



# PILLARS OF REMEMBRANCE

Contemporary memorial poles from Yirrkala

20 MARCH – 25 APRIL 2025

# PILLARS OF REMEMBRANCE

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Contemporary memorial  
poles from Yirrkala

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Detail of *larrakitj* at *The Inside World: Contemporary Aboriginal Australian Memorial Poles from the Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection* exhibition, Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, 9 February – 23 June 2019

## INTRODUCTION

Few forms in global contemporary art are as visually striking and oddly familiar as *larrakitj* (memorial poles) from Australia's north. Hollow, free-standing and intricately decorated, *larrakitj* arise from the human desire to shape the natural landscape into a symbolic marker, conveying a message to those who encounter it.

Historically, *larrakitj* were ossuaries, the final resting place for the bones of the dead. They were decorated with clan designs to identify and protect the spirit of the deceased, then erected at a specific location. Not everyone would be granted this honour: often it was restricted to high-ranking or ritually powerful members of a clan.

*Larrakitj* is one of the Yolŋu terms for these objects; other nearby cultural groups refer to them as *lorrkon*. These objects have gone by a range of descriptors, most commonly 'hollow-log coffins', or 'burial poles'. The term 'memorial poles' acknowledges their movement beyond the confines of the mortuary process, and into a broader role in both Aboriginal society and the contemporary art world.

With the arrival of missionaries in Arnhem Land in the 1920s and 1930s, the use of *larrakitj* slowly diminished. As a consequence of the developing market for Aboriginal art, there was a resurgence in the production of these objects in the late 1970s and 1980s. At the 1988 Sydney Biennale, a collection of two hundred memorial poles, one for each year of British occupation, was produced and exhibited by the artists of Ramingining. As curator Henry Skerritt would suggest, 'in the context of the Biennale, *The Aboriginal Memorial 1987–88* resonated as a work of installation art' and could therefore be considered as contemporary art.

This exhibition brings together *larrakitj* created by some of north-east Arnhem Land's most consequential past and contemporary artists. In recent years, each of these artists has developed their own innovative approach to the crafting and decoration of *larrakitj*. Djambawa Marawili AM evolved the use of his *miny'tji* (clan designs) to run the entire length of the log, Gunybi Gunumbar incorporated natural galls and burls of the tree, while Wukun Wanambi brought conceptual thinking to his installations of *larrakitj*. Gulumbu Yunupingu and Nongirrŋa Marawili's use of adapted iconography and design shifted the trajectory of Yolŋu art making, while

Nyapanyapa Yunupingu's mark making challenged assumptions of what Australian First Nations art could be.

Historically, the favoured form for *larrakitj* was straight and highly cylindrical; contemporary *larrakitj* are allowed to retain the form of the trees they come from, providing a gestural surface for artists to work upon. As Professor Howard Morphy explains: 'Yolŋu artists have always been attuned to the properties of the surface form of the natural "canvas", fitting the designs to the shape of the human body, the contours of a sheet of bark, or the structure of a woven bag.' Harvested from small forests, stringybark trees that have been hollowed out by termites are first identified and felled with an axe. The logs are then transported to the art centre, where they are stripped of their bark and sanded. These versatile trees are the same type that provide *nuwayak*, bark that is used for painting upon, and *yidaki* (*didjeridu*).

The *larrakitj* in this exhibition were the backbone of a groundbreaking exhibition, *The Inside World: Contemporary Aboriginal Australian Memorial Poles from the Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection*, that toured to four venues across North America between February 2019 and January 2021. This was the first opportunity for many outside of Australia to encounter memorial poles from Arnhem Land. The exhibition received national coverage and is the genesis of the increasing interest in *larrakitj* outside of Australia. Importantly, this exhibition also inspired a revival of *larrakitj* production at surrounding communities including Milingimbi.

D'Lan Contemporary is honoured to present this remarkable exhibition on behalf of Dennis Scholl AM and Debra Scholl AM of Miami Beach. Their extraordinary collection is a testament to their passion for Australian First Nations art. This exhibition not only highlights the beauty inherent in *larrakitj*; it also offers a powerful opportunity to foster a deeper appreciation of the cultural lives and artistic practices of Yolŋu, who continue to shape the global contemporary art landscape.

### LUKE SCHOLES

Director, D'Lan Contemporary

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Reference: Henry F. Skerritt (ed.), *The Inside World: Contemporary Aboriginal Australian Memorial Poles*, DelMonico Books-Prestel, Munich; New York, 2019



Ramingining artists (artist)  
Djon Mundine (conceptual curator)  
Djon Mundine (artist)  
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*The Aboriginal Memorial* 1987–88  
natural earth pigments and  
binder on eucalyptus wood  
height (irreg) 128.7 inches (h)

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Purchased with the assistance of funds  
from National Gallery admission charges  
and commissioned in 1987

**DJAMBAWA MARAWILI AM**

born 1953  
Maḍarrpa language

*Dhakandjali* 2016  
earth pigments on stringybark  
119.7 inches (304 cm)

**PROVENANCE**

The Artist, created at Yirrkala, Northern Territory Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre, Yirrkala, Northern Territory, cat. no. 4872A Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection, Miami Beach, Florida, acquired from the above

**LITERATURE**

Henry F. Skerritt (ed.), *The Inside World: Contemporary Aboriginal Australian Memorial Poles*, DelMonico Books-Prestel, Munich; New York, 2019, p. 118 (illus.)

