

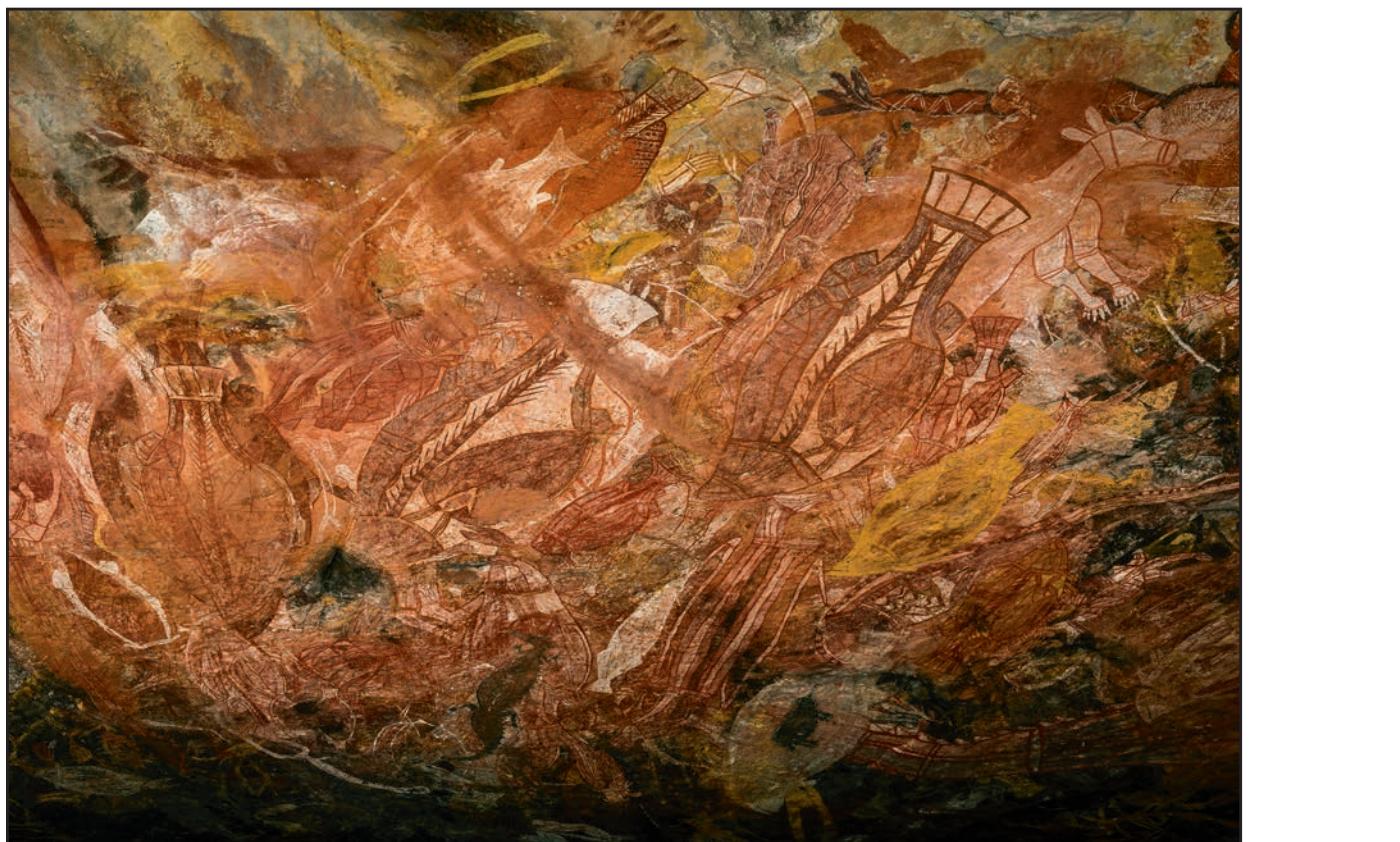
MUNGUYHMUNGUYH NGARRI BIMBUN BIM: FOREVER WE CREATE ART

Gabriel Maralngurra, Co-Manager of Injalak Arts & Crafts

Munguyhmunguyh means forever and ever. When you paint stories or paintings, they'll probably live forever, they'll never be forgotten. The stories we make when we paint will never be forgotten, they'll be there for our kids and their kids, from generation to generation. This is *binninj* culture. We keep telling stories, repeating them over and over. The stories will never be forgotten, they'll remain the same, unchanged for ever.

