

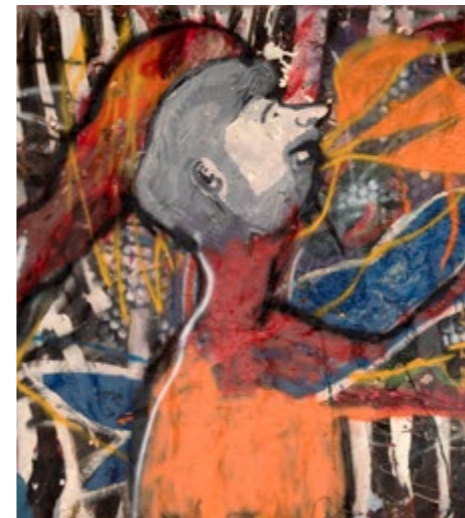


SHOCK & ORE

Tennant Creek Brio

5th August to 22nd October 2022
CDU Art Gallery

5th August to 18th September 2022
Coconut Studios



Rupert Betheras
Marcus Camphoo
Lindsay Nelson
Joseph Williams

Fabian Brown
Jimmy Frank
Clifford Thompson
Simon Wilson



Fig 7 Brio tarp at Warrego mine, 2021
Photo courtesy Harry Price & Nyinkka Nyunyu Art & Culture Centre

Charles Darwin University Art Gallery and Coconut Studios acknowledge the traditional custodians across the lands on which we live and work, and we pay our respects to Elders both past and present.

Clockwise

Fig 1 *The headless horseman*
Rupert Betheras & Fabian Brown
2022
Acrylic on canvas
215 x 202 cm

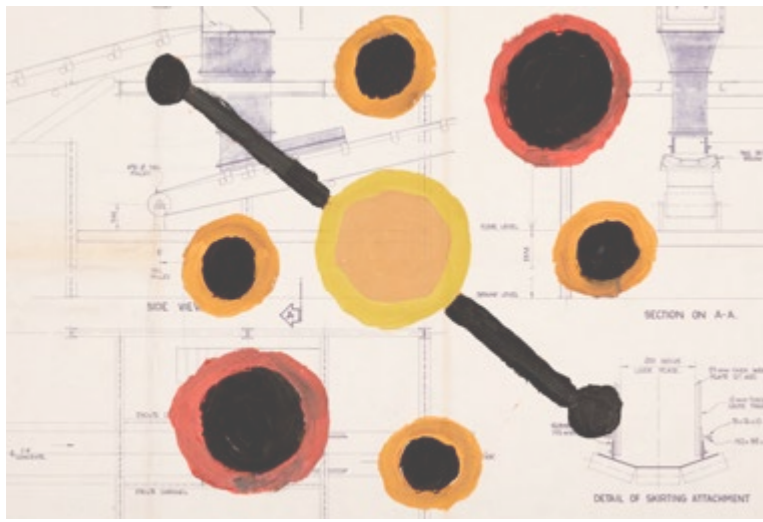
Fig 2 *Hunter & bear*
Fabian Brown
2017
Enamel on board
166 x 120 cm

Fig 3 *Found objects*
Clifford Thompson
2022
Mixed media on canvas
Variable Dimensions

Fig 4 *Mine trip 1*
Rupert Betheras
2021
Mixed media on canvas
198 x 401 cm

Fig 5 *Flush hand (detail)*
Rupert Betheras & Fabian Brown
2021
Mixed media on linen
132 x 275 cm

Fig 6 *Angelic firestarter (detail)*
Rupert Betheras & Fabian Brown
2022
Mixed media on canvas
180 x 302 cm



Apparr Manu ngara (Country is alive). Manu wankarr (old people) nyinta winkarra jangu (sing the Country). Pulkka-pulkka ajjul winanta manu. Wikarra jja manu nyinyi Yumurlirti (long ago) Karrinyki (for the people), Pina anyul apan manukuna. Walala Kapi (hunting/day trip) Ngurarra (camping), warrakaji anyul wangkan (talk to the Country). Palanmirri (warriors). This is the uncolonised story from Warumungu Country and the ways of its people

