

# Histories of Australian Rock Art Research Symposium

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8 - 9 December 2019

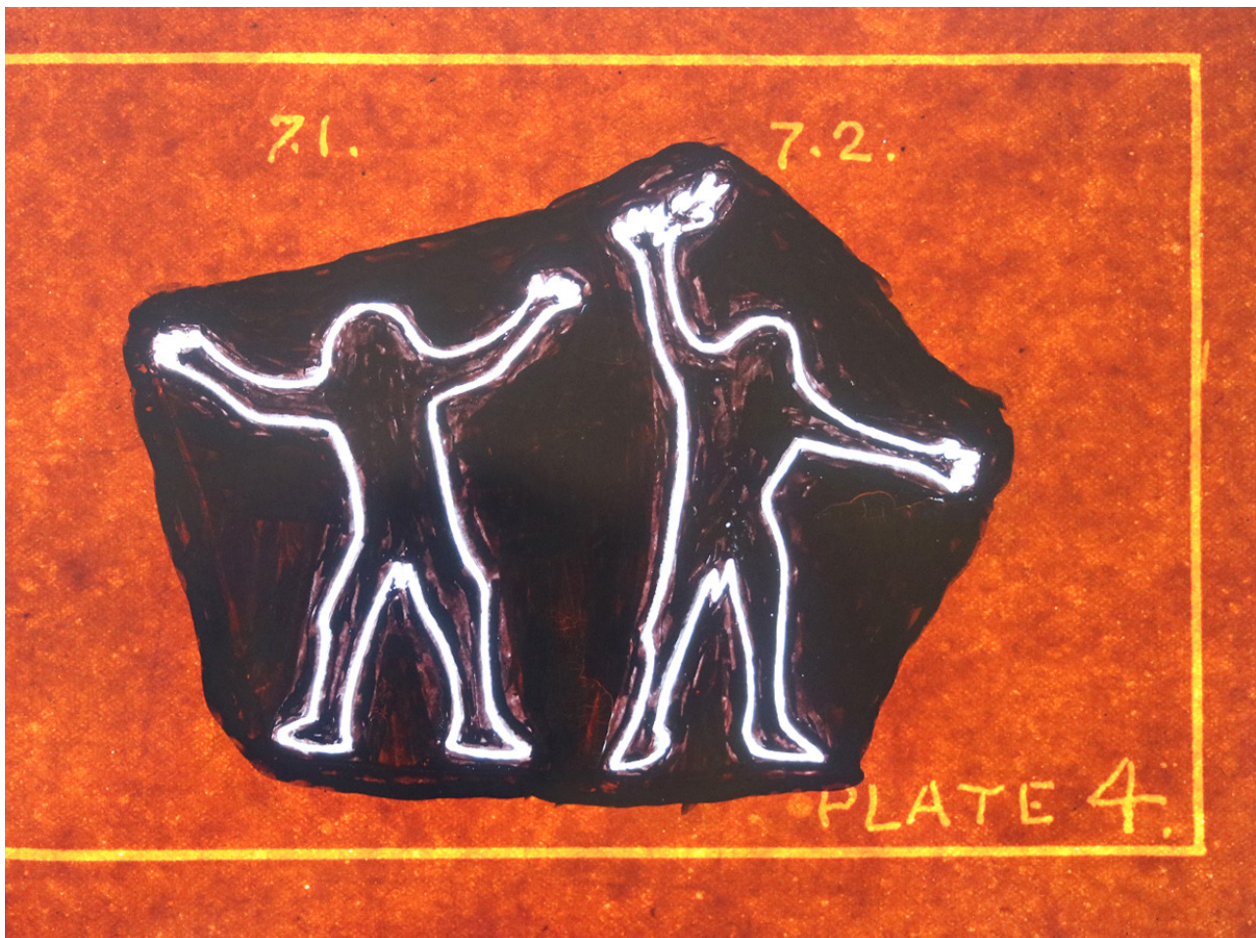
*We acknowledge and celebrate the First Australians on whose traditional lands we meet and work and whose cultures are among the oldest continuing cultures in human history.*

*The Gold Coast, where we meet today, is situated on the land of the Yugambeh/Kombumerri peoples. We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present.*

## **Welcome to Country**

9am Sunday 8 December

Emerald Brewer and Max Dillon



Front cover image: Glass plate from Lawrence Hargrave photographs of pictograms and petroglyphs, 1870-1915 (detail), National Library of Australia PIC 8531/4, Photograph: UK Frederick 2018

# Histories of Australian Rock Art Research

*Welcome to the Histories  
of Australian Rock Art  
Research symposium.*

This symposium brings together people from across Australia to reflect upon unique events, ideas and trajectories in the history of Australian rock art. With 27 presentations over two days we have a full program and one representing the diversity of rock art research in Australia. We are particularly delighted to have 14 Indigenous/ First Nation presenters from Western Australia, Victoria and the Northern Territory. Your stories of past and current rock art research in your own country brings an important element to these histories and will help to guide ongoing rock art research across Australia.

The intense interest in this symposium took us a little by surprise. We had expected a small, tightly focused collection of papers, but were happily overwhelmed with abstracts from across Australia and neighbouring countries. This suggests that the timing is right for these discussions. Clearly, there comes a time in every field of research when enough years have passed for its early practitioners to become founding members and their actions to become the subject of critical reflection. Now is that time for the study of Australian rock art. This complex history of research is imbued with unique personalities, international influences, politically charged debate, and shifting relationships within and across established disciplines, such as archaeology.

We hope that this symposium inspires reflection and re-evaluation and helps to guide continuing collaborative rock art research, conservation and management programs into the future.

## **Organising Committee**

Sally K. May (Place, Evolution and Rock Art Heritage Unit, Griffith University)

Ursula Frederick (the Australian National University)

Paul S.C. Taçon (Place, Evolution and Rock Art Heritage Unit, Griffith University)

Jo McDonald (Centre for Rock Art Research + Management, University of Western Australia).

## **Volunteers**

Emily Miller, Roxanne Tsang, Samuel Dix, Irina Ponomareva and Marcela Ortega Rincon

## **Administrative Support (Griffith University)**

Emily Miller, Sonya Brown and Fiona McKeague

## **Funding**

Australian Research Council grant: 'Australian rock art history, conservation and Indigenous well-being', part of Paul S.C. Taçon's ARC Laureate Project (FL160100123)

Griffith University Centre for Social and Cultural Research

Griffith University School of Humanities, Languages and Social Science

Australia ICOMOS through the National Scientific Committee for Rock Art and the Indigenous Conference Fund

## **Social Media**

#rockarthistories



# Overview

## Sunday 8 December:

Papers and discussion: 9 am – 5 pm

Room G06\_2.05, Academic 2 Building, Gold Coast Campus, Griffith University

Symposium Dinner: 6.30 pm

Bavarian Haus Restaurant (Keller Bar), 41 Cavill Ave, Surfers Paradise

## Monday 9 December:

Papers and discussion: 9 am – 4.30pm

Room G06\_2.05, Academic 2 Building, Gold Coast Campus, Griffith University

Informal Drinks: from 4.30pm

Terrace, University Bar, Gold Coast campus



# Schedule

## Day 1: Sunday 8 December 2019

Time	Presentation/Activity	Name/s
9.00	Welcome to Country	Emerald Brewer and Max Dillon
9.20	Opening of the symposium	Symposium Organisers
9.40	The history of Arnhem Land rock art research: a multicultural, multilingual and multidisciplinary pursuit	Paul S.C. Taçon
10.00	Preserving the rock art of Kakadu: formative conservation trials during the 1980s	Melissa Marshall, Jeffrey Lee, Gabrielle O'Loughlin, Kadeem May and Jillian Huntley
10.20	Indigenous agency, "The Other" and reciprocity: Agnes S. Schulz and the Frobenius Expedition to Arnhem Land 1954-55	Tristen Jones, Martin Porr, Richard Kuba, Alfred Nayinggul and the Njanjma Aboriginal Corporation
10.40	From ruin to revitalisation: using archival footage to revisit and respond to the repainting of rock art in Kakadu National Park	Kelly Wiltshire and Victor Cooper
11.00	<i>Morning tea</i>	
11.30	George Chaloupka, Nipper Kapiirigi and the profound impact of Indigenous knowledge systems in establishing Australian rock art research	Joakim Goldhahn
11.50	Rock art from my eyes	Mary Blyth
12.10	Discussion	
12.30	<i>Lunch</i>	
1.30	Innovation and Antiquarianism: Frederick McCarthy, Charles Mountford and the emergence of an archaeology of rock art 1948-1960	Annie Clarke, Sally K. May, Ursula Frederick, and Iain Johnston

