



# CURUMBA MAREEBA

GOOMPI UGERABAH



We gratefully  
acknowledge the  
Traditional Owners and  
their custodianship of  
the lands on which this  
collaboration originated.

We pay our respects to their Ancestors  
and their descendants, who continue  
cultural and spiritual connections to  
Country.



*Goompi Ugerabah with his dance troupe Bundjalung Kunjiel. Photographer @regardailleurs.yannick*

*“Practicing culture is my passion, and I will do this my entire life. Culture is very important; it gives people their true identity, a sense of belonging, and empowerment.”*

*- Goompi Ugerabah*



# Contents

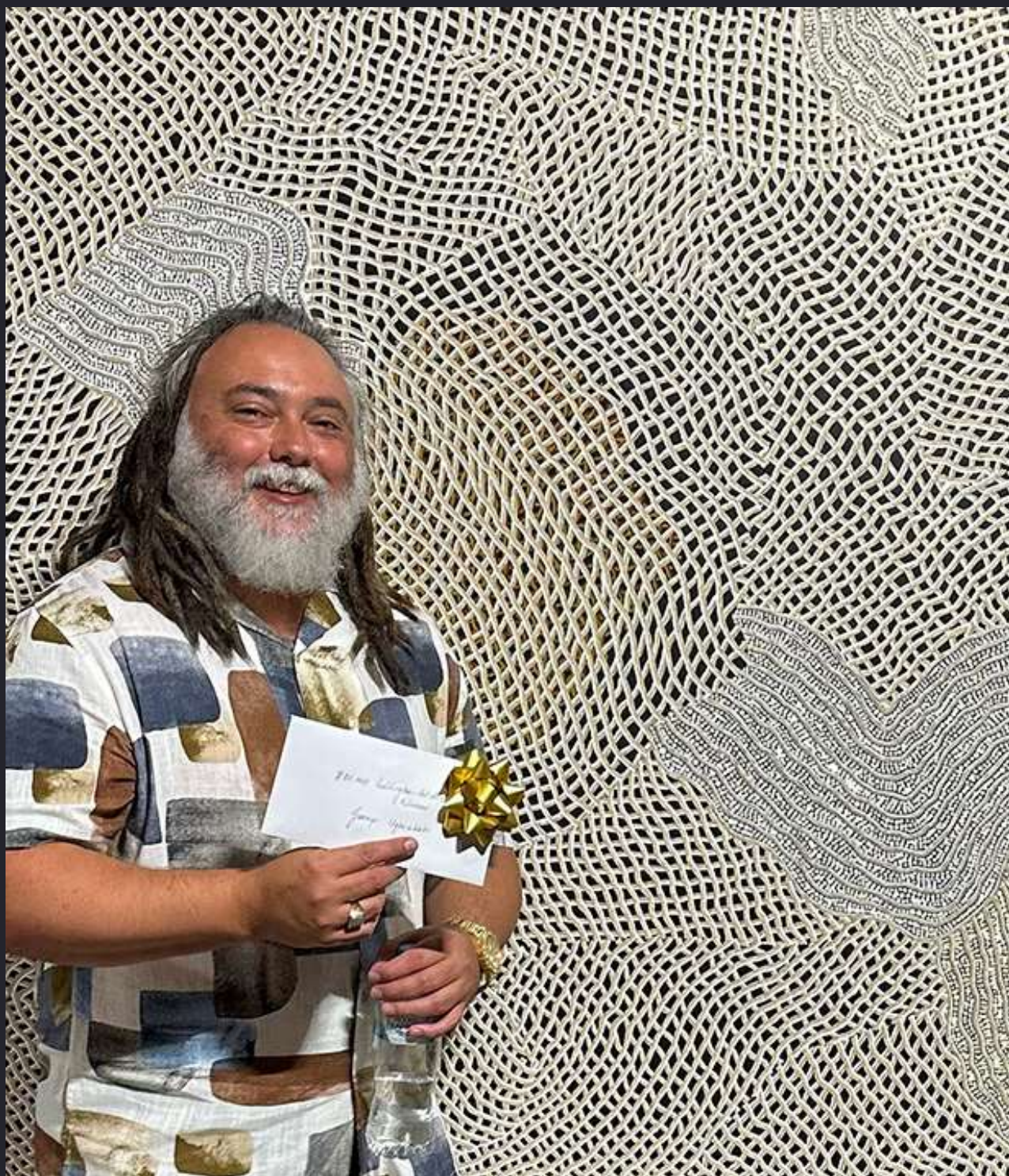
Foreward

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Biography







*Goompi Ugerabah at the 2023 Paddington Art Prize*

# Foreward

It is with great pride that we present *Curumba Mareeba*, the largest and most significant solo exhibition to date by Goompi Ugerabah - a visionary artist, cultural educator, and the 2023 Paddington Art Prize winner. Translating to “Big Good” in his teacher’s language, *Curumba Mareeba* is both a celebration of scale and spirit. It captures the breadth of Goompi’s practice - deeply grounded in cultural storytelling and the landscapes of Kombemerri Country.

Each work in this exhibition is a living narrative. Goompi’s paintings resonate with song, dance, and ceremony - evoking Country through powerful visual rhythms and an unmistakable sense of movement. Stories are inscribed on the back of every canvas, and in an unprecedented gesture of generosity, these are shared openly with viewers. The result is an experience of art that is not only visual but relational - an invitation into the artist’s world.

