



Small pool makes a huge splash in arts



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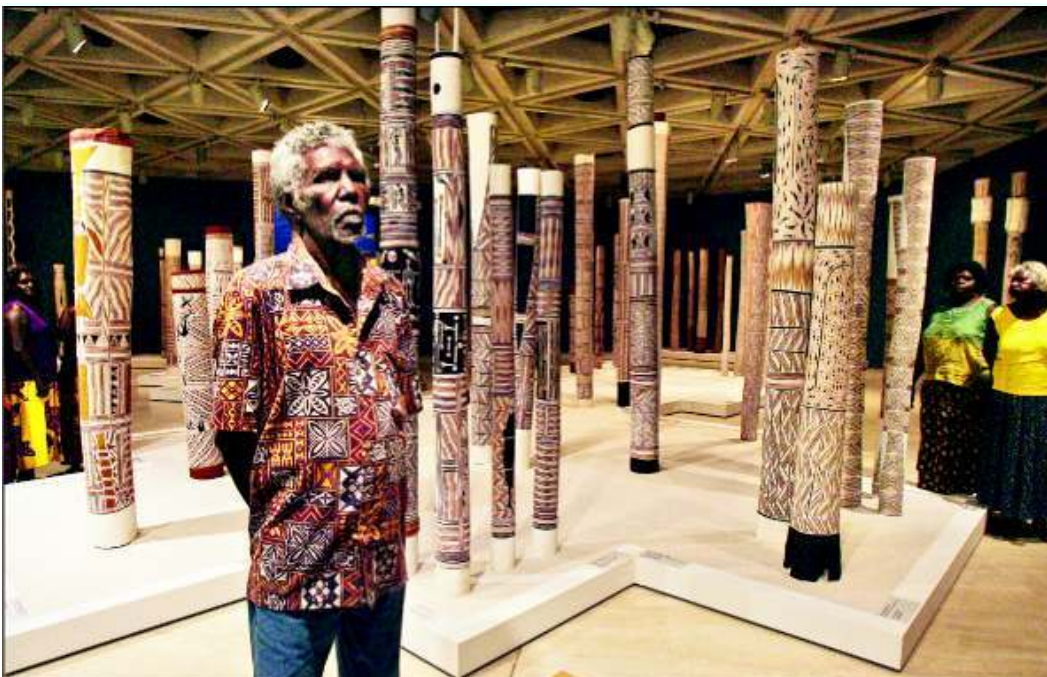
The small Yolngu population of the remote Top End region of east Arnhem Land has produced some of the most talented artists, musicians and dancers in Australia.

The dazzling roll-call includes ARIA-winning singer Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu, Yothu Yindi, the Warumpi Band, actor David Gulpilil and the cast of Ten Canoes, and “dollar-note artist” David Malangi Daymirringu.

This rich artistic tradition blooms at the Perth International Arts Festival with a major Yolngu exhibition opening yesterday and two sellout concerts by Yunupingu at the Music Box on the Esplanade in March. “Our people are sharing their knowledge and wisdom with the western people and that is why all the art is coming out of our community,” said senior artist and Yolngu leader Djambawa Marawili. “You can see it around the world. Our culture, com-

munity and name are connected with our land.”

Marawili’s art features in a forest of 100 painted hollow logs installed at the Art Gallery of WA for the larrakitj exhibition of works from the collection of businessman and West Australian Newspapers chairman Kerry Stokes. On display are larrakitj by 36 artists from the Yolngu-owned Buku-Larrnggay Mulka arts centre in Yirrkala, on the Gulf of Carpentaria. The show takes its name from the memorial-pole sculptures that originate as trees hollowed out by termites, which are central to the ecology and cultural life of east Arnhem Land. Another new Art Gallery of WA exhibition, devoted to bark paintings from Yirrkala, is called Everywhen, a reference to the Yolngu concept of the Dreaming as being as much in the present and future as in the past.



Pole position: Artist Baluka Maymuru, from Yirrkala, looks at the larrakitj exhibition at the WA Art Gallery.
 Picture: Ian Ferguson