OUTSTATION – ART FROM ART CENTRES
IN ASSOCIATION WITH
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ARE PROUD TO PRESENT

LEGACY
THE INFLUENCE OF BALANG JOHN MAWURNDJUL

Annual Maningrida Exhibition

MAY 2020

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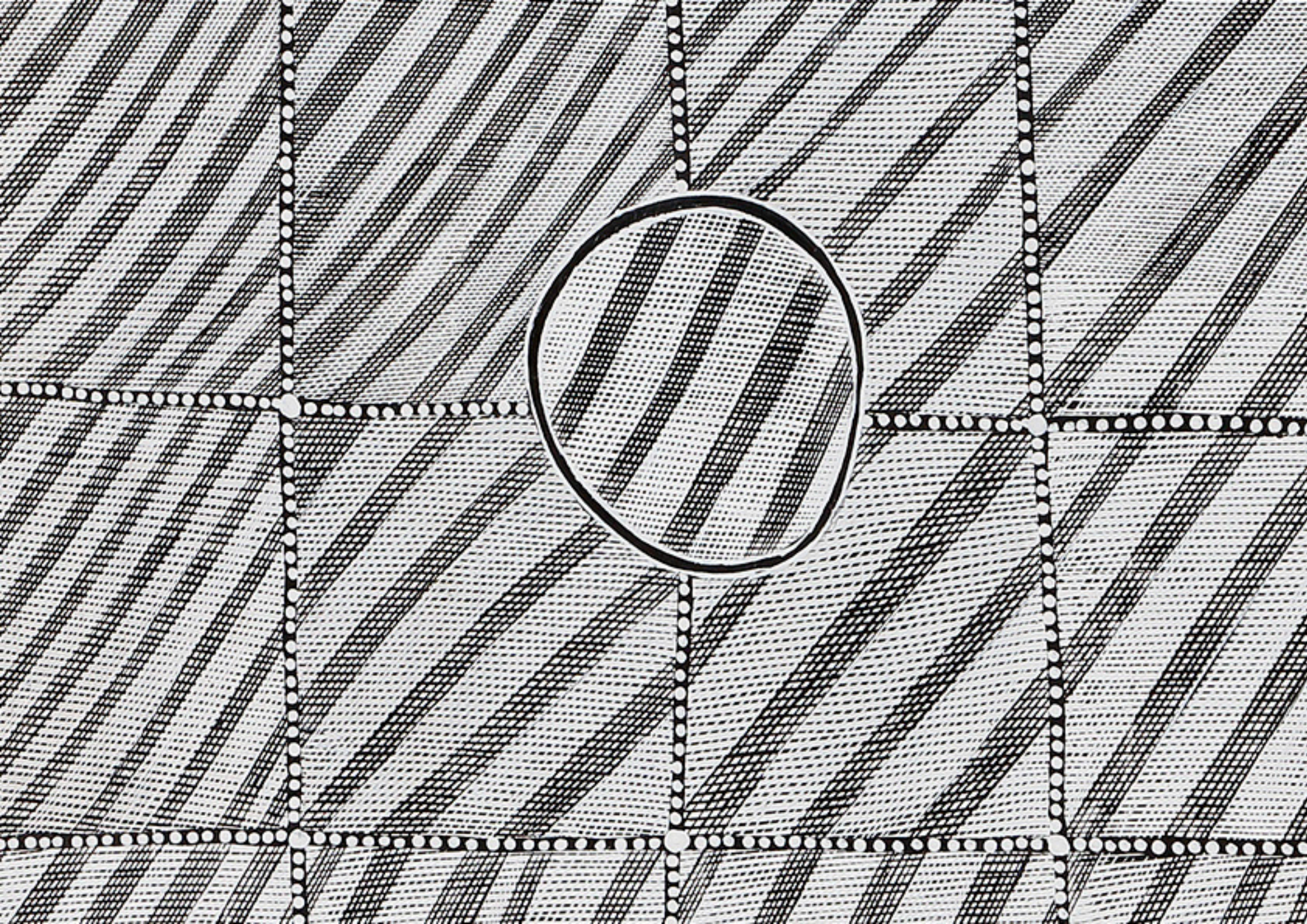

