

Balancing Act

**Our story is not one story,
but many stories to share**

Artwork Labels

Balancing Act features Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander works of art from the State Art Collection. In this exhibition, you will encounter a vast range of material revealing the wide scope of First Nations truth-telling and art-making practice. Radical observations about the ups and downs of life are placed side by side with expressions of relationships with Custodial Country; the locations and places artists and communities care for, according to their kin and family ties with place.

Different versions of history are told, at times emotional and challenging, alongside moments of great beauty and poignancy. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists use their cultural production to investigate feelings and unpack ideas around identity in the wake of colonisation. Others use their work as a way to support and express their own grief and healing, as well as to express joy and cultural belonging.

The use of different media and materials reflects the ways that First Nations artists see their place in the world. Some artists have used natural materials found in places close to their communities, including grasses, wood, bark and feathers, while others use new media such as neon, glass, and digital images.

Balancing Act invites you to be surprised, delighted and challenged by the stories told through the eyes of First Nations artists and their works of art.

WARNING: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this exhibition space contains works of art by deceased community members and may also contain images and likenesses of deceased community members.

Please note that AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Garry Sibosado

Bardi people

born 1974, Derby, Western Australia

works Lombadina Community, Dampier Peninsula,
Western Australia

Aalingoon (Rainbow Serpent)

2018

ochre on engraved pearl shell

Purchased through The Leah Jane Cohen Bequest,
The Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation, 2019

2019/0003.a-hh

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Jean Baptiste (Pulukatu) Apuatimi

Tiwi people

born 1940 Pirlangimpi (Garden Point), Melville Island,
Northern Territory

worked Nguiu, Bathurst Island, Northern Territory

died 2013 Bathurst Island, Northern Territory

Parlini jilamara (Tunga)

2009

ochres and earth pigments on bark

Purchased through the Sir Claude Hotchin Art Foundation,
The Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation, 2015

2015/0023

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Mavis Petyarre

Anmatyerre people

born c1947, Utopia, Northern Territory

Painted car door

1990

synthetic polymer paint on metal, glass, rubber

Purchased 1990

1990/0182

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Gordon Hookey

Waanyi and Waanjinjin peoples

born 1961, Cloncurry, Queensland

lives and works Sydney and country New South Wales

Flamen Jaffa

2000

oil paint on metal, glass, rubber

Gift of Sue and Ian Bernadt, 2008

2008/0102

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Amanda Bell

From our lips, mouths, throats and belly is a neon rendition of the Noongar word Moorditj. Its meaning in English might be translated to 'good' or even 'awesome'. As such, it conveys a glowingly positive energy. It is an energy, Bell - a Badimia and Yued woman - uses to express loving connections across generations and geographies. The work unites Noongar speakers in a system of shared meaning in a profoundly intimate way. The title poetically hints at this, locating the word as it is spoken as a substance from lips, mouths, throats and bellies, each of which shapes it (and is shaped by it) in particular ways.

And now, as a brightly illuminated form crafted in a quirkily wobbly neon tube script, it takes on a new role as something of a local artistic icon. Having been shown at Fremantle Arts Centre and the Rechabites Hall, it has rapidly become one of the most familiar, loved and quietly important works of our moment. A truly impressive feat. It also demonstrates that, since starting her artistic career as recently as 2016, Bell has the instinct necessary to hone-in on what is most vital, emotionally and culturally, to create art of real significance.

Amanda Bell

Badimia and Yued people

born 1965, Subiaco, Perth, Western Australia

works Busselton, Western Australia

From our lip, mouths, throats and belly

2021

neon and audio

Purchased through The Art Gallery of Western Australia

Foundation: COVID-19 Arts Stimulus Package, 2021

2021/0128

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Reko (Gwaybilla) Rennie

Kamilaroi people

born 1974, Melbourne, Victoria

works Melbourne, Victoria

OA WARRIOR II (pink)

2020

neon

Purchased, 2020

2020/0412.a-f

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Left to right

Janet Fieldhouse

Meriam Mer people

born 1971, Cairns, Queensland

works Canberra, Australian Capital Territory

Confluence 8

2017

Raku trachyte (ceramic)

Purchased 2018

2018/0040.a-d

Confluence 11

2017

Raku trachyte (ceramic)

Purchased 2018

2018/0041.a-f

Scarification hybrids series 2

2017

Raku trachyte (ceramic)

Purchased 2018

2018/0042.a-b

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Christopher Pease

Minang / Wardandi / Bibbulmun peoples
born 1969, Dunsborough, Western Australia
works Dunsborough, Western Australia

Targets

2020

oil on linen

Purchased through The Art Gallery of Western Australia
Foundation: TomorrowFund, 2022