**EXHIBITED**

*The Inside World: Contemporary Aboriginal Australian Memorial Poles*, Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, 9 February – 23 June 2019; Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Detroit, 18 July – 29 December 2019; Fralin Museum of Art, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 24 January – 28 June 2020; Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum, Florida International University, Miami, 11 July 2020 – 9 January 2021

USD 30,000

Djambawa Marawili is a distinguished leader of the Maḍarrpa clan. He is a caretaker for the spiritual well-being of his own and other related clans, and is an activist and administrator in the interface between ṅāpaki (non-Yolṅu) and Yolṅu of north-east Arnhem Land. Over many decades Djambawa has had a profound impact on the political and cultural life of Australia, fighting for the rights of Yolṅu as the custodians of the land and sea of north-east Arnhem Land.

In September 2024, Djambawa led a delegation of distinguished Yolṅu leaders to New York City for the opening of *Maḍayin: Eight Decades of Aboriginal Australian Bark Painting from Yirrkala* at the Asia Society. Over the period of a week, in an endless succession of engagements, Djambawa and others generously spoke, danced and sung their way into the hearts and minds of foreign diplomats, ambassadors, ex-prime ministers and art connoisseurs. It was a proud moment, not only for Buku-Larrngay and the Yolṅu community, but for Australia.

These three elegant ḷarrakitj, named Dhakandjali or Dhupundji, have been decorated with the miny'tji

(clan designs) of the Maḍarrpa saltwater clan estate of Yathikpa. Here the ancestral figure Baru transformed from human form into a crocodile, when he entered the salt water carrying fire. The title given to these ḷarrakitj, Dhakandjali, refers to the harpoon carried by two ancestral Maḍarrpa clan hunters, Yikuwaṅa and Nurruguyamirri. The hunters encountered a dugong in turbulent and dangerous waters associated with fire, and hurled the harpoon towards the dugong, causing the water to boil from the sacred fires beneath the water. The canoe capsized, drowning and burning the ancestral hunters and their canoe. This ḷarrakitj is a manifestation of Dhakandjali the harpoon and is itself depicted on the pole in this form.

The span of these designs – incorporating the entire length of the pole – was a development that Djambawa pioneered. Prior to this, these designs were often compartmentalised in panel-like forms proportionate to the human chest. The external bark at the top of one of these poles honours a tradition of Maḍarrpa origins, the significance of which cannot be disclosed.



**DJAMBAWA MARAWILI AM**

born 1953  
Maḡarrpa language

*Dhakandjali* 2016  
earth pigments on stringybark  
98.4 inches (250 cm)

**PROVENANCE**

The Artist, created at Yirrkala,  
Northern Territory  
Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre, Yirrkala,  
Northern Territory, cat. no. 4922C  
Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection,  
Miami Beach, Florida, acquired from  
the above

**LITERATURE**

Henry F. Skerritt (ed.), *The Inside  
World: Contemporary Aboriginal  
Australian Memorial Poles*,  
DelMonico Books-Prestel, Munich;  
New York, 2019, p. 118 (illus.)

**EXHIBITED**

*The Inside World: Contemporary  
Aboriginal Australian Memorial  
Poles*, Nevada Museum of Art,  
Reno, 9 February – 23 June 2019;  
Charles H. Wright Museum of  
African American History, Detroit,  
18 July – 29 December 2019; Fralin  
Museum of Art, University of Virginia,  
Charlottesville, 24 January –  
28 June 2020; Patricia and  
Phillip Frost Art Museum, Florida  
International University, Miami,  
11 July 2020 – 9 January 2021

USD 30,000



detail



PILLARS OF REMEMBRANCE

**DJAMBAWA MARAWILI AM**

born 1953  
Maḡarrpa language

*Dhakandjali* 2016  
earth pigments on stringybark  
102.6 inches (260.7 cm)

**PROVENANCE**

The Artist, created at Yirrkala,  
Northern Territory  
Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre, Yirrkala,  
Northern Territory, cat. no. 4922D  
Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection,  
Miami Beach, Florida, acquired from  
the above

**LITERATURE**

Henry F. Skerritt (ed.), *The Inside  
World: Contemporary Aboriginal  
Australian Memorial Poles*,  
DelMonico Books-Prestel, Munich;  
New York, 2019, p. 118 (illus.)

