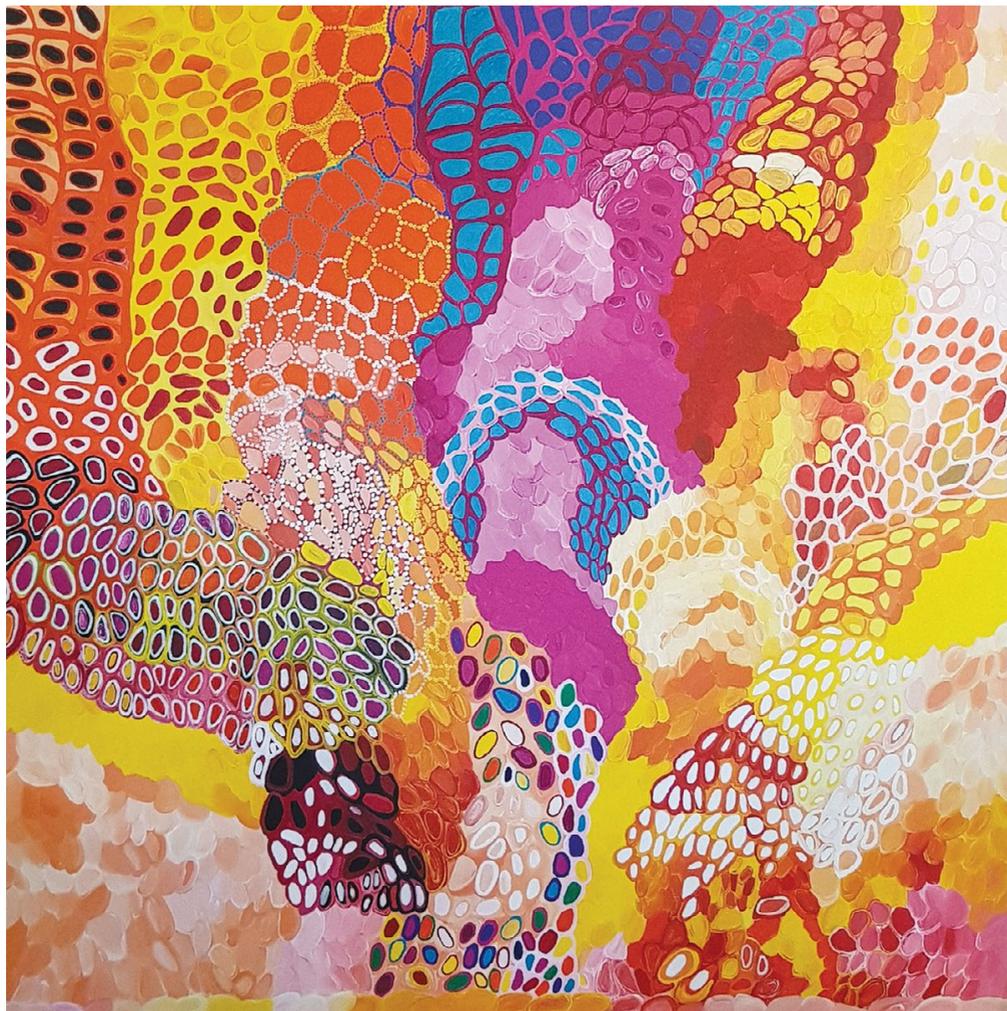
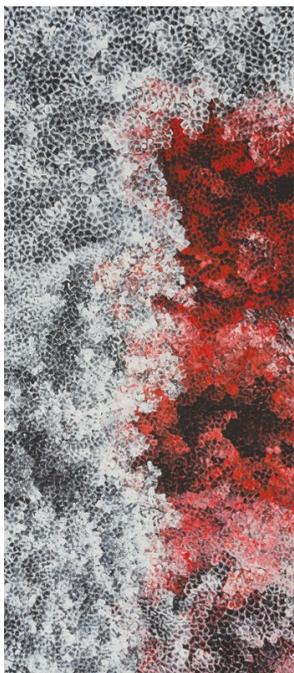


