

Musée
océanographique
de Monaco

VISITOR'S GUIDE

TABBA NABBA

AUSTRALIA, OCEANIA,
ARTS OF THE SEA PEOPLE

March 24 - September 30, 2016

PRINCIPAUTÉ
DE MONACO



Musée
océanographique
de Monaco



Australian Government



www.oceano.org



PREFACE

—
H.S.H. Prince Albert II of Monaco



During my travels I have discovered Aboriginal and Oceanic art; genuine sacred pathways through myths and dreams and the harsh reality of humanity's tenuous link with nature.

The Oceanographic Museum wanted to celebrate this imaginative and colourful art with an exhibition entitled 'Taba Naba', the title of a traditional Torres Strait Islander children's song recounting the relationship between a child and the sea. The Museum is thus inviting us on a voyage of discovery. I am pleased to be able to lend several works from my private collection to highlight my admiration for these artists who have been able to express, in such a unique way, the urgent need to protect the environment and the oceans. The Oceanographic Museum was created by my great-grandfather, Prince Albert I, as a temple dedicated to the sea and a meeting point for Science and Art, the 'two driving forces of civilisation'. Contemporary art is a great vehicle for drawing attention to the dangers that threaten us. The artworks are true advocates for the preservation of marine ecosystems and are particularly powerful when viewed in the rooms of the Oceanographic Museum; creating a living dialogue across our collections. Using a wide variety of media (painting, sculpture, photography, video, masks, headdresses, etc.) and materials (wood, metal, plastic, fishing nets, etc.), these works alert us to the importance of nature; the risks of climate change and the devastation we inflict on our environment through overfishing, pollution and plastic waste. They are an invitation to change our habits. This exhibition has created real momentum with important support from the Australian Government and the Queensland Government, major Australian galleries and major museums such as the Aboriginal Art Museum Utrecht and the Musée des Confluences in Lyon. I hope that this event is welcomed with great enthusiasm by the public, both in its encounter with the artworks as well as with the many related events and workshops the Oceanographic Museum will be running. It is by preserving endangered oceans that we will be able to usher in a new era of sustainable development, shared by all peoples. I want to offer my sincere thanks to the organisers for having devised and produced this unique and majestic exhibition that demonstrates a world in balance that we all wish for. ■



FOREWORD

*His Excellency Mr Stephen Brady AO CVO,
Australian Ambassador to France and to
the Principality of Monaco*

The Government of Australia is proud to support 'Taba Naba' at the Oceanographic Institute in Monaco, a series of three major exhibitions which explore the unique relationship between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia, and their country.

The cornerstone of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander beliefs is their interconnectedness to country – the natural environment that nurtures them, and must in turn be nurtured by them. This connection, seen by many Indigenous Australians as central to their identity, spirituality and cultural well-being, has influenced millennia of unique cultural practices and produced a tradition of sustainable land and water management. It is therefore entirely appropriate that these exhibitions take place at the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco, whose mission, as stated by its founder H.S.H. Prince Albert I, is 'knowing, loving and protecting the oceans'.

The exhibition '*Australia : Defending the Oceans at the Heart of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Art*' presents six monumental installations by contemporary artists from the coastal regions of northern Australia. Commissioned by curators Stéphane Jacob and Suzanne O'Connell, over fifty artists including Ken Thaiday Snr., Alick Tipoti and Brian Robinson and art centres including Girringun Aboriginal Art Centre whose Bagu sculptures will welcome visitors to the forecourt of the museum. Erub Arts, Pormpuraaw Art and Culture Centre and Tjutjuna Art and Culture Centre have all worked on the dramatic installations of giant sea creatures featured in the hall of honour of the museum. These works are a vibrant illustration of living Indigenous culture and the unique relationship Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have with the ocean environment.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the process of artistic creation is intrinsic to the practice of their cultural heritage and the transmission of knowledge from generation to generation.

'Oceania islanders: past masters in navigation and artistic expression' curated by Didier Zanette brings together objects and artefacts from the Pacific Islands to demonstrate the similarities between the different cultural traditions, with a focus on the sea and its navigation. This exhibition echoes the collections assembled by Prince Albert I during his scientific expeditions which are at the core



of the collection of the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco.

The exhibition 'Living Waters' explores how these traditions influence the traditional and contemporary art of Australia's first peoples. The exhibition celebrates the world's oldest continuing living culture and demonstrates the extraordinary capacity of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists to adapt and engage with other cultures, across different media. Mr Marc Sordello and Mr Francis Missana, whose major collection lies at the heart of 'Living Waters', are to be commended for their important contribution. So too their curatorial team, led by Dr Erica Izett for bringing together contemporary Indigenous artists as diverse as Emily Kngwarreye and Christian Thompson and investigating the transcultural space through

works by Ruark Lewis and Imants Tillers, alongside those of the Yolngu from eastern Arnhem Land.

Like the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco, the Australian Government shares a commitment to the sustainable management and effective protection of the world's oceans. The government is also committed to promoting international recognition and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. I express my sincere thanks to H.S.H. Prince Albert II of Monaco, the Oceanographic Museum, the artists and curators for this extraordinary opportunity they have created to show Australia in Monaco, and I commend all those who have contributed to the fulfilment of this ambitious project. ■



ART AND SCIENCE JOIN FORCES TO PROTECT THE OCEANS

Protecting the oceans and their biodiversity: such is the bond that unites the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco and Australia's Aboriginal populations. It is also the message that the Oceanographic Institute seeks to share.