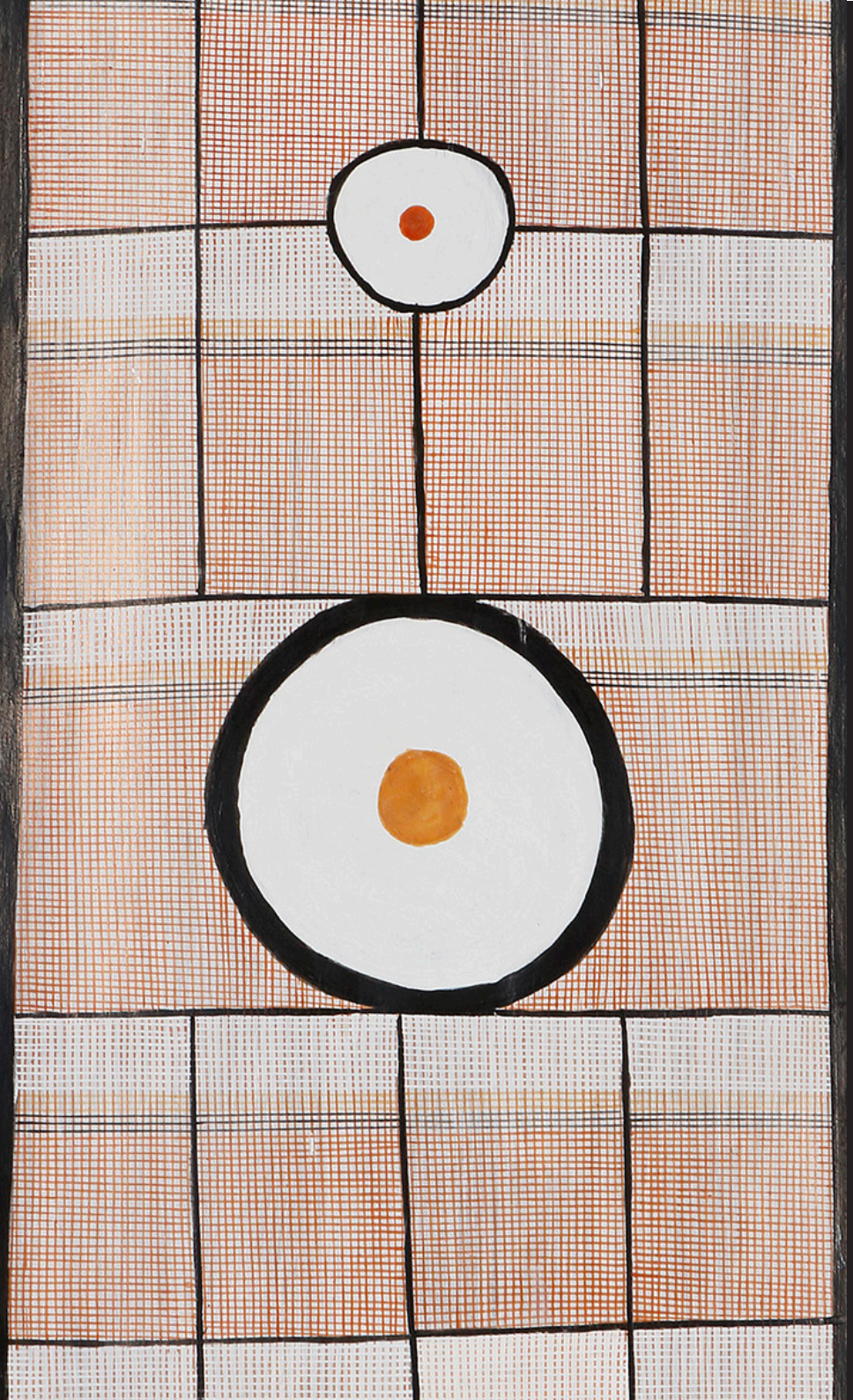

OUTSTATION GALLERY IS PROUD TO PRESENT

LEGACY
THE INFLUENCE OF BALANG JOHN MAWURNDJUL

Annual Maningrida Exhibition

Showing Friday 8 May – Friday 5 June 2020

IMAGES:
COVER: Semeria Wurrkidj *Mardayin Design* (detail) page 16
PREVIOUS: Susan Marawarr *Wak Wak* (detail) page 7
LEFT: Noah Wurrkidj *Milmilngkan* (detail) page 11

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LEGACY – THE INFLUENCE OF BALANG JOHN MAWURNDJUL

Artists lead the way for Kuninjku people. Balang John Mawurndjul AM is a community, clan and artistic leader. He speaks of the influence of his parents: Anchor Kulunba, a revered marrkidjbu (healer) and maker of mandjabu (fish trap); and Mary Wurrdjedje, expert at cultural practices, such as making sting bags, dilly bags and 'bush' bread. In turn, Mawurndjul has mentored his wife Kay Lindjwanga and his children, including Noah Wurrkidj and Semeria Wurrkidj. His leadership has also inspired his sister Susan Marawarr and his niece, Susan's daughter Rosina Gunjarrwanga.

This exhibition brings together new work from the Kurulk clan. Emerging from an artistic dynasty, the work of the next generation reveals new ways, whilst affirming the integrity and strength of Kuninjku painting.