# Amanda Jane Gabori



## Dulka (“Country”)

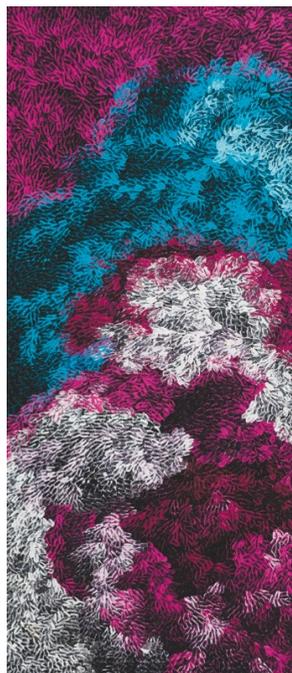
Exhibition Catalogue  
4 – 29 September 2018



*Dibirdibi Totem 2013*  
Acrylic on canvas, 137 x 61 cm



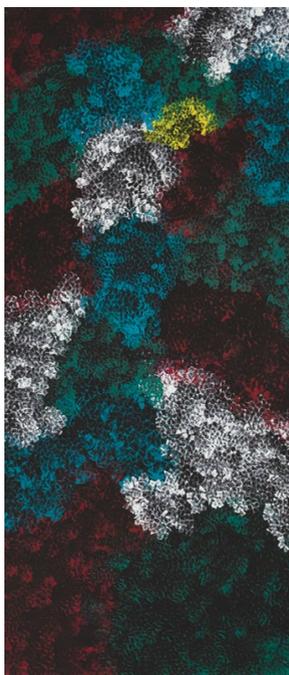
*Dibirdibi Totem 2012*  
Acrylic on canvas, 137 x 61 cm



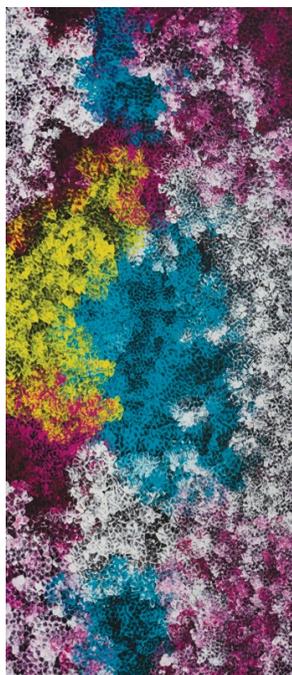
*My Country 2017*  
Acrylic on canvas, 137 x 61 cm



*Dibirdibi Scales 2015*  
Acrylic on canvas, 137 x 61 cm



*Dibirdibi Totem 2012*  
Acrylic on canvas, 137 x 61 cm



*Dibirdibi Totem 2014*  
Acrylic on canvas, 137 x 61 cm



*My Father's Country 2017*  
Acrylic on canvas, 137 x 61 cm



*Dibirdibi Totem 2011*  
Acrylic on canvas, 121 x 91 cm



*Dibirdibi Totem 2012*  
Acrylic on canvas, 151 x 91 cm



*Corals At My Father's Country 2018*  
Acrylic on canvas, 90 x 120 cm

## **Amanda Jane Gabori Dibirdibi**

Amanda Gabori's parents are Pat and Sally. Her Dad was born on the edge of Kabararriji in the south of Bentinck Island. So he carries the name Kabararrjingathi, his Country – that's why he is called Gabori, the English corruption of the place name. Her Mum was born at Mirdidingki on the south side of Bentinck Island. So she carries the name Mirdidingkingathi.

Amanda paints her Country, her Mother's Country and her Father's Country on Bentinck Island, one of the Wellesley Islands in the Gulf of Carpentaria. Dibirdibi is Amanda's language name and the totem given to her by her father. Dibirdibi is the small river rock cod and a constant subject of her work – she paints the scales that cover Dibirdibi's body.