**EXHIBITED**

*The Inside World: Contemporary  
Aboriginal Australian Memorial  
Poles*, Nevada Museum of Art,  
Reno, 9 February – 23 June 2019;  
Charles H. Wright Museum of  
African American History, Detroit,  
18 July – 29 December 2019; Fralin  
Museum of Art, University of Virginia,  
Charlottesville, 24 January – 28 June  
2020; Patricia and Phillip Frost  
Art Museum, Florida International  
University, Miami, 11 July 2020 –  
9 January 2021

USD 30,000



detail



**GUNYBI GANAMBARR**

born 1973  
Yolŋu language

*Buyku* 2016  
earth pigments on stringybark  
109 inches (277 cm)

**PROVENANCE**

The Artist, created at Gängän,  
Northern Territory  
Buku-Larrŋgay Mulka Centre, Yirrkala,  
Northern Territory, cat. no. 1455-16  
Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection,  
Miami Beach, Florida, acquired from  
the above

**LITERATURE**

Henry F. Skerritt (ed.), *The Inside  
World: Contemporary Aboriginal  
Australian Memorial Poles*,  
DelMonico Books-Prestel, Munich;  
New York, 2019, p. 116 (illus.)

**EXHIBITED**

*The Inside World: Contemporary  
Aboriginal Australian Memorial  
Poles*, Nevada Museum of Art,  
Reno, 9 February – 23 June 2019;  
Charles H. Wright Museum of  
African American History, Detroit,  
18 July – 29 December 2019; Fralin  
Museum of Art, University of Virginia,  
Charlottesville, 24 January – 28 June  
2020; Patricia and Phillip Frost  
Art Museum, Florida International  
University, Miami, 11 July 2020 –  
9 January 2021

USD 40,000

In September 2024, D’Lan Contemporary, New York hosted *Gapu-Budap – Crossing the Water*, Gunybi’s first solo exhibition in the United States. The near sell-out exhibition reflected the innovative vision and skill of one of Buku-Larrŋgay Art Centre’s most important and groundbreaking artists.

Though now a relatively common practice among Yolŋu artists, the incorporation of natural galls and burls of eucalyptus trees into decorated larrakitj was pioneered by Gunybi. Never one to work within the parameters of ‘traditional’ art practice for long, Gunybi seeks to challenge the status quo – and, consequently, inspires the creativity of others around him.

The natural form that Gunybi has allowed these larrakitj to retain relates to his process of observing an object and ‘finding the shape’. Gunybi’s initial awareness of such creative instincts arose when hunting on Country and encountering a uniquely shaped tree.

I remember the first time. I went hunting. And I saw that botj [ironwood] tree standing there ... And I saw that tree. Half burnt. Half alive. ‘Way! Hey! Can I make something from this botj? Am I going to make something from it?’ And I talked to myself, nha bayin [like that]. ‘OK! Ma! Go for it! Do that!’ Shape it up, grinder. Get the machine, sander [claps his hands]. Electric. Go! Come on! Straight away! Djämanha. Work it. Shapingya. Finding the shape.<sup>1</sup>

MILŊURR ŊAYMIL identifies the reservoirs of the Ŋaymil/Datiwuy clan. In an area on Ŋaymil Country, there is a milŋurr (freshwater spring) with special qualities called Balawurru. Gudurrku (Brolga) dance

in the milŋurr, which feeds into a nearby lagoon, Djanda, where the sacred goanna swims. The actions of both produce ripples on the surface of the water, which is covered by the totemic water plant Darra.<sup>2</sup>

GARRAPARA AND GUNYURU refers to a coastal area in the Blue Mud Bay on the eastern coast of Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory. Garrapara is a sacred burial area for the Dhalwaŋu clan and is also where disputes were formally settled by Makarrata (treaty or agreement-making). According to Dhalwaŋu song, two ancestral hunters drowned in the bay, and their canoe and paddles washed ashore. In this work, Gunybi has shown the Yirritja salt water (Muŋurru) through wavy designs. According to the artist, this design also shows the choppy water near Garrapara in the windy dry season.

The use of sand on this sculpture may refer to the significance of Garrapara for the Dhalwaŋu Ŋiŋapuŋapu, a mortuary sand sculpture used in ceremony. This sand is likely to have been collected at Garrapara, Country belonging to Gunybi’s wife, Lamanjirra Marawili.

BUYKU features the miny’tji (clan design) of the Dhalwaŋu clan belonging to the Yirritja moiety. The diamond design reflects the patterning of the water streaming from the body of ancestral creator being Barama as he emerged from the waters at Gängay with weed hanging from his arms.

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1. Will Stubbs, ‘Gunybi Ganambarr’, originally published in *Artist Profile*, Issue 45, 2018. Accessed online on 20 January 2025; <https://artistprofile.com.au/gunybi-ganambarr/>  
2. From documentation supplied by Buku-Larrŋgay Mulka Centre.