I feel proud that I'm sharing these paintings, from myself and my people, here in Kunbarlanja and also for the rest of the world to hear the stories which will never be forgotten. The old people used to paint and tell stories, which are still the same. The old people used to watch their fathers painting, and I learnt from the old people. We carry on the same tradition today.

We mentor the young artists who are around today, telling them stories, ensuring that they're painting the right stories. It's how we learned from our Elders, and it's how we paint. Those Elders, when they were painting, they saw their father's painting on rocks and they started painting on bark. Today we still paint on bark and on paper. That's how they learned from their fathers, and they taught us, now we are teaching the younger artists, telling them the stories. It's like a big cycle.



Rock art on Injalak Hill. Image courtesy of Injalak Arts.

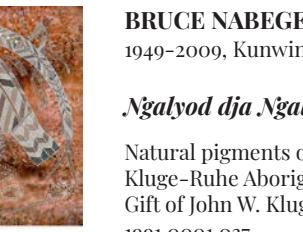


BARDAYAL NADJAMERREKAO
c.1926–2009, Kundednjenghmi language group

Kurdukadji Djang (Emu Dreaming) 1991

Natural pigments on paper
Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection of the University of Virginia
Gift of John W. Kluge, 1997
1991.0001.009.01

This painting depicts the story of Kurdukadji, the Emu Ancestor (seen in the center of the work), fleeing from hunters and their dogs (on the left). During her escape, Kurdukadji crashes into cypress trees and breaks her wings. She reaches a water hole that allows her to change into Ngalyod, the Rainbow Serpent, and eventually swallows the hunters. When she changes back into an emu, her wings are shortened, explaining why emus can no longer fly. During his lifetime, Bardayal Nadjamerrek was held in high esteem for his deep knowledge of ceremony, law and country. Considered the last master rock artist, his paintings adhered strictly to the protocols of rock art, using single-line *rarrk* (in-fill) rather than the cross-hatched *rarrk* used in ceremonial designs. The prominent inclusion of the artist's stenciled hands serves to accentuate this connection to his rock art heritage while marking his custodianship of this ancestral story.



BRUCE NABEGEYO
1949–2009, Kunwinjku language group

Ngalyod dja Ngalkordow Djang (Rainbow Serpent and Brolga Dreaming) 1992

Natural pigments on paper
Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection of the University of Virginia
Gift of John W. Kluge, 1997
1991.0001.037

At the time of the Kluge commission, Bruce Nabegeyo had already established a reputation as a bark painter, learning from his father Bilinyara Nabegeyo (c.1920–1992) who also participated in the commission. Working on paper, Bruce found his voice as a master of highly elaborate narrative paintings. In this work, he tells the story of one of his ancestors: a woman who transformed into a *ngalkordow* (brolga) to escape an attacker. With the help of Ngalyod, the Rainbow Serpent, Ngalkordow guards her two eggs from a *mimih* (spirit) nearby (in the upper right). While innovating in style and medium, Nabegeyo ensures the stories of his ancestors are passed down to future generations.

