

# WELTKULTUREN MUSEUM

Press kit for the exhibition

**"Country bin pull'em. Looking back together"**

1 November 2024 - 31 August 2025

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# WELTKULTUREN MUSEUM

## PRESS INVITATION

PRESS PREVIEW to mark the opening of the exhibition  
"Country bin pull'em. Looking back together"

Please register in advance!

Thursday, 31 October 2024, 11am, Schaumainkai 29



Dear journalists,

We cordially invite you to the **press preview (with pre-registration) on Thursday, 31 October at 11am** at the Weltkulturen Museum, Schaumainkai 29, marking the opening of the exhibition "Country bin pull'em. Looking back together".

**Please note:** The Wanjina Wunggurr curators would like to point out that for reasons of cultural protocol, a smoking ceremony will take place before entering the exhibition hall; all those who wish to take the press tour must be present as a group at 11am in order to participate in this ceremony beforehand. The curators describe the ceremony as follows:

**Welcome Smoking:** "In our Country we welcome the people who come to visit us and give them permission to stay there. Here we would like to invite you to visit the exhibition and enter in a safe and pleasant way. The smoke is like a cleansing, a protection; and also an encouragement to

grow and clear your mind to consciously experience the welcome we offer you. It is our duty and part of our nature to feel responsible for the mental and physical well-being and safety of our visitors. Please come in. We hope you enjoy your visit. (Co-curators Leah Umbagai and Rona Gungnunda Charles)

Dr. Mona Suhrbier (Acting Director of the Weltkulturen Museum), Matthias Claudius Hofmann (Oceania Curator), Richard Kuba (Frobenius Institute) as well as Leah Umbagai (Woddordda Traditional Owner and artist) and Rona Gungnunda Charles (Ngarinyin Traditional Owner, artist and cultural project Officer for WAC) will be present and available for interviews after the ceremony.

Further information on the Australian cooperation partners can be found here: [www.weltkulturenmuseum.de/en/guests-research/](http://www.weltkulturenmuseum.de/en/guests-research/)

**The opening for the general public will take place on Thursday, 31 October at 7pm.**

What significance does millennia-old rock art from Australia have today? What potential do ethnographic and historical collections hold for Indigenous communities, museums and post-colonial cooperation? The Indigenous Wanjina Wunggurr Community - comprising the Woddordda, Ngarinyin and Wunambal people - and the Weltkulturen Museum are now coming together to look back at the 1938 Frobenius Expedition from Frankfurt to the Kimberley region of North-West Australia.

Visitors will be able to see copies of monumental rock paintings, historical photographs and ethnographic objects. There will also be contemporary works by Indigenous artists which have been created through a process of engaging with the collections of the Frobenius Institute and the Weltkulturen Museum.

"Country bin pull'em" has emerged from a joint examination into the expedition's research history alongside contemporary interpretations of the Indigenous cultural heritage. In addition, the show raises issues about the collection's provenance and shares ideas about returning cultural heritage in digital form.

The title "Country bin pull'em" in Kimberley Kriol was chosen by the Indigenous project partners. Alluding to a reversal of perspectives, it underscores their Country's agency, emphasising the Indigenous viewpoint that the 'living' land itself - the Country - is what drew the German researchers in. Over eighty years later, this same agency has revived the relationships between the Wanjina Wunggurr Community and the Frankfurt collecting institutions.

The exhibition is the result of a long-term international research project initiated by the Wanjina Wunggurr Community that seeks to contribute towards decolonising the museums' collections.

Also present at the opening are Wanjina Wunggurr Traditional Owners Pete O'Connor, Bradley Liddell, Joshua Humphries, Inga Pedersen, Leah Umbagai and Rona Gungnunda Charles.

A **catalogue accompanying the exhibition** is in preparation and is expected to be published in early 2025.

#### **Project partners**

The exhibition is a joint endeavour between the Weltkulturen Museum, the Dambimangari, Wilinggin and Wunambal Gaambera Aboriginal Corporations, the Frobenius Institute (which is associated with the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, Frankfurt) and the Centre for Rock Art Research at the University of Western Australia in Perth.