2022/0006.a-c

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Tom Djumburpur

Wudamin people

born 1920s, Ramingining, Arnhem Land, Northern Territory

worked Ramingining, Arnhem Land, Northern Territory

died 2006

Yulungur the Rainbow serpent - Snake lives under the water

1991

ochres on stringy bark (Eucalyptus Tetradonta), PVA glue

Purchased 1988

1988/0262

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Violet Samson

Ngarluma people

born 1949, Cheeritha Station, Roebourne,

Western Australia

lives and works Roebourne, Western Australia

Old town Roebourne

2017

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Gift of Rio Tinto, 2017

2017/0219

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Norma Macdonald

Noongar and Yamatji peoples

born 1944 Geraldton, Western Australia

works Perth, Western Australia

Spirit drawn

2008

oil on Belgian linen

Purchased through the Sir Claude Hotchin Art Foundation,
The Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation, 2008

2008/0129

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Ngarralja Tommy May

Artist Ngarralja Tommy May is a senior Wankajonka/Walmajarri man who sings and dances the Kurtal ceremony about his waterhole country. He is known for his prints, paintings and works in tin inspired by and keeping alive ancestral rain making knowledge. Unifying his output across his mediums, is a boldly shimmering quality grounded by strong design and vivid colours. Never merely illustrations each work is fully sensory, evoking sensations often of water massing, water releasing, water moving and water in relationship to its surrounds.

This major new commission (produced in collaboration with the Perth-based manufacturer Respoke) is a distillation of key aspects of May's practice thus far. It is also his first hanging work and the first to use laser cut brass, and he uses these materials to create a highly expressive animation of vapour becoming clouds becoming rain. Full of flickering visual movement, curator and writer Emilia Gelatis has noted that the work "is a golden cloud that gives form to rain the massing of water in the whirr in vapour and its dramatic passage to ground. It was taken from his earlier works of rain clouds on tin, and includes a shiny finish that speaks to the feel and look of rain and his personality".

Mr (Ngarralja Tommy) May

Wangkajunga and Walmajarri peoples
born 1935, Yarnkurnja,
Great Sandy Desert, Western Australia
worked Fitzroy Crossing, Kimberley region
died 2022

Warla, Flat Country

2021

brass, aluminium, stone and soil

Purchased through the Bonice Tollafeld Bequest,
Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation, 2022

2022/0020

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Peggy Napurrurla Poulson

Warlpiri people

born c1935, Pikilyi (Vaughan Springs), Northern Territory

works Yuendumu, Northern Territory

Maggie Napurrurla Poulson

Warlpiri people

born c1935, Northern Territory

works Yuendumu, Northern Territory

Bessie Nakamarra Sims

Warlpiri people

born c1940, Northern Territory

worked Yuendumu, Northern Territory

died 2012, Yuendumu, Northern Territory

Janganpa Jukurrpa - Possum Dreaming

1988

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Purchased 1993

1993/0328

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Bugai Whyoulter

Kartujarra people

born 1940, Pukayiyirna

(Balfour Downs Station), Western Australia

works Kunawarritji, Western Australia

Wantili one

2018

synthetic polymer paint on linen

Purchased through The Leah Jane Cohen Bequest,
The Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation, 2019

2019/0061

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Joyce Winsley

Wilman and Goreng peoples

born 1938, Gnowangerup, Western Australia

lived and worked Narrogin, Western Australia

died 2001

Baby

1999

Guildford grasses (Romulea Rosea) and cordyline

Purchased 1999

1999/0202

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Mawalan Marika

Rirratjinu people

born c1908, Yalangbara, Northern Territory

worked Yirrkala / Yalangbara / Bremer Island,

Northern Territory

died 1967, Australia

The Djan'kawu Brother Figure

date of creation not recorded

ochres on wood, feathers, plant fibre string, resin, strips of plant fibre, human hair

Purchased through the Western Australian Government, 1988

1988/1426

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Ancestor

people not recorded

Western Australia

Custodial Country not recorded

Untitled (from Warringarri Arts)

1987

carved slate

Gift of Brigitte Braun, 2017

2017/0157

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Shirley Macnamara

Indilandji and Alyawarre peoples

born 1949, Queensland

works Mt Guide Station, north west Queensland

Garnangadha Guutu (Emu vessel)

2017

Emu feathers, spinifex, bone, wax thread and ochre

Purchased through the Sir Claude Hotchin Art Foundation,
The Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation, 2018

2018/0070

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Thapich Gloria Fletcher Ao

Dhaynagwidh and Thaynakwith peoples
born 1938, Napranum, West Cape York Peninsula,
Queensland
died 2011, Queensland

Arrone, Moocheth, Min Malong (The Ibis, The Black Crane and the Fire Clan)

1978
glazed stoneware

Purchased with assistance from the Crafts Board of the Australia Council, 1978

1978/00C4

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Waringarri Aboriginal Arts Art Centre

