# Nginingawula Jilamara Ngirramini kapi Jurra | Our Art Stories on Paper

## Printmaking at Jilamara Arts and Crafts Association

# Printmaking at Jilamara

**Emmy Monaghan in collaboration with Michelle Pulatuwayu Woody Minnapinni**

Jilamara Arts and Crafts Association is an art and cultural center located in Milikapiti on the Tiwi Islands, situated off the mainland of the Northern Territory in Australia. Now nationally and internationally renowned within the contemporary art world, Jilamara originally began as a screenprinting shed in the 1980s. Under the leadership of several Tiwi women, including Raelene Kerinauia Lampuwatu whose work is included in this exhibition, textile screenprinting was introduced in Milikapiti at the Adult Education Centre in 1985.[1] Printmaking was readily adopted by artists in Milikapiti because it provided not only economic but also cultural opportunities: screenprinted fabric became an important medium for the older, knowledgeable generation to share their ceremonial *jilamara* (body paint design).[2] The popularity of these printed textiles within the community prompted the establishment of a formal art center, Jilamara, in 1989.

While Tiwi painting, weaving, and carving practices have continued since Parlingarri (Creation Time), the printmaking of the 1980s provided a structure for a new institution that would ensure communal knowledge sharing through the medium's iterative and collaborative processes. The screenprinting studio enabled the older generations to mentor young people in producing Tiwi designs. The screenprint medium, which requires multiple hands to pull ink through screens on massive swaths of fabric, replicated the longstanding Tiwi practice of young people "following" an artistic and cultural mentor to develop their own style and skills. Printmaking became a vehicle through which art forms could be revitalized and new innovation could emerge.

The ensuing success of other media—such as bark and canvas painting, ironwood carving, *tunga* (bark bag), and *tutini* (Pukumani or mourning pole)—shifted Jilamara's focus away from printmaking in the years following the establishment of the art center. Until recently, most printmaking at Jilamara occurred through isolated workshops with various printmaking studios. All but one of the prints in this exhibition were produced during a series of etching and screenprinting workshops from 2017 to 2023 hosted by master printmaker Basil Hall. The work by Timothy Cook, Pedro Wonaeamirri, Dino Wilson, Pauletta Kerinaiua, and Raelene Kerinauia Lampuwatu each reproduce the artists' *jilamara* that is used in their painting practices.

In 2025, artists at Jilamara reprinted a line of textiles using rediscovered screens designed by the early printmakers of the 80s and 90s. The resulting collection of garments, titled *Parlini Jilamara Ngini Parlingarri*, won the Community Collaboration Award at the 2025 National Indigenous Fashion Awards which marked a significant celebration of the enduring legacy of printmaking at the art center. The Jilamara printmaking studio, now led by Raylene Miller, looks towards future projects that bring the old and new together. In reflecting on the history of printmaking at the art center, artist and co-curator of this exhibition Michelle Pulatuwayu Woody Minnapinni said, "Jilamara first started with textile screenprinting. We want to continue the cultural knowledge from the old people who did that textile printmaking. . . . The senior artists who did printmaking before will lead the way with the young generation. It's about moving forward."

## Tiwi Innovation in Charlottesville

Michelle Pulatuwayu Woody Minnapinni visited the University of Virginia in Spring 2026 for an artist and curatorial residency at the Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection. Woody reflected on her time in Charlottesville, during which she worked with local printmaking studio Infinite Repeats to produce an experimental edition of screenprints that incorporated natural ochres from the Tiwi Islands. Ochres are natural earth pigments that animate Woody's paintings with rich hues of yellow, red, and white. Although ochres are commonly used in Tiwi painting, Woody's

1 Printmaking was already active in other Tiwi communities, most notably at Tiwi Design and Bima Wear in Wurrumiyanga beginning in the late 1960s. Raelene Kerinauia Lampuwatu, Raelene Cook, Maxine Daniels, and Isobel Marego are recognized as four of the pioneering printmakers in Milikapiti. Anne Marchment, the adult educator starting in 1987, was also a major driving force behind the expansion of printmaking and the subsequent founding of Jilamara.

2 For more in-depth histories of early Tiwi printmaking, see Kathy Barnes. *Kiripapurajuwi (Skills of Our Hands): Good Craftsmen and Tiwi Art* (K. Barnes, 1999); Diana Wood Conroy and Bede Tungutalum. *Tiwi Textiles: Design, Making, Process* (Sydney University Press, 2022); and Michelle Pulatuwayu Woody Minnapinni and Joanna Barrkman, eds. *Yipapirraya Arnuwujaputi . . . (Tide Going out, Tide Coming In)* (Charles Darwin University, 2025).

screenprint titled *Ngiya Murrakupupuni amintiya Jilamara (My Country and Art)* is the first print to feature Tiwi ochre as the pigment for its ink.