#### **Co-curators and other participants**

Rona Gungnunda Charles, Kim Doohan, Christina Henneke, Richard Kuba, Lloyd Nulgit, Pete O'Connor, Martin Porr, Eva Ch. Raabe and Leah Umbagai

#### **Head curator**

Matthias Claudius Hofmann (Oceania Curator)

#### **Project assistant**

Isabel Kreuder (Oceania Research Assistant)

Weltkulturen Museum, Schaumainkai 29, 60594 Frankfurt am Main  
Admission: €7 / reduced €3.50, free admission to children under 18 years old  
Opening hours: Wed 11am-8pm, Thurs-Sun 11am-6pm



WELTKULTUREN  
FREUNDESKREIS

hessische  
kultur  
stiftung



FROBENIUS-INSTITUT  
FÜR KULTURANTHROPOLOGISCHE  
FORSCHUNG



dambimangari



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WESTERN  
AUSTRALIA

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# WELTKULTUREN MUSEUM

## **The 1938-1939 Frobenius expedition to the Kimberley region of north-west Australia**

In 1938, five young researchers set off from Frankfurt for the Kimberley region, one of the most remote areas of Northwest Australia. The ethnologists Helmut Petri, Andreas Lommel and Douglas Fox plus the two painters Agnes Schulz and Gerta Kleist were, for the most part, long-term employees at the Institut für Kulturmorphologie (today's Frobenius Institute), which was jointly run with the institution that has now become the Weltkulturen Museum.

The German ethnologist and research traveller Leo Frobenius (1873-1938) founded the institute in Berlin in 1898 as the Africa Archive; it moved to Munich in 1920 and was given the name Research Institute for Cultural Morphology. In 1925, this institute moved to Frankfurt am Main and was affiliated to the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University. It has borne the name of its founder since 1946. Between 1908 and 1938, a total of twenty-two ethnographic expeditions took place in Africa, South-East Asia, India, Australia and southern and northern Europe, with Frobenius himself participating in twelve of these.

The aim of the research trip to North-West Australia in 1938-1939 was to investigate what were then thought to be the last societies to remain largely untouched by European influence, and to record their culture before their - as was believed at the time - unavoidable demise. Most of the research was devoted to the three Wanjina Wunggurr societies: the Woddordda, Ngarinyin and Wunambal. Even today, rock paintings dating back millennia are at the heart of this culture. Documenting prehistoric rock art around the globe was a special focus of the institute, which worked at the intersection of science and art. The Frankfurt expedition produced one of the earliest and most comprehensive documentations of Wanjina Wunggurr culture that encompassed not only numerous copies of the rock paintings but also over a thousand photos, hundreds of ethnographic objects, and audio and written sources. Tragically, large swathes of the collections were destroyed in the aerial bombardment of Frankfurt in March 1944. Over eighty years later, the Traditional Owners in the Kimberley have rediscovered these materials and are evaluating them in conjunction with German and Australian researchers.

# WELTKULTUREN MUSEUM

## **Artist residency at the Weltkulturen Museum in 2023**

In November 2023, Leah Umbagai and Pete O'Connor of Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation and Rona Gungnunda Charles and Lloyd Nulgit of Wilinggin Aboriginal Corporation, accompanied by Australian anthropologist Kim Doohan, were guests at the Weltkulturen Museum.

In preparation for the exhibition "Country bin pull'em. Looking back together", scheduled to open at the museum in November 2024, they worked with Richard Kuba and Christina Henneke of the Frobenius Institute, Matthias Claudius Hofmann (Curator of the Oceania Collection) and Isabel Kreuder (Research Assistant for the Oceania Collection) on the collections that resulted from the 1938 Frobenius expedition. The group visited the archives and storage facilities in Frankfurt, and held in-depth discussions on the significance and structure of archive materials and collections, such as the rock art copies, portraits and photographs held at the Frobenius Institute and the objects of material culture at the Weltkulturen Museum.