The Oceanographic Museum is operated by the Oceanographic Institute, a charitable foundation created by Albert I, Prince of Monaco, and seeks to promote understanding about oceans and their richness, fragility and sustainable management, as well as ways of protecting them in a sensible and effective manner. It is imperative that we change our behavior in order to save the inhabitants and ecosystems of the most exposed locations, especially island states and marine habitats of high ecological and biological value, such as coral reefs.

Thanks to the support of H.S.H. Albert II, this exhibition enables the Principality of Monaco to not only contribute to this international discussion, but also to testify to its passion, firm conviction and steadfast determination to improve our habits and practices.

The Oceanographic Museum also plays a key role in sharing contemporary art. Since 2010, the Museum has sought to make its arts policy more dynamic, and major contemporary artists – Damien Hirst, Huang Yong Ping, Mark Dion and Marc Quinn among them – are regularly invited here to exhibit works that all bring a response to the same theme: protecting the oceans. ■

—
Robert Calcagno
CEO, Oceanographic Institute



AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

Australia's indigenous people are divided into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups as each is culturally distinct, with its own flag that proclaims their separate identities.

Prior to white settlement there were more than two hundred and fifty Aboriginal language groups or nations with around six hundred dialects spoken across the continent. An estimated sixty languages are still spoken today.

In the Torres Strait there are two languages which are spoken fairly widely throughout the islands today.

Kala Lagaw Ya is spoken in the Western islands and *Meriam Mir* in the Eastern islands. Dialects of these are spoken in the Mid Western, Top Western, Central and Eastern islands.

Even within these language groups or nations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders see their cultural identity as unique and different from their neighbours.

Alick Tipoti believes that ' language is the vital ingredient that binds all cultures in the world today. Everything you do, traditionally or culturally, evolves from a language. When you know the language, you know your culture.'



AN EXHIBITION OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built around the theme of water and oceans, the *Taba Naba* exhibition highlights the arts of Australia and Oceania. It is organized in three interrelated sections:

- "Australia: Defending the Oceans at the Heart of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Art", by Stéphane Jacob
- "Oceania islanders: past masters in navigation and artistic expression", by Didier Zanette
- "Living Waters", by Érica Izett.

With three artistic worlds displayed throughout the Oceanographic Museum, the *Taba Naba* exhibition is proof of our ambitious stance and our desire to send a strong message to the public.

What we are showcasing here is the art of people discussing their relationship with nature, in an unending dialogue that links ancestral tradition and modernity. The culture of the ocean belongs to these people who live with it, developing a balanced, healthy relationship that can and must inspire us all. All of the artists taking part in this exhibition-event are facing the same issue: the need to protect the oceans and water more generally.

—
Patrick Piguet
Heritage Director,
Oceanographic Institute
Curator of the Taba Naba
exhibition





TABA NABA, A FIRST PARTNERSHIP WITH MUSÉE DES CONFLUENCES

Beyond the formal partnership established between them, the Musée des Confluences and the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco both belong to a unique group of vitally important sites that publicise natural history and human history: the tale of the ties between humans and nature. Both institutions seek to promote a different, more open and more respectful view to as broad an audience as possible, and share the same determination to disseminate research and to exchange expertise while avoiding disciplinary separations.

This dialogue of the sciences across all their manifold disciplines enables us to rediscover our world, a world that is supremely complex and permanently changing.

A conservation and study site that boasts a vast collection of over two million objects amassed by various individuals and organisations in Lyon since the seventeenth century, the Musée des Confluences is an innovative location that places a special focus on History, Science, Cultures and Civilisations, an understanding of these topics and the questions that they raise. The fact that hundreds of thousands of visitors have already explored the Musée (after opening in December 2015, it had attracted one million persons by February 2016) is encouraging proof that curiosity and understanding and, similarly, the thrill of knowledge and the right to imagination, should always be united.

The partnership that began in February 2016 will enable our two organisations to enjoy a special relationship while working together in all areas that promote and enable the scientific study of our respective collections, as well as in our programming, events and projects.

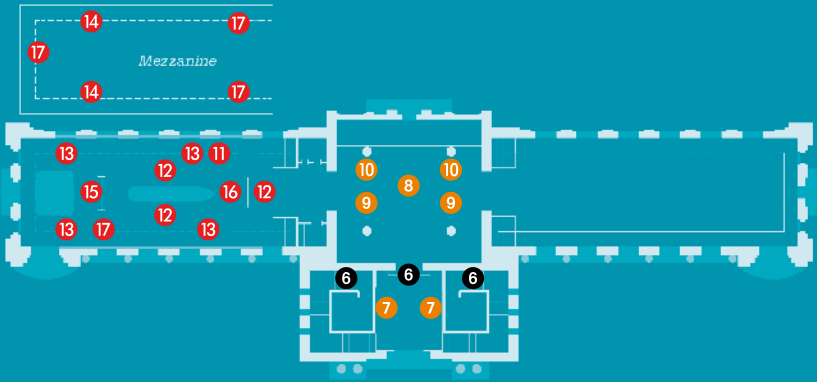
—
Hélène Lafont-Couturier
Director, musée des Confluences,
Associate Curator of
the Taba Naba exhibition