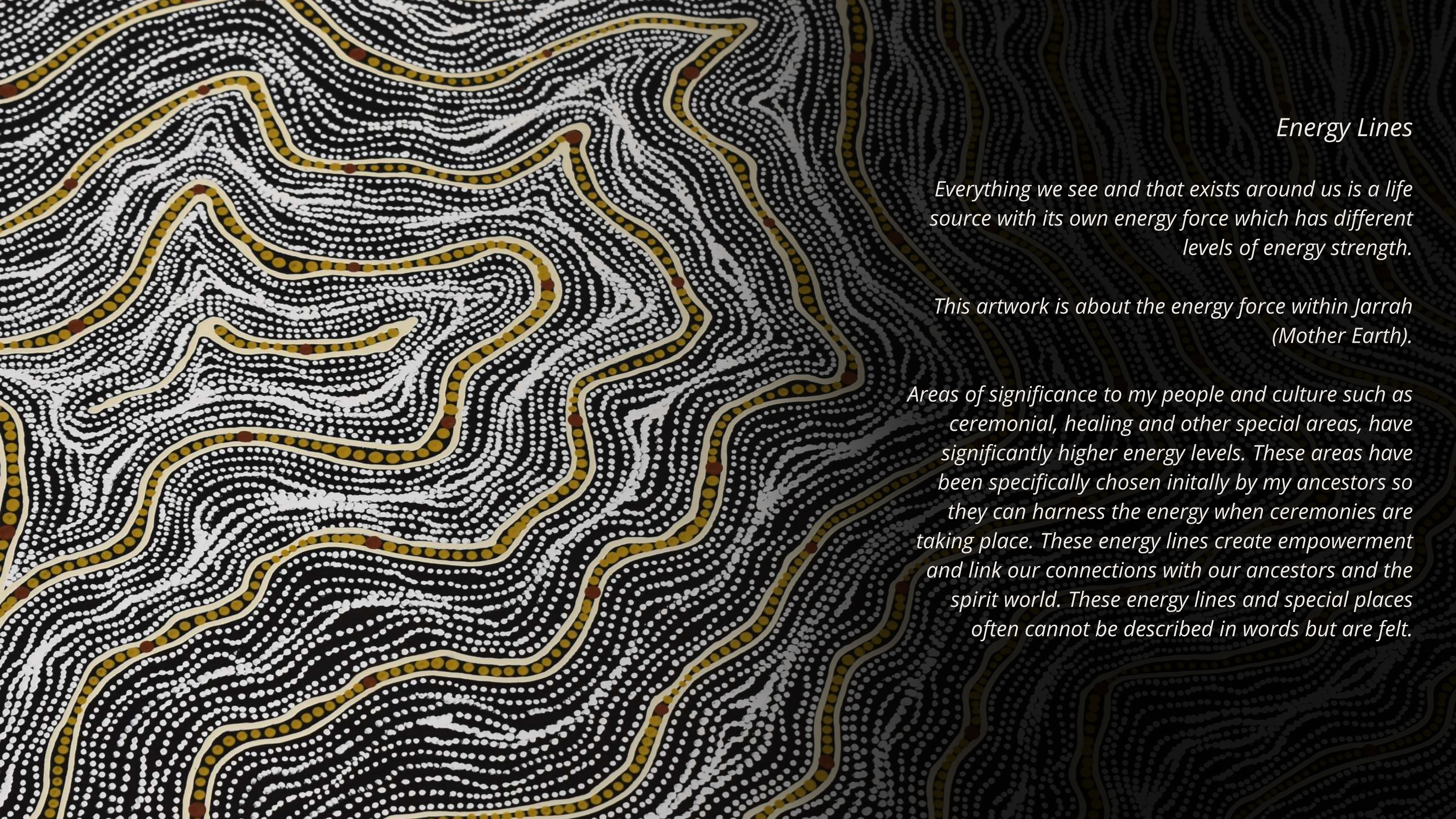
As Goompi’s national and international profile rises - with performances in the USA and ongoing inclusion in the National Museum of Australia’s *Connection* exhibition - *Curumba Mareeba* marks a pivotal moment. We are honoured to host this collection at Kate Owen Gallery and invite you to share in the connection, culture, and beauty of Goompi Ugerabah’s work.



An abstract artwork featuring a dense, wavy, and textured pattern in shades of dark blue and black, resembling a topographical map or a microscopic view of a material. The pattern is composed of numerous fine, overlapping lines that create a sense of depth and movement. The artwork is displayed on a dark, textured wall.

# ARTWORKS





## *Energy Lines*

*Everything we see and that exists around us is a life source with its own energy force which has different levels of energy strength.*

*This artwork is about the energy force within Jarrah (Mother Earth).*

*Areas of significance to my people and culture such as ceremonial, healing and other special areas, have significantly higher energy levels. These areas have been specifically chosen initially by my ancestors so they can harness the energy when ceremonies are taking place. These energy lines create empowerment and link our connections with our ancestors and the spirit world. These energy lines and special places often cannot be described in words but are felt.*

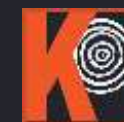




**Energy Lines**

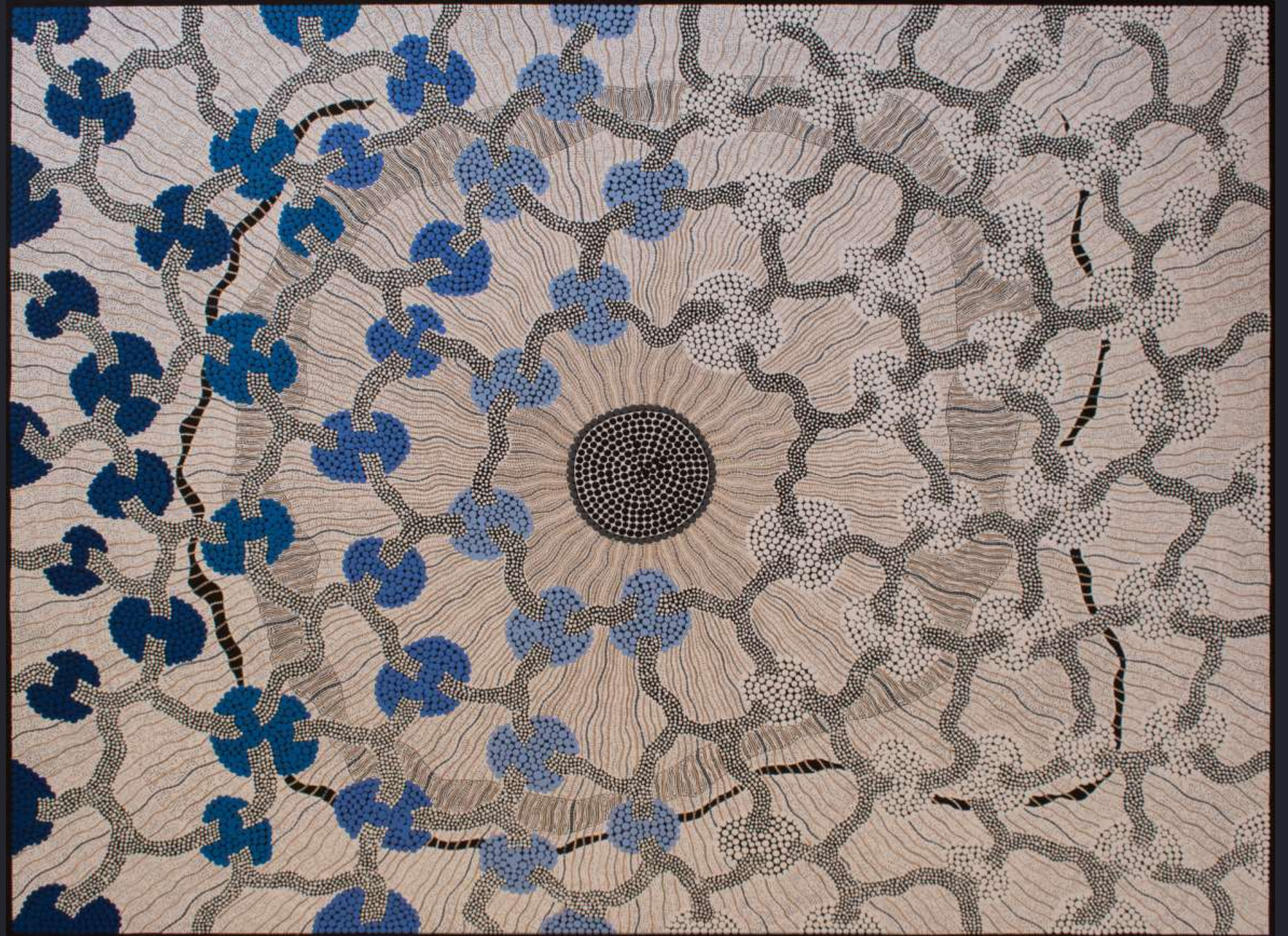
Acrylic on Canvas, 118 x 180cm  
\$18,500 [Goug0006]

SOLD





**Man Gnur Gnur (Life Giving)**  
Acrylic on Canvas, 161 x 206cm  
\$27,500 [GOU0020]





Bunya Yarrunya  
(Bunya Travels)

