Hand stencils

Are not unique to aborigine art
Aboriginal Wandjina rock art on the Barnett River, Mount Elizabeth Station
Petroglyph

North American, present day Arizona
~100-1500 CE
Sandstone
Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco
Rock painting

• Left: Painting, Mt. Elliot National Park, northern Queensland
• Right: Figures with head-dress, Victoria River, N.T.
African Rock Art

Rock art in northern Niger’s mountainous Aïr region created ~ 2,500 BP
Australia’s major indigenous art-producing communities

- Kakadu, Kimberley, Utopia, Balgo Hills, Hermannsburg, Papunya
- Growth towards Aboriginal control of communities has been accompanied by a unique art development.
- Impact especially noticeable in desert communities where the practice of new means of visual representation has come to be one of the most constructive aspects of daily life.
Aboriginal artists at work

Pintubi men Papunya

Maggy Watson Women’s Dreaming

Tiwi islander making handicraft from local fibers.
Ground painting Alice Springs, 1964
Albert Namatjira 1902-1959

Australia’s most famous Aboriginal artist painted luminous scenes (as above) from desert country surrounding his Hermannsburg home. His strong aptitude for watercolor medium & distinctive capturing of high coloring of desert landscape brought him instant success when first exhibited in 1938.
Albert Namatjira 1902-1959 water color on paper

Redbank Gorge Macdonnell Ranges 1936 Tailipate Western Macdonnell 1945
Albert Namatjira 1902-1959

- Left: Namatjira with his father, wife & children, ca 1945
- Right: Scene at Amulda, James Range, 1941

In 1953 he was awarded Queen’s Coronation Medal and in 1954 was presented to the Queen in Canberra.
Albert Namatjira
watercolors c 1940s

- Left: Mt. Ormiston, MacDonnell Ranges
  watercolor on wove paper
- Right: Ghost gum, Hermannsburg, N.T.
Albert Namatjira

Sir William Dargie CBE
1912-2003
Oil on canvas laid on composition board
1958

National Portrait Gallery, Canberra
Hermannsburg School

- Left: Untitled landscape, Otto Pareroultja, early 1960s, watercolor on wove paper
- Right: Untitled landscape, Gabriel Namatjira, early 1960s, watercolor on wove paper
Ground and Sand Painting

- Left: Central Australia in 1912 shows ground painting and ceremonial body paint applied to men.
- Right: Central Desert 1960 man before ceremony.
Symbols used in Desert paintings

- **rainbow, cloud, cliff or sandhill**
- **rain**
- **waterhole**
- **running water**
- **Fire, smoke, water or blood**
- A spiralling line can mean water, a rainbow, a snake, lightning, a string, a cliff or native-bee honey storage
- **man**
- **two men sitting**
- Concentric circles can mean a camp site, a stone, a well, a rock hole, a breast, fire, a bole or fruit
- **this grouping usually means four women sitting**
- **sitting-down place**
- **footprints**
- **travelling sign, with the concentric circles representing a resting place**
Dots characteristic of desert art

- Dots are applied using either fine brushes or sticks, or with ends of larger brushes to create different effects.
- Represent many things: stars, sparks, burnt ground, clouds
Aboriginal art

Kangaroo Hunt

Aboriginal art is unique and often features animals. Primitive paintings of animals are usually drawn with their bones and internal organs showing. This is referred to as "x-ray" art. The paints they used were ground from the earth around them and came in colors of rich reds, browns and yellow ochre.
Bark painting

art practice of applying natural pigments to straightened lengths of bark with various forms of adhesive

• Artist: Mary Serico
• A greedy hunter (upper center) attacked by a crocodile (center) and forced to leave his catch and canoe behind
Jimmy Midjau Midjau 1897-1985 Indigenous Painter
Ochre on eucalyptus bark 1960s
Gunwinggu, Croker Island NT
What is Rarrk Painting?

