

blak roots



acknowledgments

Cover, Right: Mark Hollingsworth, *Begin* (rainforest shield) 2007
Left: Dawn Naranatjil, *Yakuri* (school of bait fish) 2007 (detail)
Back: Abe Muriata, *Jawun, Lawyercane*, 2007

This catalogue celebrates a body of work collated for the KickArts Indigenous Survey exhibition, *Blak Roots*, commemorating 20 Years of Wet Tropics World Heritage in collaboration with School of Creative Arts, JCU.

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KickArts Contemporary Arts
96 Abbott Street Cairns QLD 4870 Australia
Postal address: PO Box 6090 Cairns QLD 4870 Australia
www.kickarts.org.au
info@kickarts.org.au
Telephone: 07 4050 9494
International telephone +61 7 4050 9494

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Publication team

Artists: Group exhibition
Director: Rae O'Connell
Curator and catalogue editor: Russell Milledge
Writers and contributors: Russell Milledge, Rae O'Connell, John Grey
Design and production: Sam Creyton
Photography: David Campbell unless indicated otherwise
Proof reading: Beverley Mitchell
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This year is the Twentieth anniversary of the listing of the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area (WTWHA). The Wet Tropics was inscribed on the World Heritage List on 9 December 1988.

The *Blak Roots* exhibition showcases the way in which Indigenous people identify with the Wet Tropics as a living cultural landscape where seasons, plants, animals, mountains, waterways, stories, ceremonies, places and people are intertwined and interdependent. Just as scientists can explain scientifically how nature works, Indigenous cultures also have a deep and integral understanding of the Wet Tropics landscape which can be demonstrated through artistic expression.

This exhibition also aims to reveal the Indigenous contemporary history of the area whereby themes such as dispossession, forced removal, land management, tourism and mission life are also woven into the landscape of the Wet Tropics.

Through a partnership between KickArts Contemporary Arts, the School of Creative Arts James Cook University, the Wet Tropics Management Authority (WTMA) and Indigenous artists, it is hoped that the *Blak Roots* exhibition will help reconciliation between Indigenous and non - Indigenous people.

These works play an important role in passing on and sharing Indigenous culture, which is done through visual arts, weaving, dancing and story - telling. We are proud to support this creative process.

As WTMA moves towards the future, we are continuing to establish new partnerships and are strengthening existing relationships with local, state, national and international communities. Projects such as this one, provide an opportunity to communicate to the public our vision and commitment for the future of our region through creative expression.

Finally, I would like to congratulate all the artists for the work they have contributed to this celebration of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area through *Blak Roots*. I wish them every success for this exhibition. I would also like to congratulate the Kick Arts Board of Directors and staff and JCU academic Russell Milledge, for their foresight in developing this exhibition with North Queensland Indigenous artists. Also, last but not least, the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts for its continual support of WTMA and to Arts Queensland for its ongoing support of the important work produced by KickArts and the Indigenous Art Centres through which many of the artists work.

John Grey
Lieutenant General (Ret'd)
Chair, Wet Tropics Management Authority



i n t r o d u c t i o n

KickArts is proud to present *Blak Roots*, a survey exhibition of new works of art by Indigenous artists that celebrates 20 years of World Heritage in Far North Queensland. This exhibition is the result of a very successful partnership between Wet Tropics Management Authority, James Cook University and KickArts.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the artists represented in this exhibition and the Art Centre Coordinators and Managers who have also worked with us to bring this important body of work together. We would also like to thank the staff from the Wet Tropics Management Authority for their foresight in initiating this partnership and the commitment they have made to its success. We have also had the pleasure of working with Russell Milledge who curated this exhibition through his work at James Cook University. A truly collaborative and successful endeavor.

This is the third year KickArts has presented a significant survey exhibition of Indigenous artists' work from across Far North Queensland. Works of art were sought from a varying demographic from Townsville in the South, to Mount Isa to the West, up across Cape York to the Gulf of Carpentaria, and the Torres Strait. The result has been outstanding with 54 artists submitting work representing the communities of Badu, Bamaga, Bentinck Island, Erub (Darnley Island), Forsythe Island, Cairns, Giringun, Hopevale, Lockhart River, Moa Island, Mona Mona, Mornington Island, Normanton, Pormpuraaw and Thursday Island.

With this great representation comes a wide variety of art forms from emerging and established artists. The following pages reveal baskets, jewellery, painting, photography, printmaking, sculpture and traditional shields, swords and spears. One work from each artist has been included in this publication with additional works included on the KickArts website.

We welcome new artists who have not exhibited with us before and, of course, those who are participating again.

Rae O'Connell
Director, KickArts Contemporary Arts.

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