



Lorna Fencer Napurrurla

UPPER SECONDARY

Pre-visit activities

Pre-visit activities are designed to help students enjoy the *Yulyurlu* exhibition and assist them interpret and understand what they will see.

The *Yulyurlu* Exhibition Catalogue and *Yulyurlu Research Notes* can provide information to help students and teachers learn about the *Yulyurlu* Exhibition. Additional print and electronic resources are suggested to assist with student research.

Make a copy of the *Yulyurlu Research Notes*. Read the following sections and discuss as a group.

1. *Yulyurlu* Education Kit - Research Notes

- The Place and map
- The People
- What is a 'Skin' Name
- Jukurra or Dreamings
- Style and Meaning in Central Desert Art
- *Yulyurlu*'s Artistic Development and Style
- Painting at Lajamanu
- The Dreaming cycles of Napurrurla's art
- The Battle of Yumurrpa
- How did the exhibition come about?
- The Role of the Curator
- The Curator - Margie West
- What Are Aboriginal Art Centres?

2. Read the catalogue essay by Christine Nicholls.

3. Discuss the development of the Central Desert Aboriginal art movement in the Northern Territory

Use the web links in the Research notes to further inform the discussion.

Visiting the Exhibition

- Students should come with a clipboard and pencil
- Discuss the activities and exhibition upon arrival at the venue
- Ask a gallery person to introduce the exhibition
- Provide copies of the activity for each student, where applicable
- Encourage students to talk and share ideas about what they are seeing/hearing/learning and to ask questions.
- Bring the class together towards the end of the visit to discuss questions and findings.



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Activity Sheet

At the Exhibition

Welcome to

Yulyurlu Lorna Fencer Napurrurla

Have a good look around the exhibition. Consider the following questions:

1. Look at the print by Chips McKinolty of Lorna with a *kuturu* (fighting stick), what does this image tell us about the kind of person Lorna was? Why do you think the artwork is called *Land is Life*?
2. Jukurpa refers to important events that happened in the distant past but also to things that are important to Aboriginal people today. Why do you think it is important that the old people pass these stories on to younger people?
3. How would you describe Napurrurla's painting style?
4. In the Catalogue Napurrurla is described as the ultimate colourist, what does this mean?
5. Read the following passage by Barbara Ambjerg Pedersen. Why did Napurrurla want to take Barbara to the bush with her painting?

'Her cultural beliefs were very strong. I had many experiences with Lorna that were out of the ordinary. On one occasion when I queried a painting I had never seen her paint before, she became very serious and quiet. Two days later, she arrived with hair string garlands and clapsticks and demanded that we take ourselves and the painting into the bush just outside Katherine. Here she stood the painting up against a tree then placed the hair string around me and herself and made certain invisible drawings with her fingertips on both of us. Using the clapsticks, and making me use them too, she sang and danced – and made me dance (to the best of my ability under her guidance) – the story of that particular Jukurpa (Dreaming). It was a very mysterious and moving experience for me. Lorna was transported and ended up throwing one of her clapsticks into the painting, at which point she came to herself again. The hairs on my arms and neck were rigid! I never questioned the 'rightness' of her work ever again'.

6. Yams were an important staple food for the Warlpiri people. What kinds of useful information do the stories and paintings tell about yams?
7. Read the story about the Battle of Yumurrpa (Yams) in the Research Notes. What kind of moral or social message does the story have?
8. Look at the paintings in the exhibition. List all the bush foods that people would have gathered in a wooden dish. How do you think the wooden dish has been made?



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Activity Sheet

Post-visit Activities

Student essay. Choose one of the following questions.

Note: *The Yulyurlu Exhibition Catalogue and Yulyurlu Research Notes can provide information about the Exhibition. Additional print and electronic resources are provided in the Research Notes to assist student research.*

1. The painting style of Napurrurla has sometimes been compared with the great Utopia artist Emily Kngwarreye, who was also depicted the Yam Dreaming from her country, the same pencil yam as Napurrurla's. Compare and contrast the art of the two artists.
2. Lorna Napurrurla was part of the first generation of white-contact people of her region. Her parents and grandparents lived in a traditional bush life before the contact with European settlers. Lorna therefore possessed a rich knowledge about land ownership and her country and was an important owner of for a range of important Jukurpa (Dreamings). Discuss this in relation to her artwork.
3. Discuss the following in relation to Lorna's artwork

The primary inspiration for Napurrurla's art was a childhood spent in the bush and an education that gave her a deep cultural knowledge base that would continue to fuel her artistic imagination. As well as this, Napurrurla's own astonishing drive as an artist played a significant part in her achievement. In terms of the latter, Napurrurla's energetic and daring aesthetic experiments with composition, form and colour, her robust approach to her subject matter, and her own almost mythic stature as a Northern Territory 'identity' all had unique parts to play. Napurrurla was a true original and at the time, and even today, her artworks evoke their own truly original challenges – in terms of what 'Aboriginal art' is or might be.

(Yulyurlu Lorna Fencer Napurrurla Catalogue article titled *Painting Alone: Lorna Fencer Napurrurla* by Christine Nicholls, page 61)



4. Look at the images in Lorna Fencer's prints and the way she depicts the yam



Yarla, Sweet Potato 2005
etching 12.7 x 9 cm
Collaborator: Monique Auricchio;
printed at Basil Hall Editions, Darwin



Yarla, Sweet Potato 2005
etching 14 x 12.7 cm
Collaborator: Monique Auricchio;
printed at Basil Hall Editions, Darwin



Wapirti, Little White Potato 2005
etching 14 x 12.7 cm
Collaborator: Monique Auricchio;
printed at Basil Hall Editions, Darwin



Bush Potato 2005
etching 14 x 12.7 cm
Collaborator: Monique Auricchio;
printed at Basil Hall Editions, Darwin

Make your own carved lino block print depicting how a plant grows and what it is used for.