

Wei'Num Arts and Crafts



Heart of Country: New works from West Cape York

Exhibition Catalogue
2 August – 31 August 2019



#42-19 Sandra Ase, *Rhindi Season*
Acrylic on canvas, 102 x 760 cm



#16-19 Daphne de Jersey, *Untitled*
Acrylic on canvas, 76 x 61 cm



#40-19 Sandra Ase, *Shadforth Reef*
Acrylic on canvas, 67.5 x 87 cm



#11-15 Marsha Hall, *Luwang Lanship (Small Girl of Luwang)*
Acrylic on canvas, 92 x 72 cm



#68-19 Daphne de Jersey, *Roomu - dunes*
Acrylic on canvas, 76 x 61 cm



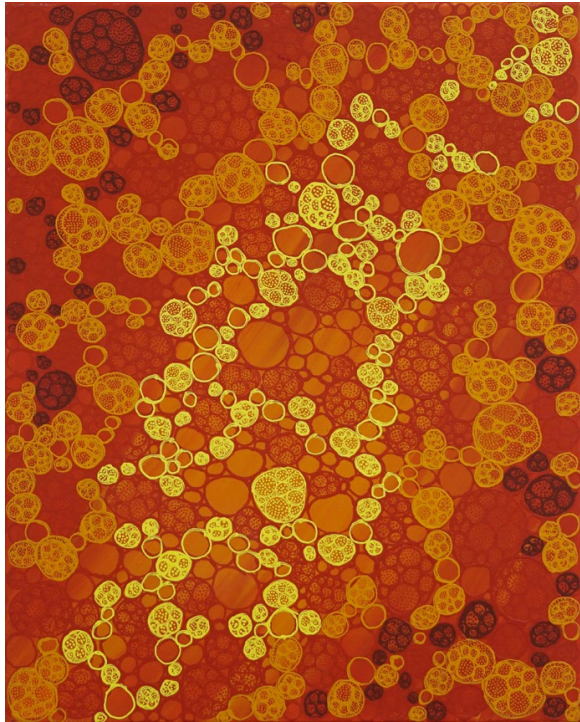
#45-19 Sandra Ase, *Wetlands*
Acrylic on canvas, 102 x 76 cm



#31-18 Daphne de Jersey, *Fiery Sky*
Acrylic on canvas, 50.9 x 76.3 cm



#47-19 Margaret Mara, *Fire Storm II*
Acrylic on canvas, 41 x 51 cm



#48-19 Margaret Mara, *Fire Embers*
Acrylic on canvas, 51 x 41 cm

The exhibition *Heart of Country: New works from West Cape York*, presents a reminder and a renewed effort to tell the stories of fractured cultures and the re-establishment of traditions, new and old. It is the first major group exhibition by Wei'Num Arts and Crafts in 5 years.

Wei'Num (pronounced *we num*) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts and Crafts Corporation is more than the sum of its parts, those parts being the country, communities and people whose lives cultures and traditions were affected by the events of the stolen generation period. Those many nations who were forcibly resettled in the Weipa, Napranum and Mapoon areas of the Western Cape York Peninsula against their will.

The name *Wei'Num* itself is an amalgam and a multilingual play on words. *Wei* representing the Weipa region and the first person plurative pronoun. *Num* being identified as the last three letters of the English translation of the settlement name Napranum and the universal first nations languages word endemic to the region meaning ours, denoting ownership of sorts.

Established in Weipa in 2010 with the trading name of the Western Cape Arts Hub, the co-operative corporation *Wei'Num* was a collaborative approach between artists practicing in the communities and education and state and Federal governments in order to provide a resource promoting business development in the arts, following in the vein of the Indigenous Art Centres coming online around Far North Queensland at that time. The Hub as it was called had one key point of difference...it serviced multiple communities rather than a single community, due to a lack of permanent workshop space being available fulltime.