Joseph Williams, 2020

Shock & Ore has overtures of another story, a story of what transpired on Warumungu lands – Country of awesome beauty, Law, and life-sustaining waterways. The Warumungu were known as the people who dwell on hard ground¹: ironstone hills and plains dotted with spinifex, and seeded grasses, laced with creeks, swamp lilies and small dancing white gums. ‘It’s rich, our Manu (Country)’.²

‘*Shock and awe*’ is a military tactic that aims for rapid dominance by exploiting superior technology and spectacular displays of force to destroy an enemy’s will to fight.

A first tremor of violent change was on the wind confirmed in 1860 by the breach of John McDouall Stuart’s posse riding their huge beasts with shock-weapons. The Warumungu warriors fought back and turned them around but in 1871 followed ‘the wire through the heart’.³ Country was sliced with a 1.8 metre wide cleared telegraph track, built by a huge team⁴ mounting their message-string⁵ to Darwin, in one of the greatest engineering feats of nineteenth-century Australia. This strategic operation opened the body of Country to a stream of strangers, cattle, horses, horrors, gold discoveries, road, rail and the rapid arrival of news. Change was like a wave that gathered in power and momentum, leaving wounds in its wake.

Fig 1 *Ceremonial motif VIII (detail)*
Lindsay Nelson
2022
Mixed media on paper (mining map)
198 x 401 cm

1. *Bata aurinnia* was a term, recorded by Spencer and Gillen in 1904, that referred to the Warumungu in *Northern tribes of Central Australia*, Macmillan, London, reprinted 1969, Anthropological Publications reprint, Oosterhout, p. 11.
2. Jimmy Frank, phone interview with 3,200 Biennale staff, 2021.

3. *Constructing Australia: a wire through the heart*, 2007; a Australian Making History production in association with Real Pictures. Developed with the assistance of NSW Film and Television Office; produced with the assistance of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. 2011 National Film and Archive Australia.
4. The team comprised of wagons, horses, men, cattle and Afghan cameliers who came up from Adelaide to wire a 3,200 kilometre long passage.
5. At first high on the brazenly cut tree poles, 80 metres apart, and a decade later replaced with galvanized iron.

Water had been the arterial elixir of knowledge and life for the Warumungu. Gold and grog were quick to pollute⁶. While gold was first found in 1926⁷, it was not till after a local Warumungu man, Frank Juppurula (grandfather of Brio artist Jimmy Frank), took some of it to the telegraph operator in 1932 that Australia’s last gold rush began⁸. At one stage, it was the third largest gold producing area, with over 210 tonnes of gold mined and home to largest open-cut gold mine in Australia⁹.

With extremes of heat, chronic and infectious diseases, housing shortage and a frontier legacy of ‘a full-on policed and regulated apartheid regime’,¹⁰ Tennant is no easy ride. But hard-won land rights, an active Aboriginal Council, elders, royalties, football, family and ongoing efforts to maintain language and culture mean the Brio retain a backbone behind their open maverick hearts. Within their street-smart comradery and the haven of their studio-yard is space for engagement, where artists navigate their individual practices through a collective spirit of dynamic and transformative working. They follow in the resourcefulness of their Ancestors—who made good use of raiding left out tools, insulators and wire from the line¹¹—so too the Brio now reclaim and transfigure entertainment and industrial debris for their own devices.

With an authoritative and defiant hand, *Shock & Ore* bursts forth a hype of guerrilla theatre. It calls on the heroes of the old world and new. Archetypal champions claim the stage, parading their power and misadventure, alluding to a pastiche of conflict and pillage. Painted storyboards, fuel drums and TVs sendup pipe-dreams from the colonial project and hint at the collateral damage of its offensive. Angels and promises take wing only to be shot down in flames. Incantations from ashes manifest as jewels on paper with their iridescent coding and song maps. In this exhibition across two venues, the Brio bravely declare their stories of living culture from Country: a psalm of Ancestral power, alchemy and renewal.