*Once there was a massive gathering of people in the Bunya mountains by many tribes. It was the feast of the Bunya nut, which happened every 3 years for thousands of years.*

*The local Gubbi Gubbi and Wakka Wakka people would gather the Bunya nuts and send a message out inviting other tribes to attend the feast.*

*Whilst waiting for guests to arrive, they would roast the bunya cones on the fires.*

*Some tribes had to walk for extended periods, often days or weeks to get there. The local people shared the bunya nuts with all tribal families as they arrived at the camp for the gathering.*

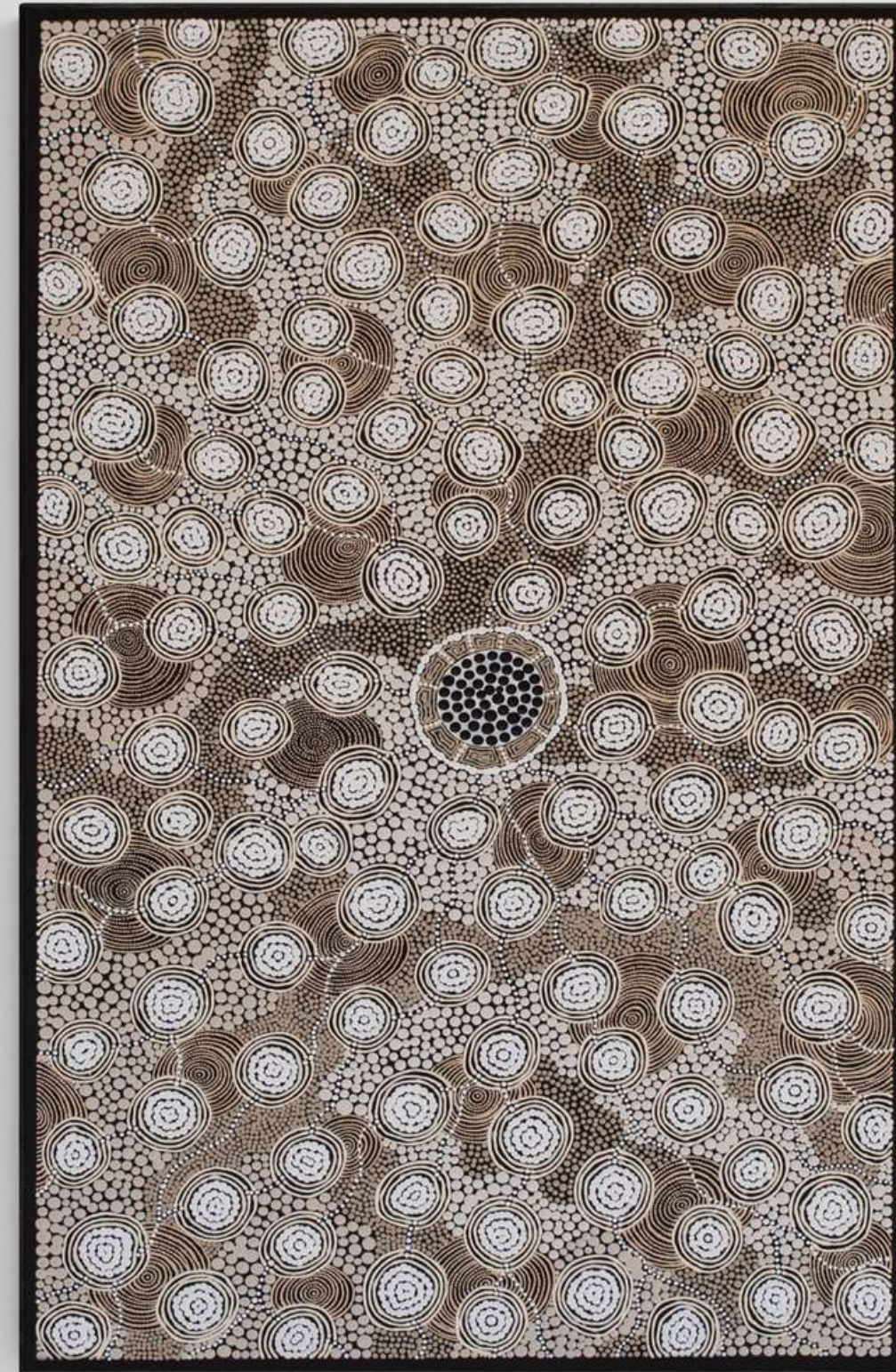
*As the visiting tribes began their journey home, they were given remaining Bunya nuts to take home. Some of these nuts/seeds were dropped unintentionally on the ground as they travelled home.*

*Living and travelling myself throughout Southeast Queensland, I have seen many Bunya pines growing in random places they don't belong. The realisation that these trees created pinpoints of those many tribes as they travelled home from the Bunya Mountains.*


*This artwork depicts the journey of the Bunya travels.*

**Bunya Travels**

Acrylic on Canvas, 130 x 78cm  
\$8,750 [GOU0012]







## *Bora Rings*

My people had three Special areas for these ceremonies.

One Strictly for males to hold initiations into manhood.

One Strictly for females to hold initiations into womanhood.

The business carried out here was very sacred and happenings in these ceremonies for those involved only. Not to be discussed outside of the ceremony or with the opposite sex. The ceremonies were held to give knowledge, empowerment, spiritual connection and more. There is much that happens but cannot be discussed.

The third circle was for ceremonies all community could attend such as marriages, and special business or gatherings.

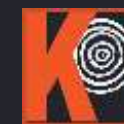
The rings have a spiritual connection, not physical.





**Bora Rings**

Acrylic on Canvas, 128 x 188 cm  
\$19,995 [GOU0013]