During the three-week residency in Frankfurt, Indigenous perspectives on the expedition were discussed and new artworks were created through a process of exploring the collections at both the Frobenius Institute and the Weltkulturen Museum. The new works were acquired by the museum and can be seen in the collaboratively curated exhibition "Country bin pull'em".

# WELTKULTUREN MUSEUM

## Short biographies of selected artists and participants

**Leah Umbagai** is a nationally and internationally renowned artist and a Woddordda Traditional Owner.

"Our paintings are to keep us strong and well but also to help other people understand better about us and our culture. We do these paintings so people will respect us, our community and our way of life."



Leah Umbagai. Photo: Kim\_Dochan

**Rona Gungnunda Charles** is a Ngarinyin and Nyikina (First Nations, Western Australian Kimberley Region) singer, dancer, cultural teacher/consultant, multi-disciplinary artist and researcher.

"When I do my artwork my *liyan*<sup>1</sup> feels strong, I feel that connection. I feel that connection when I look at the artworks that my ancestors have done; some of these works are in the exhibition."

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<sup>1</sup> Gut instinct





Rona Gungnunda Charles. Photo: Kim Doohan

**Lloyd Nulgit** has been working with Wilinggin Aboriginal Corporation for the past fifteen years as a cultural adviser and as a Wilinggin Ranger, caring for Country. As a Ngarinyin member of the Wanjina Wunggurr community he lives in Derby, Western Australia. He grew up in his traditional Country, surrounded by Wanjina Wunggurr culture.



Lloyd Nulgit. Photo: Christina Henneke

**Pete O'Connor** works as a cultural advisor to Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation staff, and offers advice and assistance with the Dambimangari Ranger Program in particular. As a Woddordda member of the Wanjina Wunggurr community, he plays an active role in ensuring cultural continuity through Joomba performances, establishing respectful cultural archives and protecting Woddordda Country.



Pete O'Connor. Photo: Christina Henneke

**Dr. Kim Doohan** is an anthropologist and human geographer who works as an independent consultant. The majority of Doohan's research and work over the past thirty-five years is based on decolonising and participatory methods conducted in remote regions of northern Australia with members of local Aboriginal communities.



Kim Doohan. Photo: Christina Henneke

# WELTKULTUREN MUSEUM

## **List of participating artists**

### **Contemporary Indigenous artists**

Barbara Arndie Bear

Cecilia Wadjlula Umbagai

Edna Dale

Gabriella Barunga

Gordon Barunga

Gudu Mungulu

Kallum Mungulu

Kirsty Burgu

Leah Umbagai

Lily Karadada

Lisa Bundamarra Mouda

Lloyd Nulgit

Mildred Minggi Mungulu

Pete O'Connor

Petrina Bedford

Phillip Gar Gar Gar Duckhole

Rona Gungnunda Charles

Sandra Mungulu

Yornadaiyn Woolagoodja

### **Artists on the Frobenius expedition**

Agnes Susanne Schulz

Douglas C. Fox

Gerta Kleist

# WELTKULTUREN MUSEUM

**Purchases of contemporary art created by Wanjina Wunggurr artists  
A purchasing project undertaken by the Oceania curator, Matthias  
Claudius Hofmann**

On behalf of the Oceania collection, the Weltkulturen Museum has purchased all the works created for the exhibition by Rona Gungnunda Charles, Leah Umbagai, Pete O'Connor and Lloyd Nulgit during their artist residency in November 2023.

Numerous other artworks have similarly been purchased for the exhibition - primarily via the Mowanjuma Art and Culture Centre in Derby - that document contemporary Wanjina Wunggurr art and complement the museum's historical collections from the Kimberley region of northwestern Australia.

All the works will be shown in the exhibition.

Some of the contemporary art purchases created during the artist residency in 2023



Leah Umbagai, *Message Stick for Frankfurt*, acrylic on wood, 24 x 4.5 cm, 2023.  
Photo (front and back): Wolfgang Günzel.  
With the permission of the Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation.