Amanda's Mum painted about her traditional life on Bentinck Island before the Kaiadilt people were taken to Mornington Island by Presbyterian Missionaries. Her Kaiadilt family taught her and her kin about the 'bush' way and Sally then passed on the integrated knowledge of this way of life to others in her Family. A way of life that is at one with the Seasons, birth, death and the environment: sea, mangroves, saltpan, dugong, fish and turtles.

The Studio at Mirndiyan Gununa is a place of stories – a place where artists keep Culture and Story alive and vital by painting and yarnng – the artists share their memories and sorrows while they paint works of compelling vibrancy that all reflect the real or imagined landscapes of Country. The dynamic and energetic artworks created in the Studio are bold, abstract, and grounded in lived and remembered experience. Amanda's paintings are almost effervescent with meaning.

The Kaiadilt phrase 'ngurruwarrawaanda barrnyant' means 'a big gathering at the stone fish trap'. The concept of 'gathering' is very important to the Mirndiyan artists, and relates to bringing Family members together, maintaining Culture and Traditions, as well as sharing food. Amanda remembers: "My Mum and Dad would tell us stories of the fish traps on Bentinck Island ..... about the tucker they would catch. They were good times for my family." These gatherings happen daily in the Studio, and Amanda's paintings reflect the complexities and depths of shared and lived knowledges in her compelling vision.

*JM John Armstrong*

## **Amanda Gabori, Mirndiyan Gununa**

### **“Dulka” (“Country” in Kaiadilt)**

***This text is adapted from a Profile of Amanda Gabori first published in Art Collector’s Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair 2018 special edition.***

Paintings by Amanda Gabori are notable, according to John Armstrong, manager at Mirndiyan Gununa art centre, for their inherent sense of longing. While the colours in her canvases are joyful and celebratory, they comprise thickly stroked and circular shapes representing the scales on Gabori’s totem the rock cod, or the fish traps of her ancestral country on Bentinck Island. She says, “My Country is a very special place, with lots of good and not so good memories”.

Amanda Gabori was the Mirndiyan Gununa feature artist at the 2018 Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair and is the youngest daughter of the great Mirdidingkingathi Juwarnda Sally Gabori. She learnt by observation after her mother “told me to come up to the art centre and do some painting with her”. The connection to neighbouring Bentinck Island remains fresh, even though Amanda has spent most of her life on Mornington. Here, the art practice from the Lardil, Yangkaal and Gangalidda peoples is long term, with the standout success of Sally Gabori (c.1924-2015) toward the end of her life. Sally Gabori and other Kaiadilt women like Netta Loogatha, May Moodoonuthi, and Paula Paul represented a radically different style when they arrived at the art centre in 2005. It is this new and vibrant tradition from which Amanda Gabori has also emerged.

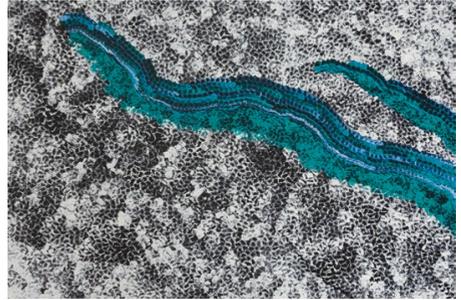
Sally Gabori, Loogatha, Moodoonuthi and Paul were all removed from Bentinck Island early in their lives, and as a group the Kaiadilt have pursued a largely separate existence on Mornington. The gestural paintings for which Sally Gabori made her name speak directly to her connection to Bentinck Island and the longing Armstrong identifies in Amanda’s work may be attributed to the intergenerational trauma of removal from Country. Art sales meant that Sally Gabori was able to charter a plane to return to Bentinck regularly before she died in 2015. This offered physical access to Amanda, and she says, “The rocks of My Country are in my paintings and the colours of My Country are there too. Dibirdbibi the River Rock Cod is my Dad’s totem and I paint the scales that cover his body to keep connection with him and to keep the story alive.”