THE THREE SECTIONS OF THE EXHIBITION

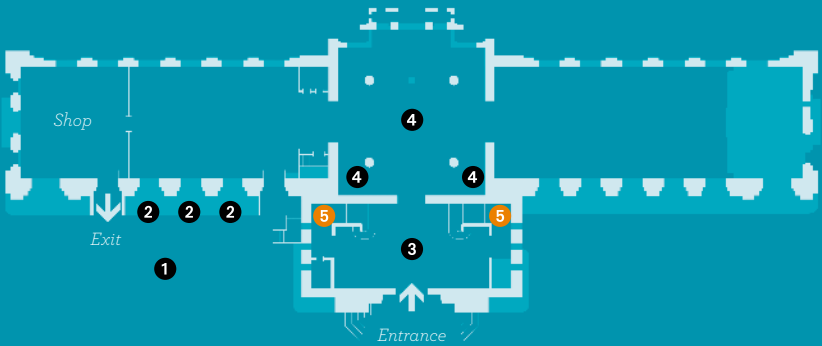
Level
2
Terrace



Level
1
Museum



Level
0
Museum





AUSTRALIA: DEFENDING THE OCEANS AT THE HEART OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLAND ART

By Stéphane Jacob

0

- 1 Bagu
- 2 Malu Githalal
- 3 Kisay Dhangal
- 4 Ocean Life

1
2

- 6 Dhari
- 18 Sowlal

OCEANIA ISLANDERS: PAST MASTERS IN NAVIGATION AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

By Didier Zanette

0

- 5 Papuan portrait photography

1

- 7 Dugout canoes, rudders and tillers: Papua New Guinea
- 8 Prows and paddles: Melanesia
- 9 Tapa marine animals: Baining
- 10 Original clamshell objects: Solomon Islands

LIVING WATERS

By Erica Izett

1

- 11 Masters of the Western Desert of the private collection of H.S.H. Prince Albert II
- 12 Shimmer
- 13 Freshwater Country
- 14 Transcultural Engagements
- 15 Saltwater Country
- 16 Boat people
- 17 Heroes

AUSTRALIA: DEFENDING THE OCEANS AT THE HEART OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLAND ART

By Stéphane Jacob

The first part of the exhibition showcases six monumental installations designed by fifty major Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists whose work serves as a clarion call against pollution of the oceans.

Their take on these environmental issues is the opposite of bleak, however, as the artists have chosen a humorous and sensitive treatment their opening section has been created as a colourful fantasy in story telling.

The work displayed both inside and outside the Museum propels us on an Alice-like journey into a poetic Wonderland.

EXHIBITION AREAS

1 2 3 4 6 18

1 MUSEUM FORECOURT

BAGU

Originally, the Bagu was a tool used to make fire. Fire, in one of the wettest places of Australia, was a very important part of daily life and therefore the tool was regarded very highly. It was only used by men and its form and patterns were embedded with spiritual meanings and understandings. The impact of one hundred and fifty years of white settlement, land clearing, agricultural and commercial activities in the Girringun region, has meant that cultural practices and activities have been significantly impacted. Caring for the land and the sea is important to the artists and their families.

The artists have used recycled materials along with materials reminiscent of the marine world and its wildlife to create an installation of ten Bagu sculptures each of which has its own story.

This installation was designed by the Girringun Aboriginal Art Centre (Cardwell, Queensland).



Brian Robinson, *Githalai I*, 2016
© Brian Robinson / CREATIVEMOVE
© Photo: TILT Industrial Design and The Artificial

2 MUSEUM FAÇADE

MALU GITHALAL

Brian Robinson was born on Waiben in the Torres Strait Islands, between the tip of the Cape York Peninsula and Papua New Guinea. Climbing along the Museum's façade, the three mangrove crabs that the artist has fashioned from aluminum serve as an invitation to explore the exhibition.

Mangrove crabs, known as *Ghitalal* in the artist's Indigenous language, are a continuation of Brian Robinson's work exploring the traditions, symbols and mythology of his people.

The *Ghitalal*, found along the coastline of Brian Robinson's native island and used for centuries as a source of food by the islanders, highlight the importance of preserving marine wildlife to safeguard the culture of his native region long into the future.



Brian Robinson, *Githalai II*, 2016
© Brian Robinson / CREATIVEMOVE
© Photo: TILT Industrial Design and The Artificial

Theresa Beeran,
Utti Stingray, 2015
© Theresa Beeran
© Photo: Valerie
Keenan / Girringun
Aboriginal Art Centre



Emily Murray,
Maangi Rainbow, 2015
© Emily Murray
© Photo: Valerie Keenan /
Girringun Aboriginal Art Centre



③ ENTRANCE HALL

KISAY DHANGAL

Alick Tipoti is an internationally acclaimed artist from the Torres Strait. Many of his works are displayed in public collections around the world, including at the Musée des Confluences in Lyon. A print maker and sculptor, Alick Tipoti is also a singer and dancer. He regularly appears in art performances (British Museum, London, Musée des Confluences, Lyon).

The artist's bronze-and-pearl shell sculpture depicts a dugong (*Dhangan*) swimming in the moonlight (*Kisay*). In Alick Tipoti's native language of Kala Lagaw Ya, the position adopted by the dugong is known as *San Tidayk*, referring to the moment when the animal raises its tail to dive to the grassy underwater mountain ranges on which it feeds. The delicately carved motifs on the surface of the sculpture highlight the destruction of these grasses by huge merchant ships that deprive dugongs as well as rays, crabs and lobsters of their food.

Torres Strait Islanders have a very close affinity with dugongs, and use dugong fat to produce a number of traditional medicines. The dugong is also the totem of seven different local tribes.