# Schedule

## Day 1: Sunday 8 December 2019

Time	Presentation/Activity	Name/s
1.50	The Golden Age of Rock Art on Groote Eylandt	Ursula K Frederick and Anne Clarke
2.10	Early interpretations of Pacific rock art and its wider connections, including with Australia, in the pre-World War II period	Matthew Spriggs
2.30	The austro-invasion of Southeast Asia and Micronesia	Andrea Jalandoni
2.50	<i>Afternoon tea</i>	
3.20	Women in Rock Art: From Cinderella Pursuit to Engaged Science	Sven Ouzman
3.40	Australian Artists as Rock Art Researchers: Percy Leason's theories on cave art	Susan Lowish
4.00	The ongoing story of Gariwerd rock art	R. G. Gunn and Jake Goodes
4.20	Sydney's rock art seen through different eyes: interpretations from outside archaeology	Denis Gojak
4.40	Discussion	
5.00	End of Day 1	
6.30 pm	Symposium Dinner: Bavarian Haus Restaurant (Keller Bar), 41 Cavill Ave, Surfers Paradise	

# Schedule

## Day 2: Monday 9 December 2019

Time	Presentation/Activity	Name/s
9.00	Welcome	
9.10	'Our way, right way': a celebration of Donny Woolagoodja and his role in rock art research	Leah Umbagai and Folau Penaia (Umbagai)
9.30	A prosopography of Murujuga rock art	Jose Antonio Gonzalez Zarandona and Michel Lorblanchet
9.50	Bloody Foreigners: what would they know	Ken Mulvaney, Patrick Churnside, Mariah Reed and Tootsie Daniel
10.10	More than just "Woodstock Figures": assessing previous approaches and interpretations of Tharra (Woodstock Abydos) rock art, and their role in shaping new research directions	Liam Brady and David Milroy
10.30	Rock art research in the Kimberley: A Ngarinyin perspective	Robin Dann, LeeAnne Bear, Lloyd Nulgit and Melissa Marshall
10.50	<i>Morning tea</i>	
11.20	Michael J. Morwood's contribution to the archaeology of rock art	Jillian Huntley, Noelene Cole, June Ross, Doug Hobbs, Mark Moore, Adam Brumm, and Iain Davidson
11.40	In the shade of the Rainbow Serpent: a trajectory of rock art research at Sandy Creek in Quinkan Country, Cape York Peninsula	Noelene Cole
12.00	Robert Edwards and the history of rock art research	Mike Smith and June Ross
12.20	Andrée Rosenfeld – The Quiet Giant	Claire Smith
12.40	<i>Lunch</i>	

# Schedule

## Day 2: Monday 9 December 2019

Time	Presentation/Activity	Name/s
1.40	Changing paradigms: liberating rock art studies from the entrapment of style and portrait	Benjamin Smith
2.00	McCarthyism and the rise of regions	Sam Harper and Jo McDonald
2.20	Fifty years of Australian rock art: from Cupules to Lightning Brothers	Josephine Flood
2.40	Mathesis Words, Mathesis Pictures and the genesis of contemporary Australian rock art research	Jo McDonald
3.00	<i>Afternoon tea</i>	
3.30	Discussion and closing remarks	
4.30	Drinks – The Terrace, Uni Bar (Gold Coast campus)	

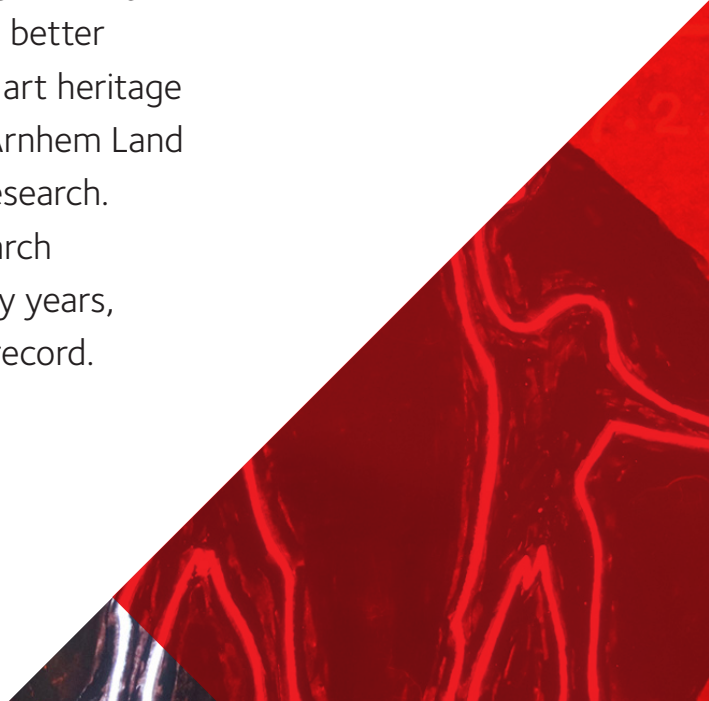
# Abstracts – Day One

## The history of Arnhem Land rock art research: a multicultural, multilingual and multidisciplinary pursuit

*Paul S.C. Taçon*

*Griffith University*

Arnhem Land rock art has been known to the outside world since the early 1800s but it was not until the late 1940s that it became a subject of serious investigation. Eight phases of research have occurred with different approaches, questions and subjects of concern. These phases, from an initial one of discovery and reporting to the most recent employing digital technology, structure this paper. However, the focus is on the multi-cultural investigation of Arnhem Land rock art and the ways in which this has shaped the history and course of research, including the testing and adoption of many pioneering approaches to rock art recording, interpretation, dating, conservation, management and tourism. Over one-hundred non-Indigenous individuals from twelve countries have significantly contributed to our understanding of Arnhem Land rock art, with Australians, Czechs, Brits and Canadians, in particular, advancing knowledge. But there has always equally been a strong interest from Aboriginal Australians in better understanding, promoting and protecting their rock art heritage with over one hundred key individuals from across Arnhem Land and beyond actively participating in Arnhem Land research. Consequently, Indigenous and non-Indigenous research perspectives have been intertwined for over seventy years, resulting in a deservedly rich and enriched rock art record.



# Preserving the rock art of Kakadu: formative conservation trials during the 1980s

*Melissa Marshall<sup>1</sup>, Jeffrey Lee<sup>2</sup>, Gabrielle O'Loughlin<sup>2</sup>,  
Kadeem May<sup>2</sup> & Jillian Huntley<sup>3</sup>*

*1 University of Notre Dame, 2 Parks Australia,*

*3 Griffith University*

Rock art conservation in Australia emerged during the 1970s and often correlated with specific impacts in the wake of increasing mining and development. The establishment of Kakadu National Park was no exception and culminated in international recognition with inclusion on the World Heritage List. The need to protect and preserve this wealth of rock art was of utmost importance to Traditional Owners and rock art researchers alike. Early innovative techniques were trialled and included photogrammetric recordings, as well as the investigation of specific environmental impacts threatening the fabric of sites. Of interest however, were two specific conservation programs that were implemented in the mid-1980 – namely the CORLAB trials and the Nourlangie Restoration Project. The three-year CORLAB program was designed to analyse, introduce and evaluate the application of artificial silica sprays to rock art at select sites. Following this, an intensive restoration project was undertaken at Anbangbang Gallery in the Nourlangie precinct. Involving international specialists and trainees, techniques included the re-adhesion of pigments, silica sprays and surface treatments. We will present a review of the trials themselves and consider the durability of the interventions applied. In addition, we consider the implications for rock art conservation as a discipline, more generally.