Kurulk country continues to be the bedrock of artistic practice. Noah, Semeria and Rosina largely grew up on their homelands at Mumeka and Milmingkan outstations. In the 1990s this generation absorbed the immense knowledge of their parents, uncles and grandparents at Mumeka. The sites, ancestors and designs of Kurulk country continue to inform their work. Noah explains, "I only paint Duwa [moiety]: Buluwana, Dilebang, Kurruldul, yawkyawk, Milmingkan, manjabu, djulng, wak. That's my choice".

Noah started painting after his first son was born in the early 2000s. He is recognised for the remarkable fineness of his rarrk (crosshatching). His delicate touch creates a lightness which is further enhanced by the white base that emanates through the repetitive grids. In this exhibition he explores the themes of wak (black crow ancestor) and the sacred place dilebang, a duwa site that contains many potent ancestor spirits, including the bones of the deceased ancestors, djulng. Close to the site are waterholes where the volatile Ngalyod (rainbow serpent) resides, which the artist depicts as white circles.

Mawurndjul has played an important role in the rise of Kuninjku women artists, encouraging his wife and later his daughters, Anna Wurrkidj, Semeria Wurrkidj and Josephine Wurrkidj, to pursue careers in their own right. Semeria's rarrk is perhaps most evocative of her father's Mardayin period in the first decade of the 2000s. However, she makes clear that her design references different subject matter, the creek, mankabo, that flows from Kurrurldul to Milmingkan outstations. Like her peers, she strictly depicts 'outside' stories. In contrast to her brother's considered grids, Semeria's work emanates a warm glow and fluid rhythm. The white lines represent the creek which wanders over the surface to give a sense of continuation beyond the picture plane.

Gunjarrwanga is easily recognised by her red, black and white palette and coarse, energetic rarrk. She paints wak, djang ('Dreaming') she is djungkay (manager) for. She was taught the process and parameters of painting by her parents, Joshua Junuwanga and Susan Marawarr, however early on they encouraged her to find her own visual language. She made a mark in the contemporary art scene in late 2019 as one of the young artists selected for Primavera: Young Australian Artists at the MCA in Sydney.

Susan Marawarr is a force. Her work stands apart and is defined by her iconic black and white palette, and confident, dynamic mark-making. It is no surprise that she taught herself to paint: "My dad made manjabu, real manjabu. I get [ideas] from my dad but I try doloppo. I paint doloppo. I didn't watch people. I learned from myself." In this exhibition Marawarr paints kunkurra (wind) and wak (black crow). She describes kunkurra as the wind you feel when you're sitting in the shade during kurrung, the build-up season when it's hot and humid. It's not djang ('Dreaming'). It's duwa, like me".

Noah, Semeria and Rosina have learned the impeccable techniques for which Kuninjku painters are renowned. They respect and care for the processes of harvesting, preparing the natural materials, and painting rarrk, line by line, layer by layer. These works are defined by technique, restraint and patience. This has stood Kuninjku artists apart and, unquestionably, the next generation are maintaining this standard of excellence.