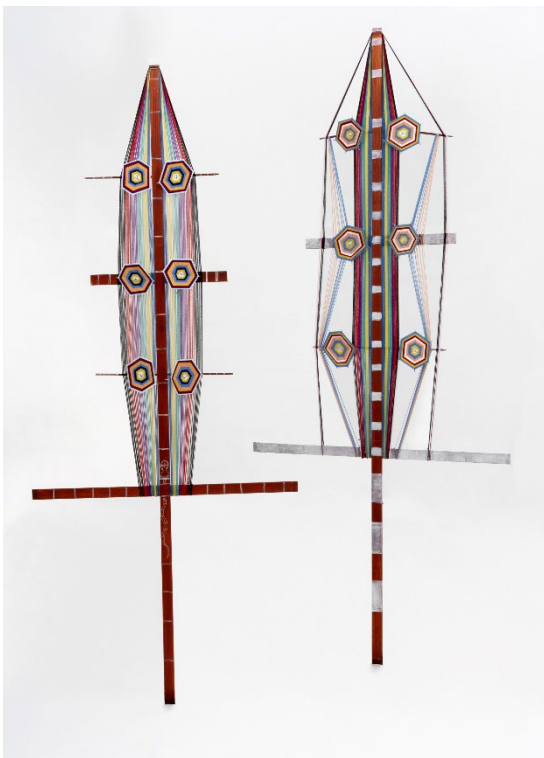
The three Wanjina represent (from top to bottom) the three Wanjina Wunggurr groups of the Ngarinyin, Woddordda and Wunambal. A Wunggurr snake is depicted on the reverse. The object is modelled on a message stick and serves as a message from the Aboriginal Corporations to the people of Frankfurt, inviting them to visit the exhibition.



Leah Umbagai, *Wanjina*, acrylic paint on crate wood, 20 x 30 cm, 2023.  
Photo: Wolfgang Günzel. With the permission of Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation.



Rona Gungnunda Charles,  
*Barramundi Dreaming*, acrylic on  
canvas, 120 x 80 cm, 2023.  
Photo: Wolfgang Günzel. With  
the permission of Wilinggin  
Aboriginal Corporation



Lloyd Nulgit (left) und Pete O'Connor  
(right), *Totems*, wood, nylon thread  
and paint, 250 x 128 cm, 2023.  
Photo: Wolfgang Günzel. With the  
permission of Dambimangari  
Aboriginal Corporation.



Leah Umbagai, *Malan Jiunya Bushwoman, Mooloomooloony*, acrylic on canvas, 80 x 60 cm, 2023.

Photo: Wolfgang Günzel. With the permission of Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation.



Leah Umbagai, *Geeyorn Geeyorn, Maagorddeegorddee*, acrylic on canvas, 120 x 60 cm, 2023.

Photo: Wolfgang Günzel. With the permission of Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation.

Contemporary art purchased from the Mowanjum Aboriginal Art Centre, Derby, and the Japingka Gallery in 2024



Yornadaiyn Woolagoodja,  
*Ungud (snake)*, acrylic  
on canvas, 45 x 45 cm,  
2024.



Mildred Minggu Mungulu,  
*Wandjinas (cloud and  
rain spirits)*, print, 53  
x 34.5 cm, 2023.





Lily Karadada,  
*Wandjina Rain  
Spirit*, Ochre on  
canvas, 98 x 88cm,  
1999.

Photo: Wolfgang  
Günzel.



Donny Yornadaiyn  
Woolagoodja,  
*Namarali*  
(*Wororra god*),  
Coloured woodprint  
with ochre  
on paper, 60 x 25  
cm , 2021.  
Photo: Wolfgang  
Günzel.



Mildred Minggi  
Mungulu, *Wandjina  
Dreaming*, Acrylic  
on canvas, 120 x  
91 cm, 2023.  
Foto: Wolfgang  
Günzel.