**Michelle Pulatuwayu Woody Minnapinni: I get the yellow ochre rock from Country, which I sand into a yellow powder. Then I put the yellow in the fire to make the red ochre. I also use the white ochre from the beach by the cliffside.**

The printmakers at Infinite Repeats—Thomas Dean, Jeremy Taylor, and Allyson Mellberg Taylor—used their expertise in screenprinting with natural pigments from Virginia to help realize this project. They mixed the Tiwi ochres with water and tapioca starch, a plant-based binder, to produce the entirely natural screenprinting ink.

**MWM: At first when I was looking at the ochre, I was thinking that I would make printmaking with that natural material because it's our tradition and the ancient ancestors, the Parlingarri generation, used them. This was the first time I ever used natural pigments from Country for printmaking. I brought the ochres all the way to Virginia to make the print and it was an experience to learn the new techniques.**

The undulating dotted lines of the print's composition are Woody's *jilamara*. In the context of the Pukumani (mourning) ceremony, participants use ochres to paint *jilamara* on the body which functions to disguise themselves from the spirits of the deceased. The ceremonial concept of *jilamara* governs contemporary Tiwi painting practices: each artist must develop their own unique painted design using *marlipinyini* (lines) and *pwanga* (dots). Woody achieves the staccato marks of her *jilamara* through the use of a *pwoja* (ironwood comb).

**MWM: *Pwoja* is a traditional tool that old people used for painting *jilamara*. *Pwoja* is a comb carved out of ironwood, which is out on Country. That's how we make our designs and patterns with such detail.**

Once Woody designed the seven screens of her print, the screens were printed one after the other in layers, beginning with the large blocks of background color and then the lines of *pwoja* markings over top. The finished print glistens in the light, taking on a micaceous quality from the shimmering ochre ink.

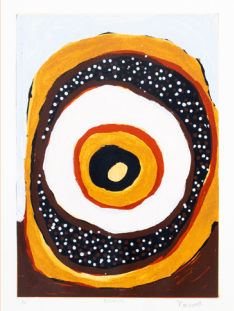
Top: Michelle Pulatuwayu Woody Minnapinni paints the transparencies for her screenprint using a *pwoja* (ironwood comb). Photograph by Henry Skerritt. Courtesy of Michelle Pulatuwayu Woody Minnapinni and Jilamara Arts and Crafts Association.

Bottom: Allyson Mellberg Taylor and Michelle Pulatuwayu Woody Minnapinni mix screenprinting ink and watercolor using ochre from the Tiwi Islands. Courtesy of Allyson Mellberg Taylor, Michelle Pulatuwayu Woody Minnapinni, and Jilamara Arts and Crafts Association.

When discussing the etching she made in 2017 during a workshop with Basil Hall, Woody describes a very different printmaking process. This print, titled *Purukuparli, Japarra amintiya Minga*, tells the Tiwi creation story of the first Pukumani ceremony. Woody gently scratched her design onto the surface of a metal plate using an etching needle.

**MWM: That was the first print I ever made, I had to take my time with it because it was an etching and I was using different tools. I went really slow and steady because it was something new.**

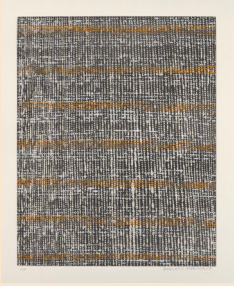
In contrast, the screenprint she made in Charlottesville best replicates her painting process through both materials and methods. This print represents a significant convergence of old and new technology: the ochres, used for Tiwi ceremony since Parlingarri, take on new iterative potential in Woody's layered screens. As with the Jilamara textiles of the 1980s, printmaking continues to move Tiwi culture forward.



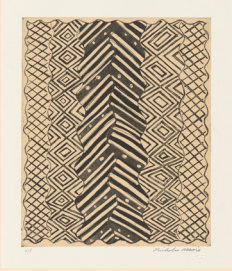
**TIMOTHY COOK**
b. 1958, Tiwi
*Kulama (Coming of Age Ceremony)*, 2023
Collagraph and screenprint on Hahnemühle paper
27 9/16 x 20 7/8 in. (70 x 53 cm)
Printed by Basil Hall
Courtesy of Basil Hall Editions

**COLLEEN FREDDY**
b. 1969, Tiwi
*Jurrukukuni (Boobook Owl)*, 2017
Etching on Hahnemühle paper
15 3/8 x 13 15/16 in. (39.05 x 35.4 cm)
Printed by Basil Hall
Gift of Basil Hall, 2023
Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection, 2023.0006.869

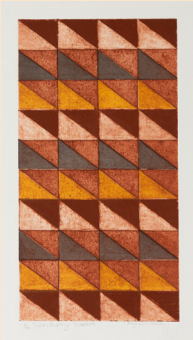
**PAULETTA KERINAIUA**
b. 1982, Tiwi
*Japarra amintiya Japalinga (Moon and Stars)*, 2017
Etching and screenprint on Hahnemühle paper
25 13/16 x 20 15/16 in. (65.56 x 53.18 cm)
Printed by Basil Hall
Gift of Basil Hall, 2023
Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection, 2023.0006.863