**GUNYBI GANAMBARR**

born 1973  
Yolŋu language

*Garrapara and Gunyuru* 2016  
earth pigments on stringybark  
110.4 inches (280.3 cm)

**PROVENANCE**

The Artist, created at Gängän,  
Northern Territory  
Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre, Yirrkala,  
Northern Territory, cat. no. 48971  
Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection,  
Miami Beach, Florida, acquired from  
the above

**LITERATURE**

Henry F. Skerritt (ed.), *The Inside  
World: Contemporary Aboriginal  
Australian Memorial Poles*,  
DelMonico Books-Prestel, Munich;  
New York, 2019, p. 116 (illus.)

**EXHIBITED**

*The Inside World: Contemporary  
Aboriginal Australian Memorial  
Poles*, Nevada Museum of Art,  
Reno, 9 February – 23 June 2019;  
Charles H. Wright Museum of  
African American History, Detroit,  
18 July – 29 December 2019;  
Fralin Museum of Art, University of  
Virginia, Charlottesville, 24 January  
– 28 June 2020; Patricia and  
Phillip Frost Art Museum, Florida  
International University, Miami,  
11 July 2020 – 9 January 2021

USD 40,000



detail



**GUNYBI GANAMBARR**

born 1973  
Yolŋu language

*Milŋurr Njaymil* 2016  
earth pigments on stringybark  
116.1 inches (295 cm)

**PROVENANCE**

The Artist, created at Gängän,  
Northern Territory  
Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre, Yirrkala,  
Northern Territory, cat. no. 4967C  
Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection,  
Miami Beach, Florida, acquired from  
the above

**LITERATURE**

Henry F. Skerritt (ed.), *The Inside  
World: Contemporary Aboriginal  
Australian Memorial Poles*,  
DelMonico Books-Prestel, Munich;  
New York, 2019, p. 116 (illus.)

**EXHIBITED**

*The Inside World: Contemporary  
Aboriginal Australian Memorial  
Poles*, Nevada Museum of Art,  
Reno, 9 February – 23 June 2019;  
Charles H. Wright Museum of  
African American History, Detroit,  
18 July – 29 December 2019;  
Fralin Museum of Art, University of  
Virginia, Charlottesville, 24 January  
– 28 June 2020; Patricia and  
Phillip Frost Art Museum, Florida  
International University, Miami,  
11 July 2020 – 9 January 2021

USD 40,000



detail



PILLARS OF REMEMBRANCE

**WUKUN WAŃAMBI**

1962 – 2022  
Yolŋu language

*Bamurrŋu* 2016  
earth pigments on stringybark  
106.3 inches (270 cm) tallest

**PROVENANCE**

The Artist, created at Yirrkala, Northern Territory  
Buku-Larrŋgay Mulka Centre, Yirrkala, Northern Territory  
Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection, Miami Beach, Florida, acquired from the above

**LITERATURE**

Henry F. Skerritt (ed.), *The Inside World: Contemporary Aboriginal Australian Memorial Poles*, DelMonico Books-Prestel, Munich; New York, 2019, p. 135 (illus.)

**EXHIBITED**

*The Inside World: Contemporary Aboriginal Australian Memorial Poles*, Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, 9 February – 23 June 2019; Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Detroit, 18 July – 29 December 2019; Fralin Museum of Art, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 24 January – 28 June 2020; Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum, Florida International University, Miami, 11 July 2020 – 9 January 2021

USD 100,000

Prior to Wukun's untimely passing in 2022, he was one of the lead curators of the acclaimed exhibition *Maḏayin: Eight Decades of Aboriginal Australian Bark Painting from Yirrkala*. He is remembered as an innovative multi-disciplinary artist whose artistic and intellectual contribution to Buku-Larrŋgay cannot be overstated.

Wukun's unique installation of seven poles is a result of his interest in the education of outsiders about Yolŋu art and culture and its interpretation. This assemblage of poles reveals the varying stages of transformation of the trunk of gaḏay'ka, or stringybark tree, into a decorated ḷarrakitj. One of the poles remains in its original form as a bark-covered trunk; others have been stripped and sanded. Two have been prepared with gapan (white ochre), ready to be decorated. The pinnacle ḷarrakitj retains its natural form and has been decorated with the image of schooling wawurritjpal (sea mullet) at Bamurrŋu, a sacred rock in the middle of Trial Bay.

Wukun described his specific relationship to ḷarrakitj in his essay that accompanied the travelling exhibition of these poles throughout North America: *The Inside World – Contemporary Aboriginal Australian Memorial Poles*:

The ḷarrakitj is made from a Waŋambi tree that we call gaḏay'ka. I have authority over that tree: the stringybark tree (*Eucalyptus tetradonta*). Whatever is painted on a ḷarrakitj, the skin and the flesh

belongs to the Waŋambi people. And when people chop it every day, it reminds me they are chopping up pieces of me. But the backbone remains, and the symbolism of that is maintained. Our flesh and bone is still there: because that is attached. Gaḏay'ka is very, very important. When we chop that gaḏay'ka, we sing that gaḏay'ka. We sing that stringybark: we sing all the bits and pieces. And every little piece represents Marrakulu people – like our flesh and our bones.<sup>1</sup>

Given this relationship, his desire to exhibit a series of poles is revealed to be a very personal one.