Alick Tipoti, *Kisay Dhangan*, 2015
© Alick Tipoti
© Photo : Roger D'Souza Photography / Australian Art Network



Alma Sailor, *Carangid*, 2015
 © Alma Sailor / Erub Arts
 © Photo Lynnette Griffiths

Michael Norman, *Crocodile*, 2015
 © Michael Norman / Pormpuraaw Art and Culture Centre



Merad turtle – *Turtle from Underdown Cay*, 2015
 © Erub Arts
 © Photo Lynnette Griffiths



4 HALL OF HONOUR (GROUND FLOOR)

OCEAN LIFE

'Ocean Life' is an installation of sculptures in the Hall of Honour made from ghost nets. Ghost nets is a term for fragments or large sections of fishing nets often wantonly abandoned off fishing vessels and now floating in surprisingly large quantities throughout our oceans. Washed up nets along the coastlines of the Torres Strait Islands and Cape York have been utilised by innovative artists to create depictions of marine animals vulnerable to the adverse consequences of such net hazards. Turtles, sharks, dugongs, crocodiles and whales are often trapped, killed or harmed in the process of trying to break free. A strong motivation of the Ghost Net art movement is to raise awareness of the devastating effects of this pollution on marine animals, but also to the livelihoods, custodian duties and identity of sea peoples themselves, worldwide. The interdependence of species and ecosystems depends on an urgent response and global awareness.

This installation is a collaborative work between Erub Arts (Torres Strait, Queensland), Pormpuraaw Art and Culture Center (Cape York, Queensland), and the Tjutjuna Arts and Culture Centre (South Australia).

Jidirah the Whale, 2015
 © Tjutjuna Arts and Culture Centre /
 Arts d'Australie Collection – Stéphane Jacob, Paris
 © Photo Iain Moreton



6 FIRST FLOOR LANDING

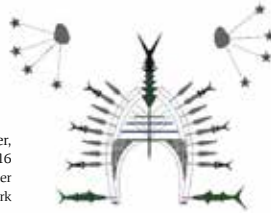
DHARI

The three sculptures displayed on the high red walls of the first floor landing are the work of Ken Thaiday Snr., an artist renowned for pieces that incorporate symbols from his native island of Erub (Darnley Island). Those works have been made in collaboration with a Sydney artist, Jason Christopher. They depict ceremonial headdresses made for dances and recall traditional fish traps.

Note that a *Dhari* appears on the Torres Strait Islander Flag. While art from the region remains relatively unknown, it is extremely vibrant and varied, revealing the close link between Torres Strait Islanders and the marine environment around them.



Above and below:
Ken Thaiday Snr., in collaboration with Jason Christopher,
Erub Eastern Island Dhari Headdress, 2016
© Ken Thaiday Snr. and Jason Christopher
© Photo : Jason Christopher / Australian Art Network



Ken Thaiday Snr., in collaboration with Jason Christopher,
Torres Strait Dhari Headdress with Shooting Star, 2016
© Ken Thaiday Snr. and Jason Christopher
© Photo : Jason Christopher / Australian Art Network





Alick Tipoti creating the preparatory linocut for the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco
© Alick Tipoti

Top image:
"Sowlal" project simulation, based on a linocut, 2016
© Alick Tipoti
© Simulation Multiplast - photo Michel Dagnino
Oceanographic Museum of Monaco

18 **TERRACE (SECOND FLOOR)**

SOWLAL

This piece by Alick Tipoti depicts the body of a giant sea turtle, itself made up of dozens of marine creatures and the flora and fauna found across the Torres Strait Islands.

Displayed on the floor of the Museum's terrace and occupying some 600 m², this is one of the largest artworks ever created by an Indigenous artist. The installation is also visible from the air when flying over the Museum, a vantage point that allows the turtle's body to be seen in full.

Every year, the Oceanographic Institute places specific emphasis on a protected species. For 2016, its "marine ambassador" is the sea turtle.

OCEANIA ISLANDERS: PAST MASTERS IN NAVIGATION AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

By Didier Zanette

The second part of the exhibition displays one hundred and fifty ethnographic items from the personal collection of Didier Zanette, who personally collected them throughout Oceania. Some date back to the nineteenth century, while other more contemporary pieces are still used by the islanders on a daily basis.

Displayed alongside this collection is a series of thirty photographic portraits of Papuans that focus on the cultural bonds between Pacific peoples and the sea, forming an ensemble that brings to mind the collections created by Prince Albert I during his scientific expeditions.

EXHIBITION ROOMS

5 7 8 9 10



Melpa woman from Mount Hagen, Papua New Guinea
Photo Didier Zanette

Enga warrior, Papua New Guinea
Photo Didier Zanette

5 GRAND STAIRCASE

PAPUAN PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY

This series of portraits by Didier Zanette depicts men and women adorned with symbols of tribal membership, from painted faces to feather-and-shell jewelry, recreating the movements and mindsets that have guided their ancestors for millennia.

For Didier Zanette, every journey is an opportunity to capture unique stories and add to his collection of photographs and videos. Bringing all these portraits together in a single location helps to promote Oceanian cultures and enables us to better understand communities that may be geographically marginalized, but nevertheless retain a vast cultural richness.



Huli highlander, Papua New Guinea
Photo Didier Zanette



Highlander group,
Papua New Guinea
Photo Didier Zanette

7 FIRST FLOOR LANDING

DUGOUT CANOES, RUDDERS AND TILLERS: PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Human settlement across Oceania has only ever been possible as a result of navigational expertise. In around 2500 B.C., Austronesians, humanity's first great explorers, undertook a hazardous journey from Indonesia to Melanesia, continuing to the shores of New Guinea, before venturing beyond, to the Pacific Islands. This process of population migration is thought to have taken place over a period of one thousand five hundred years.

