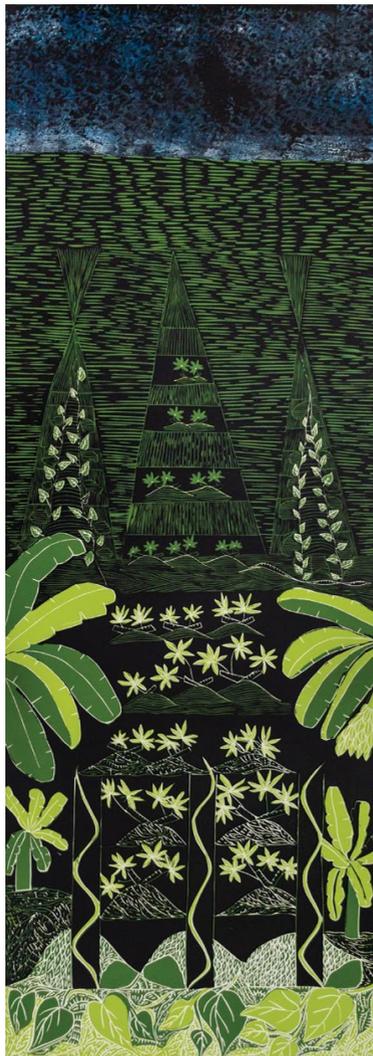


Ngalmun Lagau Minaral (Moa Arts)



Malu Mabaigal “Seafaring People”

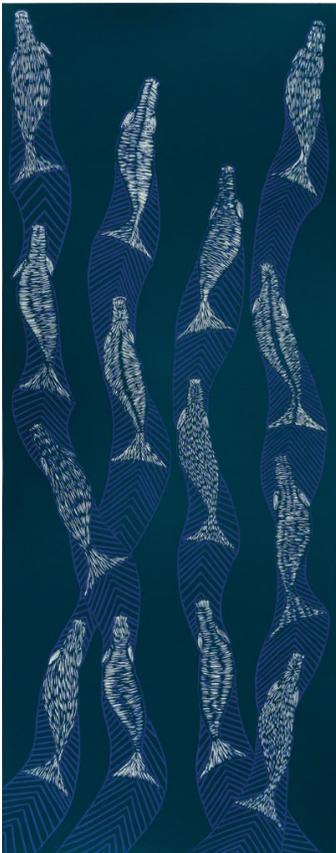
Exhibition Catalogue
2 October – 3 November 2018

Malu Mabaigal – Seafaring People

Malu Mabaigal – Seafaring People is the latest exhibition from Moa Arts (Ngalmun Lagau Minaral). The exhibition, a collection of works on paper and woven objects, showcases the cultural stories and unique way of life of the Mualgal people from Moa Island in the Torres Strait.

The Torres Strait is located between the tip of Cape York and the southern shores of Papua New Guinea, with the Coral Sea to the East and Arafura Sea to the West making up its other natural borders. The region is an archipelago of more than 200 islands and home to Torres Strait islanders, one of Australia's two Indigenous Peoples.

Moa Island is the second largest island in the region and belongs to the Near Western Island cluster. This group of islands are considered the most culturally complex in the Torres Strait. The surrounding waters and reefs are a diverse range of land and marine eco systems, which are home to many rare species such as dugong (Dhanganl) and sea turtles (waru).



Solomon Booth
Dhanganl Urgnu Tadiak 2018
Linocut print, 155 x 60cm
Limited edition of 4

The Mualgal (Moo-al-gul) people, known by locals as Italgal (Itu-gul), are the Traditional Owners of the island and refer to the island as 'Mua'. The Mualgal people are saltwater people, their way of life is intrinsically linked to the sea. The artists from Moa Island, seafaring people with deep connections to sea, land and sky, draw inspiration from ancestral stories, animal totems and spirit beings.

Malu Mabaigal – Seafaring People highlights the ability of artists from Moa Island to produce innovative contemporary artworks whilst also maintaining traditional art making practices and preserving their cultural heritage.

The exhibition includes a collection of limited-edition prints, showcasing colour reduction prints, large format works, and works on paper featuring 'Kaidaral', a Moa Island adaptation of the French printmaking technique *À la poupée*.

Also included in the exhibition are artworks made by the Moa Weavers, hand woven baskets and bags made from hand dyed raffia, seagrass, ghost net and twine, decorated with seashells and seeds collected from the island.

Established in 2010, Moa Arts (Ngalmun Lagau Minaral) is a not-for-profit Torres Strait Islander Corporation, owned and operated by an elected indigenous board.

Moa Arts promotes and preserves the arts, culture and heritage of Moa Island. It facilitates the production of high-quality traditional and contemporary art from which artists can earn an income, provides local training and employment, and markets and promotes Torres Strait islander culture and art internationally.

Malu Mabaigal – Mualgal pasts and presents

Mualgal people are among the most sea-focussed people on the planet. From subsistence to cosmology, the sea permeates virtually every dimension of social life, today and in the past. Torres Strait Islander peoples are often referred to as 'Saltwater Peoples'; maritime communities whose engagements with their sea-spaces is so highly specialized that the sea itself becomes implicated in social reproduction.

Torres Strait Islander seascapes are 'owned by right of inheritance, demarcated territorially, mapped with named places, historicized with social actions, engaged technologically for resources, orchestrated ritually, and legitimated cosmologically... the sea is central to identity' (McNiven 2008, p. 151). Archaeological evidence for off-shore island settlement and canoe voyaging, reef exploitation, ritual as well as subsistence activities reveal an intimate picture of sea living and knowledge.

For over four millennia, generations of seafarers acquired, organised and communicated a vast body of knowledge about the biology and ecology of hundreds of different fish, molluscs, stingray, as well as, of course, dhangal (dugong) and waru (green sea turtle). Navigating through some of the most complex tidal waters and dangerous reef systems on earth demanded (and continues to demand) an intimate understanding of astronomy and the interactions between wind and tide at different temporal scales; such knowledge is ordered within an elegant and detailed seasonal calendar that helps structure people's activities (from hunting, gardening, to travelling).

*Dr Jeremy Ash
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David Bosun
Kubilaw Ulakal 2018
Linocut print, 205 x 60cm
Limited edition of 3



(l-r) Flora Taylor, Maria Ware & Paula Savage, various ghostnet and raffia baskets



Solomon Booth, *Zagul Dungal* 2018, Linocut print, 80 x 50cm, Limited edition of 5

front image:

Fiona Elisala, *Nguzu Akana Dharbau Lag* 2018, Linocut print, 155 x 60cm, Limited edition of 4

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