



# BERNDT NEWS

Berndt Museum of Anthropology

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THE UNIVERSITY OF  
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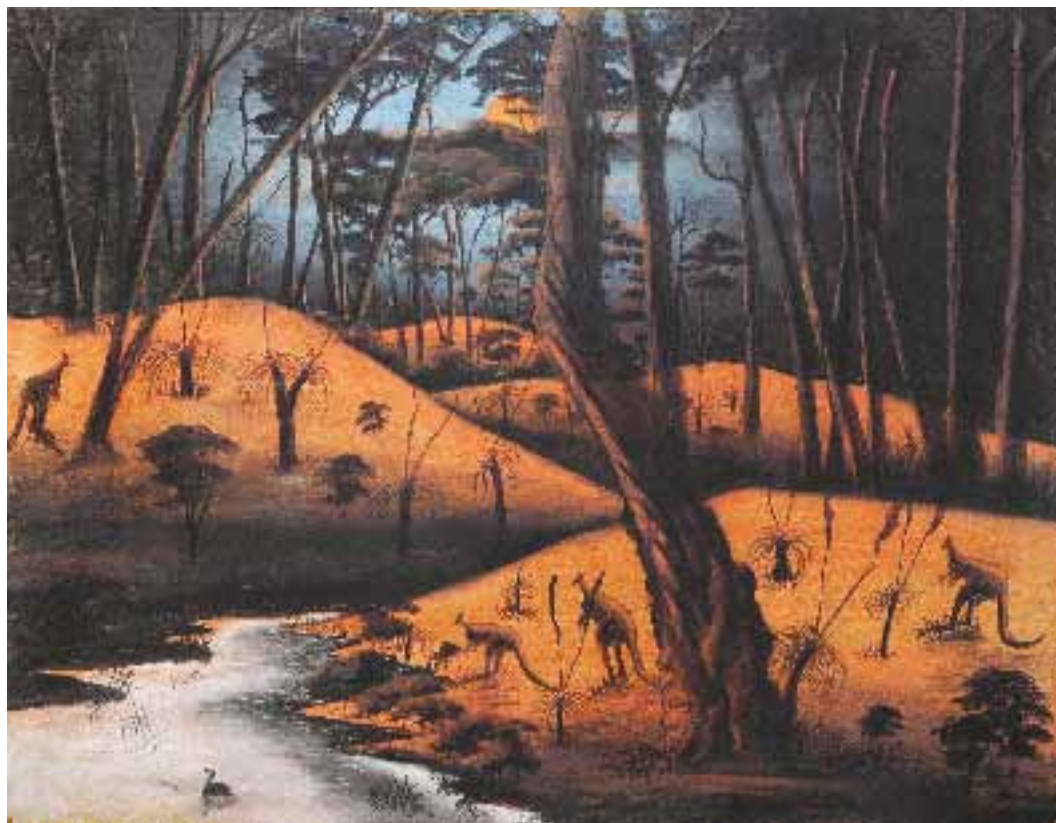
G'day Everybody!

THIS is the eighth Newsletter from the Berndt Museum of Anthropology, produced by staff for Aboriginal communities throughout Australia. We apologise for the delay, but we have been very busy planning the temporary relocation of our collections off-site as the first step in the move to a new building, and this is taking up a lot of our time. We've also had lots of community visitors, it's been great getting to meet you!

Our offering of the *Koorah Coolingah* exhibition on the Carrolup artists of the South-West was a key achievement for 2006, and our other two currently travelling exhibitions, *On Track* and the Allawah Grove photographic exhibition, are still on tour: the first is now in Sydney; the second is now in Geraldton.

## OPENING DAY AT KATANNING: Perth International Arts Festival

The highlight of 2006 for the Museum was undoubtedly the opening of its twin *Koorah Coolingah* exhibitions at both the Katanning Regional Art Gallery and the Western Australian Museum.



*Dawn*, Parnell Dempster, c. 1945-53. Pastel 58.3 x 75.7cm. Gift of Herbert Mayer (Class of 1929), 1966. Picker Art Gallery, Colgate University. WU/P32611

## QUICK NEWS

- Allawah Grove exhibition completes its South-West tour and is now at the Geraldton Regional Art Gallery
- The *On Track* exhibition is traveling through the Eastern States with funding from Visions Australia, and is now in Sydney.
- Assistant Curator Robyn Smith Walley and Curatorial Assistant Tracie Pushman curated the *Koorah Coolin-gah: Children Long Ago* exhibition, which focused on the unique landscape painting tradition of the South-West, which was initiated by the child artists of Carrolup, near Katanning.
- Kalgoorlie artist Sue Wyatt has commenced work at the Museum, replacing Robyn who is on Study Leave this year.