# WELTKULTUREN MUSEUM

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NOVEMBER

AT THE WELTKULTUREN MUSEUM



Rona Gungnunda Charles, Bradwodingari, 2023, approved by Wilinggin Aboriginal Corporation, Weltkulturen Museum Collection. Photo: Wolfgang Günzel

Dear journalists,

In November we will be launching guided tours and workshops to accompany the **new exhibition "Country bin pull'em. Looking back together!"**.

## ARTIST TALK

**Sunday, 3 November, 3pm**

Artist talk in the exhibition **"Country bin pull'em"**

With Leah Umbagai (Woddordda Traditional Owner and artist), Rona Gungnunda Charles (Ngarinyin Traditional Owner, artist and cultural project officer for WAC), Matthias Claudius Hofmann (Curator of the Oceania Collection)

The Wanjina Wunggurr artists and co-curators have travelled all the way from Australia to open the exhibition "Country bin pull'em. Looking back together". In this conversation with curator Matthias Claudius Hofmann they share their traditional

knowledge with visitors and talk about the collaboration with the Frankfurt institutions and how the exhibition came about.  
Event in English.  
7 euros, reduced 3.50 euros. No need to book.  
Weltkulturen Museum, Schaumainkai 29

#### **THEMATIC TOUR**

**Wednesday, 6. November, 7 pm**

**"Historical collections in new relationships"**

**With Christina Henneke (cultural anthropologist)**

What significance do the historical archive and collection materials hold for the Wanjina Wunggurr indigenous community today? This themed tour allows visitors to find out more about key aspects of the joint research which formed the basis for the exhibition. In addition, it provides some intriguing insights into the re-evaluation of historical photographs, copies of rock paintings and archive documents conducted by the Indigenous research partners; the contemporary works in the exhibition provide a fascinating counterpoint to this work.

7 euros, reduced 3.50 euros. No need to book.

Weltkulturen Museum, Schaumainkai 29

#### **TOURS WITH THE CURATOR**

**Sunday, 10 November, 3pm**

**Sunday, 24 November, 3pm**

**"Country bin pull'em. Looking back together"**

**With Matthias Claudius Hofmann (Curator of the Oceania Collection)**

What significance do millennia-old rock paintings from Australia have today? What potential do ethnographic and historical collections have for Indigenous communities, for museums and for post-colonial coexistence? Together with the Indigenous communities of the Wanjina Wunggurr - the Woddordda, Ngarinyin and Wunambal - the Weltkulturen Museum is taking a look back at the Frankfurt Frobenius expedition to the Kimberley region of north-west Australia in 1938.

This tour led by the curator will cover topics relating to the expedition's research history and current interpretations of Indigenous cultural heritage. In addition, issues pertaining to collection provenance will be addressed and options for digitally returning cultural heritage will be discussed.

Curator Matthias Claudius Hofmann will illustrate these contexts with selected examples and provide in-depth insights into the exhibition.

7 euros, reduced 3.50 euros. No need to book.

Weltkulturen Museum, Schaumainkai 29

#### **PUBLIC TOUR**

**"Country bin pull'em. Looking back together"**

**Saturday, 16. November, 3 pm**

**With Isabel Kreuder (Research Assistant)**

During a group tour, Isabel Kreuder will give an overview of the central themes of the exhibition, the Frobenius expedition and the collaboration with the indigenous representatives of the Wanjina Wunggurr community.

7 euros, reduced 3.50 euros. No need to book.  
Weltkulturen Museum, Schaumainkai 29

#### **GUIDED TOUR FOR EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONALS**

**Wednesday, 27 November, 6-7.30pm**

**Introduction to the exhibition "Country bin pull'em. Looking back together" for educational professionals**

**With Stephanie Endter (Head of Education and Outreach)**

Stephanie Endter, the museum's Head of Education and Outreach, will give a free guided tour of the new exhibition "Country bin pull'em" especially for those working in education. There will also be an overview of the new educational programme.

Free of charge.