TEXT BY CHLOE GIBBON
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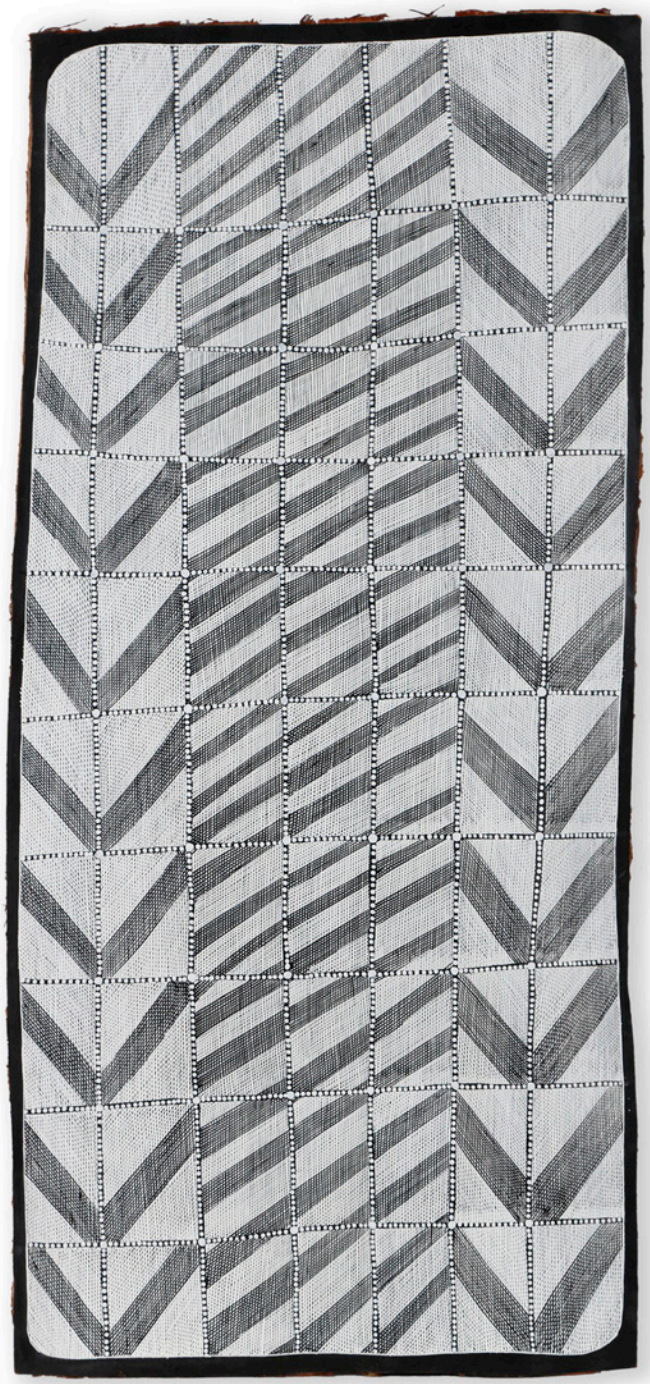
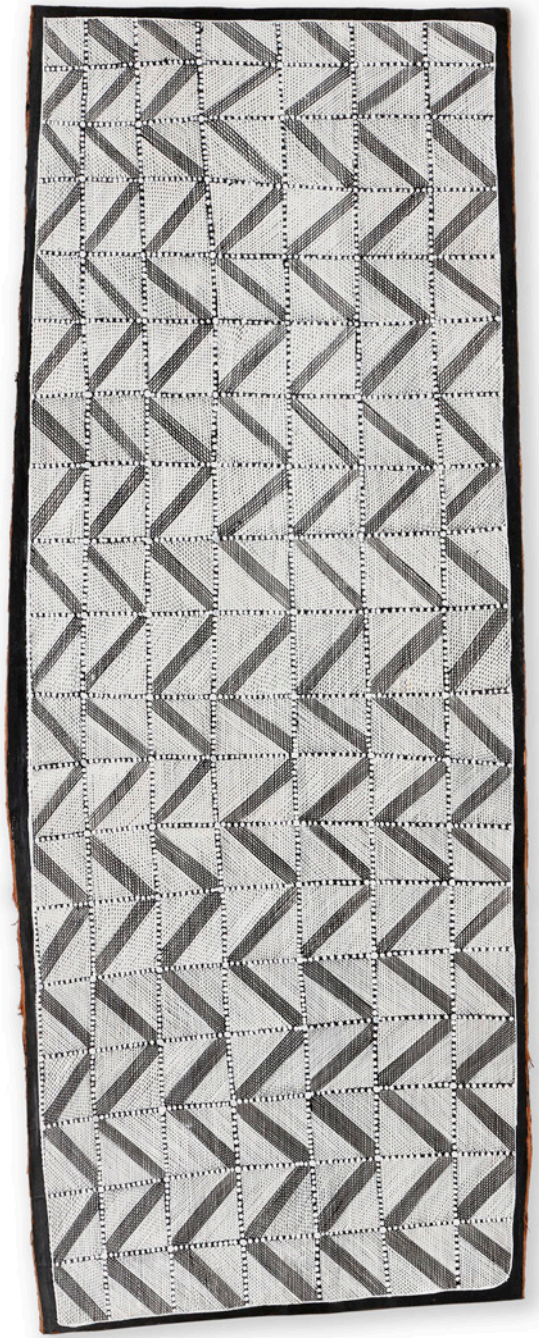
REFERENCES:
Website: https://www.johnmawurndjul.com/
Primavera 2019: Young Australian Artists, 2019, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
Private communication with author



SUSAN MARAWARR
Kunkurra (The Spiralling Wind)
2020
natural earth pigments on bark
137 x 62 cm
312-20 $5500