## UNIDENTIFIED PHOTO FROM THE LAST NEWSLETTER

MANY thanks to everyone who telephoned the Museum and gave us information on the three young boys photographed at the Allawah Grove settlement. This photograph is one of many unidentified photographs that were brought to the Museum in 2002 as part of a collection from the Gare family, who worked at the Settlement from 1958 to its closure.

Many of these photographs were included in the Allowah Grove exhibition curated by Tracie Pushman and Robyn Smith Walley in 2005, which was for many community members their first opportunity to revisit the memories of the past. Allowah Grove, which was located where the Perth International Airport is now, was the first home for many Nyungar families, and others, who moved to Perth in the post-War period. The photographic collection assembled by the Gares, over many years in-



WU/P32136

L.-R.: Larry Pickett, Colin Boundry and Ian Garlett.

volvement with the Society of Friends at Allowah Grove, is an enduring record of an important event of South-West history, which is no longer forgotten and unrecognised.

## MUSEUM CELEBRATES FIRST 30 YEARS!

THE Museum celebrated its first thirty years at a symposium organised with the Discipline of



Anthropology and Sociology, which was celebrating its 50th titled *Anthropology of the West 1956-2006*. The symposium attracted participants from around the world, all either directly or indirectly associated with Anthropology at The University of Western Australia.

The Museum convened the last session of the Symposium, at which Howard Morphy (Australian National University), Philip Jones (South Australian Museum) and Athol Farmer (Mungart Boodja, Katanning), spoke about the Berndts' contribution to Australian museology and, in particular, to the popularising of Aboriginal art.

Professor Berndt mounting an exhibition of Aboriginal art from Western and North-Eastern Arnhem Land at the Perth Town Hall, 1957. [WU/P1012]

## A new home for the Berndt Museum of Anthropology

IN the late 1960s, Professor Berndt dreamed of a new building to house the collections of cultural material that he and other anthropologists assembled over many years of research. The Social Sciences Building provided the Museum with its first proper home. Here, photographs taken in 1976 to publicise the new accommodation, are joined by photographs taken for this issue, from exactly the same points of view, to show the state of the gallery today.

The Museum has long outgrown its home of 30 years. Our collections have increased from about 1,100 objects of art and culture in 1976, to over 11,500 today. There have been several major donations of works, including several from Aboriginal artists themselves and art communities, who have chosen the Museum as a repository for their works.

There are more than 32,000 photographs that need to be looked after, for better access by communities, students and researchers.

The University is committed to providing a new

home for the Museum and its collections, and is currently negotiating with the State Government to acquire the site of the old Sunset Home overlooking the Swan River.

This would be a perfect location for a new Museum built around the historic limestone buildings that are already on the site. Public galleries, visible storage and other facilities would greatly enhance the Museum's operations.

We should know very soon whether the Government will be able to provide us with this site.

### THE MUSEUM GALLERY—THIRTY YEARS ON



WU/P289



WU/P32755

These photographs of the Museum's gallery were taken thirty years apart. The black and white photographs were taken for the University's announcement of the formation of the Museum in 1976. In one, a young John Stanton stands with Professor Berndt, admiring the new gallery. The colour photos were taken for this issue of *Berndt News*. The gallery is now overcrowded with packing crates and recently acquired works, which are to be moved off-site into temporary storage until there is a new building to house the Museum.



WU/P32756



WU/P293

## Koorah Coolingah exhibition

THERE is no doubt that this project, which drew on the Museum's outstanding collection of early Carrolup art, has been one of the most talked about exhibitions the Museum has ever been involved in. It has reinvigorated interest in the South-West landscape style.



Ezzard Flowers, John Stanton and Athol Farmer examining the 'lost' Carrolup drawings at the Picker Art Gallery, Colgate University. [WU/P32228]

Former child artist Milton 'Micky' Jackson looks on as his daughter Merlene Mead unscrews the first packing case with Angus Wallam and Ezzard Flowers, while Kelrick Martin's team from SBS *Message Stick* films the event. [WU/P32779]

The 'lost' collection of Carrolup children's drawings at the Picker Art Gallery, Colgate University in mid-state New York, was recognised by Professor Howard Morphy, of the Centre for Cross Cultural Research at the Australian National University in Canberra, during a visit there.

Subsequently, the Museum's Director Dr John Stanton accompanied two Nyungar community representatives, Athol Farmer and Ezzard Flowers, both of Katanning, to inspect the collection.

It was a moving experience for all three of them, seeing for the first time in five decades the precious artworks created by the Nyungar children at Carrolup Native Settlement as it was then called. Carrolup later became the Marribank Mission, where Ezzard was raised.

The Director of the Picker, Elizabeth Barker, accompanied the crates from New York to Katanning Regional Gallery, where they were shown as part of the twin displays that comprised the exhibition.