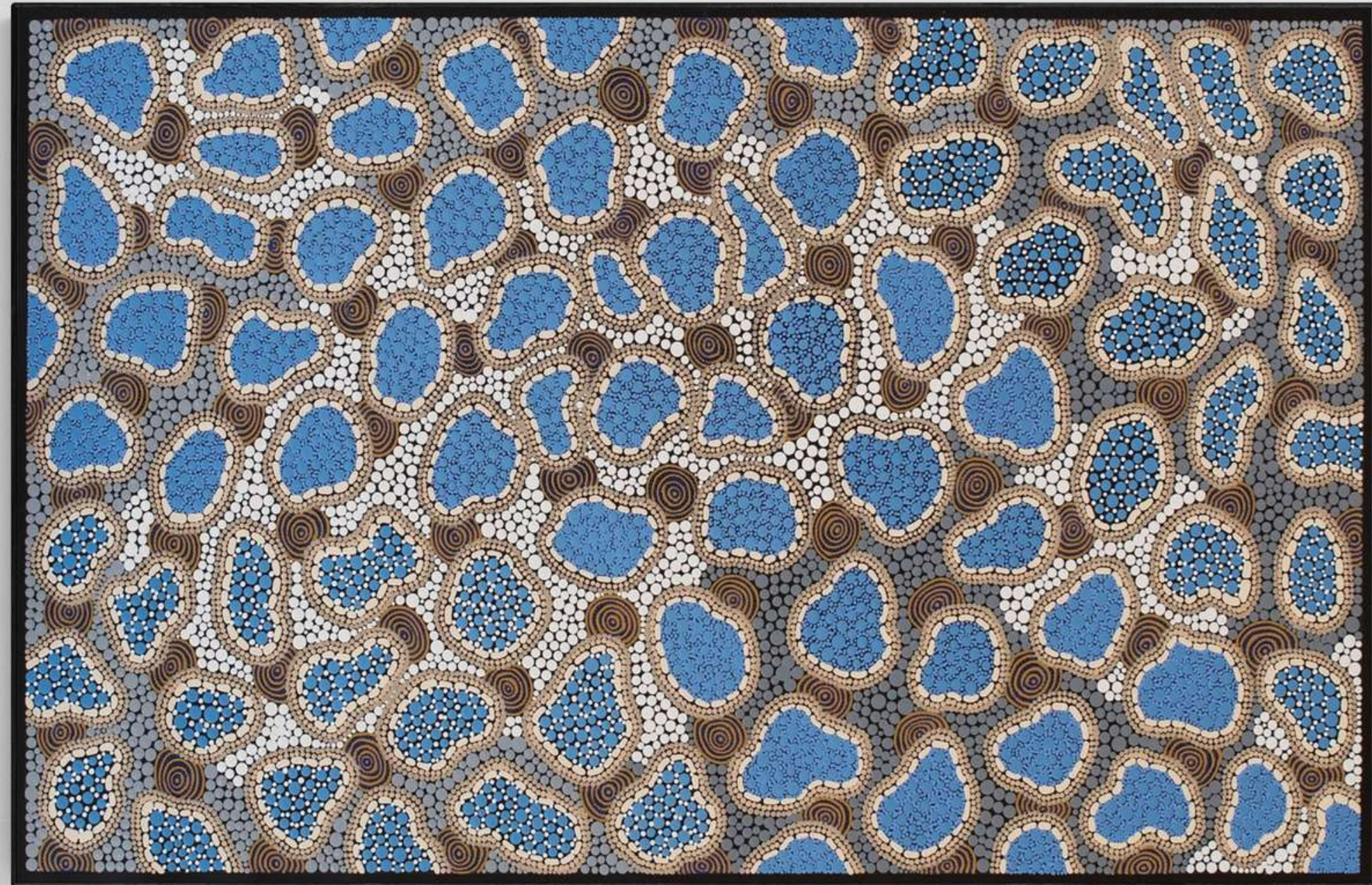


Jarrunya Tdapul  
(Travelling Water)

*This artwork represents water  
flowing out of mother earth, the  
mountains and travelling through  
rock pools.*

*Water is significant and important  
to my people.*

*As simple as drinking water to using  
the very high energy water that  
comes from mother earth to aid in  
healing ceremonies.*



**Jarrunya Tdapul**  
**(Travelling Water)**

Acrylic on Canvas, 78 x 130cm  
\$8,750 [GOU0011]







*Mugeedah  
(Ochre Used for Body Paint)*

*This artwork represents the Ochres of my area. Grey, black and white mainly with some red and yellow Ochres in the mountains. I gather them to use to paint my body when I do tribal dancing. We paint symbols to represent our animal totems or stories of dances that we do.*

*Our ancestors did the same, but also use special paint ups for sacred and important ceremonies. Also painting our bodies for travel. As a uniform as such. So as our people would arrive at borders of the different neighbouring tribes it would state their business of why they needed to come there or pass through the neighbours' tribal land.*

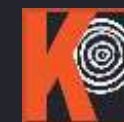
*So when the people of that tribe seen the painted designs on approach they would know what their intentions were before even speaking.*





**Mugeedah**  
**(Ochre Used for Body Paint)**  
Acrylic on Canvas, 120 x 182cm  
\$18,500 [Goug0007]

SOLD



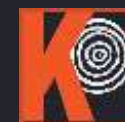




**Ochres of Mother Earth**

Acrylic on Canvas, 92 x 162cm

\$12,000 [GOU0017]





## Meeting on Minjungbal Land

*This is a representation of a small area of landscape on Minjungbal tribal land (Tweed Heads) pointing out to a special place called, Jungarra's (pelican's) corroboree ground.*

*A special place where the birds got their colours by painting their bodies with elements from the land so they could dance. These colours permanently remained after the special corroboree with the Pelicans.*

*This place is commonly known today as Razor Back hill. The artwork also references community gatherings or meetings with neighbouring tribes who would travel there for trade or business.*



## Meeting on Minjungbal Land

Acrylic on Canvas, 93 x 162cm  
\$12,000 [Goug0018]



Yarunya Jahlow (Travelling Fire -  
Burning off the Land)

*This artwork represents ancient tribal  
methods of burning off land to create  
new life. Rejuvenation.*

*Knowing when to burn, how many  
times a year, how to burn, was  
common knowledge among each tribal  
people. A big part of the rejuvenation  
was knowing that the many species of  
native trees needed fire to germinate  
their seeds to begin the growth.*

*Being strongly connected to Mother  
Earth, our people had many practices  
in place for a reason and naturally  
understood it was important. Like all  
knowledge, it was always passed down  
to the next generations.*



**Yarunya Jahlow (Travelling Fire - Burning off the Land)**

Acrylic on Canvas, 96x 150cm

\$12,000 [GOUJ0001]







*Tdapul  
(Water Brings Life)*

*The artwork represents the importance of water to my people both salt and fresh water.*

*My people live beside the ocean so we are saltwater people.*

*Water is part of creation when merging with the sun (Bimee) and mother earth (Jarrah), it created life in the beginning.*

*The saltwater brings life to everything in the ocean and rivers. A lot of which are food sources for my people, so it continues life.*

*Freshwater, rain, waterholes, lakes etc. give life to all on the land. Including underground water tunnels that flow from beneath mother earth and through the rock pools as well.*

*That's why we always pay respect for our creation ancestors that continue life.*





**Tdapul**  
**(Water Brings Life)**

Acrylic on Canvas, 122 x 184cm  
\$18,500 [GOU0008]

**SOLD**





## Tribal Ceremonies

*This piece represents special areas where my people held ceremonies. Some more important than others, but all a part of our people's life, which they shape who we are as a cultural people.*

*Intentionally the area's where ceremony is held, the land has high energy than the rest of our tribal land.*



## **Tribal Ceremonies**

Acrylic on Canvas, 96 x 152 cm  
\$12,000 [GOU0015]







## Creation of Life

*Sun: Bimee | Earth: Jarrah | Water: Tdapul*

*In the beginning the earth was dark, flat and lifeless.  
When a crack appeared in the earth, opening widely where  
a bright light shot out and into the sky Country.*

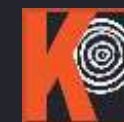
*From that crack water started to flow across the Earth.  
As the three merged – bright light (sun), earth, and water –  
organisms came to life, such as the shrubs, plants, trees,  
insects, grass then after some time, animals.*

