

Eric Djorlom

Dob: 23/11/1968
Tribe: Kunwinjku
Community: Oenpelli,
Area: Western Arnhem Land, NT



Profile:

Eric is the son of Sadler Djorlom (deceased), a traditional bark painter who taught his son to paint on rock and on bark. He had a very good schooling in his youth, and took his promised wife, Leonie Nabegeyo, when she was still in her teens, they have two children, Austin and his sister Kira Djorlom. As the son of a ceremonial leader Eric learnt the traditional way of life and is an excellent hunter and food gatherer. He has appeared in several documentaries depicting both his talent as an artist, a dancer, and a hunter in the old way, using four-pronged fishing spears, and digging sticks for yams.

Eric has achieved fame as a master painter on bark and on Arches Rives paper. He lives at a remote outstation called Gumarrirnbang, in the Stone Country between Oenpelli and Ramingining. This homeland centre is owned by an old man called Timothy Nadjowh (deceased) who was a great artist but has since passed away. He was worried that without sons to carry on recording the history and religion of his tribe the stories will be lost forever. He therefore decided to gradually pass on his myths to Eric whom he considers to be a man of stature and worthy of keeping them safe. In return for Timothy's trust in him Eric keeps the immediate surroundings spotlessly clean and looks after the machinery associated with water reticulation and tractor work, as well as maintaining the small airstrip so that the community is assured of medical assistance and supplies of food during the Wet Season when raging rivers cut transport by road. Despite all this activity Eric still concentrates on his painting in every spare moment, rising at dawn and working until dark, although he often finds it difficult to meet all the demands of collectors who appreciate his works depicting animals, birds, and the Ancestral Beings of the Dreamtime.

Boomerangs

The Boomerang is as interesting as the people it served. It's uses are wide and varied, and to the Aborigines it was a highly prized possession as such, its ability to kill was outstanding. Not only was boomerangs used to hunt game, but it could be used to create fire, as a digging implement and as a musical instrument. At a corroboree boomerang would be used with another one, "clapping" them together to accompany song and dance. They could also be tapped on rocks or the ground, or simply drawn across one another to provide a distinct sound.



Although used in warfare, the hunting boomerang's most common use was in hunting food. It would be thrown into a flock of birds with the chance of bringing down more than one, very possible. It's versatility to dig for water, clear fire sites, unearth honey ants and lizards, cut open animals and chop them up, and to scrape hot ashes from baked animals, made it invaluable.

As with other boomerangs, some were also dependent upon the shape of the root of a tree to give it strength and shape. In Central Australia, Mulga Wood was most commonly used. In other areas, Black Wattle, Bat Willow, Needle wood or Mangrove were the choice wood. Depending on the area, boomerangs from these regions are painted with ochre, decorated with incised designs representing totemic clans and travels of spirit-heroes, or simply left in the natural state.



Aboriginal Fine Arts Gallery

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