

JOHN GURRI KELLY

# Dunghutti bul-bul

## YARNS AND STORIES

### 1. Morning Star

#### *Barrang Wupi*

The East Coast of Australia Aboriginal people are known as the Morning Star people.

### 2. Diamond Tree

#### *Diamond Mitayan*

Across the Dunghutti land and East Coast of Australia you used to find sacred trees with diamonds carved into them representing Lore.

### 3. Ring In The Water

Throwing a pebble into the water before swimming was a way our people would ask permission for safety and wellbeing before entering the water.

### 4. Dunghutti Dreaming

Dunghutti Elders would share the dreamtime stories so that they could be passed down from generation to generation. When I first started painting, my father said to me, paint your surrealism. My surrealism is capturing from the dreamtime stories.

### 5. Campfire

#### *Gandi Wakayi*

Campfires were upon the land not only for cooking but for warmth, storytelling, and ceremonies.

### 6. Eclipse

This painting depicts looking through my eyes as a young boy at the eclipse, my understanding as I watched the sun go behind the moon. My grandfather gave me dark plastic to look through while watching the sun go behind the moon.

### 7 & 14. Walkabout

#### *Manhamanha*

My father used to tell me, don't go in with the tide and don't go out with the tide and don't do nothing in between. I told that to the young people as well: do the things you can do, don't worry about the things you can't do, and understand where you have been.

Aboriginal people have gone walkabout for thousands of years to experience new things that their Elders would share with them, to reconnect to their land. Aboriginal people still to this day go walkabout.

### 8. Macleay River

#### *Macleay Bitha*

The Macleay River is the heart of the Dunghutti nation, and it runs from Walcha to South West Rocks. Dunghutti people have used the Macleay for thousands of years as a food resource.

### 9 & 12. Diamonds of the Dunghutti

The diamonds came along as representing the Lore that Dunghutti people would respect what their Elders were sharing. Diamonds of the Dunghutti symbolises the law of Dunghutti

### 10 & 13. The Bunyip

#### *Boorogen Yetti*

The Dunghutti Elders would tell the story of the Bunyip that when the rings would appear upon the water the presence of the Bunyip would be felt. Uncle Max always told us "have your wash in the morning, don't go down to wash in the river in the night time, because you could slip into the water and you could be gone.

### 11. Standing on Dunghutti ground

As a cultural man, my footprints represent standing on country.

### 15. The Midden

This tells the story of the biggest midden in the southern hemisphere, its 22 metres wide, she is 8 metres deep and runs for 16 kilometres long.

### 16, 32 & 34. Turtle

#### *Dhawarr*

As young children we would go turtle diving. We could only watch the males as the females would be left to rebirth.

### 17, 25, 28, 30 & 38. Goanna

#### *Dungga*

The Goanna is looked upon as a sacred Totem to some families and tribes and only people who do not have it as totem are allowed to feast on them. Even though the Goanna is not our token, it's very important to my family. The Goanna is like an old man looking over the tribe while people are away.



UNIVERSITY  
GALLERIES

## **18, 26, 35 & 37. Witchetty Grub**

### **Bulia**

There is a mountain on our land, it tells the story of when the floods were coming. The people could not find a Witchetty Grub near the water, so they went up to the mountain. This mountain holds a high significance. It was the first sacred site to be recorded by NPWS in Australia.

## **19. Kangaroo Dreaming**

### **Wambuyn Dreaming**

This painting depicts kangaroos fighting in the snow in the top part of the Dunghutti lands. These were big kangaroos fighting for survival and territory.

## **20. Murramar and Waterholes**

### **Murramar and Gayayi**

The Dunghutti people for thousands of years have travelled across their land, camping at meeting places, feasting from the land and the waterholes.

## **21. Me / You**

### **Nyanghan / Nyinda**

*Terracotta nests and eggs with Rena Shein and Dalaigur. Canoe by Elders in Men's work in Sydney and Newcastle.*

Initiated by Dreamtime story, this installation consists of hundreds of clay nests and eggs that have been co-created by children supported by parents, grandparents, teachers, or other family.

Cradled within a stringy bark canoe on a field of paperbark through which the Macleay River threads, the haptic process of 'nest making' embeds and supports a cycle of connectivity, attempting to mitigate traumatic experiences for Dunghutti people as a result of colonial practices. Nganhang Nyinda / Me You reflects this interconnectedness, whereas seen in language there is no Me and You – there is only me-you, indivisible... one.

## **22. Canoe**

This canoe was made as part the Wollotuka Institute's Giyi Para 2022 Cultural Symposium, honouring the thousands of generations First People in our country who have gathered in a continuing practice of coming together to share knowledge, celebrate country, honour each other, and strengthen our ongoing relationships.

## **24 & 27. Meeting Place**

### **Murramar**

Meeting Places were where different tribes would meet to trade, goods, and food with each other – a place to feast and yarn.

## **29. Bush Tucker**

This painting shows a variety of some of the Bush Tucker food that the men and women would hunt and collect.

## **31. My Hands**

This painting depicts my hands reaching out to the next generation by sharing stories and yarns.

## **33. Waterholes**

### **Gayayi**

Waterholes were a lifeline to the Dunghutti people as they travelled across the land.

## **36 & 39. Honey Ant**

The women of the tribe would take the children to collect Bush Tucker food. They would teach the children how to dig and find the Honey Ant nest, they would also feast on the honey sacs.

## **40, 41 and 42. Paintings by the artist's mother, Aunty Alice McKenzie**

When my mother and father first got together and she moved down to my father's country, an old man used to come and sit on the veranda, and he would leave when my father came home. My mother was certain it was one of the old spirit guides. She painted that old man, coming to sit, waiting for my father to return so she was safe on the new country that she was in.