Today, navigation remains a key feature of Oceanian life. It enables people to travel and cultural and commercial exchanges to take place. It plays a major part in maintaining local livelihoods and enables the trade of raw materials and other items that are vital to both the community and to artistic expression.



Dugout canoe in the Trobriand Islands, Papua New Guinea
Photo Didier Zanette



Boat crew in the Trobriand Islands, Papua New Guinea
Photo Didier Zanette

8 OCEANOMANIA ROOM (FIRST FLOOR)

PROWS AND PADDLES: MELANESIA

Taking center stage in this room is a vast range of canoe prows and paddles that showcase the ingenuity and creativity of Oceanian peoples.

The ornamental motifs adorning these prows and paddles are a clear expression of allegiance to a particular location or tribe. They appear on both ceremonial and everyday use objects, from carefully crafted items to simple fishing equipment.

Despite the variety of motifs found across Melanesia, seafaring outfits do have a consistent appearance, with paddles featuring symbols that can be very similar to the ones on canoe prows.



Paddle from Sissano Lagoon, Papua New Guinea
Photo Éric Dell'Erba



Nguzunguzu from Roviana Lagoon, Solomon Islands
Photo Didier Zanette

Vao canoe prow from Vanuatu, by sculptor Billy Tavman Kalmari
Photo Éric Dell'Erba



Collection of paddles from Papua New Guinea
Photo Didier Zanette



9 OCEANOMANIA ROOM (FIRST FLOOR)

Baining ceremony
Photo Didier Zanette

TAPA MARINE ANIMALS: BAINING

The Baining community lives on the Gazelle Peninsula on the island of New Britain, which lies to the north of Papua New Guinea.

Hanging in the OCEANOMANIA room, the Baining pieces are made from natural materials – *Tapa* (bark), bamboo, feathers, white earth and bulrushes – and depict animal figures.

The Baining people have developed a fascinating artistic practice in which they make oddly shaped masks from fragile materials for use in ancestral rituals. Young initiated males perform mysterious nighttime dances in the forest, among the most spectacular ceremonies in the Oceanian region, where they brave gigantic bonfires before emerging miraculously unharmed.



Baining figure,
fish spirit,
twentieth century
Photo Éric Dell'Erba

Four-headed Baining *kawat*
mask symbolizing the
points of the compass
Photo Éric Dell'Erba



10 OCEANOMANIA ROOM
(FIRST FLOOR)

EXCEPTIONAL CLAMSHELL OBJECTS: SOLOMON ISLANDS

This stunning collection of clamshell objects comes from the Solomon Islands.

A unique material, clamshell gave rise to one-of-a-kind, and particularly valuable, objects that were highly prized by men of authority in Melanesia. In order to retain the rights owed their social position, these men needed to display on their person highly unusual insignia. Unlike wood, clamshell is resistant to the passage of time, a property that has led to priceless clamshell items being handed down from father to son over multiple generations, thus bolstering the divine characteristics of some of these objects. The objects were already hard to come by in the past and their scarcity today is even greater. The scarcity of these objects explains why they were, for a long time, unknown in the West and why so few early examples of them survive in collections today.

Clamshell *barava* ring featuring two hornbill heads, Simbo, Solomon Islands, nineteenth century
Photo Suk Jin Jeon



Clamshell fishhook, Nggela Islands, Solomon Islands, nineteenth century
Photo Suk Jin Jeon



Clamshell *barava* plaque, Choiseul, Solomon Islands, nineteenth century
Photo Éric Dell'Erba



Kapkap from Malaita, Solomon Islands, nineteenth century
Photo Didier Zanette



LIVING WATERS

By Erica Izett

The third part of the exhibition features a selection of contemporary Aboriginal paintings from the Sordello-Missana collection, as well as pieces by Australian artists that deal with the theme of water. The dynamic and creative way in which Western and Indigenous knowledge was brought together in Australia paved the way for intercultural exchanges and opened up new perspectives and artistic practices. All around the world, Western artists have been influenced by the art of Indigenous peoples and vice versa. "Living Waters" showcases encounters that extend beyond differences and help to encourage dialogue.

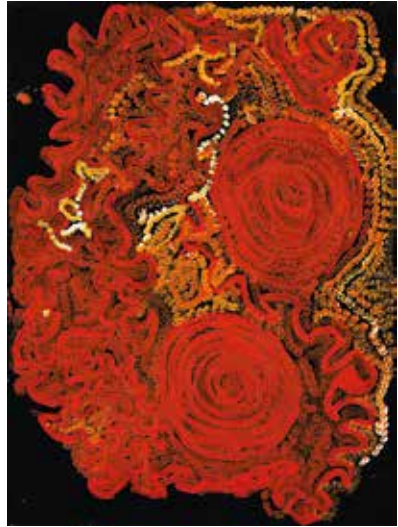
EXHIBITION AREAS

11 12 13 14 15 16 17

11 ALBERT I ROOM (FIRST FLOOR)

MASTERS OF THE WESTERN DESERT OF THE PRIVATE COLLECTION OF H.S.H. PRINCE ALBERT II

This recent addition to the Prince's collection is a stunning example of Nyarapayi Giles's rich haptic style. Painted by a woman in her mid-seventies, its iconography of waterholes (the roundels), serpentine lines and dotting tells the ancestral histories of her conception at Warmurrungu – a self-portrait, history and landscape painting all rolled into one. Typical of much Western Desert painting, it has a vitality, verve and conceptual sensibility that would be the envy of the best Western modernist.