Sadly, only one of the original child artists is still



alive, Milton Jackson. John and Robyn were thrilled to have him present in the Katanning Art Gallery when they opened the crates. For the first time since 1951, the children's drawings were back in Nyungar country, the place where they belong.

Seeing the works on the gallery walls evoked memories of them pinned to the walls of the old school (now the Marribank church) all those years ago.

Over 2,000 people, Nyungar and Wedjela, attended the celebratory opening of the exhibition that evening.

A group of senior local women spoke strongly of seeing these works 'come home', Chairman of the Museum Advisory Board Dr Richard Walley performed the didjeridu, and local children danced.

Three nights later, a large crowd attended the launch of the other element of the exhibition, at the West-



Local Nyungar leaders spoke at the launch of the *Koorah Coolingah* exhibition at the Katanning Art Gallery. They talked of the local significance the return of the Picker Collection had for them and their community. L.-R.: Janet Collard, Patsy Michaels, Freda Winmar, Kathy Hill (Hayward), Gabrielle Hansen, Meryl Farmer. [WU/P32799]



Milton Jackson with his daughter Merlene Mead as he is presented with a reproduction of one of the paintings he did as a child at Carrolup, by Elizabeth Barker, Director of the Picker Gallery at Colgate University, in the state of New York, where the original is now held. [WU/P32759]

ern Australian Museum. Milton Jackson was again present, as guest of honour of the Museum. After the formal opening, he was presented by Elizabeth Barker with a copy of one of his early works that is held in the Picker Gallery.



Richard Walley performs a didjeridu welcome at the opening. [WU/P32804]

We all felt very sad to be packing the Picker Collection up for its return to the United States, but perhaps it will come back before too long. Fifty-five years is much too long to be away from country! Even as we packed the crates, community members were making plans for an extended display at the Mungart Boodja Gallery in Katanning's main street, as a permanent reminder of the Carrolup children artists.

These twin exhibitions of Nyungar art are a moving testament to the creativity and endurance of South-West peoples, both today and in the past. They attracted considerable national and international attention, and subsequently the *Message Stick* television program was aired by the ABC, focussing on this project to bring these works from the United States and exhibit them with comparable works held by the Berndt Museum.

The torch lit by the children at Carrolup all those years ago in the 1940s is still alive today!

