arnhem Land, Djambawa uses his art to communicate his wider socio-political aims - drawing on the strong foundations of Yolngu culture to educate, inspire and seek justice for his people.

Through various advocacy, administrative and educative roles, Djambawa acts as an interface between Yolngu and the wider non-Indigenous population of Australia. He was a participant in the production of the Barunga Statement (1988), which led to Bob Hawke's promise of a treaty between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, the Royal Commission into Black Deaths in Custody (established in 1989) and the formation of ATSIC in 1990.

As he has consistently throughout his life, Djambawa uses painting to show the sacred designs that embody his right to speak for the land and sea. He was instrumental in the initiation of the *Saltwater: Yirrkala Bark Paintings of Sea Country* exhibition, which toured nationally from 1999 – 2001 and played a central role in the landmark Blue Mud Bay 'sea rights' case. Djambawa coordinated the 2004 Sea Rights claim in the Federal Court which eventuated in the High Court's determination that Yolngu did indeed own the land between high and low water mark (2008 Blue Mud Bay case).

Djambawa's art work is held in many important public and private collections including Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow, Scotland; JW Kluge Collection, Virginia, USA; President of India Art Collection; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth; National Maritime Museum, Sydney; Northern Territory Supreme Court, Darwin; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Holmes a Court Collection and Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane.

Djambawa has received a number of awards as an artist including the 2019 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award. He opened the Tarnanthi Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Festival at the Art Gallery of South Australia in 2019 and is lead curator for Madayin: Eight Decades of Aboriginal Bark Painting from Yirrkala, Australia the first major exhibition of bark painting to travel outside Australia, touring North America from 2021.

Governance & Further Qualifications:

Awarded a Member (AM) in the General Division of the Order of Australia (2010)

ANKA Chairperson (1998-)

Buku-Larrnggay Mulka, Yirrkala, Chairperson (1994–2000) (2016-2018)

Buku-Larrnggay Mulka, Yirrkala, Board Members (2001-2016)

Australia Council, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board (2008–2009)

Laynhupuy Homelands Committee, Chairperson (1995–1997) (2018)

Nambara Homelands School, Board Member (2001-)

Baniyala Homeland Art Studio, Founder

Northern Land Council, Councilor (1995-1997)

YBE Enterprises, Board Member

Yilpara - Laynhupuy Homelands, CDEP Supervisor

Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre, Certificate II in Indigenous Leadership (2009)

Australia Council *Financial Skills for Arts Organisations* workshop (2009)

ORIC Governance Training for ANKA Directors (2008-4 Days) & (2013-2 Days)

Australia Council, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Arts Fellowship (2003)