*After many thousands of years animals changed into  
human form.*

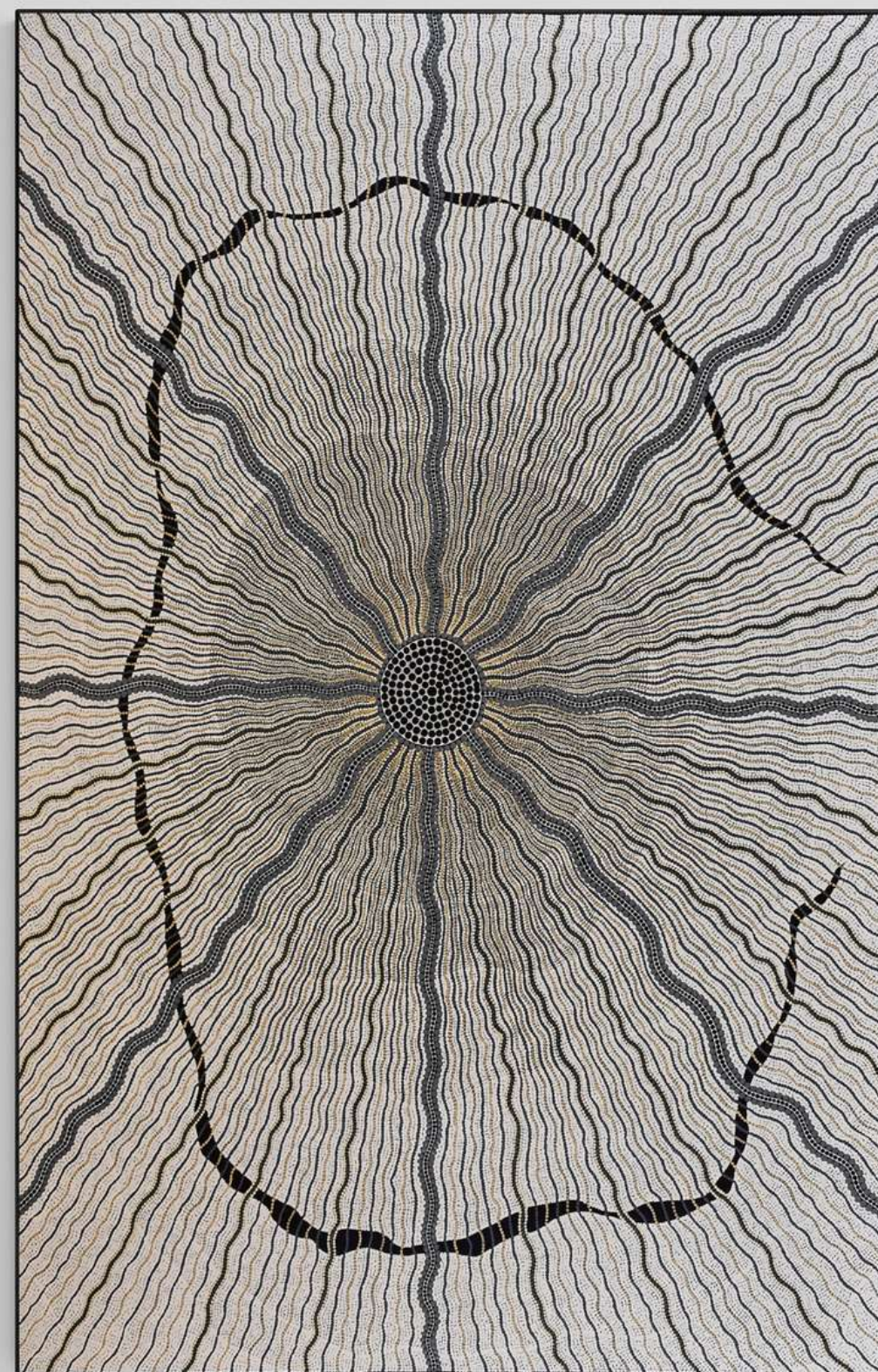


**Creation of Life**

Acrylic on Canvas, 144 x 110 cm  
\$13,500 [GOU0016]



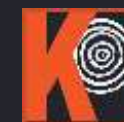




**Creation of Life**

Acrylic on Canvas, 188 x 128 cm  
\$19,995 [Goug0009]

SOLD





## Undercul (Diamond Scaled Mullet Fish)

*The artwork represents the diamond scaled mullet fish. The schools of fish travel pass my homeland each year. Around the cold season time. They migrate along the east coast heading for warmer waters. As they arrive the sea eagles would call out to the people as a sign to grab the fishing gear.*

*We also have natural signs in my area where the silver wattle, which is yellow in colour would bloom to let us know it's mullet season.*

*And the hairy grubs would walk one after each other in long unbroken lines when the mullet are passing through. Some of them lines being up to 10metres long.*

*The artwork depicts the diamond scales of the mullet and also the doro nets the women used to net the mullet. These were made from the inner bark of the hibiscus trees. Rubbing the strands together and creating a strong twine which was woven into nets.*



## Undercul (Diamond Scaled Mullet Fish)

Acrylic on Canvas, 97 x 153cm

\$12,000 [Goug0019]







## *Angry Sands*

The Rainbow Serpent was born between the earth and the seawater.

From head to tail it stretched from Ballina to Fraser Island.

As it moved from its birthplace the afterbirth remained, creating sand  
which was rainbow colours.

Then the serpent started to travel growing larger and etching away at the  
earth. Creating rivers, lakes, valleys, hills, mountains (the entire landscape).

Over tens of thousands of years my people had the same lore as animals  
that we leave things the way it is. Especially sacred areas or significant  
sites.

When the settlers came, they mined the sands where the serpent was  
born. Taking all the rare colourful sands. Leaving only white, black and  
grey. This angered the serpents spirit.

So when people walk the area of its birthplace sometimes the serpent will  
warn people away by whipping up the wind and stinging people with sand.





**Angry Sands**

Acrylic on Canvas, 138 x 206 cm

\$24,995 [GOU0014]