**RAELENE KERINAUIA LAMPUWATU**
b. 1962, Tiwi
*Kayimwagakami Jilamara (Ironwood Comb Body Paint Design)*, 2017
Etching and screenprint on Hahnemühle paper
25 7/16 x 20 15/16 in. (64.61 x 53.18 cm)
Printed by Basil Hall
Gift of Basil Hall, 2023
Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection, 2023.0006.865



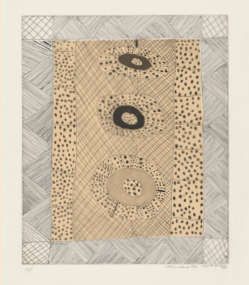
**NICHOLAS MARIO**
1972 – 2019, Tiwi, Greek
*Jilamara (Body Paint Design)*, 2017
Etching and chine collé on Hahnemühle paper
15 1/4 x 14 1/16 in. (38.74 x 35.72 cm)
Printed by Basil Hall
Gift of Basil Hall, 2023
Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection, 2023.0006.877



**RAYLENE MILLER**
b. 1988, Tiwi
*Yirrikipayi Tuwara (Crocodile Tail)*, 2023
Collagraph and screenprint on Hahnemühle paper
14 3/4 x 21 1/16 in. (37.5 x 53.5 cm)
Printed by Basil Hall
Courtesy of Basil Hall Editions

**DINO WILSON**
1983 – 2023, Tiwi
*Warnarringa (Sun)*, 2017
Screenprint on Magnani paper
22 1/16 x 24 15/16 in. (56.04 x 63.34 cm)
Printed by Basil Hall
Gift of Basil Hall, 2023
Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection, 2023.0006.886

**MICHELLE PULATUWAYU WOODY MINNAPINNI**
b. 1972, Tiwi
*Ngiya Murrakupupuni amintiya Jilamara (My Country and Art)*, 2026
Screenprint with natural pigments on BFK Rives paper
29 7/8 x 22 3/8 in. (75.88 x 56.83 cm)
Printed by Thomas Dean and Jeremy Taylor
Gift of the artist, 2026
Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection, 2026.0003.001



**MICHELLE PULATUWAYU WOODY MINNAPINNI**
b. 1972, Tiwi
*Purukuparli, Japarra amintiya Minga (Purukuparli, Japarra and Body Marking)*, 2017
Etching and chine collé on Hahnemühle paper
15 3/8 x 14 in. (39.05 x 35.56 cm)
Printed by Basil Hall
Gift of Basil Hall, 2023
Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection, 2023.0006.880

**PEDRO WONAEAMIRRI**
b. 1974, Tiwi
*Jilamara (Body Paint Design)*, 2017
Etching and screenprint on Hahnemühle paper
25 5/8 x 20 15/16 in. (65.09 x 53.18 cm)
Printed by Basil Hall and Jonathon Larson
Gift of Basil Hall, 2023
Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection, 2023.0006.866

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## Printmaking at Jilamara Arts and Crafts Association

August 18, 2026 – January 24, 2027

Upper West Oval Room of the Rotunda
at the University of Virginia
1826 University Avenue, Charlottesville, Virginia 22904
Open daily 9 am – 5 pm

**Michelle Pulatuwayu Woody Minnapinni** is a Tiwi artist and curator from Milikapiti, a small community situated on Melville Island, one of the Tiwi Islands located off the northern coast of Australia's Northern Territory. She is a Tiwi leader who celebrates her culture through a commitment to strong Indigenous governance and through creating celebrated contemporary artwork. In addition to her art practice, Woody is a museum professional who served as the former president of the art center Jilamara Arts and Crafts Association, and is the current coordinator of the Muluwurri Museum, the keeping place for historical Tiwi cultural material.

**Emmy Monaghan** is an art history PhD candidate at the University of Virginia whose research focuses on installation and the moving image in contemporary Indigenous Australian art. She is a doctoral fellow in Indigenous studies and has served as the assistant registrar at Kluge-Ruhe since 2022. She has contributed to several Kluge-Ruhe exhibitions, including co-curating *Performing Country* and *Boomalli Prints and Paper: Making Space as an Art Collective*.

**The exhibition *Nginingawula Jilamara Ngirramini kapi Jurra | Our Art Stories on Paper: Printmaking at Jilamara Arts and Crafts Association* is organized by the Kuge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection of UVA in partnership with Jilamara Arts and Crafts Association. It is co-curated by Michelle Pulatuwayu Woody Minnapinni and Emmy Monaghan.**

**We acknowledge the Monacan People as the custodians of the land in and around Charlottesville, Virginia.**

Cover image: Detail of MICHELLE PULATUWAYU WOODY MINNAPINNI, *Ngiya Murrakupupuni amintiya Jilamara (My Country and Art)*, 2026.

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JILAMARA
Arts & Crafts Association