

# John Mawurndjul: I am the old and the new

## The Temporary Exhibitions Gallery

10 July – 13 September 2020

*John Mawurndjul: I am the old and the new* reunites works of art made across a 40-year period. The artist has led the development of this exhibition, which describes in Kuninjku (and English) his places of special cultural significance known as kunred, as well as the sacred places and spirits – or Djang – that resurface time and time again in his art-making. We also encounter the animals and spirit beings that populate these locations including female water spirits (yawkyawk), rainbow serpents (ngalyod) and mischievous mimih spirits.

The places around western Arnhem Land that recur in his work include spring-fed creeks such as Milmilngkan, sandstone escarpments including Ngandarrayo and the white clay quarries of the seasonal creek called Kudjarnngal. The materials used by Mawurndjul to make his art come from these places: the stringy bark eucalypt skins that form the body of his bark paintings; the white clay, yellow and red ochres mined from sacred deposits that become paint; and the manyilk, the paint brush sedge that makes the single strand brushes that the artist uses to make cross hatching or rarrk.

The Mardayin ceremony, comprising rituals of a sacred nature, and informing so much of Mawurndjul's work, remains a timeless narrative thread that links the past to the present, and sheds light on Kuninjku future – embracing the old and the new.

This exhibition was developed and co-presented by the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia and the Art Gallery of South Australia, in association with Maningrida Arts & Culture.

View the [full length documentary](#) *John Mawurndjul: I am the old and the new*.

**Museum of  
Contemporary  
Art Australia**



Exhibition organised and toured by the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia. This project has been assisted by the Australian Government's Visions of Australia program.

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**John Mawurndjul**  
*Ngalyod* 2012

earth pigments on Stringybark (*Eucalyptus tetradonta*)

Museum of Contemporary Art, purchased with funds provided by the MCA Foundation, 2015  
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