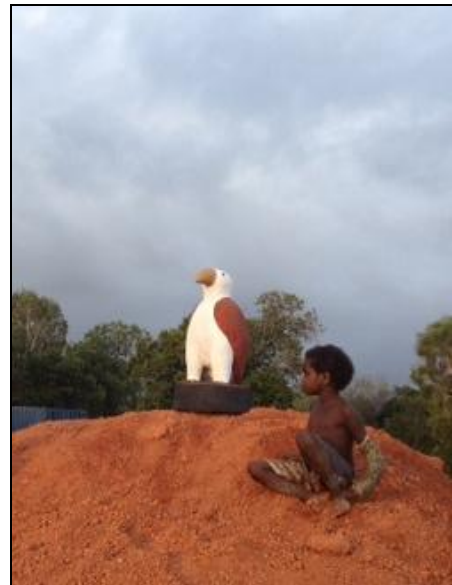




David Mapoondin



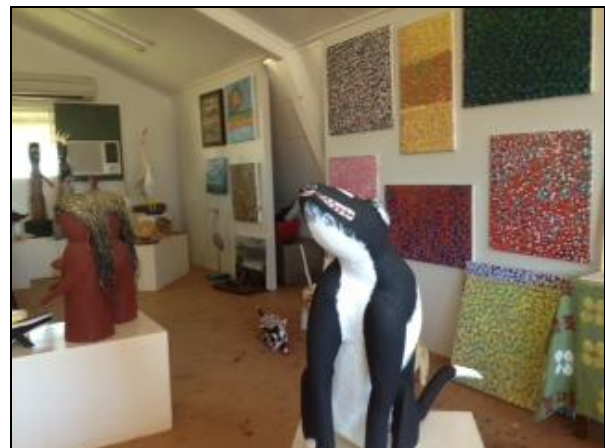
Roderick Yunkaporta
(creating echidna in clay)



KANGKANG by Garry
Namponan

The **Wik & Kugu Arts & Craft Centre** is operated for the benefit of the artists and craftspeople of Aurukun. It has about 30 members and about a quarter of its members are regular producers of arts and craftworks. All community members are eligible to join the Centre's membership.

The Centre has achieved high standing in the fine arts community winning critical acclaim and selling many major pieces to leading national and international galleries and collectors.



Stock at the Centre

Nicholas Rothwell, Walkley Award winning journalist, author and respected Indigenous affairs commentator described Aurukun as: “...an Ultra creative remote Indigenous community (where) deep traditions ... have long seemed ripe for international promotion.”

The art of Aurukun is deeply rooted in its traditional culture. Storytelling, song, dance, wood carving, weaving and painting in natural ochres are all ancient traditions in the region. Nearly all artworks produced by Aurukun artists have direct links to specific traditional cultural stories, places and experiences. These empower dramatic artistic works.

In recent years, artists have diversified to new media. Important developments include painting landscape and stories in acrylics and weaving with the fibre of recovered drift nets (*Ghostnets* - flotsam from the trawling industry that is destructive of marine life).



Joshua Woola and others dancing at the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair 2010. The dance and the carving are part of the traditional funerary practice of the Wik people.



A pack of carved Aurukun camp dogs, one of the hits of the 2010 Cairns Indigenous Art Fair, were purchased by Brisbane’s Gallery of Modern Art and joined the Gallery’s high profile 2010/11 exhibition *21st Century: Art in the First Decade*, which showcased the fresh and innovative ways artists around the world reflected their perceptions in the first decade of this millennium.

The dogs, commissioned for the 2010 Cairns Indigenous Art Fair, were created by seven artists from the five clans of Aurukun working collaboratively at the Wik and Kugu Arts and Craft Centre. The artists, Garry Namponan, Roderick

Development and promotion of the Wik & Kugu Arts & Craft Centre through exhibitions, participation in competitions and sales to leading national and international galleries and collections has been rewarded by steadily increasing sales and the achievement of very high prices (\$20,000+) for some pieces.

Centre’s artists have participated in many exhibitions and competitions in recent years including:

- The Woollahra Small Sculpture prize;
- The national tour of the Contemporary Indigenous Sculpture Exhibition *Menagerie*;
- The opening of the *Culture Warriors Exhibition* in Washington DC;
- *Border Zones New Art Across Culture Exhibition*, Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada;
- Cairns Indigenous Art Fair, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013
- *Before Time Today: Reinventing Tradition in Aurukun Aboriginal Art*, University of Queensland Art Museum;

Yunkaporta, David Marpoondin, Craig Koomeeta, Jack Bell, Leigh Namponan and Keith Wikmunea, endowed each of their dogs with unique characters.



Traditional baskets (above) and woodcarvings (below) in the “Before Time Today – Reinventing Tradition in Aurukun Aboriginal Art” Exhibition, UQ Art Museum: Photo Carl Warner.



- *Yuk Wiy Min Exhibition*, Andrew Baker Gallery;
- *Work in Progress Exhibition*, Cairns Tanks Art Centre;
- *Arts Elysees 2010*, Stephane Jacob Gallerie, Paris, France;
- *21st Century Art in the First Decade*, Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane;
- *Wanchinith Ma’Min*, Andrew Baker Gallery;
- *Aurukun Artists*, Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne;
- *Aurukun Artists*, Japinka Gallery, Perth;
- On-going exhibition at Canopy Art Space, Cairns 2010/13.
- Martin Browne Contemporary, Sydney 2013
- Gabrielle Pizzi Gallery, Melbourne 2013
- Wollongabba Art Gallery, Brisbane, 2013
- Telstra Award, 2013

Aurukun artists gain on-going stimulus from professional development workshops arranged by the Wik & Kugu Arts & Craft Centre. In the coming year a three week workshop in ceramics will be conducted and a separate three-week camp “on country” in association with linguists and traditional language recording and maintenance work will be run. The camp is expected to stimulate further artistic development and to renew an emphasis on traditional stories and story places.



Art is passed on from father to son. Alair Pembegan is the son of Arthur. In the last year of Arthur’s life, Alair got instructions by the old man and now has started his own paintings depicting body markings.

Traditional basket weaving practiced by the Wik & Kugu women [above] since time immemorial produced valuable utensils often used to hold fruits or other food. The pleasing colours show the use of traditional plant dyes which are collected and processed by the craftspeople. Women gathering pandanus leaves [below] to make fibre for traditional weaving.



Strongly innovative, the women of Aurukun have been the strong force behind the new Aurukun painting movement. Mavis Ngallametta pictured below painting at the Centre and with paintings at the Andrew Baker Gallery will commence work on her first solo exhibition later this year.



Jean Wolmbeng



Nathan Ampeybegan



Owl by Bevan Namponan



David Mapoondin

Despite the emergence of new media in the art of Aurukun people the traditional medium of wood carving remains a vibrant art form. Striking sculptural forms like those above are produced regularly in stunning variety reflecting the deep love of the artists for their country and fauna.

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