Art is one way us men in Tennant Creek are telling the history and bad things that have happened... truth-telling, this is a different way of healing ... sending a message to all who have suffered from stereotyping and the results of colonisation. There’s healing. Our Country and culture has been there all the time, it is our strength, our dream, our stories and our identity. No one can take that away from us.

Jimmy Frank, 2020¹²

Dr. Erica Izett

Independent Curator & Project Manager for the Tennant Creek Brio

6. The worst culprit being cattle. By 1900, the Australian beef herd numbered 8.6 million animals (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006) and extended to most regions of Australia, including very large pastoral holdings in central and northern Australia. See: <https://academic.oup.com/af/article/1/2/10/4638606>; Accessed 23 July 2022.
7. Claims exist that gold was first discovered in Tennant Creek during 1901 by Alan Davidson but most widespread credit is given to J Smith Roberts who is attributed with finding the first gold, in 1926, three miles north of the current town area in the ranges. In 1927 by Charles Windley, a telegraph operator, also reportedly found gold. Source: <https://www.monumentaustralia.org.au/themes/technology/industry/display/97994-tennant-creek-gold-rush> Accessed 15 July 2022.
8. Frank Juppurula gave the gold to Woody Woodruffe. Soon three hundred men were working in the fields and by 1935 there were six hundred. See F. E Baxjme ‘The Centre Quest’, no 2. Wed 17th April 1935 *The Daily Telegraph* Sydney, NSW.
9. The largest open-cut gold mine in Australia was in Tennant Creek until 1985, when mining stopped. See: www.industry.nt.gov.au; accessed 10 July 2022.
10. Ashenden, D, 2022. *Telling Tennant’s story* Black Inc., Melbourne, p. 10. Tennant Creek has been notable for its high crime rates, violence and social dysfunction, fuelled by substance abuse and endemic poverty for decades. Its Aboriginal residents suffer high rates of imprisonment and the town has one of highest rates of police per population in the nation – around fifty police for a town of 3,200 people, half of which are Aboriginal.
11. ‘The two latter made excellent spearheads when fashioned to needle points by skilled Stone Age craftsmen’. See: Pike, Glenville (1971). *The Northern Territory* Glenville Pike, F.R. G. S. A. *The Northern Territory Overland Telegraph: an epic of courage - just 100 years ago*, p.119. https://espace.library.uq.edu.au/data/UQ_207991/s00855804_1970_1971_9_2_95.pdf?_accessed=15/7/2022
12. Jimmy Frank, interview, 2020.

Charles Darwin University Art Gallery

Charles Darwin University Art Gallery presents an annual program of exhibitions in its state-of-the-art gallery located within the University’s Casuarina campus, Darwin. These exhibitions are professionally curated by CDU staff, guest curators or are incoming-touring exhibitions from other Australian cultural institutions.

Curator / Director Dr Joanna Barrkman
Exhibitions & Collection Officer Eileen Lim
Assistant Exhibition Officer Roxanne Voulanas
Installation and lighting Aaron Corner

Opening hours: 10am-4pm Wed-Fri | 10am-2pm Sat
Chancellery (Orange 12 building), University Drive South, Casuarina campus, CDU, Brinkin, NT.

W: cdu.edu.au/artcollection-gallery
E: artgallery@cdu.edu.au
FB: facebook.com/cduartgallery



Coconut Studios

Coconut Studios (estd. 2020), is a visual and performing arts studio and gallery that hosts multidisciplinary art shows, talks and workshops with a focus on diversity, experimentation and change.

Director Stephanie Martin

Opening hours: 10am-5pm Thurs-Sun
8/18 Caryota Court, Coconut Grove, NT.

W: coconutstudios.com.au
E: coconutstudios.darwin@gmail.com
FB: facebook.com/coconutstudiosdarwin



Fig 2 *Fire serpent*
Rupert Betheras with Lionel Possum
2015
Mixed media on canvas
198 x 401 cm