Atypically there was and is no single facility in either community defined as the 'Art Centre'. That is a building where the artists gather to make, document, store artwork, yarn together and invite visitors to share in culture, as one might expect. Presently the artist's work at home or in residence in Cairns or other locations as budget allows.

Then, as now, facilitators and staff move between locations delivering training, documenting artwork and addressing the needs of the communities in terms of supplying resources and building artist capacity. It is a time consuming and expensive process by which the artists make the work for it to reach an audience outside of community. Space to work and play remains a key barrier to the growth and success of the West Cape artists, an issue foremost on the artists' minds across the three communities.

The history of the West Cape area is nothing short of horrific. Mapoon and Napranum became staging grounds for the enacted policies resulting in the Stolen Generation. The infamous burning of the township of Mapoon by the Queensland State Government in 1963 is one of many examples of brutal and traumatic colonisation of the region by religious, governmental and business institutions. A colonisation that devastated the passing down of knowledge and language from one generation to the next, altering traditions forever as members of first nations people from Coen, the lower Gulf of Carpentaria and the Torres Straits were moved and forced into missionary cohabitation with traditional owners. It has ultimately affected the manner by which this people of this region express themselves.

One might expect the work of the region to reflect the bitterness and resentment of events that occurred in living memory however this is not the case as can be seen in this exhibition. Collectively the artists are reinventing the visual narratives of the region, drawing on the diverse intermingling of languages and cultures that underpins life in a remote community post Stolen Generation.

The works are expressive and explosive in their use of colour. They depict experience of country throughout the changing seasons and demonstrate a reflective attitude to personal experiences, not unlike any contemporary artist working today. From the expressive monotypes and etchings of Margaret Mara to the affirmation of the love of country and its resources in the paintings of emerging artist Sandra Ase the works in *Heart of Country: New Works for West Cape York* strive to remember the past and celebrate the now.

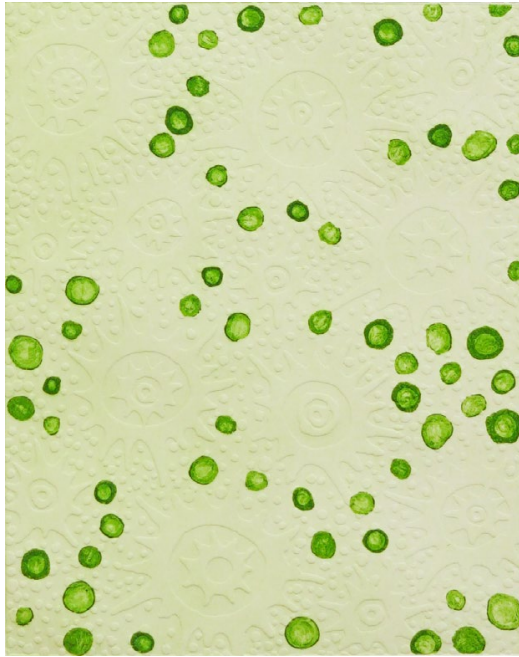
Justin Bishop
Art Centre Manager
Wei'Num Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander
Arts and Crafts Corporation
2019