SOLD

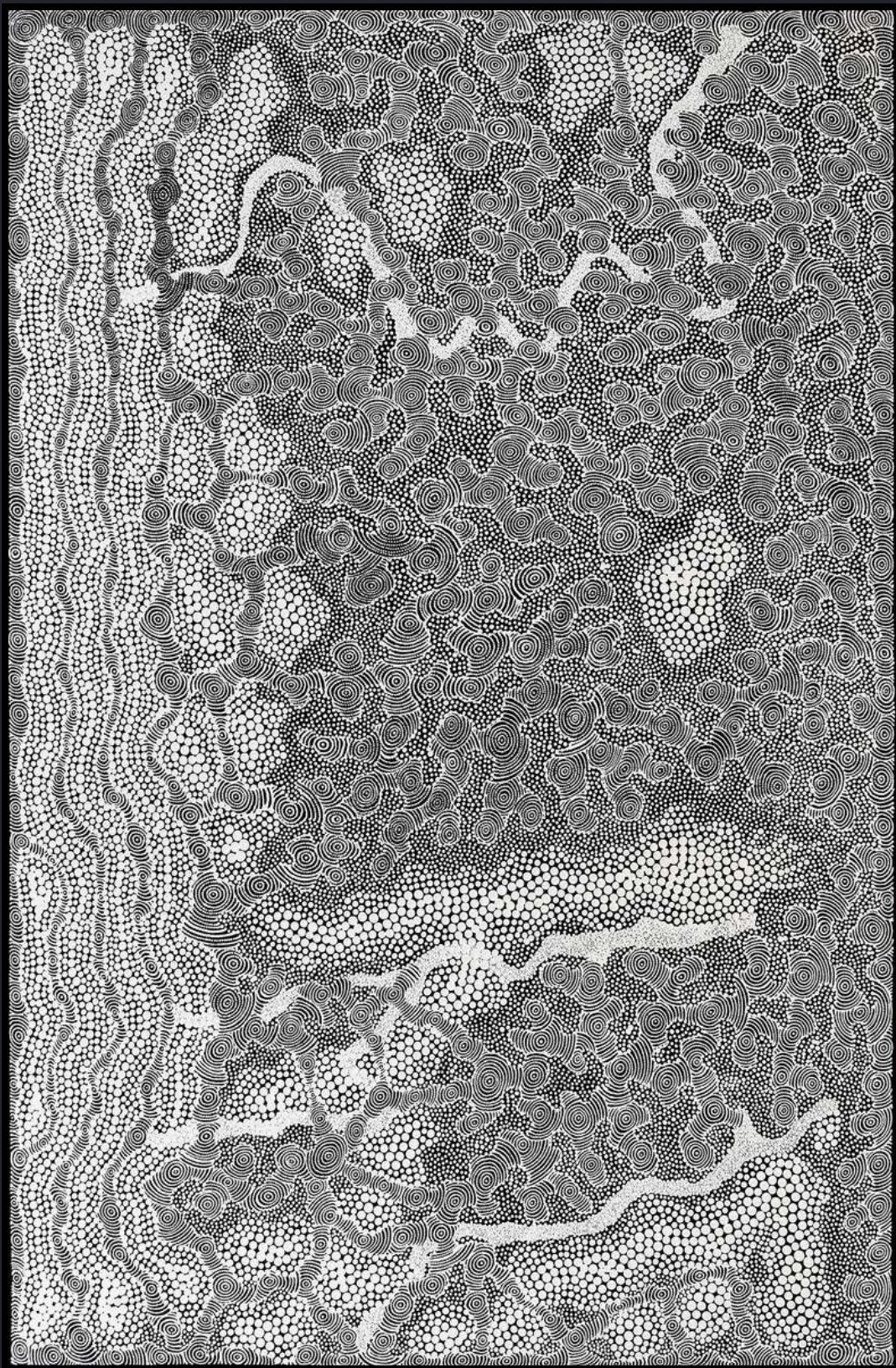






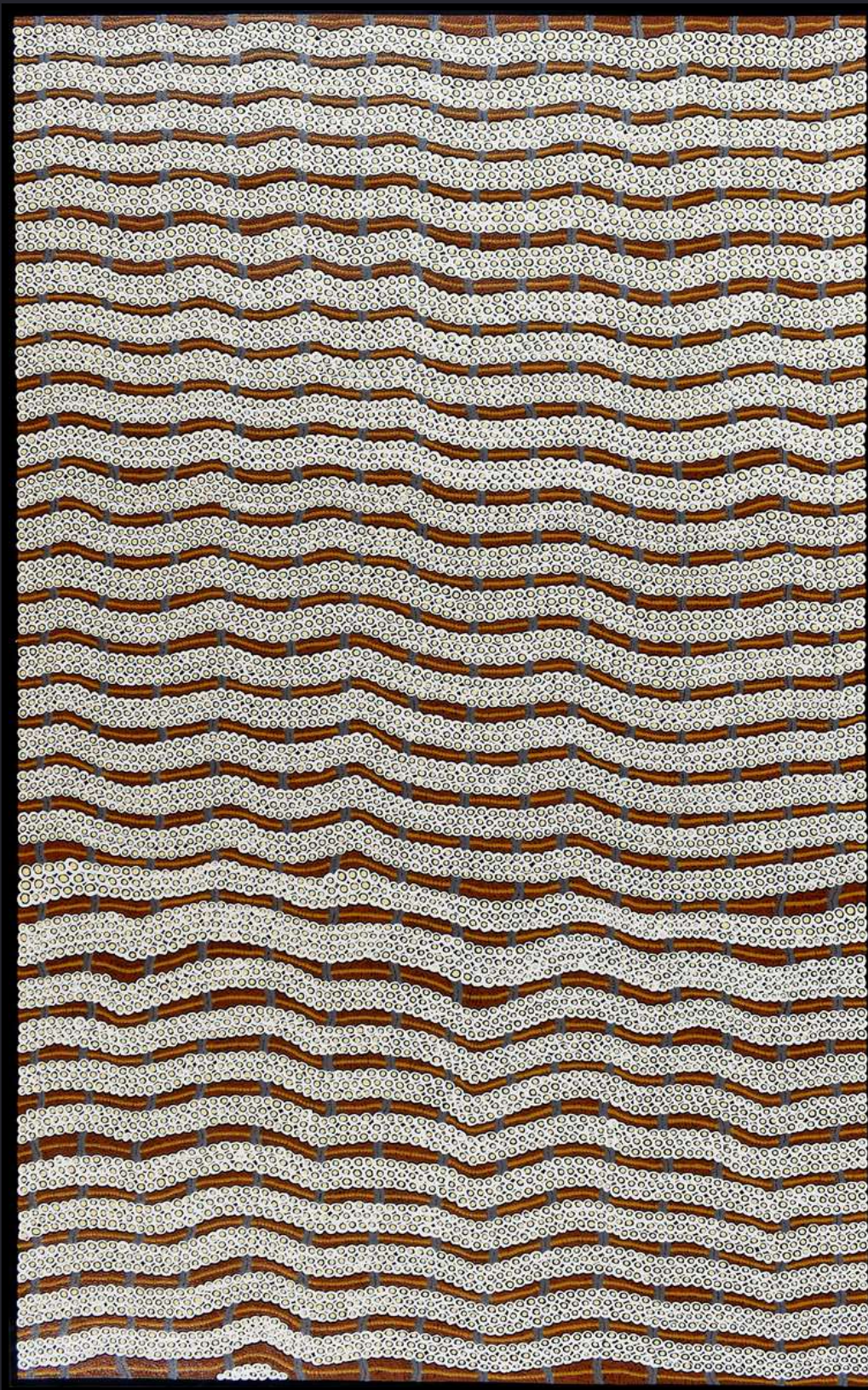
# ADDITIONAL ARTWORKS





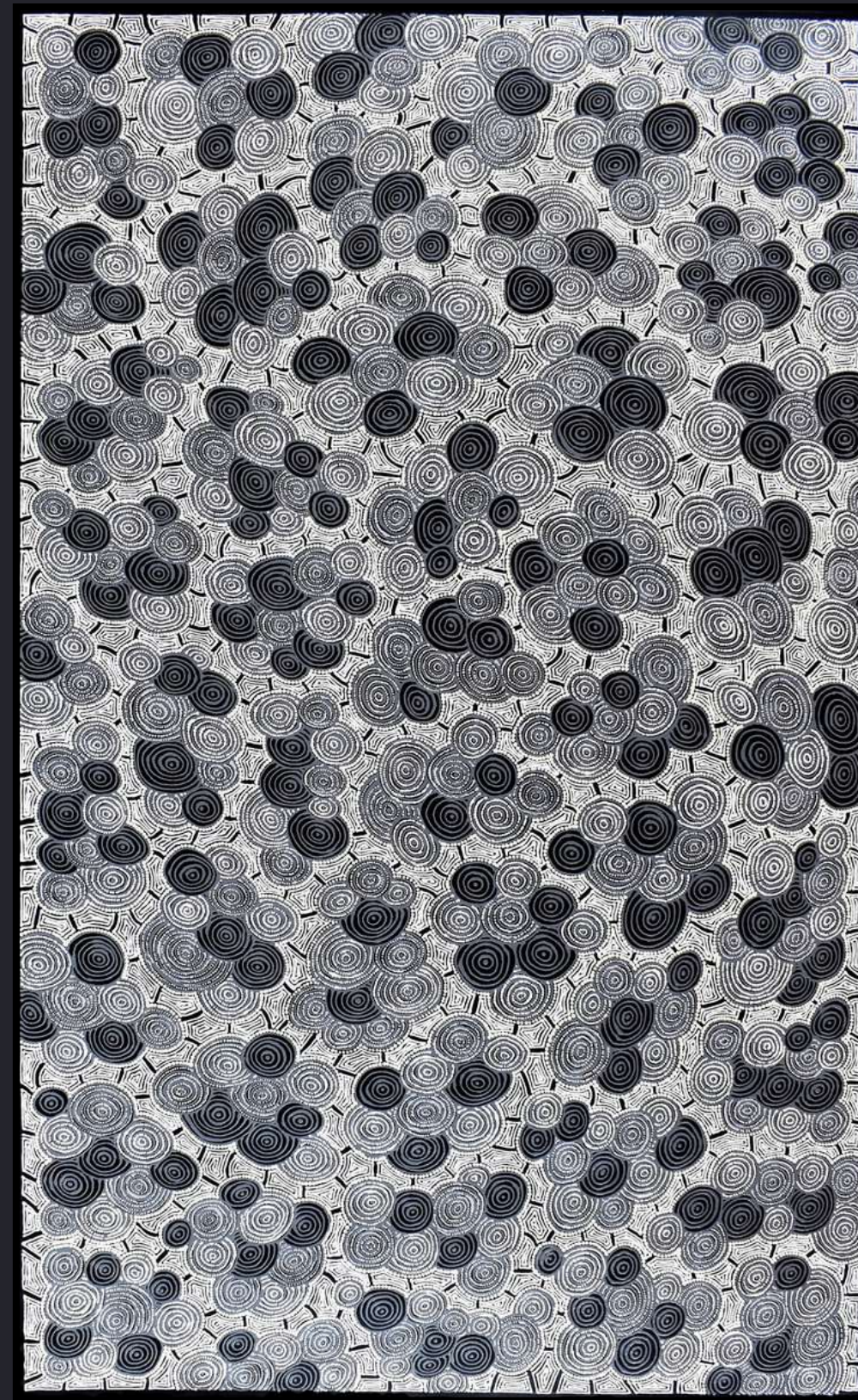
**Kombumerri Dreaming**

Acrylic on Canvas, 181 x 121cm  
\$18,500 [Goug0010]



**Hairy Grubs**

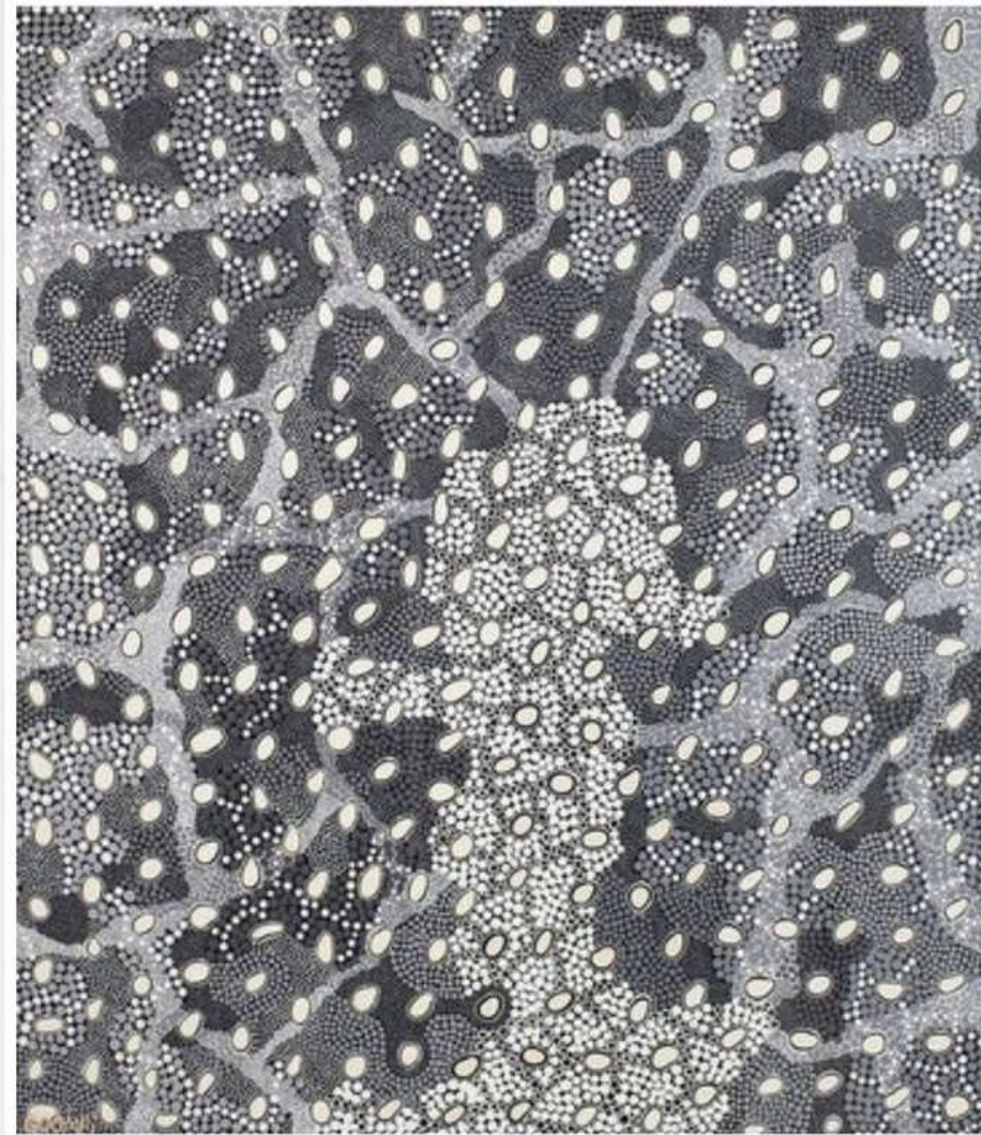
Acrylic on Canvas, 93 x 151cm  
\$12,000 [Goug0003]



**Mud Flats**

Acrylic on Canvas, 92 x 152cm  
\$12,000 [Goug0002]





**Kingingyarra (Oyster)**

Print on Paper, 100 x 88cm

\$2,650 [GOUGLP002]



**Ochres of Mother Earth**

Print on Paper, 76 x 131cm

\$3,150 [GOUGLP001]





SKIN NAME: BANDA

ARTIST: Goompi Ugerabah  
(POSSON) (GOANNA-PLACE OF)

ENGLISH NAME: Stephen Larcombe

TRIBE: GURRENG-GURRENG (BUNDABERG REGION QLD)

BORN AND PRACTICED  
CULTURE ON

"  
KOMBUERRI  
(GOLD COAST QLD)

# BIOGRAPHY

TRIBES of the BUNDJALUNG NATION

LANGUAGE TAUGHT: GANDAI (GANDOWAL) - EASTERN BRISBANE TO COASTLINE, REDLANDS AND ISLANDS INCLUDING STRADBROKE & MORETON.