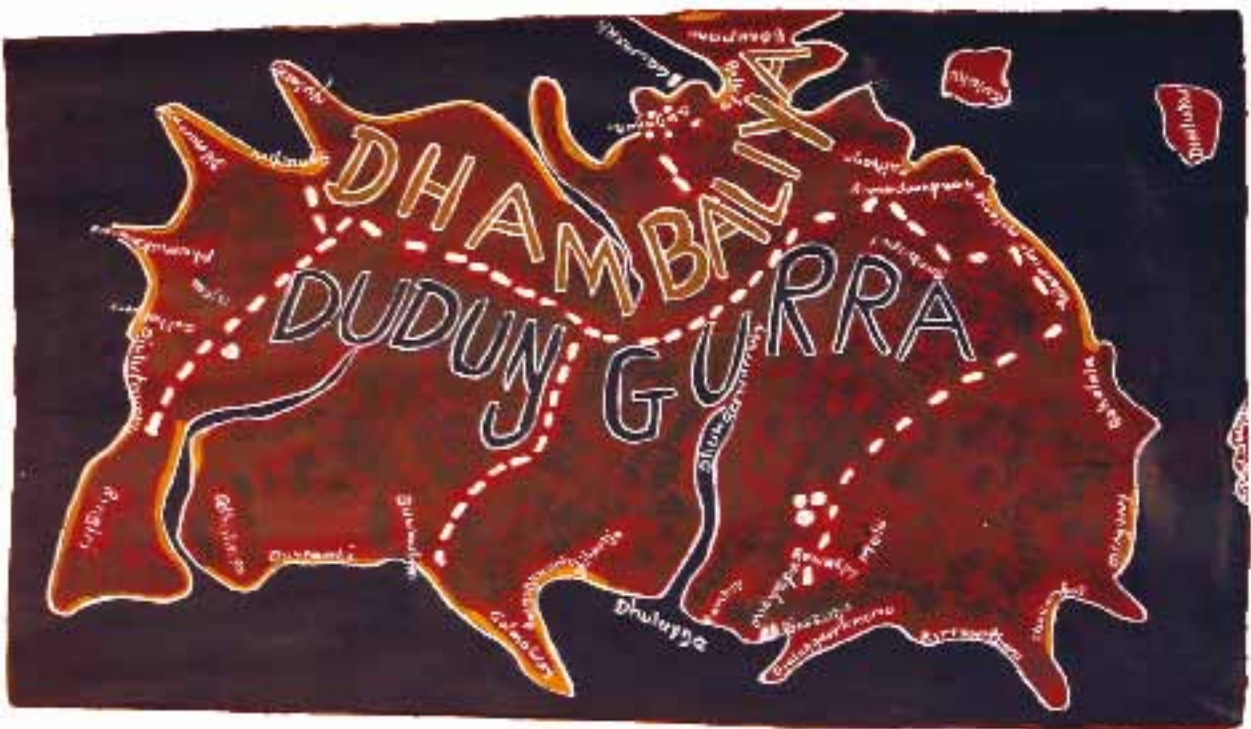
## RECENT ACQUISITION

ONE of the treasures of the Museum's collections is the set of 365 large crayon drawings on paper that Professor Berndt collected at Yirrkala, NT in the mid-1940s, which last year were placed on the UNESCO *Memory of the World* Register. Some of these were included in the exhibition curated by Gillian Hutcherson, *Djalkiri Wanga: the Land is my Foundation*, which toured nationally with *Visions Australia* from 1995. On his recent research trip to Yirrkala, John Stanton acquired for the Museum a number of contemporary bark paintings from Buku Larnggay Arts Centre.

One of these was this exciting work, a painting of country by Dhuwarrwarr Marika, which is reminiscent of these earlier crayon drawings. In ochre, it depicts the clan territories of the artist.

This painting of country is a unique work, which depicts a map-like impression of the artist's home and residence: Bremer Island. She says that she conceived this style by herself, but was in part inspired by the crayon drawings by her father Mawulan, now in the Berndt Museum.

The shape came from her mind and what she had seen from aeroplanes. The names are



*Gutjangan / Bremer Island*, by Dhuwarrwarr Marika, Rirratjingu and Milwurrwurr clans; Dhuwa moiety, Yirrkala 2006. 48.8 x 85.6cm. [WU10885]

## E-RESEARCH PROJECT FOR YIRRKALA, NT

THE Museum has a long commitment to improving access to its collections and associated materials, like photographs and sound recordings, to Aboriginal communities throughout the western half of Australia, which is where our collections come from.

WU/P21582

John Stanton is currently involved in a project sponsored by the Australian Research Council, jointly with Buku Larnggay Mulka Arts Centre, Professor Howard Morphy of the Centre for Cross Cultural Research at the Australian National University and Ms Lindy Allen of the Museum of Victoria, in Melbourne.

The project, which we have called the E-Research Project (E-Research standing for 'Electronic Research') is a first attempt to set up a computer system that will enable the Buku Larnggay Arts Centre to access the computer databases at the Berndt Museum and the Museum of Victoria.



Wandjuk Marika, Ron Berndt and Munggerau crossing the old bridge at Yirrkala, taken 30.4.68. Photo: Catherine Berndt. [WU/P21582]

Both these museums hold the key collections of Yirrkala material made over the years; ours with the Berndts' collection over the 1947-84 period, and Melbourne's with the Donald Thompson collection that was made in the 1930s.

In order to discuss the project further with members of the Yirrkala community, the project team travelled to Yirrkala and spent several days at Buku

Larnggay Arts Centre developing principles for the project, and inspecting the new cultural heritage centre being built immediately adjacent to the Arts Centre, which will be staffed by Yolngu researchers, in collaboration with the local school, where there is an active cultural program.

The Yirrkala site is a prototype. We envisage extending the system to other communities who might like to participate with our two museums and develop closer collaborative linkages. Other museums and collecting institutions may also come on board in the future.

This photograph is typical of those that will be accessible to the community. The visit to Yirrkala also provided John Stanton with an opportunity to purchase a number of contemporary artworks, which have now arrived at the Museum.



John Stanton unpacking the Yirrkala works in the Museum. [WU/P32772]

## Who's who at the Museum

THIS was the staff photograph for the 2006 Christmas card, which was sent to individuals, organisations and communities throughout the world. We are standing beside Winthrop Hall and the Reflecting Pond:- L.-R.: Brett Nannup, Robyn Smith Walley, John Stanton, Rita Bennett, Nell Ustundag and Sue Wyatt.



WU/P32644

## CONTACT DETAILS AND MUSEUM VISITING TIMES

Everybody is welcome to visit the Museum; we especially encourage school groups. If you want to see what we have on display then the Museum is open on Mondays and Wednesdays 2:00 – 4:30pm, and on Fridays 10:00am – 2:00pm. However, if you need something more specific from the Museum (like looking at the Photographic Collection) then you need to ring and arrange a time to visit. This will help Museum staff to prepare for your visit.

The Museum has Disabled Access. Please contact staff before the visit if Disabled Access is needed.

## To find the Museum you must go to:

Social Sciences Building  
Entrance No.1, Hackett Drive  
The University of Western Australia  
CRAWLEY WA 6009

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