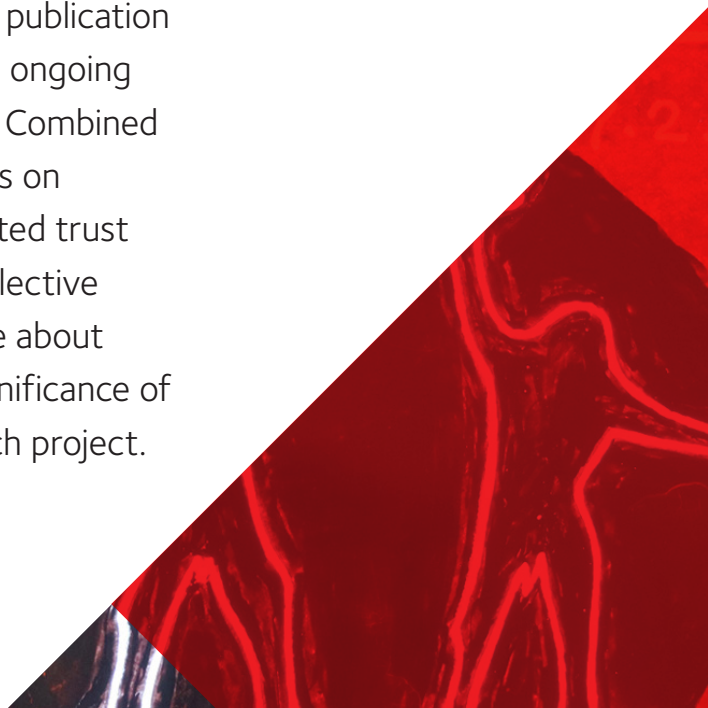
# Indigenous agency, “The Other” and reciprocity: Agnes S. Schulz and the Frobenius Expedition to Arnhem Land 1954-55

*Tristen Jones<sup>1</sup>, Martin Porr<sup>2</sup>, Richard Kuba<sup>3</sup>, Alfred Nayinggul<sup>4</sup> and the Njanjma Aboriginal Corporation*

*1 Australian National University, 2 University of Western Australia, 3 Frobenius Institute, 4 Njanjma Aboriginal Corporation*

Recent research into the Frobenius expedition to the Kimberley in the 1930s has shown that collaborative research engagements with ethnological museum collections can provide novel opportunities for understanding local indigenous agency within historic colonial contexts (Porr and Doohan 2017).

They also provide opportunities for indigenous custodians to engage with and reassert ownership over objects removed from country. However, until now the research and outreach activities relating to the ethnological and archival museum collections assembled by the Frobenius Expeditions and their members in Australia have focussed solely on the Kimberley region. In this paper, we outline our preliminary research into the activities of the Frobenius Expedition to Arnhem Land in 1954/55, which was conducted by Agnes S. Schulz. Over 1400 BW photographs as well as original archival materials and bark paintings from her time in the NT have been identified in the collections. Based on a preliminary analysis of the photographic collection and the rock art sites featured in the only publication from the expedition (Schulz 1971), unrestricted and ongoing access to remote rock art sites was given to Schulz. Combined with the personal photographs of Traditional Owners on country, this evidence seems to indicate a reciprocated trust and personal relationship with her guides and the selective choice of her guides to impart traditional knowledge about place, art and djang. In this paper we discuss the significance of these observations and outline a future joint research project.



# From ruin to revitalisation: using archival footage to revisit and respond to the repainting of rock art in Kakadu National Park

*Kelly Wiltshire<sup>1</sup> and Victor Cooper<sup>2</sup>*

*1 AIATSIS, 2 Ayal Aboriginal Tours, Kakadu*

In July 1982 Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (AIAS) film maker Kim McKenzie and sound recordist Wayne Barker travelled to Kakadu National Park to make a film at the request of Gagudju elder Big Bill Neidjie and Limilngan elder Felix Holmes. This film would document the repainting of Indjuwanydjuwa shelter as well as accompanying song cycles performed by Neidjie and Holmes. At the time the repainting was described as the first major exercise of this kind in recent history, providing a unique record of rock art techniques in the region; however, the AIAS film makers found the activities they recorded played into public debates surrounding the repainting of rock art that occurred in the 1980s, in part contributing to the film never being produced. Drawing on archival footage to revisit this repainting, this presentation will provide a unique behind the scenes experience of this activity. In doing so, this presentation highlights the potential to critically reflect on these events in light of the changing perspectives surrounding the repainting of rock art, providing an opportunity to respond to this archive as well as document the contemporary value ascribed to this repainting event.



# George Chaloupka, Nipper Kaporiki and the profound impact of Indigenous knowledge systems in establishing Australian rock art research

*Joakim Goldhahn*

*Linnaeus University*

Working with rock art related issues in western Arnhem Land, you inevitably develop an appreciation of the profound and thought-provoking research contributions by George Chaloupka (1932–2011), not least his epic publication “Journey in time” from 1993. This paper will not try to evaluate the pros and cons of Chaloupka’s influential research per se, but, based on a selection of his published papers, reports and monographs, it will present some reflections on his intellectual journey into the local Aboriginal knowledge system. The paper will identify some ambiguities in how Chaloupka perceived the rock art in western Arnhem Land, as well as in how he dealt with the information he received from local Aboriginal people. This includes Nipper Kaporiki with whom Chaloupka formed a strong bond over many decades. Subtly revealed in his published works is the complexity of this relationship and the control maintained by Kaporiki in the sharing of cultural knowledge over time. It will be argued that we need to develop a more explicit strategy for reflecting upon the kind of information, esoteric or not, that we choose to include in our rock art research and what we choose to leave out of our research outcomes.

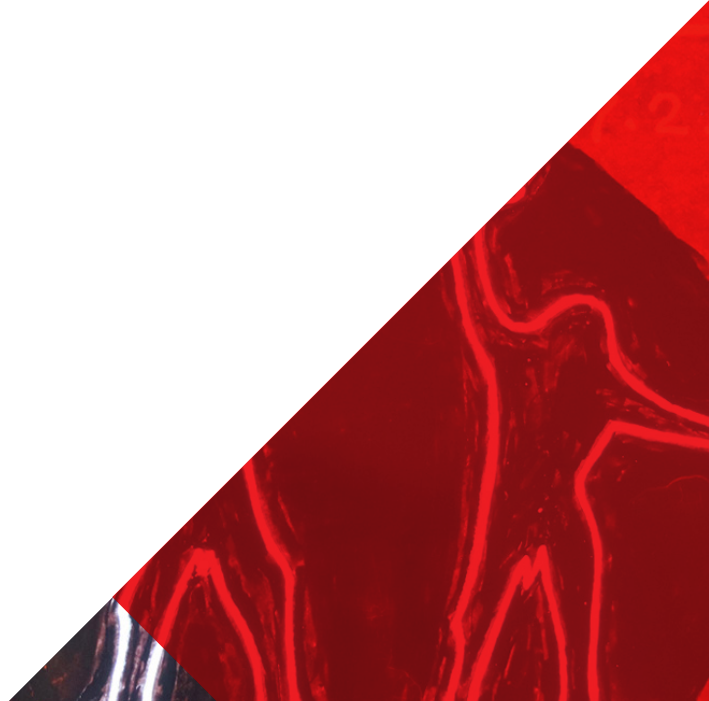


# Rock Art from My Eyes

*Mary Blyth*

*Miniaga Clan, Northern Territory*

As an Indigenous person living and working in Kakadu National Park from the 1980's to 2014 I was fortunate enough to be able to spend time out on Country managing rock art. We would visit rock art sites to record paintings, clear the site of vegetation, termites, wasps, feral animals. I interacted with most of the rock art researchers who visited Kakadu during this time period and witnessed many different approaches to rock art recording, analysis and management. Rock art sites have been on the land for thousands of years. They tell a story of how the land was created and utilised as a way of traditional life. The paintings tell of how Aboriginal people lived on the land hunting and gathering and how rich the country was of resources. When you visit a site you feel a sense of belonging and how looking after rock art sites plays a role in sharing culture and keeping it alive for future generations. In this presentation I will also explore questions such as: Where to from here? Do we continue to do the physical management, or do we let nature take its course? What have we learnt from previous research in Kakadu and how can it help us with ongoing management of rock art?



# Innovation and Antiquarianism: Frederick McCarthy, Charles Mountford and the emergence of an archaeology of rock art 1948-1960

*Annie Clarke<sup>1</sup>, Sally K. May<sup>2</sup>, Ursula Frederick<sup>3</sup> & Iain Johnston<sup>4</sup>*

*1 University of Sydney, 2 Griffith University, 3 Australian National University, 4 AIATSIS*

In this paper we present the story of two individuals – Frederick McCarthy and Charles Mountford – whose rock art research, differing methodologies and ongoing ‘debates’ represent a key turning point in Australia’s rock art research history. Spanning the 1940s to the 1960s their documentation of rock art during the 1948 American-Australian Scientific Expedition to Arnhem Land and their subsequent arguments reflect both innovation and antiquarianism. Importantly, these debates reveal an attempt to introduce scholarly investigation into rock art research in Australia and early struggles to link archaeology and rock art research. We use their story to explore this seismic shift and the ongoing impact of their work on Australian rock art research.