ḷarrakitj need their family because it gives them strength and power. One ḷarrakitj on its own is like nothing – it doesn't mean anything – but if you put three or four together in one group it is like a family: they have the strength of the family ties from that area. When we see that gaḏay'ka (stringybark tree) family, it makes us happy – because there is a family. When you look at the trees, all together, rotating around each other, that is how it is like with me.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Wukun Waŋambi, in Henry F. Skerritt (ed.), *The Inside World: Contemporary Aboriginal Australian Memorial Poles*, DelMonico Books-Prestel, Munich; New York, 2019, p. 108.
  2. Wukun Waŋambi, in Henry F. Skerritt (ed.), *The Inside World*, p. 106.





**NONGIRRŃA MARAWILI**

c. 1939 – 2023  
YolŃu language

*Yurr'yun* 2015  
earth pigments on stringybark  
107.1 inches (272 cm)

**PROVENANCE**

The Artist, created at Yirrkala,  
Northern Territory  
Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre, Yirrkala,  
Northern Territory, cat. no. 4820X  
Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection,  
Miami Beach, Florida, acquired from  
the above

**LITERATURE**

Henry F. Skerritt (ed.), *The Inside  
World: Contemporary Aboriginal  
Australian Memorial Poles*,  
DelMonico Books-Prestel, Munich;  
New York, 2019, p. 121 (illus.)

**EXHIBITED**

*The Inside World: Contemporary  
Aboriginal Australian Memorial  
Poles*, Nevada Museum of Art,  
Reno, 9 February – 23 June 2019;  
Charles H. Wright Museum of  
African American History, Detroit,  
18 July – 29 December 2019;  
Fralin Museum of Art, University of  
Virginia, Charlottesville, 24 January  
– 28 June 2020; Patricia and  
Phillip Frost Art Museum, Florida  
International University, Miami,  
11 July 2020 – 9 January 2021

USD 50,000

Over the past decade, few Australian artists have captured the zeitgeist more than NongirrŃa Marawili. Following a series of successful solo exhibitions, and the acquisition of major works by cultural institutions across Australia and the United States, NongirrŃa's brutalist interpretations of YolŃu visual forms became highly sought after.

Prior to her passing in 2023, NongirrŃa was part of a group of women painting at Yirrkala who collectively shifted the YolŃu aesthetic. She, like other women, refrained from painting miny'tji (clan designs), knowing that others might consider this to be a transgression upon the domain of male relatives. Instead NongirrŃa employed the duality of these designs and their meanings to create paintings unencumbered by cultural strictures. This enabled her to experiment in ways previously unseen – thereby creating a new category of YolŃu painting that demanded its own interpretation.

NongirrŃa's father, Mundukul Marawili (c. 1890 – c. 1950), was a revered leader of the Maḏarrpa clan. His name, Mundukul, is shared with an ancestral lightning snake that dwells in the waters of Blue Mud Bay at Baraltja. When the lightning snake, Mundukul, encounters the mixing of fresh water and salt water at Baraltja, it excitedly spits lightning into the clouds.

Some of the designs on NongirrŃa's larrakitj depict the rock at Baraltja and Mundukul's lightning across the sky. Historically, this lightning has been represented in the form of diamond shapes, which also serve as the Maḏarrpa clan's symbol for salt water. These shapes mirror the way the salt water splashes against the rocks. The word Yurr'yunna describes the powerful waves that crash over the rock, sending spray high into the sky.



**NONGIRRŊA MARAWILI**

c. 1939 – 2023  
Yolŋu language

*Yurr'yun* 2015  
earth pigments on stringybark  
105.9 inches (269 cm)

**PROVENANCE**

The Artist, created at Yirrkala,  
Northern Territory  
Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre, Yirrkala,  
Northern Territory, cat. no. 4795R  
Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection,  
Miami Beach, Florida, acquired from  
the above

**LITERATURE**

Henry F. Skerritt (ed.), *The Inside  
World: Contemporary Aboriginal  
Australian Memorial Poles*,  
DelMonico Books-Prestel, Munich;  
New York, 2019, p. 121 (illus.)