Kununurra, Western Australia est. 1980s

Wesfarmers Arts BOAB100 Project

2013

engraving on white aluminium

Gift of Wesfarmers in 2014 on the occasion of the company's Centenary

2014/0174.1-15

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Black Joe Wombiaudimirri

Tiwi people

born 1910 Melville Island, Northern Territory

died 1973 Melville Island, Northern Territory

Pukamani bark basket

ochre on eucalyptus bark

Purchased through the Western Australian Government, 1988

1988/0477

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Anmanari Brown

Pitjantjatjarra people

born c1930s, Purpurna, Western Australia

worked Papulankutja (Blackstone), Western Australia,
and Irrunytju, Northern Territory

died 2018

Minyma Tjuta (Seven sisters)

2004

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Purchased 2005

2005/0142

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Nora Wompi

Manyjilyjarra and Kukatja peoples
born 1939, Lipuru, Western Australia
lived Kunawarritji, Western Australia
died 2017

Bugai Whyoulter

Kartujarra people
born 1940, Pukayiyirna (Balfour Downs Station),
Western Australia
works Kunawarritji, Western Australia

Nora (Nyangapa) Nungabar

Manyjilyjarra people
born 1920, Lipuru, Western Australia
worked Kunawarritji, Western Australia
died 2016

Martumili Ngurra

2013
synthetic polymer paint on linen

Purchased through The Leah Jane Cohen Bequest,
The Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation, 2014

2014/0004

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Tjyllyungoo Lance Chadd

Bibbulmun and Budimia peoples

born 1954, Bunbury, Western Australia

works Perth, Western Australia

Reflections

2000

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Purchased 2002

2002/0254

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Revel Cooper

Goreng people

born 1933, Katanning, Western Australia

worked Carrolup Native Settlement, Perth,

Western Australia and Melbourne, Victoria

died 1983

South-West landscape near Pemberton

c1962

synthetic polymer paint on plywood

Purchased 2003

2003/0007

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Meeyakba Shane Pickett

Balardung People

born 1957, Quairading, Western Australia

worked in Perth, Western Australia

died 2010, Western Australia

Calling for rain – The Wanyarang suite

2007

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Purchased through the The Leah Jane Cohen Bequest,
The Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation, 2008

2007/0309.a-h

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Sandra Hill

My series revisits the era of intense assimilation and attempts to convey the level of alienation that my people and family experienced during that period.

In the 1950s, low budget housing was made available to 'chosen' Aboriginal families through the *Transitional Housing Scheme*. Under the housing scheme, extended families were separated into nuclear units; and every tenant was subjected to an unfathomable amount of government rules and regulations. These 'settlements' were nothing more than an experiment in assimilation.

A key component of the housing scheme was the Homemaker program. It was aimed at Aboriginal women living in these settlements. White women, who were 'trained' to deliver the program, were sent into the homes of Aboriginal families to specifically 'teach' Aboriginal women in all things domestic. Many of the lessons focused on Anglo-Australian social etiquette, household rituals including the ceremony of dinner parties, the formality of dress, recreational social activities and the material 'wealth' of a pristine home. In return, Aboriginal women were expected to demonstrate a 'white' appreciation for these imposed domestic environments.

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Without a doubt, there was a clear expectation that the 'black' woman could just slot into this lifestyle with relative ease. But they couldn't, because the new role imposed on them was culturally foreign and alienating. Eventually, both programs were considered a failure. Though, by then, thousands of Indigenous men, women and children had already lived through intolerable, heartbreaking experiences including my beloved mother, my grandmother, my siblings and myself.

SANDRA HILL, ARTIST STATEMENT 2021

Sandra Hill

Wardandi / Minang / Ballardong / Wilmen peoples
born 1951, South Perth, Perth, Western Australia
works Balingup, Western Australia

Home-maker #9 The Hairdresser

2014

oil on linen

Purchased through The Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation:
TomorrowFund, 2020

2020/0288

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Sandra Hill

Wardandi / Minang / Ballardong / Wilmen Country
born 1951 Western Australia

Home-maker #10: Honey, I'm home

2020

oil on linen

Purchased through the Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation:
TomorrowFund, 2020

2020/0289

Sandra Hill

Wardandi / Minang / Ballardong / Wilmen peoples
born 1951 Perth, Western Australia
works Balingup, Western Australia

Home-maker #4

2010

oil on canvas

Purchased through The Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation:
TomorrowFund, 2011

2011/0041

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Sandra Hill

Wardandi / Minang / Ballardong / Wilmen Country
born 1951 Western Australia

Home-maker #5: The bedroom

2012

oil on linen

Purchased through the Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation:
TomorrowFund, 2020