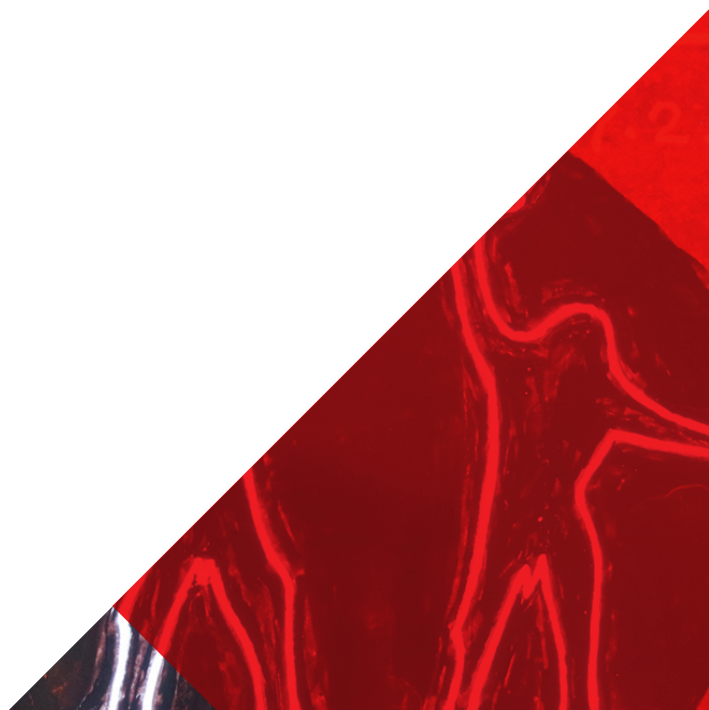


# The Golden Age of Rock Art on Groote Eylandt

*Ursula K Frederick<sup>1</sup> & Anne Clarke<sup>2</sup>*

*1 ANU, 2 University of Sydney*

The Groote Eylandt Archipelago is unique within Australia as having one of the longest trajectories of rock art recording. Commencing in 1803 when paintings at Chasm Island were noted by Matthew Flinders and sketched by William Westall, a sustained program of research began in earnest in the early 20th century. From Norman Tindale and Fred Rose to Fred McCarthy and Charles Mountford, David Turner, George Chaloupka and even ourselves, each researcher was motivated by a particular agenda that not only responded to contemporary research questions but also pioneered new methodologies and interpretive frameworks. In this paper, we discuss Groote Eylandt rock art and cross-cultural encounter through the lens of a 'golden age'. Borrowing from Peter Worsley we use this term to reflect on and critically engage with both the 20th century history of rock art research in the archipelago as well as the period of Makassan contact that so strongly influenced the production and perception of Groote Eylandt rock art, including our own ongoing research.

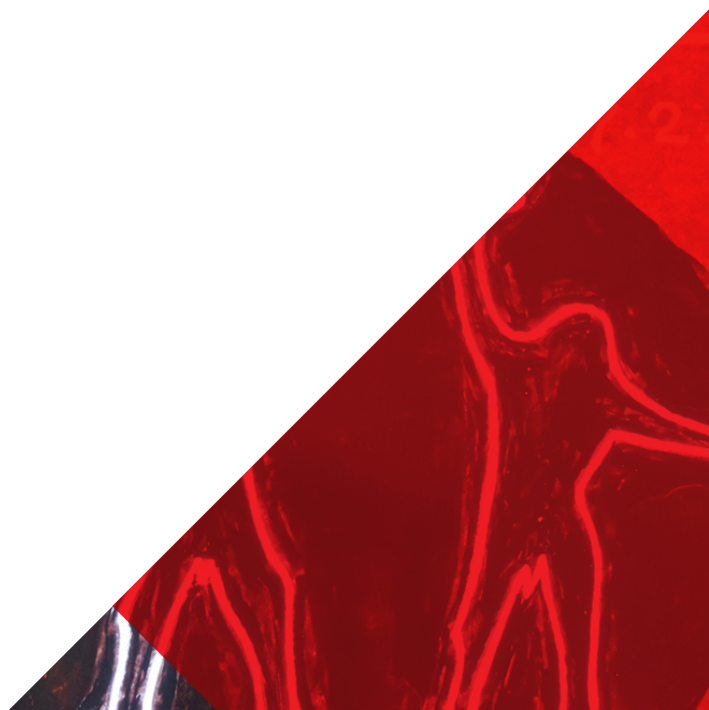


# Early interpretations of Pacific rock art and its wider connections, including with Australia, in the pre-World War II period

*Matthew Spriggs*

ANU

This paper asks the question whether there was a uniquely Australian perspective on Indigenous rock art in the 19th and early 20th centuries, or was it part of a wider regional discourse embracing the neighbouring Pacific Islands? Current Australian archaeology has been accused – often quite justifiably – of being too parochial, notoriously even excluding consideration in standard text books of New Guinea and the Aru Islands, to which Australia was joined in the continent of Sahul for somewhat over 80 per cent of the time it has endured human occupation. Earlier generations of Australian archaeologists, however, were considerably less parochial in their concerns, albeit very much within a particular diffusionist perspective. Should we be producing histories of Australian Rock Art or histories of Australasian-Pacific Rock Art?



# The Austro-invasion of Southeast Asia and Micronesia

*Andrea Jalandoni*

*Griffith University*

The rock art of Southeast Asia and Micronesia, while still under researched compared to other regions, has been of growing interest to international researchers since the 1970s. Quantifying and analysing data from a systematic quantitative literature review of the rock art research of the region revealed interesting observations. The industry conventions and collaborative process has changed over time. Also, the methods identified showed that the majority of research is at the level of observations, literature reviews, and recording rock art as opposed to interpretations, excavations, dating, pigment analyses, and condition assessments. Finally, scholarship in Southeast Asian rock art is increasing and publications are dominated by researchers affiliated with Australia. While it was unlikely a collective conscious decision, Australian rock art research has inadvertently impacted the direction of rock art research for the region.

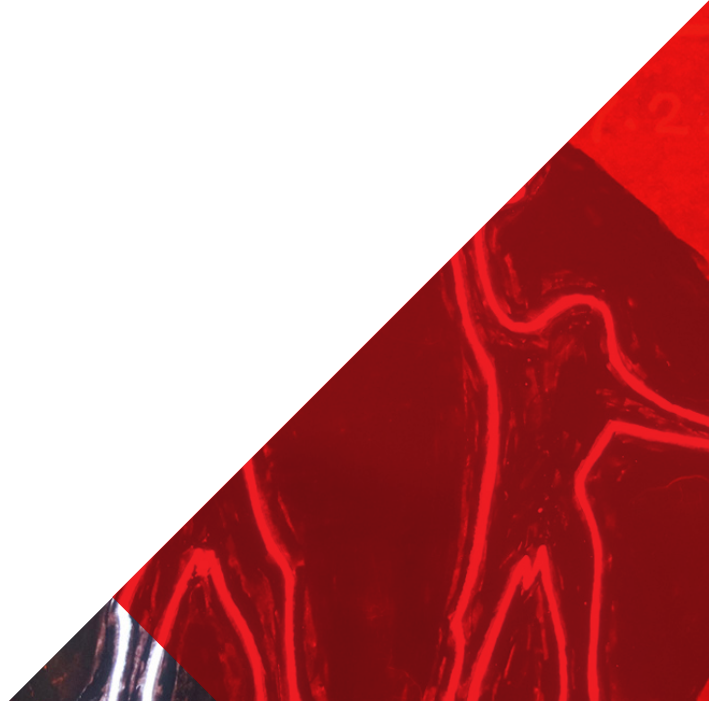


# Women in Rock Art: From Cinderella Pursuit to Engaged Science

*Sven Ouzman*

UWA

Rock art has not only been described as a ‘Cinderella’ science metaphorically; its practitioners have disproportionately been women. For many years rock art work operated at the fringes of Archaeology because of the inability to date or excavate it. The androcentric framing of fieldwork and research relegated rock art largely to illustrative and peripheral material culture. This lacuna was immediately filled by a disproportionate number of female researchers globally – but especially from the Global South. They often worked with local and Indigenous communities, pioneered copying technique and realised the value of ethnography in interpreting rock art. I here explore the shared rock art research histories of southern Africa and northern Australia, using key figures from the 19th century until today. This case study may help better understand not just gendered knowledge production, but also how certain kinds of material culture make us think of them.