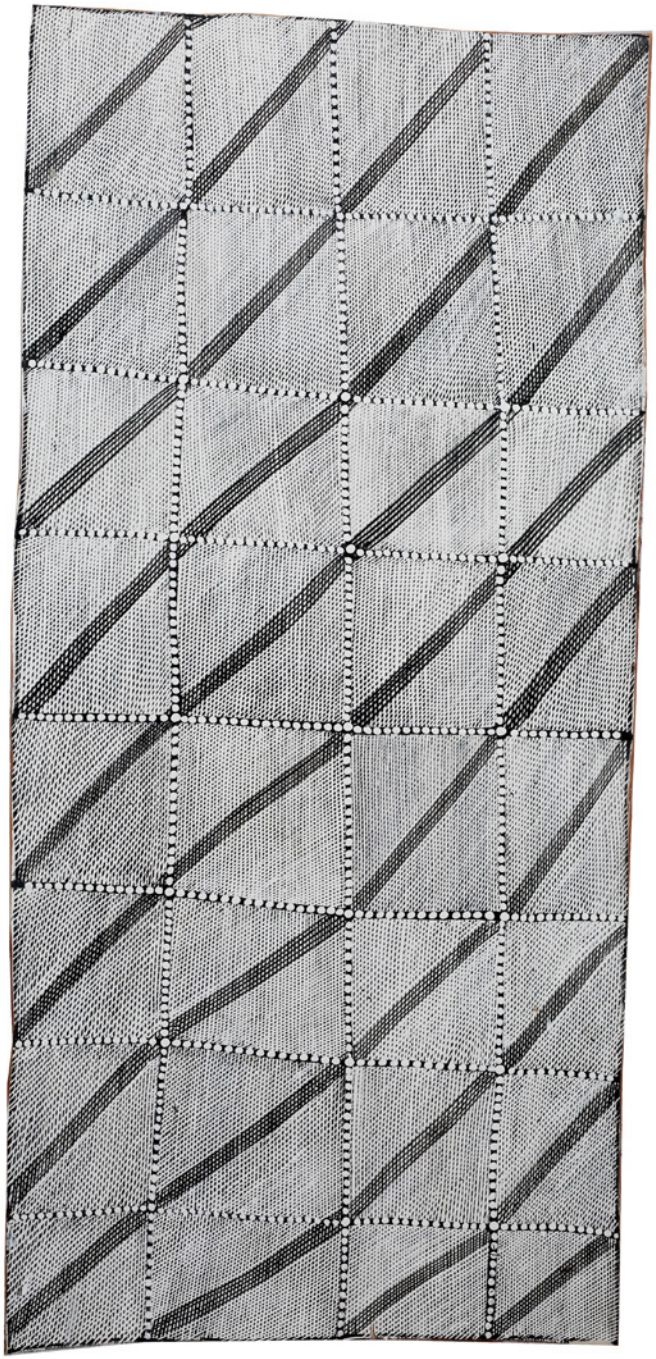
SUSAN MARAWARR
Mandjabu
2020
natural earth pigments on bark
129 x 32 cm
313-20 $2600

SUSAN MARAWARR
Wak Wak
2020
natural earth pigments on bark
143 x 66 cm
230-20 $5750

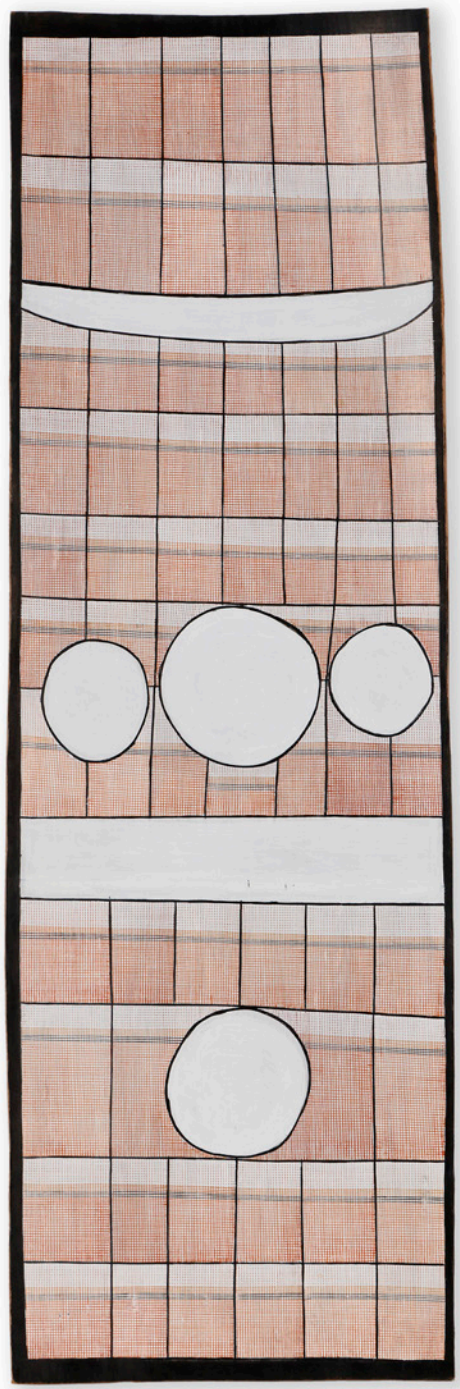


SUSAN MARAWARR
Kunkurra (The Spiralling Wind)
2020
natural earth pigments on bark
131 x 52 cm
290-20 $4600