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 INJALAK
ARTS



MUNGUYHMUNGUYH (FOREVER):

Celebrating the 30th Anniversary of the John W. Kluge Injalak Commission

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Upper West Oval Room of the Rotunda at the University of Virginia

January 31- April 5, 2020

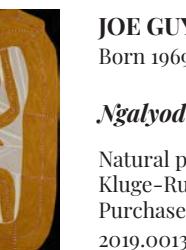
In September 1990, the American businessman and philanthropist John W. Kluge was approached with a proposal to commission forty-five works on paper by the leading artists of the newly formed Injalak Arts and Crafts Association. This would become Kluge's second major commission of Indigenous Australian art and represented a critical turning point in the art of the region.

Located in the Aboriginal community of Kunbarlanja in western Arnhem Land, Injalak Arts took its name from an imposing hill adjacent to the community. Adorned with painted images dating back over 40,000 years, Injalak Hill contains some of the most concentrated and spectacular rock art galleries in the world. Throughout the twentieth century, artists at Kunbarlanja drew inspiration from these images to create paintings on eucalyptus bark for trade with anthropologists and collectors. Injalak Arts was initially founded as a screen-printing workshop for young artists but quickly transformed into an inter-generational epicenter for Kunwinjku painting. Under the watchful tutelage of elders such as Bardayal Nadjamerrek, Peter Nabarlambal and Thompson Yulidjirri, the art center became a vibrant space of cultural transmission, teaching, and learning through art.

The Kluge commission was the first time that many of the artists at Injalak had worked on paper. The scale and flexibility of paper created new possibilities, which the artists embraced creating images of unprecedented complexity and narrative flair. In the decades that followed, paper would become one of the most commonly used supports among Kunwinjku painters. In 1997, Kluge donated thirty-one of the works from the commission to the University of Virginia. These remain a cornerstone of the Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection. This exhibition presents five works from the original commission, alongside two newly commissioned works by the contemporary artists Joe Guymala and Gabriel Maralngurra.

In 1992, Maralngurra, the then president of Injalak Arts, wrote that his hope for the future was that those who viewed these paintings would "develop a greater understanding of Aboriginal culture, our relationship to the Dreaming, and the creation of our clan lands." For Indigenous Australians, art has always been central to the process of teaching and learning. Shown here in Thomas Jefferson's Rotunda, *Munguyhmunguyh* is an affirmation of our shared commitment to broadening the scope of traditional pedagogy. In commemorating three decades since John W. Kluge's Injalak commission, we pay tribute to the power of one of the world's oldest continuous artistic traditions while celebrating the ongoing relationship between UVA and Injalak Arts.

This exhibition and the artist visit of Gabriel Maralngurra and Joe Guymala have been sponsored by the Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection of UVA, the UVA Parents Fund, the UVA Arts Council, Injalak Arts, the Embassy of Australia and the Mapping Indigenous Worlds Lab of the Institute of Humanities and Global Cultures.



JOE GUYMALA

Born 1969, Kunwinjku language group

Ngalyod dja Ngalkunburriyaymi (Rainbow Serpent and Water Spirit) 2018

Natural pigments on paper

Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection of the University of Virginia

Purchased with funds provided by Libby Kingdon and Michael Rowe, 2019.

2019.0013.002

"This is how we paint where I come from and that's the way I do painting. From my grandfather to my father, my cousins to myself, this is how we paint. And my great-great grandfather, they painted like this. I'll keep painting till I get too old and weak. When I get too old, I will stop. That's it, finished."

— JOE GUYMALA

Joe Guymala is the grandson of the famous artist Namerredje Guymala (c.1926–1978), whose painting *Ngalyod and Ngalkunburriyaymi* (c.1966) is held in the Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection of UVA. Joe draws upon one of his grandfather's favorite motifs while adding his own distinctive style of thickly applied layers of natural pigments. Ngalkunburriyami are female water spirits that are originally born in tadpole form, eventually transforming their tails into legs so they can walk on land. Encircling her is Ngalyod (the Rainbow Serpent), one of the most important creation beings in Arnhem Land. Ngalyod is the protector of Ngalkunburriyami and is able to take many forms. She is recognizable by his composite nature, which includes a serpent's body, a fish tail and crocodile teeth.