# GOOMPI UGERABAH

**DOB:** 1981

**BORN:** Southport, QLD

**LANGUAGE GROUP:** Gandowal

**COMMUNITY:** Ngnarangwai, QLD

Goompi Ugerabah, whose tribal name translates to "possum from the place of the goanna," was born on Kombemerri land in the Gold Coast region of Queensland. Though he grew up on Minjungbal and Kombemerri land, Goompi has traced his maternal ancestry to the Gurreng Gurreng tribal area near Bundaberg. His connection to his culture began early in life through his immersion in traditional practices of song, dance, and language, which he has pursued with devotion for over 25 years.

As a young teenager, Goompi was guided by the Walker brothers, renowned Nunukal songmen and dancers from Stradbroke Island. Under their mentorship, Goompi honed his skills in traditional song and dance, which became the foundation of his cultural journey. As an adult, Goompi has grown into a respected songman, founding his own family dance troupe, "Bundjalung Kunjiel."



His troupe has performed for distinguished audiences, including Members of Parliament, international dignitaries, and overseas audiences, sharing the richness of Aboriginal culture through powerful performances.

In 2002, Goompi's path expanded to visual art. Watching artists from diverse Indigenous communities, he was inspired to pick up the brush himself, initially depicting animalistic representations of his totems and local stories. His style quickly evolved, developing a unique graphic language marked by a restrained palette and bold designs, evocative of the ochres and landscapes of his homeland. Goompi's acrylic on canvas works are sought after for their strong cultural narrative, connecting viewers with stories deeply rooted in place and tradition. His dedication to innovation has made him a full-time artist, whose works feature in notable galleries and collections worldwide.

Alongside his art, Goompi remains deeply involved in preserving and teaching cultural practices. His knowledge has been cultivated through years of research, conversations with elders, and active collaboration with local custodians. Now an educator himself, he teaches children and adults alike, sharing the importance of heritage and community. His goal is to foster an enduring appreciation for culture, passing it forward so it thrives with the next generation.

Goompi's artwork has been exhibited internationally, and his work has captured the attention of figures such as Princess Benedikte of Denmark and institutions including the CIA in the United States. In 2023, he was awarded the prestigious Paddington Art Prize for Landscape, a recognition that underscores his influence in contemporary Indigenous art. His recent public installation, 'Water Brings Life,' echoes the textures and colors of the local rainforest, paying homage to Kombemerri Country's landscapes and waters.

To own a piece by Goompi Ugerabah is to hold a powerful connection to the rich cultural landscapes of Kombemerri and Gurreng Gurreng Country. His art embodies a profound respect for land, history, and tradition, offering viewers a window into the stories and symbols that have shaped his people for generations. For collectors and art lovers, Goompi's work is not only visually compelling but also a chance to engage with and preserve the spirit of one of Australia's oldest living cultures. Each painting invites a deeper understanding of the land, traditions, and the artist's unique perspective, making his pieces truly invaluable additions to any collection.

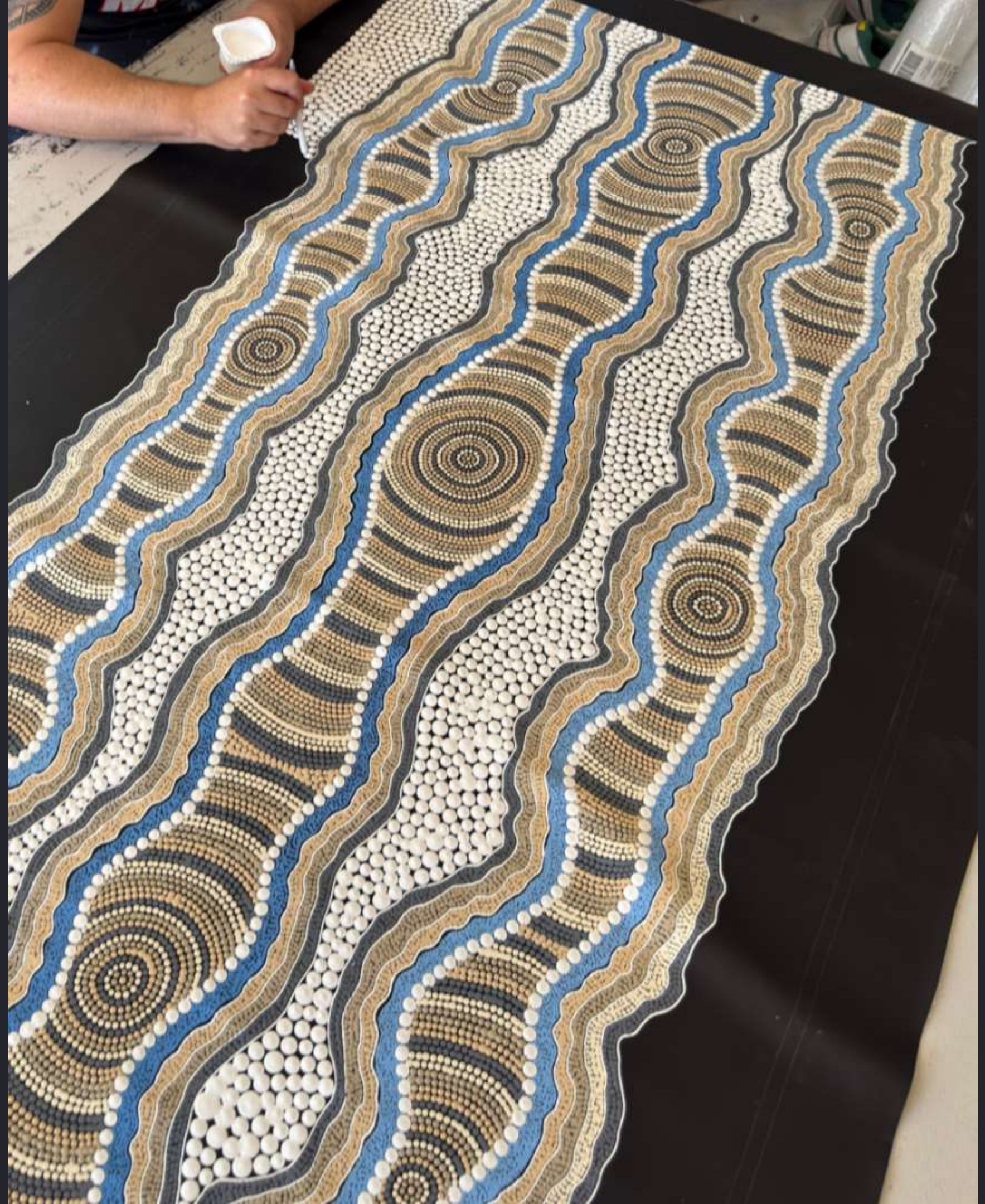


# Ethics + Authenticity

Kate Owen Gallery is committed to upholding the rights of Indigenous artists and each painting is sold with a Certificate of Authenticity guaranteeing the provenance of the work.

The Gallery is a proud member of the Aboriginal Art Association of Australia (AAAA), the pan industry organisation for people involved in Indigenous art.

The Association binds members to a strict code of conduct, so visitors can be assured that artists are dealt with fairly, transparently and with respect.





# Contact Us



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kate owen gallery  
contemporary aboriginal art