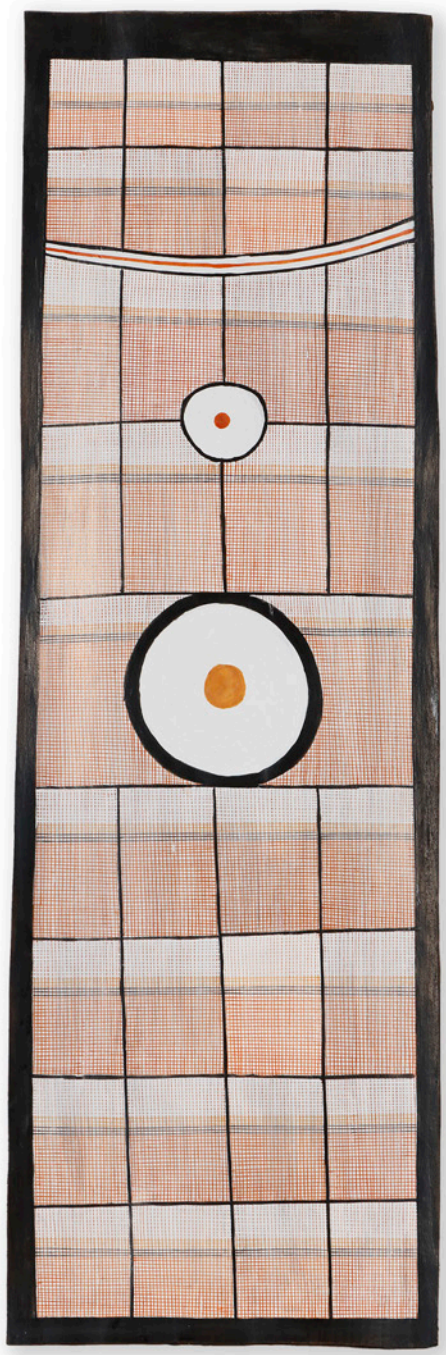
SUSAN MARAWARR
Wak Wak
2020
natural earth pigments on bark
126 x 34 cm
320-20 $2600



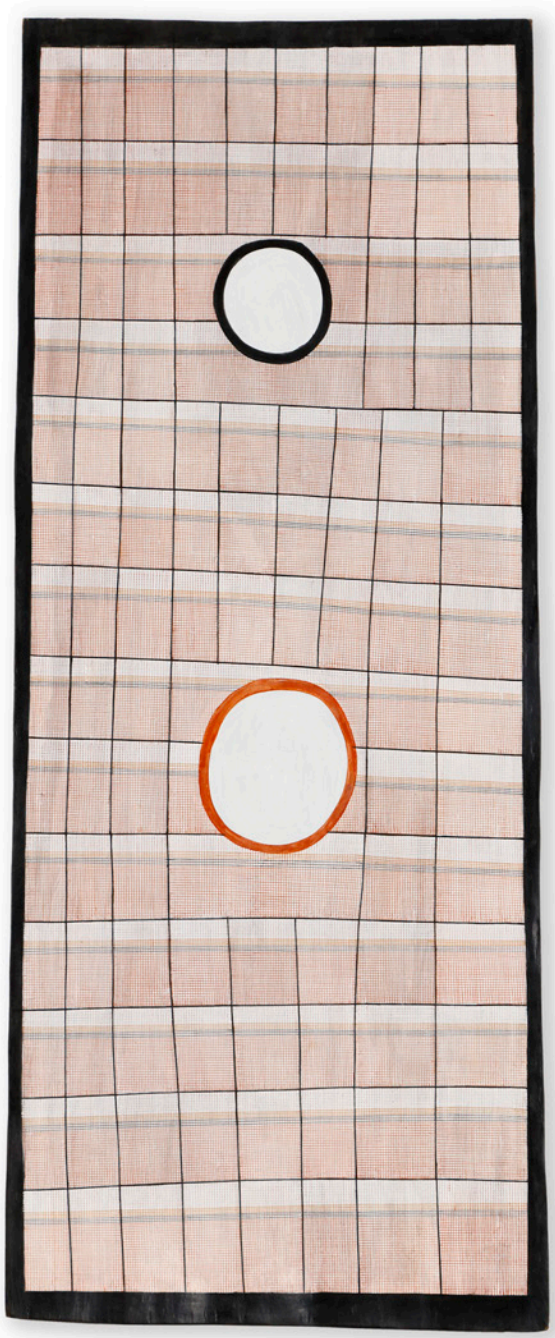
SUSAN MARAWARR
Kunkurra (The Spiralling Wind)
2020
natural earth pigments on bark
91 x 43 cm
343-20 $2,500