**EXHIBITED**

*The Inside World: Contemporary  
Aboriginal Australian Memorial  
Poles*, Nevada Museum of Art,  
Reno, 9 February – 23 June 2019;  
Charles H. Wright Museum of  
African American History, Detroit,  
18 July – 29 December 2019;  
Fralin Museum of Art, University of  
Virginia, Charlottesville, 24 January  
– 28 June 2020; Patricia and  
Phillip Frost Art Museum, Florida  
International University, Miami,  
11 July 2020 – 9 January 2021

USD 50,000



detail



PILLARS OF REMEMBRANCE

**NONGIRRŊA MARAWILI**

c. 1939 – 2023  
Yolŋu language

*Yurr'yun* 2015  
earth pigments on stringybark  
105.9 inches (269 cm)

**PROVENANCE**

The Artist, created at Yirrkala,  
Northern Territory  
Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre, Yirrkala,  
Northern Territory, cat. no. 4850L  
Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection,  
Miami Beach, Florida, acquired from  
the above

**LITERATURE**

Henry F. Skerritt (ed.), *The Inside  
World: Contemporary Aboriginal  
Australian Memorial Poles*,  
DelMonico Books-Prestel, Munich;  
New York, 2019, p. 121 (illus.)

**EXHIBITED**

*The Inside World: Contemporary  
Aboriginal Australian Memorial  
Poles*, Nevada Museum of Art,  
Reno, 9 February – 23 June 2019;  
Charles H. Wright Museum of  
African American History, Detroit,  
18 July – 29 December 2019;  
Fralin Museum of Art, University of  
Virginia, Charlottesville, 24 January  
– 28 June 2020; Patricia and  
Phillip Frost Art Museum, Florida  
International University, Miami,  
11 July 2020 – 9 January 2021

USD 50,000



detail



**GULUMBU YUNUPIŊU**

c. 1943 – 2012  
Gumatj language

*Garak* 2011

earth pigments on stringybark  
71.7 inches (182 cm)

**PROVENANCE**

The Artist, created at Yirrkala, Northern Territory  
Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre, Yirrkala, Northern Territory, cat. no. 4108C  
Harvey Art Projects, Sun Valley, Idaho  
Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection, Miami Beach, Florida, acquired from the above in 2015

**LITERATURE**

Henry F. Skerritt (ed.), *The Inside World: Contemporary Aboriginal Australian Memorial Poles*, DelMonico Books-Prestel, Munich; New York, 2019, p. 142 (illus.)

**EXHIBITED**

*The Inside World: Contemporary Aboriginal Australian Memorial Poles*, Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, 9 February – 23 June 2019; Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Detroit, 18 July – 29 December 2019; Fralin Museum of Art, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 24 January – 28 June 2020; Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum, Florida International University, Miami, 11 July 2020 – 9 January 2021

USD 30,000

Gulumbu Yunupiŋu was a pioneering artist whose unique practice paved the way for a generation of Yolŋu women to pursue their artistic endeavours. Unlike male artists, whose artistic practice and design was governed by cultural law, Gulumbu and a small number of other women developed modes of painting that expressed Yolŋu past and contemporary life while acknowledging their inherited cultural identities. For Gulumbu this manifested in a star motif that employed both lines and, unusually, dots.

*Ganyu (Stars)* 2004 was created for Gulumbu's first solo show in Melbourne in November 2004. Just prior to this, she had won the major award at the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards for her work *Garak – The Universe*, an installation of three larrakitj that were subsequently acquired by the museum.

The painted decorations on this larrakitj refer to, but do not specify, stories of two different constellations in the night sky. One tells the story

of two sisters who became stars that sit beneath the Milky Way; the other, of seven sisters who travelled across the night sky in a canoe. Gan'yu, the title of this work, is the Yolŋu word for stars. Gulumbu's father, Mungurrawuy Yunupiŋu, shared these stories with her when she was a child.

The documentation accompanying this work provides insight into Gulumbu's desire to connect with a broader community through her art, a goal she achieved during her brief but impactful career.

When she looks at the stars, Gulumbu thinks about the universe, all around, and about every tribe, every colour. In every corner of the world people can look up and see the stars. This is Gulumbu's vision – in her art, she focuses on the link between all people everywhere. The link between people on earth and stars in the sky.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Drawn from the Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre documentation



**GULUMBU YUNUPIŊU**

c. 1943 – 2012  
Gumatj language

*Ganyu (Stars)* 2004  
earth pigments on stringybark  
94.5 inches (240 cm)

**PROVENANCE**

The Artist, created at Yirrkala,  
Northern Territory  
Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre, Yirrkala,  
Northern Territory, cat. no. 2604O  
Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne  
Private Collection, Melbourne,  
acquired from the above  
*Important Australian and  
International Fine Art; Important  
Aboriginal and Oceanic Art*,  
Deutscher and Hackett, Melbourne,  
27 November 2013, lot 156  
Debra and Dennis Scholl  
Collection, Miami Beach, Florida,  
acquired from the above

**LITERATURE**

Henry F. Skerritt (ed.), *The Inside  
World: Contemporary Aboriginal  
Australian Memorial Poles*,  
DelMonico Books-Prestel, Munich;  
New York, 2019, p. 142 (illus.)

