

WILAM BIIK

31 July – 7 November 2021



Paola Balla (Wemba Wemba, Gunditjmara), *Collecting Plants with Mum 2020*, digital image, 142 x 106 cm. Courtesy of the artist

TarraWarra Museum of Art will stage a major exhibition as part of the Yalingwa Visual Arts Initiative, focused on the Home Country of First Nations artists from South-East Australia.

WILAM BIIK, 31 July – 7 November 2021, is curated by Wurundjeri and Dja Dja Wurrung woman Stacie Piper as part of her two-year Yalingwa position as the First Nations curator at TarraWarra Museum of Art.

WILAM BIIK features new works by nine contemporary Aboriginal artists of South-East Australia and a group installation by the Djirri Djirri Wurundjeri Women's Dance Group, together with works by 19th century Aboriginal artists William Barak and Timothy Korkanoon of Coranderrk on loan from the National Gallery of Victoria, State Library of Victoria, Art Gallery of Ballarat, Queensland Art Gallery & Gallery of Modern Art. The exhibition also includes a selection of historic, ancestral personal tools on loan from Museums Victoria.

The exhibition features new work from contemporary artists Paola Balla (Wemba Wemba, Gunditjmara), Deanne Gilson (Wadawurrung), Kent Morris (Barkindji), Glenda Nicholls (Waddi Waddi, Ngarrindjeri and Yorta Yorta), Steven Rhall (Taungurung), Nannette Shaw (Tyereelore, Trawoolway, Bunurong), Kim Wandin (Wurundjeri), Arika Waulu (Gunditjmara, Djapwurrung, Gunnai), Rhiannon Williams (Wakaman, Waradjuri), and the Djirri Djirri Women's Dance Group (Wurundjeri, Dja Dja Wurrung, Ngurai Illum-Wurrung).

Director of the TarraWarra Museum of Art, Victoria Lynn, says the exhibition *WILAM BIIK*, which means “Home Country” in the Woiwurrung language of the Wurundjeri people, will invite visitors to appreciate how First Nations people see, listen and connect to Country.

“This is an exhibition of an innate and unsevered connection between First Peoples and Home Country, bridging thousands of generations.

“You are invited to listen deeply – to learn and understand how First Peoples connect with Home Country, Wilam Biik,” Ms Lynn said.

First Nations Curator, Stacie Piper, says the *WILAM BIIK* exhibition is about exploring the true spirit of ourselves, which is found within the spirit of Country.

"Artists have been selected to represent particular songlines, waterlines, bushlines, representing a number of the 38+ different clans within South East Australia."

“Our Wilam Biik is the soil, the land, the water, the air, the sky, and the animals residing within. The only home we know, which we honour for its sacred exchange. A home where custodial rights and responsibilities never left. May this place you call home become a deeper part of you.

“Experiencing Country through a First Nations lens provides a perspective which can inspire, give insight and knowledge, and affirm and re-establish a fundamental connection with nature. This is critical to the wellbeing of people, nature and the planet.

“The exhibition will also feature ancestral tools from the region. The Barak works and ancestral tools from Coranderrk represent a “return to Country” by coming home to the TarraWarra area.

“With the ancestral tools, new works and a Djirri Djirri installation we are presenting the past, present and future of what home Country means to First Nation people in South East Australia.

“My hope is that each person walks away inspired, in awe of the beauty of Country, and empowered with a personal sense of connection and responsibility,” Ms Piper said.

The Yalingwa Visual Arts Initiative 2017–2022 is a significant partnership between Creative Victoria, the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA) and TarraWarra Museum of Art that aims to support the development of outstanding contemporary Indigenous art and curatorial practice, with a primary focus on South-East Australian First Nations artists.

WILAM BIIK is the second of three major exhibitions as part of the Yalingwa Initiative. The exhibitions alternate between ACCA and TarraWarra Museum of Art. The first, *A Lightness of Spirit is the Measure of Happiness*, curated by Hannah Presley, was held at ACCA in 2018, and a final exhibition will be at ACCA in 2023.

ENDS

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Opening Hours: Tuesday – Sunday, 11am to 5pm. Open all public holidays except Christmas Day.

Admission: \$12 Adults; \$10 Seniors; \$8 Concession and Students; Museum Members and children under 12 free.



Steven Rhall (Taungurung), *Untitled (Border Country, Port Phillip Bay)* 2012,
inkjet print, 58.3 x 70.1cm. Courtesy of the artist

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