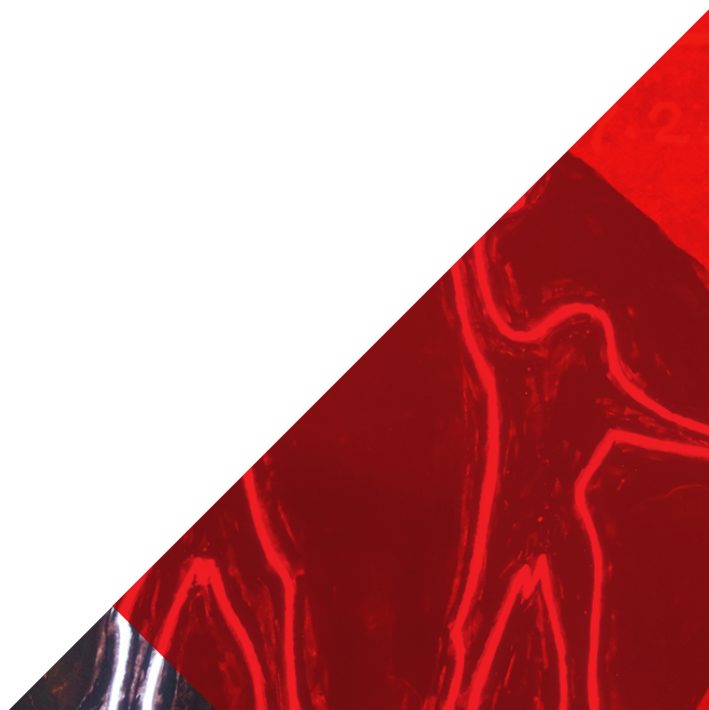


# Australian Artists as Rock Art Researchers: Percy Leason's theories on cave art

*Susan Lowish*

*University of Melbourne*

This paper sheds light on those rock art researchers who were also prominent Australian artists. Margaret Preston's travels to rock art sites in west Arnhem Land in 1940 had a profound effect on her artistic practice; her observations and experimentation could be called artistic research, but she is not a rock art researcher. On the other hand, the Australian tonal realist Percy Alexander Leason (1889–1959), after making copies of rock paintings in caves near Glenisla for the National Museum of Victoria's 1929 exhibition of Aboriginal art, caused great controversy. Further studies of the Cave of the Serpent at Mount Langi Ghiran and of rock paintings in the Mootwingee range, New South Wales, led Leason to produce several publications outlining his ideas. This paper reveals Leason's contributions to rock art research, beginning with the model cave created for the 1929 exhibition, through his sketches, paintings and dioramas produced to illustrate his internationally recognised theories on cave art.

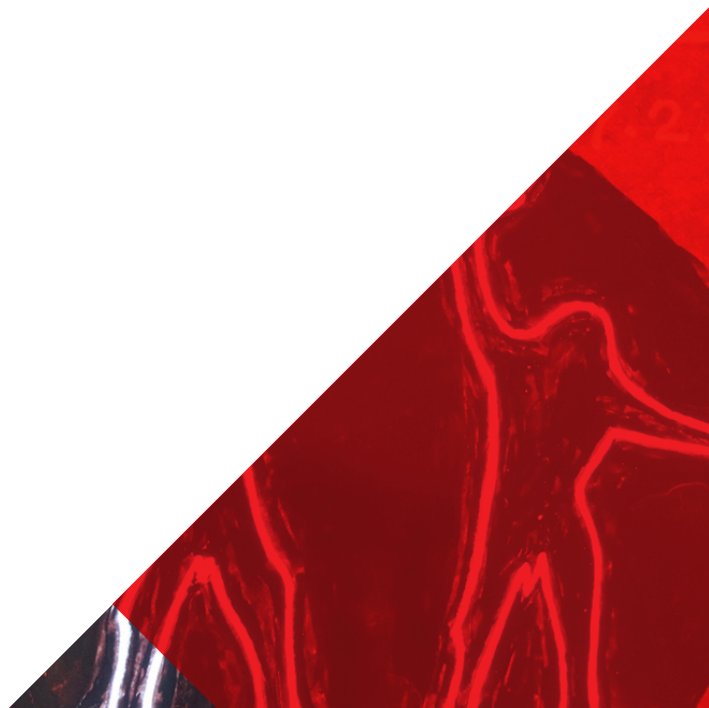


# The ongoing story of Gariwerd rock art

*R. G. Gunn<sup>1</sup> and Jake Goodes<sup>2</sup>*

*1 Monash University, 2 Parks Victoria*

Aboriginal people have occupied Gariwerd for at least the past 22, 000 years. From the Aboriginal perspective Gariwerd was made by Bunjil in the Dreaming, so in their terms they have a charter that says they have always been here. It is unknown when the first artist put paint to rock in Gariwerd but, on the basis of superimpositioning and preservation, those artist(s) started a process that continued for generations. This paper presents an outline of the story of Gariwerd rock art, its recording, conservation and Government management, and the increasing role of Aboriginal traditional owner groups.

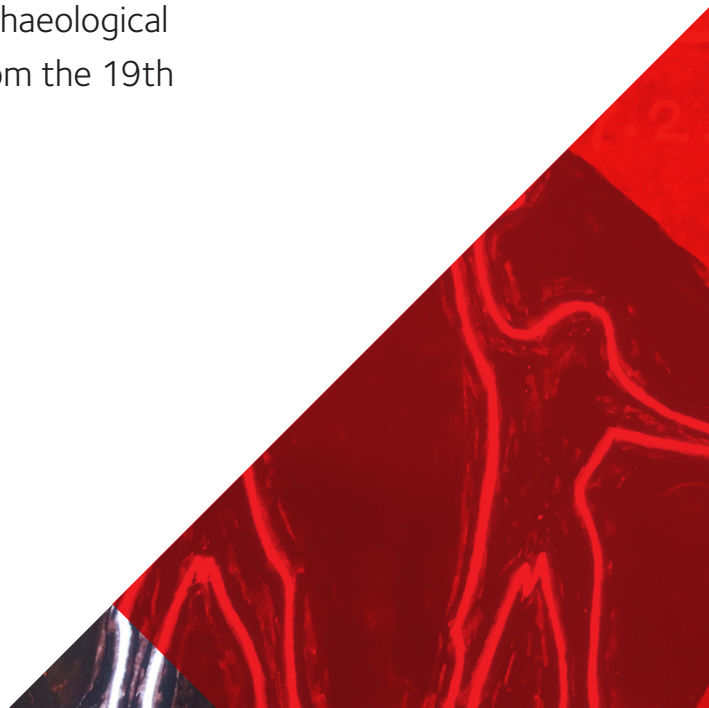


# Sydney's rock art seen through different eyes: interpretations from outside archaeology

*Denis Gojak*

*University of Sydney*

Over much of the past two centuries Sydney's Aboriginal art has drawn far more attention from speculators about alternative pasts than from the archaeological profession. Its apparent simplicity and ambiguity have been exploited to support a range of theories about Australia's human history. Even though much of this is ultimately corrosive to reliable knowledge of the past, it has activated a complex legacy of fieldwork and recording that still has its own value. For this paper, rather than focussing on the theories themselves, I look at the process of recording and investing meaning into the images that have taken place through such work. The disciplinary boundaries of archaeology in relation to Indigenous art can be indistinct. This is reflected in the uneasy relationship between amateur and professional studies, how Aboriginal people have been involved and which ideas have maintained traction with the broader public. While some of these are strictly pseudoarchaeological in focus, attempting to mimic or masquerade archaeological process, others work with different assumptions. Understanding the context for past recordings is an essential first step in being able to realise any archaeological value such work may retain. Examples are drawn from the 19th century through to the present.



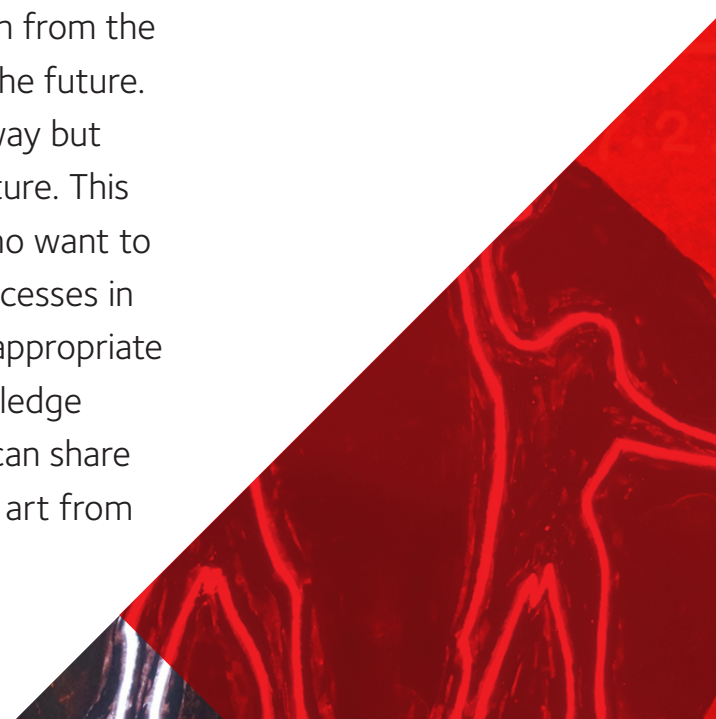
## Abstracts – Day Two

### ‘Our way, right way’: a celebration of Donny Woolagoodja and his role in rock art research

*Leah Umbagai & Folau Penaia (Umbagai)*

*Worrora Traditional Owners, Dambimangari  
Aboriginal Corporation*

Our discussion is on Donny Woolagoodja, our babaa and gajaa, and the role he has played alongside anthropologists, archaeologists, historians and linguists who have been coming to our community from the 1930s till today. Taking them out on Country, telling them the traditional history of our county, he worked hard with us, the Indigenous people of the land, to teach researchers it should be done the right way. Cultural understanding, we believe, has never been properly explored or understood as the communication between the two societies that have walked different paths. As a leader in the community, our babaa and gajaa has led the way interpreting how researchers should go about researching the rock art in better ways. We have worked hard to get scientists to understand and interpret this through an Indigenous lens, understanding that this is part of us, this is who we are, and this is what you should say. We will talk to you all at the Histories Workshop on where we are, what we want to see you all learn from the past research practices to improve things into the future. We want you to take away from this the two-way but proper way of giving information about our culture. This is an opportunity now for all of the ‘ologists’ who want to explore our country to understand we have processes in place to do this the right way now, a culturally appropriate way, with us collaboratively. You have the knowledge about the technology to share with us and we can share with you the correct way to represent our rock art from both perspectives.