**EXHIBITED**

*All About Art – Gulumbu Yunupingu*,  
Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne,  
14 June – 15 July 2011  
*The Inside World: Contemporary  
Aboriginal Australian Memorial  
Poles*, Nevada Museum of Art,  
Reno, 9 February – 23 June 2019;  
Charles H. Wright Museum of  
African American History, Detroit,  
18 July – 29 December 2019;  
Fralin Museum of Art, University of  
Virginia, Charlottesville, 24 January  
– 28 June 2020; Patricia and  
Phillip Frost Art Museum, Florida  
International University, Miami,  
11 July 2020 – 9 January 2021

USD 40,000



detail



PILLARS OF REMEMBRANCE

**NYAPANYAPA YUNUPIŊU**

Gumatj language  
c. 1945 – 2021

*Untitled* 2010  
earth pigments on stringybark  
83.9 inches (213cm)

**PROVENANCE**

The Artist, created at Yirrkala, Northern Territory  
Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre, Yirrkala, Northern Territory, cat. no. 3975Y  
Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney  
Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection, Miami Beach, Florida acquired from the above in 2014

**LITERATURE**

Henry F. Skerritt (ed.), *The Inside World: Contemporary Aboriginal Australian Memorial Poles*, DelMonico Books-Prestel, Munich; New York, 2019, p. 143 (illus.)

**EXHIBITED**

*Nyapanyapa Yunupiŋu, My Sister's Ceremony*, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney, 9 January – 8 February 2014  
*The Inside World: Contemporary Aboriginal Australian Memorial Poles*, Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, 9 February – 23 June 2019; Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Detroit, 18 July – 29 December 2019; Fralin Museum of Art, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 24 January – 28 June 2020; Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum, Florida International University, Miami, 11 July 2020 – 9 January 2021

USD 45,000

For nearly two decades, in the frenetic studio at Yirrkala, Nyapanyapa Yunupiŋu created significant paintings, drawings, sculptures, prints and screen-based works. Yunupiŋu's diverse and shifting practice challenged the conventions of Yolŋu art making and established her as an important and compelling Australian contemporary artist.

Yunupiŋu's engagement with Buku-Larrngay began in 1996 when she was one of the very first artists to make a print for the new Yirrkala Print Space. Her interactions with the centre intensified through the occasional delivery of small craft items such as carved sculptures, and painted rocks and shells. It was partly through her observance of her sister Gulumbu that Yunupiŋu became interested in bark painting. Eventually her persistent presence at the art centre resulted in Yunupiŋu being provided with small barks, on which she would paint unique representations of various animalia and personal accounts of her own history.

Sometime in 2009, the stimulus for Yunupiŋu's practice evolved. The transcription of memory onto

bark ceased in favour of works composed entirely of cross-hatched lines. Her palette was reduced to pink and white until, finally, varying shades of gapan (white ochre) were all she required to produce her impactful series of 'white paintings' upon larrakitj, bark and paper. These remarkable larrakitj capture the period in which Yunupiŋu used circles and thick brushed lines to anchor her loose compositions.

In 2020, a comprehensive retrospective exhibition of Yunupiŋu's work, *The Moment Eternal: Nyapanyapa Yunupiŋu*, was mounted at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT) in Darwin. The exhibition featured more than sixty works, including several larrakitj. This award-winning exhibition was the first solo exhibition at MAGNT to feature work by an Australian Indigenous artist.<sup>1</sup>

1. Luke Scholes, in Luke Scholes (ed.), *The Moment Eternal: Nyapanyapa Yunupiŋu*, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT), Darwin, 2020, p. 101.



**NYAPANYAPA YUNUPIJU**

Gumatj language  
c. 1945 – 2021

*Untitled* 2014  
earth pigments on stringybark  
94.9 inches (241 cm)

**PROVENANCE**

The Artist, created at Yirrkala,  
Northern Territory  
Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre, Yirrkala,  
Northern Territory, cat. no. 4425T  
Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney  
Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection,  
Miami Beach, Florida, acquired  
from the above in 2014

**LITERATURE**

Henry F. Skerritt (ed.), *The Inside  
World: Contemporary Aboriginal  
Australian Memorial Poles*,  
DelMonico Books-Prestel, Munich;  
New York, 2019, p. 143 (illus.)

**EXHIBITED**

*Nyapanyapa Yunupiju, My Sister's  
Ceremony*, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery,  
Sydney, 9 January – 8 February 2014  
*The Inside World: Contemporary  
Aboriginal Australian Memorial  
Poles*, Nevada Museum of Art,  
Reno, 9 February – 23 June 2019;  
Charles H. Wright Museum of  
African American History, Detroit,  
18 July – 29 December 2019;  
Fralin Museum of Art, University of  
Virginia, Charlottesville, 24 January  
– 28 June 2020; Patricia and  
Phillip Frost Art Museum, Florida  
International University, Miami,  
11 July 2020 – 9 January 2021

USD 55,000



detail



PILLARS OF REMEMBRANCE

**NYAPANYAPA YUNUPIJU**

Gumatj language  
c. 1945 – 2021

*Untitled* 2013  
earth pigments on stringybark  
84.3 inches (214 cm)

**PROVENANCE**

The Artist, created at Yirrkala,  
Northern Territory  
Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre, Yirrkala,  
Northern Territory, cat. no. 4238E  
Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney  
Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection,  
Miami Beach Beach, Florida,  
aquired from the above in 2014

**LITERATURE**

Henry F. Skerritt (ed.), *The Inside  
World: Contemporary Aboriginal  
Australian Memorial Poles*,  
DelMonico Books-Prestel, Munich;  
New York, 2019, p. 143 (illus.)