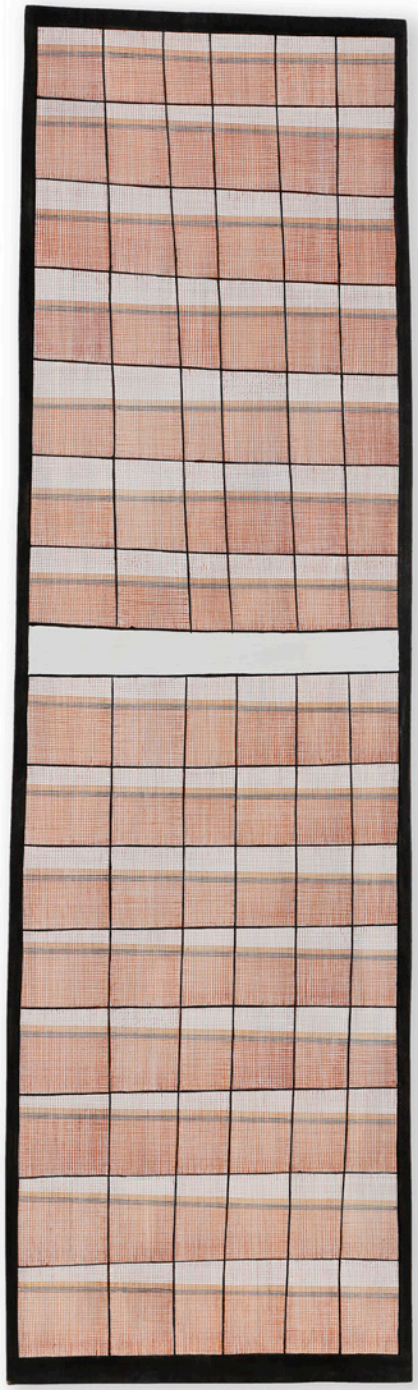
NOAH WURRKIDJ
Kudjidmi
2020
natural earth pigments on bark
126 x 42 cm
103-20 $2500



NOAH WURRKIDJ
Milmilngkan
2020
natural earth pigments on bark
90 x 28 cm
164-20 $1200



NOAH WURRKIDJ
Milmilngkan
2020
natural earth pigments on bark
130 x 52 cm
196-20 $3400



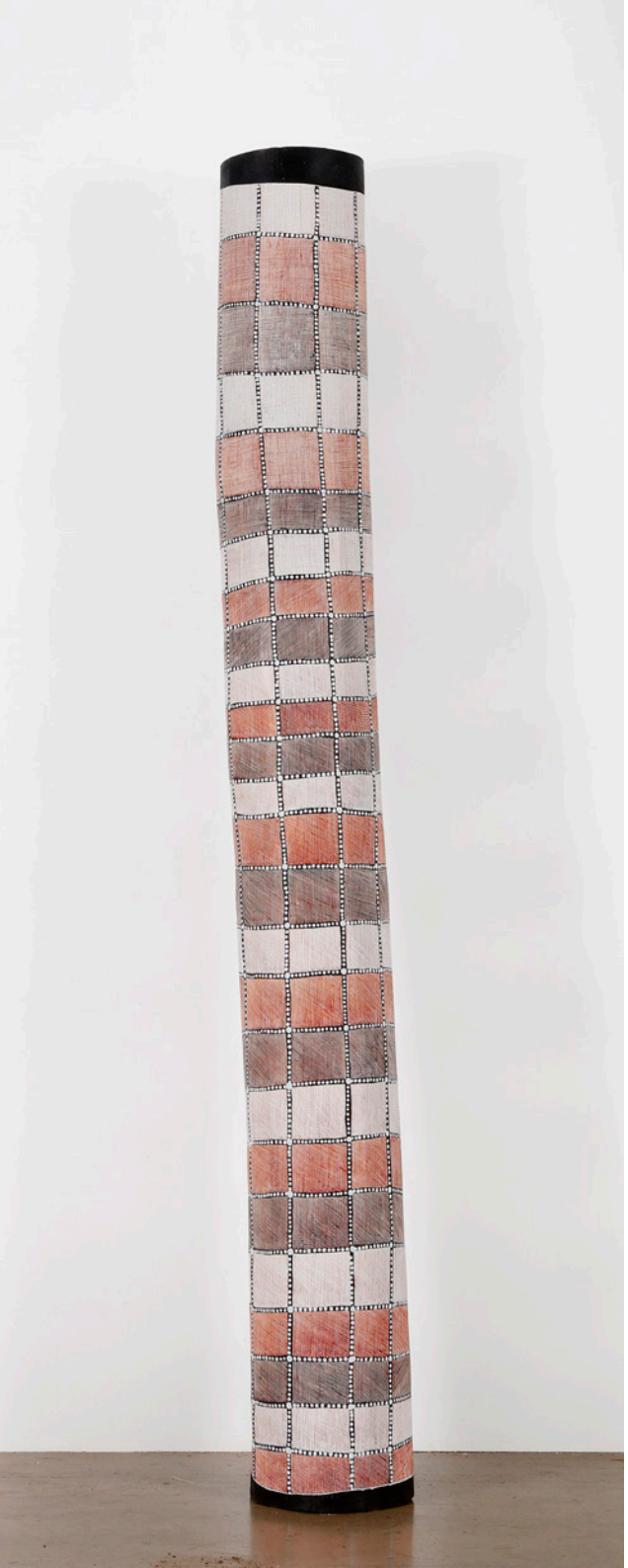
NOAH WURRKIDJ
Milmilngkan
2019
natural earth pigments on bark
144 x 41 cm
1868-19 $3500