Nyarapayi Giles,
Warmurrungu, 2014

© Image Courtesy Tjarliri Arts, Tjukurla

12 ALBERT I ROOM (FIRST FLOOR)

SHIMMER

The lustrous shimmer of the pearl shell has bewitched all cultures. Associated with the moon, water and ancestral power, it is a sign of providence and prestige. Aboriginal pearl shells are the scales that fell from the Rainbow Serpent as the glow of the full moon draws it to the surface from its home in the deep. They were widely used in rain making ceremonies. The traditional interlocking zigzag and similar abstract patterns incised on the shells have multiple meanings including rippling water. These patterns were replicated on shields, trees and painting throughout the continent, and to this day their optical shimmer is a major motif in Aboriginal art. The movement of the lines also evokes the Rainbow Serpent, which is the principle deity of water, rain, storms and lightning.



Unknown Artist,
Incised pearl shell
from the early
twentieth century

13 ALBERT I ROOM (FIRST FLOOR)

FRESHWATER COUNTRY

Recasting their histories in the modern medium of acrylic paint on stretched canvas, Western Desert artists found an artworld market with potential to address contemporary issues. No contemporary issue is greater for Aboriginal people than control of their land and sea rights, so they can properly care for country. Western Desert country rests on a vast underground sea – the great artesian basin – which wells up to the surface in waterholes and soakages that are the foci of Western Desert histories. Water is the central subject of these histories, evoked here in the rich blues that soak through the red and yellow sand dunes that striate Ray Ken's country.



Ray Ken, *Ngayuku Ngura*
[My Country], 2013
© Image Courtesy of Tjala Arts, Amata

14 ALBERT I ROOM (FIRST FLOOR)

TRANSCULTURAL ENGAGEMENTS

The continued separation of Indigenous and Western art traditions presents a false picture of Australian contemporary art and unwittingly perpetuates the apartheid that existed in Australian political and cultural policy before 1970. We have included works by three Western artists who have engaged with Aboriginal art and artists for many years. Ruark Lewis, a Sydney-based postconceptual artist, has been working closely with Barayuwa Mununggurr since 2009. While his banners echo Barayuwa's designs and those on pearl shells, they are in fact derived from connecting the location of stars in the night sky. They were initially devised in 2011 after spending time on Barayuwa's country with an anthropologist researching Yolngu astronomy.



Ruark Lewis, *Star Shelter*, 2012
© Image Courtesy of the artist
and Charles Nodrum Gallery, Melbourne

15 ALBERT I ROOM (FIRST FLOOR)

SALTWATER COUNTRY

Like most cosmologies, Aboriginal ones make a conceptual distinction between salt and fresh water. However, because Aboriginal knowledge systems are holistic, saltwater and freshwater are two sides of the same coin. To think with water's ecology is to travel across the oceans, into the sky, down to the earth, lakes and rivers and back to the ocean. Salt water cannot be thought without fresh water. Thus ocean is also country, with its own ancestral beings. In *Buwayak* [Invisibility], Barayuwa Mununggurr uses interlocking clan designs to call up the power of the ancestral whale but at the same time shields us from its full force with its optical shimmer. He thus warns us of its presence and our need to assume due reverence.

Barayuwa Mununggurr,
Buwayak [Invisibility], 2016
© Image Courtesy of Bukularmgay Mulka, Yirrkala



Michael Cook, *Civilised 6*, 2012
© Image Courtesy of the artist and
Andrew Baker Art Dealer, Brisbane

16 ALBERT I ROOM
(FIRST FLOOR)

BOAT PEOPLE

The surrounding ocean and what has come across it has very much shaped the significant histories of this island continent. Ancestral beings came from across the sea, as did Macassan fishermen and after them European explorers and finally British colonists. These latter caused the greatest social and ecological disruption on the continent since the rising seas at the end of the last Ice Age created its current coastlines. These colonial water histories have been a favoured subject of Aboriginal artists from urban centres, where the very force of colonisation made it a new and powerful narrative in their cultural memory.

HEROES



Christian Thompson,
Trinity 1, 2014
© Image Courtesy of the
artist and Michael Reid,
Sydney / Berlin

Every culture has its heroes in whose tragic fate the gods have chosen to reveal their authority. These stories, the subject of the tragic and comic masterpieces of ancient legends, continue to reverberate in contemporary Hollywood movies and comic books. Aboriginal ancestral heroes are not restricted to human form: they include fauna, flora and inanimate things such as mountains, rivers and lakes. As living incarnations of these ancestral heroes the artists feel a great responsibility and strength. The hero and lord of this room is the whale, of which Barayuwa Mununggurr, like Jonah or Melville's Captain Ahab, is an incarnation.



Tracey Moffatt,
Invocation 7, 2000
© Image Courtesy of the
artist and Roslyn Oxley9
Gallery, Sydney

AUSTRALIA: DEFENDING THE OCEANS AT THE HEART OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLAND ART

Project Manager & Co-ordinator & Senior Curator: Stéphane Jacob, Director Arts d'Australie • Stéphane Jacob (Paris)

Associate Curator: Suzanne O'Connell, Director Suzanne O'Connell Gallery (Brisbane)

This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Ministry for the Arts' Catalyst Australian Arts and Culture Fund.