# A prosopography of Murujuga rock art

Jose Antonio Gonzalez Zarandona<sup>1</sup> & Michel Lorblanchet<sup>2</sup>

1 Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, 2 CNRS

The recent publication in English of *Archaeology and Petroglyphs of Dampier (Western Australia), an Archaeological Investigation of Skew Valley and Gum Tree Valley*, the sum of French archaeologist Michel Lorblanchet's work during his Australian fieldwork in the 1970s, represents a landmark in the history of Murujuga rock art. His book is also a testament to the work done by foreign archaeologists and scholars in Murujuga since the 1960s until today. Drawing on the technique of prosopography, this paper will provide an overview of the many international scholars and individuals who have been involved in the most recent history of the area, not only looking at the features of this magnificent site, but also raising awareness of the issues at stake. In doing so, the paper will analyse the contributions of these individuals towards the appreciation of Australian rock art, in light of the history of neglect and destruction that has impacted Murujuga since the 1960s. It will also highlight the fruitful collaboration of Michel Lorblanchet, who later faced a similar situation of neglect and destruction in Europe, with some of these individuals. Rather than contrasting the work of international individuals, the paper will conclude that their work, done in collaboration with the local Indigenous communities and Australian archaeologists, has enormously contributed to the advancement of Australian rock art history.

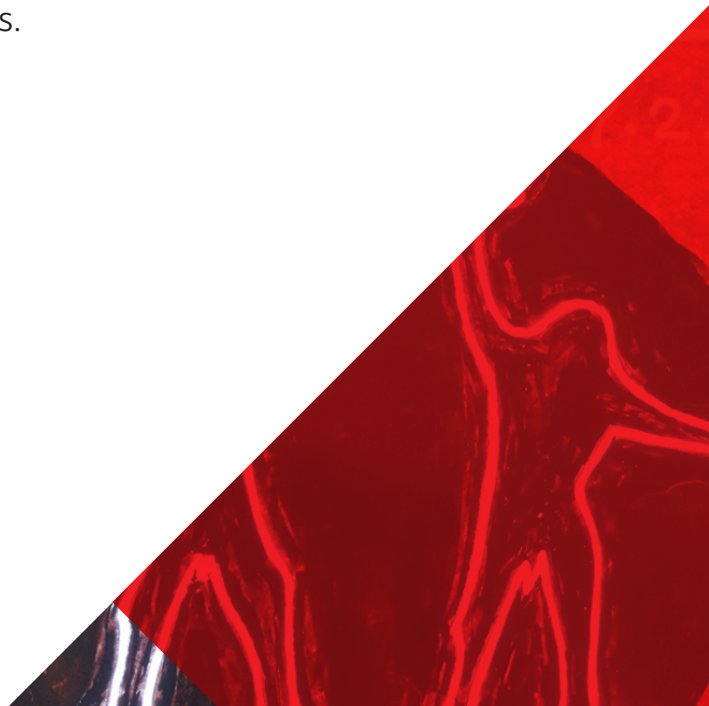


# Bloody Foreigners: what would they know

*Ken Mulvaney<sup>1</sup> Patrick Churnside<sup>2</sup>, Mariah Reed<sup>2</sup>, and Tootsie Daniel<sup>2</sup>*

*1 Rio Tinto, 2 Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation*

From the late 1960s, apart from the Traditional Owners, it has been foreigners that have awoken the stories of Murujuga; Burrup Peninsula Western Australia. Early work by people such as Italian Enso Virili and Frenchman Michel Lorblanchet carried out detailed archaeological investigations and engagement with the local Aboriginal people. Weaving through this was Austrian Robert Bednarik photographing the petroglyphs and later generating political and public focus on the place. Others, travelling not so far, started recording the place prior to industrial construction, instrumental in this Bruce Wright bringing yet others into engagement with the place. One of these, South African born Pat Vinnicombe brought with her a wealth of experience and a particular way of seeing rock art. Her influence guided future work and engagement with Murujuga custodians. All have contributed to the understanding of the globally significant petroglyphs of Murujuga and all have endeavoured to ensure that tens of thousands of years of cultural productivity is not wiped out by a few decades of industrial utilisation. In essence all but the Traditional Owners of this place and custodians of its culture are foreigners.



# More than just “Woodstock Figures”: assessing previous approaches and interpretations of Tharra (Woodstock Abydos) rock art, and their role in shaping new research directions

*Liam Brady<sup>1</sup> & David Milroy<sup>2</sup>*

*1 Monash University, 2 Budadee Aboriginal Corporation*

Rock art across the Tharra (Woodstock Abydos) landscape has captured the attention of researchers since the 1930s. Beginning with observations of the Tharra’s engravings by members of Germany’s Frobenius Institute Expedition to north western Australia, much of the literature around its rock art has concentrated on the aesthetic, stylistic and interpretative aspects of the assemblage. Arguably, most of this attention has focused on the highly distinctive and elaborate “Woodstock Figures” and attempts at interpreting their meaning including often-cited references to ritual. In this paper, we focus on analysing the nature of the literature referencing Tharra’s rock art using Traditional Owner and archaeological perspectives. Our aim is to 1) identify and critique the various themes that have emerged in discussions around Tharra rock art, and 2) draw attention to the implications of this literature in the way Tharra rock art has been approached, studied, and reproduced. In doing so, we highlight how Traditional Owner views on this earlier work are shaping new collaborative approaches to studying Tharra’s rock art record.



# Rock art research in the Kimberley: A Ngarinyin perspective

Robin Dann<sup>1</sup>, LeeAnne Bear<sup>2</sup>, Lloyd Nulgit<sup>2</sup> & Melissa Marshall<sup>3</sup>

1 Wanjina Wunggurr Wilinggin Traditional Owner, Wunggurr Rangers and Wilinggin Aboriginal Corporation, 2 Wanjina Wunggurr Wilinggin Traditional Owner and Wilinggin Aboriginal Corporation, 3 University of Notre Dame

*“The colour, we didn’t make it. Our animals put this there, our ancestors. A lot of our history from the beginning... The derivation of the colours used is enshrined in myths about the ancestors. It is not just a case of going out and finding some red ochre or white Kaolin or yellow limonite or black manganese and mixing it to make a painting. The colours all have complex associations, and the myths are often linked with songs, and with specific places or sites where the mythological events occurred and where the pigments may be obtained” (Mowaljarlai and Vinnicombe 1995:44).*

Mowaljarlai was one of our most well-known Ngarinyin elders, who throughout his life was a voice for our people, advocating for our rock imagery to be considered from a cultural perspective – Wanjinas and Gwion Gwion alike. Illustrating our connection to country for time immemorial, we want to take this opportunity to highlight the work of Mowaljarlai and share Ngarinyin perspectives of rock art research. This includes publications from our elders – ‘Yorro Yorro’ and ‘Secret and Sacred Pathways of the Ngarinyin Aboriginal People of Australia’ – we want to celebrate the strength and resilience of our old people through their stories.