#28-19 Zoe de Jersey, *Gidi Gidi*
Etching on paper, 24 x 16.5 cm



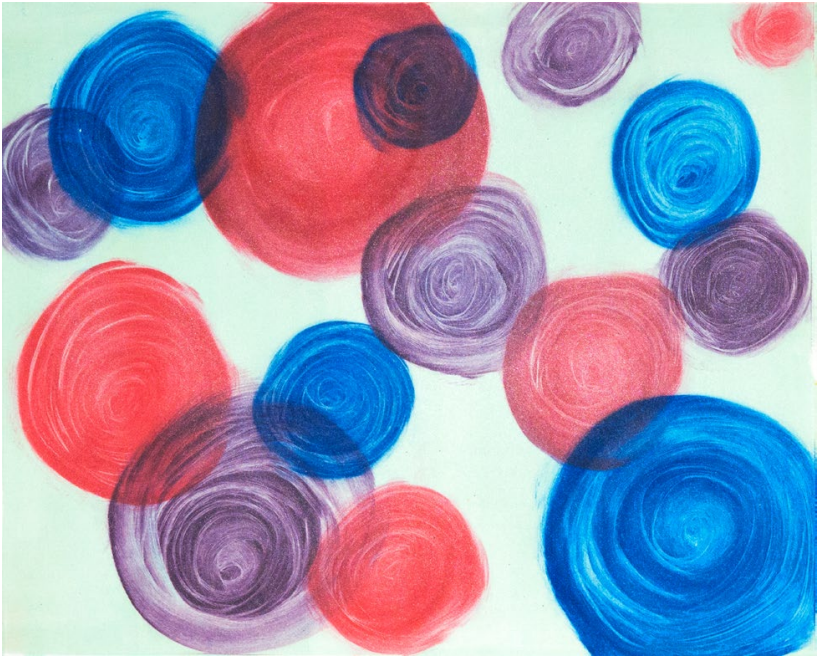
#64-19 Marsha Hall, *Swamp Turtle*
Etching on paper, 34 x 24.5 cm



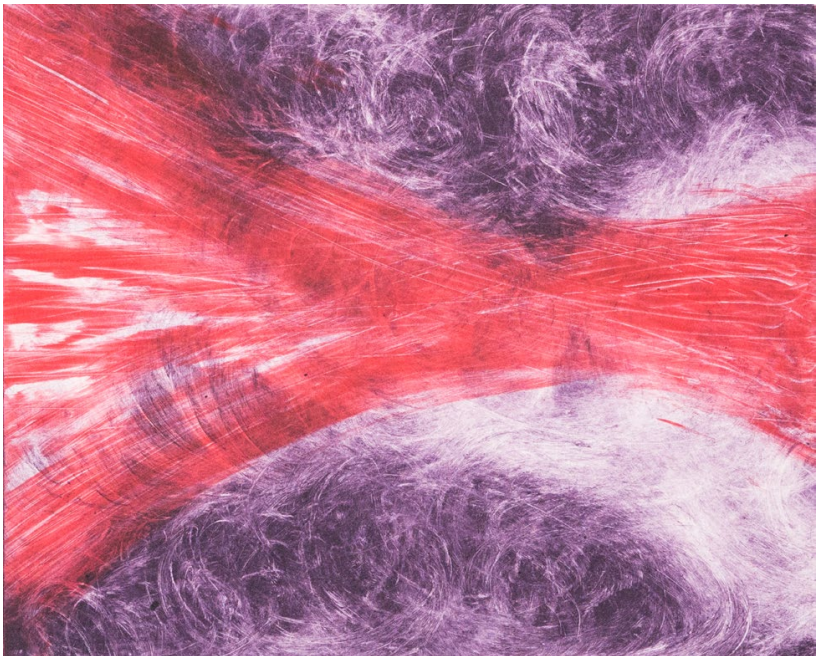
#26-19 Marsha Hall, *Camp Fires*
Etching on paper, 25 x 20 cm



#27-19 Marsha Hall, *Gathering Bush Food*
Etching on paper, 25 x 20 cm



#16-18 Margaret Mara, *In The Beginning*
Etching on paper, 47.5 x 45.5 cm



#12-18 Margaret Mara, *Turbulent Times*
Etching on paper, 47.5 x 45.5 cm



#29-19 Margaret Mara, *Emotional Whirlwind*
Etching on paper, 93 x 24 cm



#3-25 Daphne de Jersey, *Deep Water Lalunji*
Acrylic on canvas, 92 x 122 cm

front image:
#20-19 Daphne de Jersey, *Untitled*
Acrylic on canvas, 76 x 61 cm



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