"BAGU" INSTALLATION:

Girringun Aboriginal Art Centre, Girringun (Cardwell, Queensland):

Art Centre Manager: Dr Valerie Keenan

Workshop coordinator: Len Cook

Artists: Ninney Murray, Emily Murray, Sally Murray, Ethel Murray, Debra Murray, Alison Murray, John Murray, Jonas Murray, Theresa Beeron, Daniel Beeron, Philip Denham, Maleisha Leo, Eileen Tep, Clarence Kinjun, Doris Kinjun, Marjorie Kinjun, Elizabeth Nolan, Sigourney Thaiday, Leonard Andy, Special thanks Girramay Elder Claude Beeron

This project has been made possible thanks to:

The Australia Council for the Arts and the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland

Main sponsor: Métropole Gestion

For more information: www.artsdaustraliae.com/monaco-bagu.html

"MALU GITHALAL" INSTALLATION

Artist: Brian Robinson born in Waiben ('Thursday Island'), Torres Strait – lives and works in Cairns.

Brian Robinson is represented for his public artworks by CREATIVEMOVE (Brisbane) –

John Stafford & Jodie Cox.

For more information: www.artsdaustraliae.com/monaco-brian-robinson.html

"OCEAN LIFE - GHOST NET SCULPTURAL" INSTALLATION

Created by three not for profit Indigenous Art Centres: Erub Arts (Torres Strait, Queensland),

Pormpuraaw Art and Culture Centre (Cape York, Queensland), Tjutjuna Arts and Culture

Centre (South Australia).

■ Erub Arts

Manager: Diann Lui

Artistic Director: Lynnette's Create: Lynnette Griffiths is responsible for the design and installation of 'Ocean Life - Ghost Net Sculptural Installation'.

Artists: Jimmy K Thaiday, Lorenzo Ketchell, Ellarose Savage, Emma Gela, Ethel Charlie, Florence Gutchen, Alma Sailor, Nancy Naawi, Nancy Kiwat, Lavinia Ketchell, Racy Oui-Pitt, Lynnette Griffiths, Marion Gaemers, Sarah Dawn Gela, Sue Ryan.

■ Pormpuraaw Arts and Culture Centre (Cape York, Queensland)

Art Centre Manager: Paul Jakubowski

Artists: Syd Bruce Ornkoo Munwoonka, Michael Norman

■ Tjutjuna Arts and Culture Centre, Ceduna (South Australia)

Art Centre Manager: Pam Diment

'Jidirah The Whale'

Project Manager/Lead artists: Sue Ryan and Gina Allain

Artists: Verna Lawrie (Elder), Josephine Lennon (Jo's initiative), Margaret Argent, Ashley Sansbury, Natalie Austin, Estelle Miller, Elma Lawrie (Elder), Collette Gray, Denise Scott, Beaver Lennon, Carmel Windlass, Sophia Gibson, Dorcas Miller (Elder), Yasmin Wolfe.

With assistance from Jessica Viersma Yalata Women's Coordinator, Yalata Rangers who collected the Marine Debris.

A Tjutjuna Arts and Culture Workshop (september 2014), coordinated by Pam Diment, Manager. Facilitated by Ananguku Arts & Ghost Net Art Project - Sue Ryan and Gina Allain.

Initiated & sponsored by Alinytjara Wilurara Natural Resources and Ananguku Arts.
Funding provided by the Australia Council for the Arts, Arts South Australia & the Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support Programme.

“Ocean Life-Ghost Net Sculptural Installation” gratefully acknowledges assistance by the Torres Strait Island Regional Authority, Queensland Government, through Arts Queensland and the Torres Strait Island Regional Council.

The project has also received generous private support, including significant donations from the following individuals: Myriam Boisbouvier-Wylie and John Wylie, Bruce, Judith and Genevieve Gordon, Judith Gordon Eaton Films Ltd, Helen and Bori Liberman, as well as corporate support from Ged Erub Trading and Sea Swift.
For more information: www.artsdaustralie.com/monaco-ghostnet.html

«TORRES STRAIT HEADRESSES AND ERUB EASTERN ISLAND DHARI HEADRESSES » INSTALLATION

Artists: Ken Thaiday Snr. born in Erub (‘Darnley Island’), Torres Strait - lives and works in Cairns, in collaboration with Jason Christopher (lives and works in Sydney).
Ken Thaiday Snr. is represented by the Australian Art Network (Sydney).
For more information: www.artsdaustralie.com/monaco-ken-thaiday.html

“SOWLAL” MONUMENTAL INSTALLATION & SCULPTURE “KISAY DHANGAL”

Artists: Alick Tipoti (lives and works in Badu, Torres Strait).
Alick Tipoti is represented by the Australian Art Network (Sydney)
Sculpture’s main corporate support: Urban Arts Project (Brisbane)
The installation of “Sowlal” on the Museum’s rooftop has been made possible notably by the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco.
For more information: www.artsdaustralie.com/monacoalick-tipoti.html

We would like to thank Joël Hakim, former President of the French-Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Sydney) and Tea Dietterich, CEO of 2M Language Services (Brisbane, Paris, Nice) for their invaluable help.