SEMERIA WURRKIDJ
Mardayin and wak
2020
natural earth pigments on bark
109 x 49 cm
228-20 $2600

SEMERIA WURRKIDJ
Mardayin and Milmingkan waterhole
2020
natural earth pigments on bark
99 x 50 cm
227-20 $2300

SEMERIA WURRKIDJ
Mardayin Design
2020
natural earth pigments on bark
109 x 56 cm
258-20 $2600

ROSINA GUNJARRWANGA
Wak Wak
2019
natural earth pigments on bark
133 x 70 cm
808-19 $3800



ROSINA GUNJARRWANGA
Wak Wak
2019
natural earth pigments on Lorrkon
194 x 20 x 22 cm
1892-19 $4400

NOAH WURRKIDJ
Lorrkon (Hollow Log)
2019
natural earth pigments on Lorrkon
189 x 18 x 20 cm
1907-19 $5800

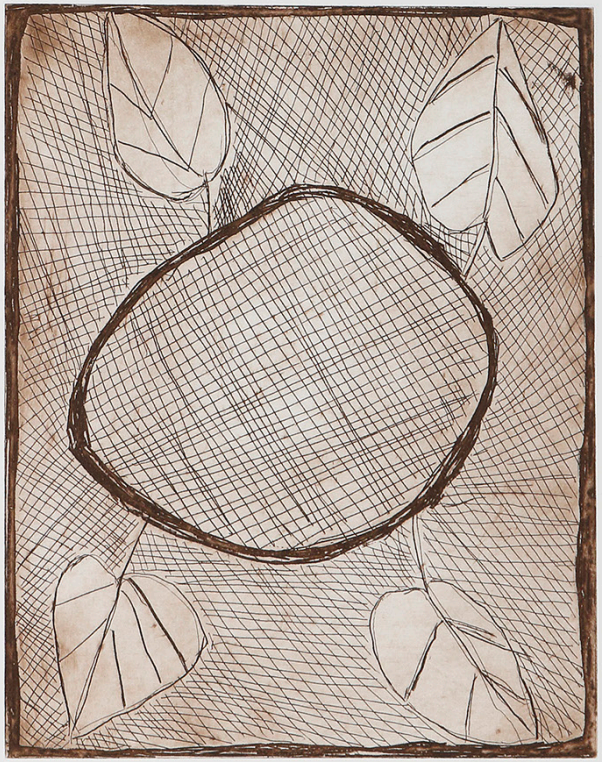
SEMERIA WURRKIDJ
Mardayin Design
2020
natural earth pigments on Lorrkon
156 x 19 x 19 cm
152-20 $3900

ROSINA GUNJARRWANGA
Wak Wak
2020
natural earth pigments on Lorrkon
151 x 29 x 36 cm
149-20 $4800

JOHN MAWURNDJUL
Wak Wak (Sanguine)
2016
etching
25 x 20 cm
JOHM04-16 FRAMED $1050

JOHN MAWURNDJUL
Billabong at Milmilngkan
2016
etching
25 x 20 cm
JOHM06-16 FRAMED $1050

JOHN MAWURNDJUL
Kunj
2016
etching
25 x 20 cm
JOHM01-16 $780



JOHN MAWURNDJUL
Lily (II)
2016
etching
25 x 20 cm
JOHM08-16 $780

JOHN MAWURNDJUL
Untitled
2016
etching
33 x 16 cm
JOHM16-16 $780

For further information or to see high resolution images please contact the gallery.

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