Amanda Gabori’s potential has been noted since she began in 2010, and Armstrong marks the translation of simple motifs into complex and evocative work, attuned with sadness. Her painterly fish scales are depicted like clouds of colour that pulsate with changing visual depths and movement. Gabori’s solo exhibition at Woolloongabba Art Gallery in Brisbane was offered on the strength of two paintings seen earlier this year by director Alex Shaw. WAG’s experience with artists from Mornington Island has been constant since the movement began in 2005. He notes that, “I found the phases Amanda is going through fascinating; she is pushing herself with different styles. Amongst the group of current Kaiadilt women artists, Amanda stood out for us. She is incorporating what Sally and Netta Loogatha were doing in early years, absorbing it all into her own style and experimenting.”

Canvases for this exhibition are characterised by their intensity of colour and the movement captured by their lozenge-like painterly surfaces. In *My Country*, it is as though she is traversing the fish traps, the plenitude of rock cod, and the undulations of the island under her feet, exploring in her imagination the heights and the depths of her experiences.



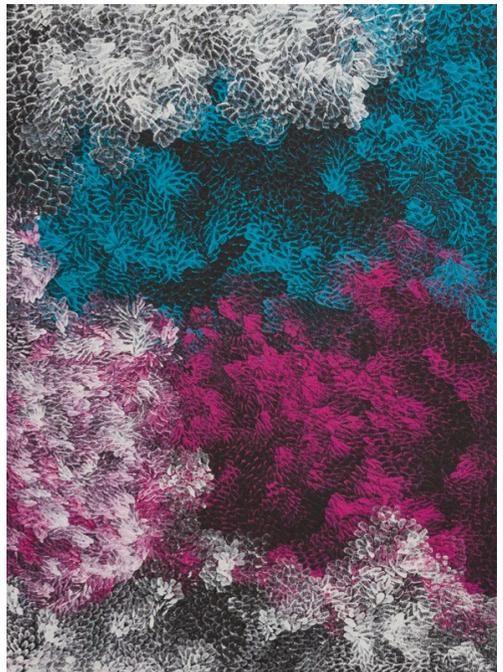
*My Country 2018*  
Acrylic on canvas, 121 x 91 cm



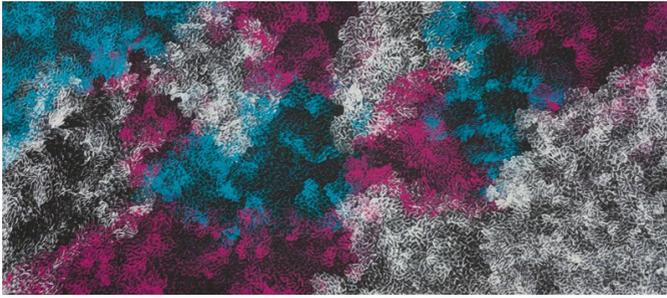
*Dibirdibi Scales 2013*  
Acrylic on canvas, 91 x 61 cm



*Dibirdibi Totem 2013*  
Acrylic on canvas, 91 x 61 cm



*Dibirdibi 2015*  
Acrylic on canvas, 121 x 91 cm



*Dibirdibi Country 2014, Acrylic on canvas, 137 x 76 cm*



*Corals At My Father's Country 2018, Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 135 cm*



*Corals At My Father's Country 2018, Acrylic on canvas, 75 x 150 cm*



*My Country 2018, Acrylic on canvas, 90 x 150 cm*



*Nyinyilki - My Mother's Country 2018, Acrylic on canvas, 197 x 152 cm*

front image:

*My Country 2018, Acrylic on canvas, 197 x 196 cm*

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## Woolloongabba Art Gallery

613 Stanley Street Woolloongabba Qld 4102 Australia

+61 7 3891 5551 ~ email@wag.com.au