Please register in advance at [weltkulturen.bildung@stadt-frankfurt.de](mailto:weltkulturen.bildung@stadt-frankfurt.de)

Weltkulturen Museum, Schaumainkai 29

#### **SPECIAL TOUR**

**Saturday, 30 November, 3pm**

**"Welcome to the Weltkulturen Museum"**

**With Alex Novačeskić (Cultural educator)**

What actually is an ethnological museum? Who works here? How do the exhibitions come about? In this tour the participants will learn all about the Weltkulturen Museum and go around the current exhibition together. The museum's educator will take the participants' linguistic proficiency into account.

Free of charge. No need to book.

Weltkulturen Museum, Schaumainkai 29

#### **WELTKULTUREN EVENTS**

**Sunday, 17 November, 3-5pm**

**"Setting pictures to music"**

**Family workshop including exhibition visit**

**With Gregor Glogowski (cultural educator)**

Can a work of art produce sounds like a piece of music? Do pictures have a certain rhythm and can colours be loud or quiet? After the participants have learned about the stories and meanings of the artworks and rock paintings in the exhibition "Country bin pull'em. Looking back together", the participants will set selected works to music and create short musical compositions.

Ages six and over. Price: 6 euros. Please register in advance at

[www.weltkulturenmuseum.de](http://www.weltkulturenmuseum.de)

Weltkulturen Museum, Schaumainkai 29

**Saturday, 30 November, 3-5 pm**

**"Little heroes all grown up"**

**Saturday workshop for families with children**

**With Irina Scelsi (cultural educator)**

Do we have superpowers? Are we open, brave and strong? Together we will visit the exhibition "Country bin pull'em. Looking back together" and search for images, symbols or stories that express strength. We will then develop our own collages of courageous images, signs and words.

Ages six and over, free of charge

Please register in advance at [weltkulturen.bildung@stadt-frankfurt.de](mailto:weltkulturen.bildung@stadt-frankfurt.de)  
Weltkulturen Museum, Schaumainkai 29

PRESS MATERIALS: Can be found as always at  
<https://www.weltkulturenmuseum.de/de/presse>

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[www.weltkulturenmuseum.de](http://www.weltkulturenmuseum.de)

# WELTKULTUREN MUSEUM

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Weltkulturen Museum is an ethnological museum which is committed to interdisciplinary cooperation and operates at the intersection of ethnology and art.

As a museum that is part of the city of Frankfurt, it provides a link between the local and global levels. It is engaged in an active process of international exchange with partners from Indigenous cultures and non-European societies.

As a forum for transcultural exchange we promote a diverse spectrum of worldviews, historiographies, religions and aesthetics, as well as an acceptance and appreciation of the same.

We are committed to preserving, looking after and researching the collections by establishing a dialogue with their societies of origin and with artists and scholars. One of our key goals is researching provenance and critically reappraising colonial contexts.

The Weltkulturen Museum stands against any kind of exclusion or stigmatisation and seeks to contribute to processes of decolonisation.

We work together as a team to bring our projects to fruition and value the wishes and needs of our visitors.



# WELTKULTUREN MUSEUM

## EXHIBITION PREVIEW 2025–2026

### **S\*HEROES. Comic Art from Africa** 31.10.2025 - 30.09.2026

The exhibition "S\*HEROES. Comic Art from Africa" provides insights into Africa's diverse comic scene. A growing group of young creatives from the African continent will be talking about (pre-colonial) history in their works, drawing on cultural myths and symbols and addressing social and ecological challenges. Their comics enable them to contribute their voices, experiences and demands to global society, addressing the key issues of our time and creating new visions of the future.

S\*HEROES focuses on female protagonists and female perspectives: superheroines who fight against environmental disasters with local deities; a young woman who masters her everyday urban life; protagonists who defend LGBTQ rights; a storyteller who advocates for the democratic distribution of knowledge.

Through their works, these comic creators are challenging the status quo in the international art and culture scene, where female perspectives from the Global South are still marginalised.

Weltkulturen Museum, Schaumainkai 29, 60594 Frankfurt am Main  
Admission: €7 / reduced €3.50  
Free admission for children and teenagers under 18.  
Opening hours: Wed 11am-8pm, Thurs-Sun 11am-6pm

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