GABRIEL MARALNGURRA

Born 1968, Kunwinjku language group

Kunwardde Bim Kakukyime (Rock Art Style) 2019

Natural pigments and Reckitt's Blue on paper

Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection of the University of Virginia

Purchased with funds provided by Terry Snowball and Machel Monenerkit, 2019.

2019.0013.001

"I want people to feel the spirits and the elders who were doing those styles when they look at my paintings. I want them to feel and touch how it was done, to see the past continuing in the present."

— GABRIEL MARALNGURRA

Gabriel Maralngurra was introduced to rock art by his uncle, Thompson Yulidjirri (c. 1930–2009), took him to see the paintings on Injalak Hill when he was a child. Several of the images in this painting are taken from the most iconic rock art sites on Injalak Hill. He utilizes old and new materials, from natural ochres to Reckitt's Blue laundry whitener. Reckitt's Blue was introduced by missionaries who first went to western Arnhem Land in 1927. Artists quickly incorporated this new color into their palette, using it on rock shelters across the region. Maralngurra elaborately layers images to illustrate the long history of Kunwinjku art from ancestral times to the present.



PETER NABARLAMBARL

c.1930–2001, Kunwinjku language group

Mimih dja Namarnkol (Spirits and Barramundi) 1992

Natural pigments on paper

Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection of the University of Virginia

Gift of Henry Skerritt and Lydia Lange, 2019

2019.0006.001

Mimih (spirits) are thin, shy creatures that hide all day within large boulders, surfacing only at night to hunt and fish. At dawn, they retreat back to their homes, closing their rock doors behind them. Thousands of years ago, *mimih* taught *marrkidjbu* (ancestral men with supernatural powers) to hunt and paint. The ancient paintings high on rock walls are inaccessible to humans, proof that only *mimih* could have painted them. This painting depicts three *mimih* surrounding a large *namarnkol* (barramundi fish). Along with thirteen other works from the Injalak commission, this work remained in John Kluge's possession until 2005 when it was sold at auction. In 2019, *Mimih dja Namarnkol* was finally reunited with the rest of the commission. Thirteen pieces from the original commission remain in private collections.



GARRY DJORLOM

born 1963, Kunwinjku language group

Namarrkon (The Lightning Spirit) 1991

Natural pigments on paper

Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection of the University of Virginia

Gift of John W. Kluge, 1997

1991.0001.021

Namarrkon, the Lightning Spirit, is associated with numerous sacred sites across western Arnhem Land. Depictions of *Namarrkon* are found on rock surfaces and caves throughout the region, including the main rock art gallery of Injalak Hill. In this work, *Namarrkon* is painted with stone axes on his elbows and knees, which he uses to punish those who have broken Kunwinjku law. The *rarrk* (cross-hatched designs) throughout the painting are specific to Garry's clan. He learned these ancestral patterns from his father Dudley Djorlam. Garry was one of the youngest artists involved in John W. Kluge's Injalak commission.



DJAWIDA NADJONGORLE

c.1943–2008, Kunwinjku language group

Benuk Djang (Bush Turkey Dreaming) 1992

Natural pigments on paper

Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection of the University of Virginia

Gift of John W. Kluge, 1997

1991.0001.038

This painting shows a male and female *benuk* (bush turkey) with two eggs in a nest, representing fertility. Nadjngorle uses a combination of "x-ray" style, in which the spinal cord and organs of the birds are revealed, and the abstract cross-hatched *rarrk* (in-fill) associated with clan designs that are painted on the body during ceremony. For Indigenous people, all things have an ancestral origin. During Djang (the ancestral creation period), *Benuk* was a man who changed into a bush turkey while being threatened by a hunter, forever remaining in this new form. The images of *benuk* are easily identifiable in Nadjngorle's painting, but the use of ceremonial *rarrk* alludes to deeper narratives that are withheld from non-Indigenous viewers.