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OCEANIA ISLANDERS: PAST MASTERS IN NAVIGATION AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

Scientific curator: Didier Zanette, Director, DZ Galerie (Paris, Nice, Nouméa)
Printing partners for “Papuan Portrait Photography”: Christophe Hénin/Studio Pixels & Papillon, Vincent Piot/Pisoni
Partner for “ocean” video: Pierre Quatrefages/P4 Productions

LIVING WATERS

Scientific curator: Dr Erica Izett, Independent Curator (University of Western Australia, Sydney)
Assistant curators: Dr Georges Petitjean, Director, AAMU-Aboriginal Art Museum Utrecht
Donna Carstens, Indigenous Programs Manager, Australian National Maritime Museum (Sydney)
Associate catalogue editors: Prof. Ian McLean, University of Wollongong (Australia)
and Margo Neale, Senior Indigenous Curator, National Museum of Australia (Canberra)

MASTERS OF THE WESTERN DESERT OF THE PRIVATE COLLECTION OF H.S.H. PRINCE ALBERT II

Artists: Nyarapayi Giles, Paddy Japaljarri Sims, Shorty Jangala Robertson

SHIMMER

Artists: Joan Brown, Richard David, Mavis Warrngilna Ganambarr, Dulcie Greeno, Lola Greeno, Ruark Lewis, Kitty Malarvie, Muriel Maynard, Prince of Wales, Aubrey Tigan, Imants Tillers, Willy Tjungurrayi, Peg Leg Tjampitjinpa, Charles Warusam, Roy Wiggans, Various unknown artists

We gratefully acknowledge the inclusion of items from the magnificent collection of the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco and the expertise of Valérie Pisani in selecting and curating the addition of pearlshells from around the world.

FRESHWATER COUNTRY

Artists: Paddy Bedford, Jan Billycan, Susie Bootja Bootja, Rhonda Unrupa Dick, Ned Grant, Ray Ken, Sylvia Ken, Emily Kame Kngwarreye, Ruark Lewis, Karen Mills, Maggie Watson Napangardi, Tiger Palpatja, Paddy Japaljarri Sims, Christian Thompson, Imants Tillers, Peg Leg Tjampitjinpa, Sam Tjampitjinpa, Whiskey Tjukanguku, Johnny Warangkula

TRANSCULTURAL ENGAGEMENTS

Artists: Jim Everett, Jonathan Kimberley, Ruark Lewis, Tracey Moffat, Barrayuwa Mununggurr, Michael Riley, Imants Tillers, Whaiora Tukaki, Mulkun Wirrpanda, John Wolseley

SALTWATER COUNTRY

Artists: Old Hector [Hector Julum?], Billy Koorubbuba, Ruark Lewis, John Mawurndjul, Barrayuwa Mununggurr, Whaiora Tukaki, Judy Watson, Roy Wiggans, Mulkun Wirrpanda, John Wolseley

BOAT PEOPLE

Artists: Michael Cook, Judy Watson, John Wolseley

HEROES

Artists: Tracey Moffatt, Barrayuwa Mununggurr, Michael Riley, Christian Thompson

This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body, along with the vital contribution of the Australian National Maritime Museum, Sydney and the Australian Embassy in France.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

H.S.H. Prince Albert II of Monaco	Kunga Collection (Switzerland)
Andrew Baker Art Dealer (Brisbane)	Michael Reid (Sydney, Berlin)
Australian National Maritime Museum (Sydney)	Milani Gallery (Brisbane)
Brocard-Estrangin Collection (Brussels)	Museum of Contemporary Aboriginal Art (Utrecht)
Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre (Yirrkala)	Private Collections (Sydney and Brisbane)
Charles Nodrum Gallery (Melbourne)	Thomas Vroom Collection (Netherlands)
Didier Zanette Collection	Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery (Sydney)
Kerry Stokes Collection (Perth)	Sordello Missana Collection (Antibes)

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The governmental organisations



The involved cultural partners



Companies and generous donors



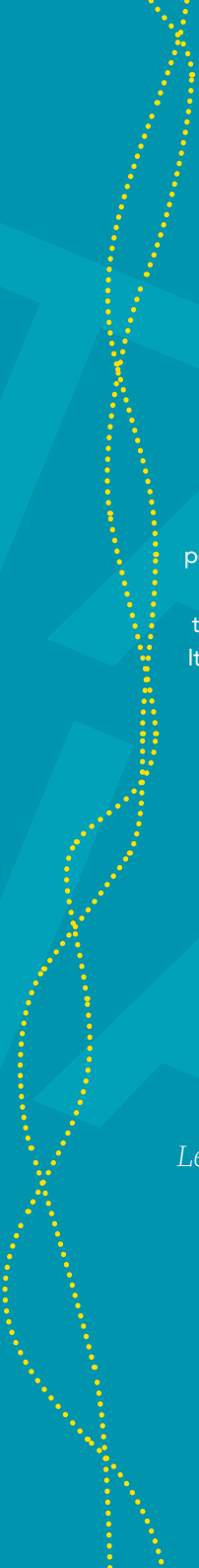
Lady Monika Bacardi, Myriam Boisbouvier-Wylie and John Wylie, Bruce, Judith and Genevieve Gordon, Judith Gordon Eaton Films Ltd, Helen and Bori Liberman.

Our major partners for all the events



Media partners





Taba Naba is a traditional children's song from the Torres Strait. It is accompanied by a seated dance in which the singers perform actions to fit the song. The original version of the song is in Meriam Mir. It is a happy song that refers to the pleasures of fishing on the reefs. It is performed in the presence of family members, friends, fellow islanders and even non-natives.

*“Taba naba / naba norem
Tugi penai siri / dinghy e naba we
Miko keimi / sere re naba we
Taba naba / norem”*

*“Come / Let's go to the reef
While the morning tide is low /
Let 's set off in the little boat
Let's row / Until we reach the tip of the reef
Come / Let's go to the reef”*