2020/0287

Graham (Swag) Taylor

Noongar people

born 1955 Merredin, Western Australia

works Bunbury, Western Australia

My Heartland

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Transferred from Department of Commerce,
Science, Innovation and Business, 2010

2010/0097

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Norma Macdonald

Noongar and Yamatji peoples

born 1944 Geraldton, Western Australia

works Perth, Western Australia

Spirit drawn

2008

oil on Belgian linen

Purchased through the Sir Claude Hotchin Art Foundation,
The Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation, 2008

2008/0129

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Gordon Bennett

born 1955 Monto, Queensland
worked Brisbane, Queensland
died 2014 Brisbane, Queensland

Painting for a New Republic (The inland sea)

1994
synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Gift of the Friends of the Art Gallery, 1995

1995/0055

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Amanda “Mandy” White

Yamatji people

born 1978 Guildford, Perth, Western Australia

works Perth region, Western Australia

Barking Owl

2020

painted steel

Purchased through The Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation:
COVID-19 Arts Stimulus Package, 2021

2021/0129

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Pedro Gurrumaiyuwa Wonaeamirri

Tiwi people

born 1974 Melville Island, Northern Territory

works Melville Island, Northern Territory

Yirrinkuruwu Pwoja - pukamani body design

1999

ochres on wood

Purchased 2000

2000/0245

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Black Joe Wombiaudimirri

Tiwi people

born 1910 Melville Island, Northern Territory

died 1973 Melville Island, Northern Territory

Pukamani bark basket

ochre on eucalyptus bark

Purchased through the Western Australian Government, 1988

1988/0477

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Lin Onus

Yorta Yorta people

born 1948 Melbourne, Victoria

worked Melbourne, Victoria

died 1996 Melbourne, Victoria

Maralinga

1990

fibreglass, synthetic polymer paint,
acrylic and paper stickers

Purchased 1990

1990/0236.a-b

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Noreen Parker

Pitjantjatjara people

born 1964 Fregon, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara,
South Australia

works Irrunytju, Western Australia

Walka Pulka

2020

synthetic polymer on canvas

Purchased through The Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation:
COVID-19 Arts Stimulus Package, 2020

2020/0330

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Ginger Riley Munduwalawala

Marra people

born c1939 Ngukurr, Northern Territory

worked Wamungu and Melbourne, Victoria

died 2002 Borroloola, Northern Territory

Untitled

synthetic polymer paint (series of 3 paintings) on plywood

Purchased through The Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation:

TomorrowFund, 2010 Courtesy of the Estate of the Artist and

Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne

2010/0111-13

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

John Prince Siddon

Walmajarri people

born 1974 Derby, Western Australia

works Fitzroy Crossing, Western Australia

Will the babies make it?

2019

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Purchased through The Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation:
COVID-19 Arts Stimulus Package, 2020

2020/0307

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Judith Yinyika Chambers

Ngaanyatjarra people

born 1958 Jameson (Mantumaru), Western Australia

works Warakurna, Western Australia

Warburton Mission church time

2014

synthetic polymer paint on plywood

Purchased through The Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation:

COVID-19 Arts Stimulus Package, 2020

2020/0393

Missionaries travelled with camels to Warburton

2014

synthetic polymer paint on plywood

Purchased through The Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation:

COVID-19 Arts Stimulus Package, 2020

2020/0392

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.

Top to bottom, left to right

James Tylor

Kaurna and Maori peoples

born 1986 Mildura, Victoria

works Canberra, Australian Capital Territory

(Deleted scenes) From an untouched landscape #1

2013

inkjet print on Hahnemuhle paper

Purchased through The Leah Jane Cohen Bequest,
The Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation, 2014

2014/0164

(Deleted scenes) From an untouched landscape #3

2013

inkjet print on Hahnemuhle paper

Purchased through The Leah Jane Cohen Bequest,
The Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation, 2014

2014/0165

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(Deleted scenes) From an untouched landscape #6

2013

inkjet print on Hahnemuhle paper

Purchased through The Leah Jane Cohen Bequest,
The Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation, 2014

2014/0166

(Deleted scenes) From an untouched landscape #9

2013

inkjet print on Hahnemuhle paper

Purchased through The Leah Jane Cohen Bequest,
The Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation, 2014

2014/0167

(Deleted scenes) From an untouched landscape #10

2013

inkjet print on Hahnemuhle paper

Purchased through The Leah Jane Cohen Bequest,
The Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation, 2014

2014/0168

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(Deleted scenes) From an untouched landscape #13

2013

inkjet print on Hahnemuhle paper

Purchased through The Leah Jane Cohen Bequest,
The Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation, 2014

2014/0169

AGWA values artist-led information and knowledge sharing. Differences in name, place and language spellings may result from different languages and dialects in use.