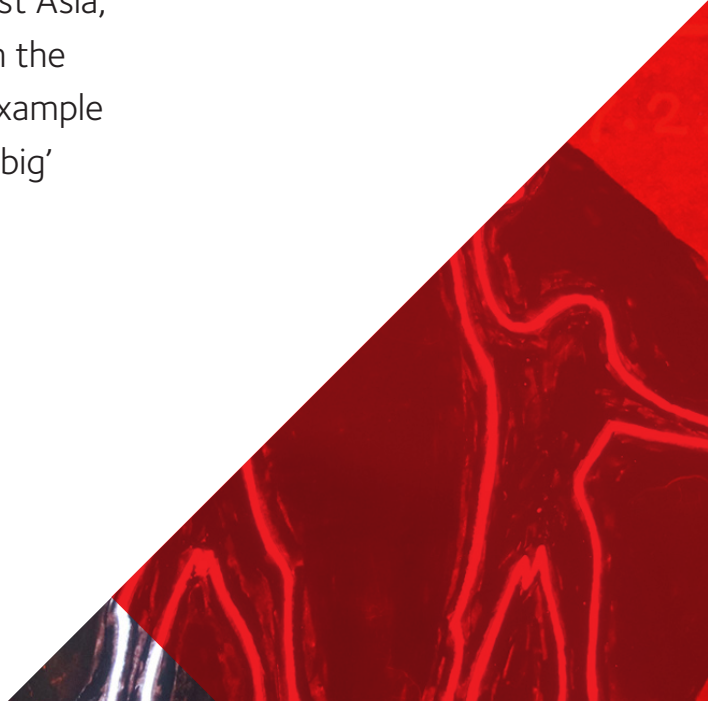


# Michael J. Morwood's contribution to the archaeology of rock art

*Jillian Huntley<sup>1</sup>, Noelene Cole<sup>2</sup>, June Ross<sup>3</sup>, Doug Hobbs<sup>4</sup>, Mark Moore<sup>3</sup>, Adam Brumm<sup>1</sup> & Iain Davidson<sup>3</sup>*

*1 Griffith University, 2 James Cook University, 3 University of New England, 4 Archaeo Cultural Heritage*

A distinctive feature of Australian rock art scholarship has been to treat this unique material culture as archaeological evidence. Here we review the seminal contribution made by Michael J. Morwood. His pioneering doctoral research on the Central Queensland Highlands set the standard for integrating rock art into regional archaeological investigations, giving equal attention to the analysis of lithic technologies and rock art, situating this evidence within its environmental and social setting, and in so doing, demonstrating the importance of a contextual approach. Integrating rock art recording with excavation, applying dating techniques to subsurface deposits and art panels, and contextualising regional assemblages within the available environmental and ethnographic records (including an emphasis on collaborating with contemporary custodial communities) became hallmarks of Mike's projects. As a university lecturer he inspired many to pursue rock art studies, emphasising scholarship and practical field training. From his extensive work across QLD, to the search for early human colonisation of Sahul in the Kimberley and further afield in Island Southeast Asia, Morwood recognised the embedded nature of art in the human story, and moreover, provided an enduring example of how to interrogate rock art when answering the 'big' archaeological questions.



# In the shade of the Rainbow Serpent: a trajectory of rock art research at Sandy Creek in Quinkan Country, Cape York Peninsula

*Noelene Cole*

*James Cook University*

Sandy Creek in the heart of Quinkan Country has a long and colourful research history, beginning in the 1960s with an unpublished excavation by Percy Trezise at the 'Rainbow Serpent' rockshelter. Subsequent archaeological excavations by Mike Morwood and colleagues and micro-analysis of rock surface accretions by Alan Watchman, in association with Ang-Gnarra Aboriginal Corporation, produced evidence of sequential and/or periodic art practice from the late Pleistocene. The collective data was applied, along with other data, to model a timeline of Laura rock art. Later it provided evidence to support the inscription (in 2018) of Quinkan Country to the National Heritage List. This paper moves on from the founding research which, although of national significance, has tended to leave Sandy Creek's rich and diverse assemblage of Aboriginal rock art in the shade. After reviewing the prior research, I exit the time line to consider the paintings, stencils and engravings of Sandy Creek rockshelters and their potential to reveal the humanity of the artists, their world views and land systems.



# Robert Edwards and the history of rock art research

*Mike Smith<sup>1</sup> & June Ross<sup>2</sup>*

*1 National Museum of Australia, 2 University of New England*

Working in the 1960s, Robert (Bob) Edwards was one of the first rock art scholars in Australia to attempt a systematic, quantitative and comparative survey of rock engravings in south and central Australia, and the legacy of his pioneering work still suffuses rock art studies today. His work on rock art was seminal in that it took place during a critical decade in the expansion of field archaeology in Australia ensuring that research into rock art would develop as a second strong research domain, paralleling stratigraphic archaeology with its focus on excavations, sequence and chronology. Although Edwards began as an antiquarian, with interests in what he saw as archaeological relics of an ancient Australia (something that became known as the Panaramittee style), by the 1970s he had adopted a more humanist perspective seeing rock art as a living contemporary tradition. Through his leadership of the Aboriginal Arts Board, he did much to foster the growth of the Papunya Tula art movement and the striking desert acrylics it produced.

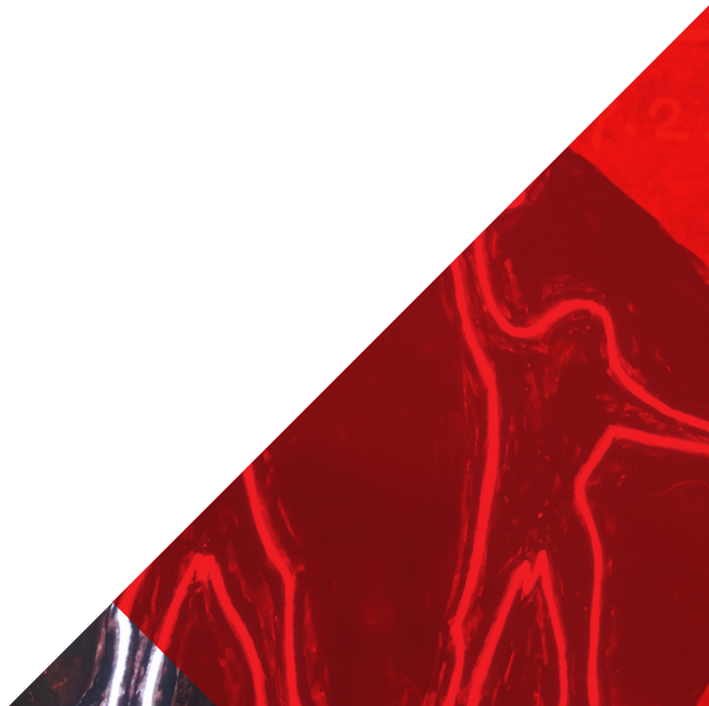


# Andrée Rosenfeld – The Quiet Giant

*Claire Smith*

*Flinders University*

This paper will discuss Andrée Rosenfeld's legacy in relation to the study of archaeological art. It will assess how her ideas were received at the time they were published, and how they have impacted upon the field subsequently. Key areas of interest will be rock art conservation in Australia, her analysis of Panaramittee style art, and her contributions to the study of Upper Palaeolithic art.

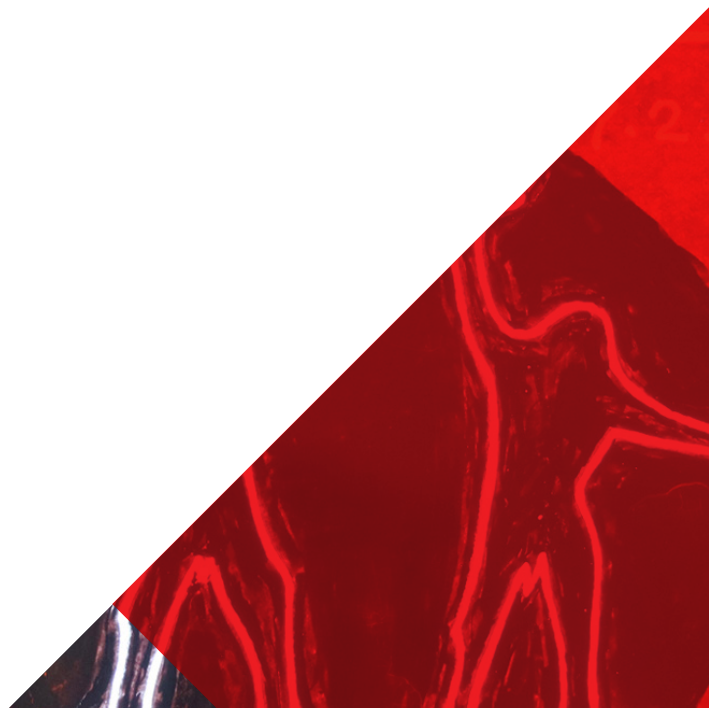


# Changing paradigms: liberating rock art studies from the entrapment of style and portrait

*Benjamin Smith*

*University of Western Australia*

The recent histories of rock art research in Australia and Africa have followed two entirely different paths. Of course, there is a diversity of approaches used in both regions, but the typical approaches to rock art interpretation show almost no overlaps between the two regions. This paper seeks to walk down both paths and to explore their relative values. I will review the underlying premises behind the differing choices and in particular how this has affected regional understandings of the nexus between style, portrait and interpretation. I will also consider the effects on societal engagement with rock art research. Research conclusions made about specific panels of rock art in both regions will be drawn upon to illustrate aspects of the contrast between the regional approaches. The purpose of the comparison is to ask the important question: What next for Australian rock art studies?