Rarrk or crosshatching is a style of painting that is from Arnhem Land, north eastern Northern Territory. It covers a large area with very few people. These paintings are paintings usually done on dried and cured bark or on modern art materials like canvas. It is a style of line painting done originally with grass but now is done with brushes. It is also called crosshatching because the technique requires the time consuming application of many parallel lines. The more advanced technique looks as if the applications of lines have been woven into the painting.

Connie Rovina (artist) b. 1985

A woman (center right) is taken by a crocodile whilst trying to steal eggs from its nest and her people (upper left) are searching for her.
Rainbow Serpent's antilopine kangaroo

John Mawurndjul 1952-Mumeka, Western Arnhem Land Northern Territory

Natural earth pigments and binder on eucalyptus bark, braced with wood and natural fiber string bark 1991

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
David Malangi, (1927-1999)

began bark painting as a young boy, taught by his father & uncle to paint on bodies for ceremonies, on hollow logs for burials & later on stringybark. He was taught to paint the story of his creation ancestor, Gurrumurringu, and the story of the Djangkawu sisters. David painted the stories that they sang in their ceremonies & his totems: sea eagle, crow, snake and goanna

Malangi was a prolific and highly individualistic Aboriginal artist whose bark paintings and fine art prints has been sought after by major international collectors since the 1960’s. In style, his bold collection of individual imagery and shapes on a clear, red ochre or sometimes black background influenced several other central Arnhem Land painters. Depicted are Night Insects of Yathalamara, where he lives, and reeds at the waters edge with the insects sitting at the base of the stems waiting until nightfall.
Australia’s first $ bill 1966

• Left third of image was designed by David Malangi, a bark painter, printer & designer from Central Arnhem Land. After painting for many years for ritual purposes, he learned from older artists how to paint for the outside market in 1960s.

• One of his paintings (right) had been collected & displayed by Czeck anthropolgist, Karel Kupka & was reproduced on the dollar note. Malangi received neither payment nor recognition for painting the design used until after the notes were issued and circulated. The Reserve Bank later recognized his copyright and awarded him compensation.
Gurrumiringu the Great Hunter

David Malangi 1927-1999
Australian indigenous artist
Natural earth pigments on eucalyptus bark 1969
National Gallery of Australia

Australian $1 note back 1966-94
design plagiarized from
David Malangi’s work
Young initiate
1992
Galawu 1985
(Stringbark house)

George Milpurrurru
1934-1998

Natural earth pigments on eucalyptus bark

Funerary rites
Bushfire I & II  Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri 1932-2002

Synthetic polymer paint on composition  National Gallery of Australia

1972
Warlugulong exemplifies a distinctive painting style developed by Papunya artists in the 1970s, and blends representation of landscape with ceremonial iconography.
Spirit Dreaming through Napperby country

Tim Leura Tjapaltjarri 1929-1984 and Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri 1932-2002
Synthetic polymer paint on canvas 1980
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri

- Possum (c.1932-2002) lived and worked in Anmatyerre country in central Australia. An accomplished wood carver before his emergence in 1970s as the most innovative and skillful of the Western Desert ‘dot’ painters who record traditional Aboriginal designs in acrylics on board & canvas, spread to other areas.

- Died June, 2002 the day he was to receive the Order of Australia

- Upper: Two Tjangalas, 1996
- Lower: Possum Dreaming at Napperby, 1979
As a child saw famous Namatjira paint their country in Western-style, realistic water color

Was able to perceive parallel between European maps and traditional Western desert sand painting maps of country
Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri

• Left: *Love story* 1972 depicts ancestral Lilipiliti enticing Napangati to his campsite
• Right: *Bushfire Dreaming* 1986
Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri
Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri

Right: Narripi worm dreaming 1986 synthetic polymer paint on linen
Contemporary Aboriginal Artists

Nora Nangala Watson

Nym Bandak 1958-9

Mick Tjapaltjarri
Malcolm Jagamarra

1955 - Central Australia

Water dreaming

Land River Dreaming II
Possum Jukurrpa
Ngapakurlangu
Maggie Napurrula Poulson
Jampijinpa Ross

1989

Darby

Oil on canvas
Beauty is in the eye of the beholder

“I like this painting because it has a bench.”