



**The Weltmuseum Wien received a gift of Aboriginal Art
from the Essl Private Collection**
Official presentation on 29 April 2022

On 29 April 2022, the collectors Karlheinz and Agnes Essl presented the Weltmuseum Wien with a generous gift of Aboriginal Art from the Essl Private Collection. The gift consists of an important block of works comprising 58 artefacts – mainly bark paintings and three-dimensional objects. These works are by 40 indigenous artists, among them John Mawurndjul, Fred Ward Tjungurrayi, Melba Gunjarrwanga, Jenny Fraser, Charlie Djinmalala Brian, Lena Yarinkura, and Maree Puruntatameri.

The Origins of the Collection

Karlheinz and Agnes Essl began collecting Aboriginal Art in 2000. In 2003, Karlheinz Essl and the Australian curator Michael Eather visited Aboriginal communities in the Australian Outback. They travelled to settlements all over the country where art was being produced including Alice Springs, the spiritual centre of Aboriginal Art, and Papunya, where the artist and art teacher Geoffrey Bardon was instrumental in creating contemporary Aboriginal Art in the 1970s and bringing it to world attention. Papunya is home to the now famous dot painting.

The Aboriginal Communities kindly allowed Karlheinz Essl and Michael Eather to gain valuable insights into this millennia-old yet timeless art tradition.

Exhibitions at the Essl Museum in 2001 and 2004

Over the course of this trip, Karlheinz Essl was able to acquire artworks from all parts of Australia, which were included in the exhibition *Spirit and Vision* shown at the Essl Museum in 2004. Most of the artefacts shown there form the block of works now gifted to the Weltmuseum Wien.



In 2001, the Essl Museum presented *Dreamtime*, the first important exhibition of Aboriginal art shown in Austria. Both shows generated enormous international interest and proved the museum's most popular exhibitions.

"We are proud to present the Weltmuseum Wien with an important group of works of Aboriginal art. Aboriginal Art is a core holding of the Essl Collection and has always formed a part of exhibitions hosted at the Essl Museum. We are very happy that these unique works have found a new home at Weltmuseum Wien."
Agnes and Karlheinz Essl

"I would like to express my appreciation and deep gratitude to Agnes and Karlheinz Essl, whose tireless commitment to art and international patronage and connoisseurship has deeply impacted and enriched Austria's museum landscape."
Sabine Haag, Director-General of the KHM-Museumsverband

"Until now the Weltmuseum Wien's Australia Collection comprised around 700 artefacts, its first acquisitions dating from the early nineteenth century. Now it will receive examples of contemporary Aboriginal Art, mainly from Arnhem Land. These artworks represent an important and valuable addition to our historical holdings. At Weltmuseum Wien they will be both accessible to a wider audience and preserved for science and academic study."
Jonathan Fine, Director of the Weltmuseum Wien

PRESS CONTACT

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PRESS PHOTOGRAPHS

Press photographs are available in the press section of our website free of charge, for your topical reporting: <https://www.weltmuseumwien.at/en/press/>

Maree Puruntatameri

Body Painting

2002, acrylic on canvas

© Photo: Stefan Fiedler – Salon Iris, Vienna



Jimmy An.gunguna

Hollow log – Goanna dreaming

2003, ochre paint on bark (stringybark)

© Photo: Stefan Fiedler – Salon Iris, Vienna



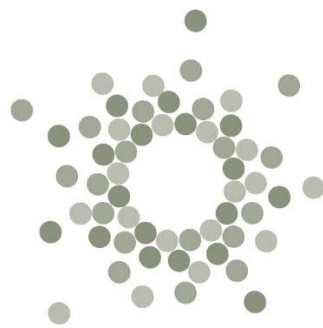
Tommy Gondorra Steele

Didgeridoo

2002, wood, painted

© Photo: Stefan Fiedler – Salon Iris, Vienna





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John Mawurndjul

Mimih Spirit

2002, ochre paint on wood (Kurrajong)

© Photo: Stefan Fiedler – Salon Iris, Vienna



Hamish Karrkarrhba

Dilly Bag

2003, ochre paint on wood (stringybark)

© Photo: Stefan Fiedler – Salon Iris, Vienna



John Mawurndjul

Mardayin Design

2001, ochre paint on wood (stringybark)

© Photo: Stefan Fiedler – Salon Iris, Vienna

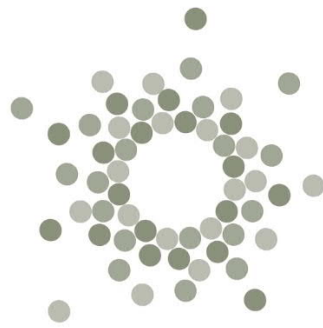


Zelda Wurigin

Mat

2003, natural fibres (twined Pandanus)

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Lena Yarinkura
Yawkyawk
2003, ochre paint on natural fibres (twined Pandanus)
© Photo: Stefan Fiedler – Salon Iris, Vienna



Matilda Malparringa Pascoe
Wangarra Spirit Figure
2002, ochre paint on wood (cottonwood)
© Photo: Stefan Fiedler – Salon Iris, Vienna



Topsy Tjulyata
Piti – Collecting Bowl
2000, wood
© Photo: Stefan Fiedler – Salon Iris, Vienna



Topsy Tjulyata
Piti – Collecting Bowl
2000, wood
© Photo: Stefan Fiedler – Salon Iris, Vienna