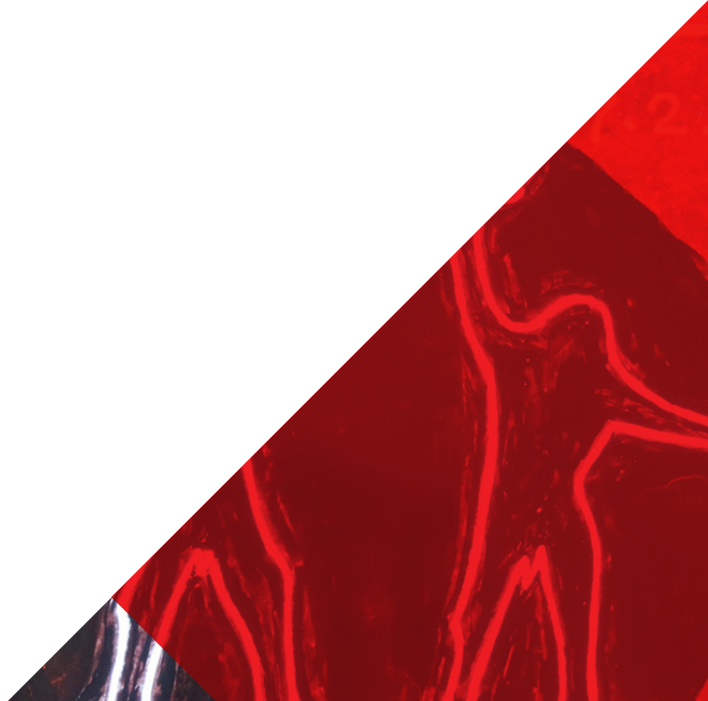


# McCarthyism and the rise of regions

*Sam Harper & Jo McDonald*

*University of Western Australia*

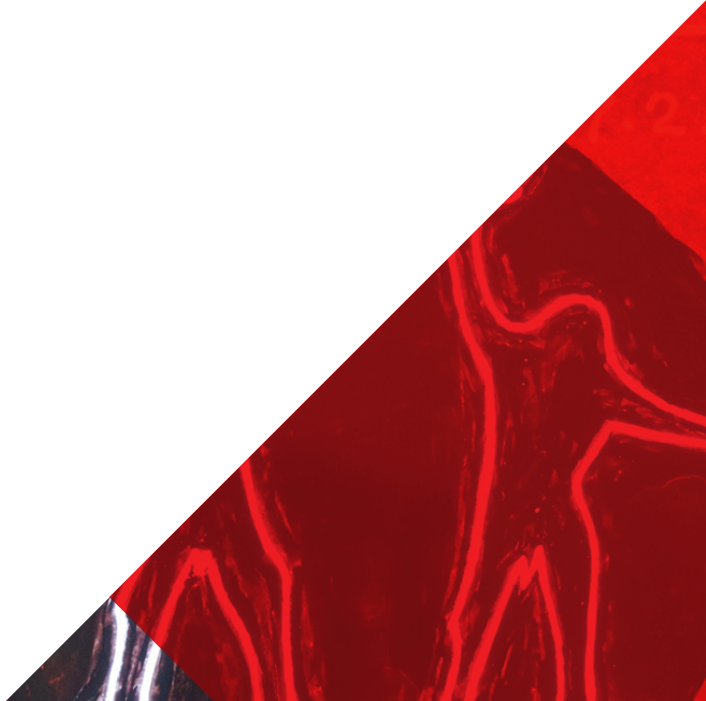
Fred McCarthy's impact on rock art research is manifold, with extensive documentation in multiple States, participation in anthropological expeditions, marriage to Elsie Brummel, excavation of key sequences, long term employment by the Australian Museum, and role as the first Director of the (then) Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies. Here we focus on his development of rock art sequences in the Sydney region and Port Hedland. These art bodies formed the core of his pan-continental sequence that emerged when early pioneering continental syntheses were being developed, before the advent of contemporary rock art research. With wide-ranging but preliminary data, these were linear models and McCarthy's contribution was clearly a product of its time. However – it was not one from which he resiled. McCarthy defended his sequence in 1988, replying to a who's-who of Australianists' critique (Bednarik, Clegg, David, Franklin, McDonald, Maynard, Moore, Morwood and Rosenfeld). This publication in itself provides a focused historiography of rock art research at this time. This paper looks critically at Fred McCarthy's impact on rock art research in Australia. Focusing on the 1988 RAR debate it identifies the key themes which have driven the last three decades of research in Australia.



# Fifty years of Australian rock art: from Cupules to Lightning Brothers

*Josephine Flood*

As an archaeologist, my interest in Australian rock art began by trying to trace its origins and development from the earliest traces to the present day. Then rock art became a major concern of mine when I worked for the Australian Heritage Commission (from 1979 to 1991) on compiling the Register of the National Estate, to list and conserve the most significant heritage sites in Australia. This job took me all over the continent and rock art sites seemed to top most people's agendas. Gradually, I realised that besides practical conservation work, a top priority must be the recording of modern Aboriginal knowledge of rock art. I therefore carried out two seasons of fieldwork in Koolburra, North Queensland and then six in the Victoria River region of the Northern Territory, the 'land in-between' Kakadu and the Kimberley. Only in Australia is such ethnographic recording of meanings and function of rock art still really possible and we recorded the stories in both English and the Wardaman language, thanks to linguist Francesca Merlan. This Lightning Brothers project always took place in school holidays to give traditional owners the chance to camp at their traditional sites and pass on their culture to their children.



# Mathesis Words, Mathesis Pictures and the genesis of contemporary Australian rock art research

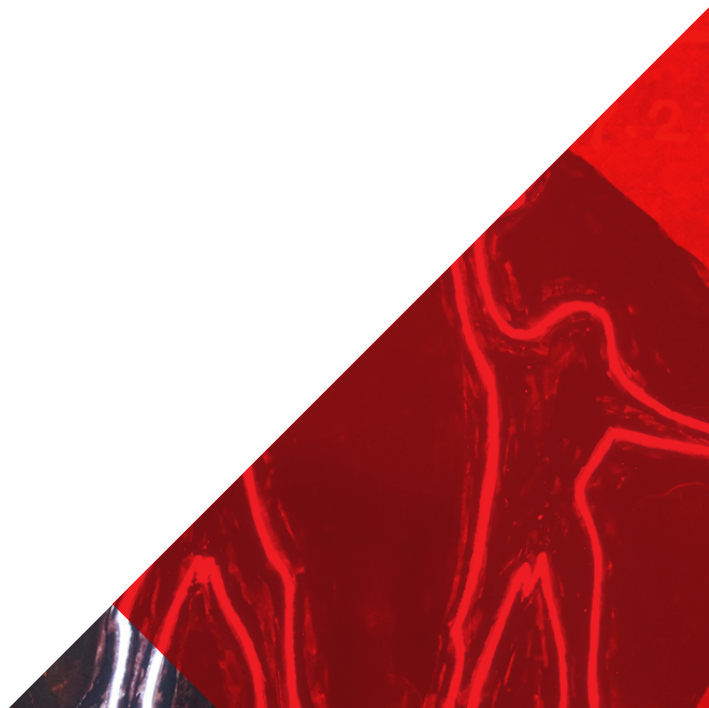
*Jo McDonald*

*University of Western Australia*

Australian rock art research has progressed through a number of ontological phases. The earliest days of settler encounter/arrival/invasion realised the continental presence of rock art. Last century, anthropologists began to document a long-term cultural practice. The 1960's saw a flood of (mostly) Cambridge-trained archaeologists to Australia included John Clegg, Richard Wright, and later Iain Davidson who became key practitioners (with Lesley Maynard, Michael Morwood and Andrée Rosenfeld) training undergraduates, for the first time, in specialised rock art units in Australian universities. Rock art research began to flourish as a sub-discipline, with approaches focused on regional and landscape studies. Interest shifted from 'art as an object' to 'style' as a means of communication. The development of formal archaeological approaches to rock art and the mobilisation of myriad scientific techniques has realised to potential of rock art to contribute to archaeological discourse. This paper discusses the ontological innovations in John Clegg's early work: and how these have defined contemporary archaeological Australian rock art practise.



# Notes





CRAR+M

#rockarth**histories**