**EXHIBITED**

*Nyapanyapa Yunupingu, My Sister's  
Ceremony*, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery,  
Sydney, 9 January – 8 February 2014  
*The Inside World: Contemporary  
Aboriginal Australian Memorial  
Poles*, Nevada Museum of Art,  
Reno, 9 February – 23 June 2019;  
Charles H. Wright Museum of  
African American History, Detroit,  
18 July – 29 December 2019;  
Fralin Museum of Art, University of  
Virginia, Charlottesville, 24 January  
– 28 June 2020; Patricia and  
Phillip Frost Art Museum, Florida  
International University, Miami,  
11 July 2020 – 9 January 2021

USD 45,000



detail





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Mulka Art Centre

© Nyapanyapa Yunupingu. Licensed by Buku-Larrnggay  
Mulka Art Centre

#### ABOUT

Established in 2016, D'Lan Contemporary presents exceptional modern and contemporary art by leading and emerging First Nations artists at its galleries in Melbourne, Sydney and New York alongside an international program of exhibitions, educational talks and events that celebrate and promote the rich art and culture of Australian First Nations peoples.

#### ETHICS

D'Lan Contemporary maintains strict ethical practices and is committed to creating a sustainable marketplace for this important segment of Australian art and culture. The gallery contributes 30% of its annual net profits to artists, artist projects and their communities.

#### PROVENANCE

Every work of art exhibited and sold by D'Lan Contemporary has a clear line of provenance.

Documentation we draw upon to establish provenance includes:

- Community Art Centre certificate of provenance/authenticity
- Transfer of ownership documentation
- Purchase receipt or invoice
- Inclusion in academic / art historical publications
- Inclusion in exhibitions and exhibition catalogues (private and/or public institution)
- Collection/exhibition inventory numbers (private and/or public institution)
- Inclusion in auction catalogues
- Documented appraisals

D'Lan Contemporary's guidance on best practice for buying Australian Indigenous art is:

#### CONTEMPORARY AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS ART (1980–PRESENT)

All contemporary Australian Indigenous works of art should be accompanied by documentation linking the artwork to the artist via their Community Art Centre or their primary gallery/representative.

Community Art Centres operate with an ethical focus and establish their own individual guidelines by which all artworks are sold.

**Primary market** artworks should only be bought from a Community Art Centre or an official artist gallery/representative.

**Secondary market** artworks should only be bought with a source of provenance from a Community Art Centre or an official artist gallery/representative.

#### MODERN INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN ART (1950s–1980)

For artworks created prior to the establishment of Community Art Centres, such as bark paintings, Hermannsburg watercolours, Papunya boards and sculptural artworks made for sale, there is less necessity for Community Art Centre provenance.

However, artworks from this period with no traceable history are likely to have less market value than those that do – even when an artwork is clearly authentic.

Highly desirable provenance for artworks from this period includes Papunya Tula Artists, Stuart Art Centre and Maningrida Arts, or a clear link to a primary collector such as Geoffrey Bardon, Dorothy Bennett, Sandra Le Brun Holmes or Dr Scougall – who were all active in the 1950s–1970s.

#### ARTEFACTS AND OBJECTS (1880s–1950)

With artefacts, often much of the important collection history has been lost over time. Therefore, proven provenance can greatly impact value.

Before acquisition, research should be undertaken to ascertain the origin of the artefact or object, and how and when it left its country of origin.

Best practice in this segment is to obtain advice from a trusted industry expert before buying or selling.

#### PROTECTION OF MOVEABLE CULTURAL HERITAGE ACT

The *Protection of Moveable Cultural Heritage Act 1985* (PMCH Act) implements Australia's obligations under the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, 1970 (1970 UNESCO Convention), to which Australia is a State Party.

The 1970 UNESCO Convention requires State Parties to ensure that no collecting institution accepts illegally exported items.

The Australian Government administers the PMCH Act through the Ministry for the Arts. The PMCH Act regulates the export of Australia's most significant cultural heritage objects by implementing export controls for objects defined as 'Australian Protected Objects'.

If you have any questions about acquiring or selling Australian Indigenous Art, please contact us at: [enquiries@dlancontemporary.com.au](mailto:enquiries@dlancontemporary.com.au)

*The Inside World: Contemporary Aboriginal  
Australian Memorial Poles from the Debra and  
Dennis Scholl Collection exhibition, Nevada Museum  
of Art, Reno, 9 February – 23 June 2019*



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