Works are listed in order according to their placement in the exhibition.

1. **Quartpot Nangenkibiyanga Warramarrba**  
   born Groote Eylandt, Northern Territory, c. 1900; died Groote Eylandt 1972  
   Anindilyakwa language group, Wurraliliyanga clan  

   **Yimurarra [Milkfish], kunkwurna [big turrum] and yarruwarra [skinny fish]**  
   c. 1941–45  
   ochres and orchid extract on eucalyptus bark  
   The Leonhard Adam Collection of International Indigenous Culture, the University of Melbourne Art Collection  
   1960.2212

   The first five fish depicted are *yimurarra* (milkfish) brothers. They represent the Mamarika and Amagula clan groups. The red fish second from the bottom is a *kunkwurna* (big turrum) and represents the Jaragba and Bara clans. The black fish on the bottom is a *yarruwarra* (skinny fish) and is not a Groote Eylandt totem.

2. **Minimini Numalkiyiya Mamarika**  
   born Groote Eylandt, Northern Territory, c. 1900; died Groote Eylandt 1972  
   Anindilyakwa language group, Warnindilyakwa clan  

   **Dinginjabena [Dolphins] and armbulirra [jelly-fish]**  
   c. 1941–45  
   ochres and orchid extract on eucalyptus bark  
   The Leonhard Adam Collection of International Indigenous Culture, the University of Melbourne Art Collection  
   1960.2201

   Dolphins are of special totemic significance to the Barabara clan group. The dolphin creation ancestor created Emeda Lake in the south of Groote Eylandt, near Inamalamanjita Point. She went under the earth at Marangala Point and came up through the earth to create the salt-water lake. This is the ancestral country of the Barabara clan.

3. **Yibarungkwa [Mullet]**  
   c. 1941–45  
   ochres and orchid extract on eucalyptus bark  
   The Leonhard Adam Collection of International Indigenous Culture, the University of Melbourne Art Collection  
   1960.2198

   *Yibarungkwa* is a totem of the Mamarika and Amagula clans. The mullet creation ancestor created a lagoon near Umbakumba, at Scott Point.

4. **Peter Nangwurrrama Wurrwiliya**  
   born Groote Eylandt, Northern Territory, c. 1926; died Groote Eylandt 1986  
   Anindilyakwa language group, Warnungawerrikba clan  

   **Yaraja [Goanna]**  
   c. 1945–49  
   ochres and orchid extract on eucalyptus bark  
   The Leonhard Adam Collection of International Indigenous Culture, the University of Melbourne Art Collection
In 2005, senior Groote Eylandt men were consulted about these Groote Eylandt barks in the University of Melbourne Art Collection. Their careful consideration of the barks led to much discussion about cultural meanings connected to them. As a direct result of this consultation, works including Yaraja and Yimurarra, kunkwurna and yarruwarra were (among others) attributed to the painters who made them. While such attributions remain open to ongoing interpretation, they are a valuable foundation for ongoing research.

5. Minimini Numalkiyiya Mamarika
born Groote Eylandt, Northern Territory, c. 1900; died Groote Eylandt 1972
Anindilyakwa language group, Warnindilyakwa clan

Yiningburna [Ancestral blue-tongue snake] or yimabedukwena [death adders] c. 1941–45
ochres and orchid extract on eucalyptus bark
The Leonhard Adam Collection of International Indigenous Culture, the University of Melbourne Art Collection
1960.2200

Although documentation about the making of the Groote Eylandt barks is difficult to obtain today, Groote Eylandt Aboriginal elders suggest that they were made specifically for trade rather than ceremony. They were produced during and after World War II, a period of increasing intercultural exchange. The artists were among the first of their clans to experience contact with white people. Groote archipelago histories also include seasonal visits by Macassan fishermen who traded with Groote Eylandt people until 1907, when changes to Australian law meant they were prohibited from continuing to fish in Australian waters.

Mick Makani Wilingarr
born Gatji Creek, central Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, c. 1905; died 1985
Djinang language group, Mildjingi clan, Yirritja moiety

6. Kunapippi c. 1968
ochres on bark
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of Emily Nicol in memory of Bill Nicol, member of staff, Melbourne Teachers College (1939–68), 1985
1985.0109

In 1963, the naturalist David Attenborough published his encounter with Mick Makani Wilingarr in his book Quest under Capricorn, which described a visit he made to the Northern Territory. Makani took Attenborough into the bush to look for bark and Attenborough describes the process as follows: 'With the axe, [Makani] ringed the trunk about three feet from the ground. He propped a fallen branch against the tree, climbed up it and, gripping the branch with his toes in order to keep his balance, dexterously cut another ring, five feet above the lower one. Then he cut out a vertical strip joining the two rings and slowly peeled away an immense sheet, leaving the trunk of the tree naked white and running with sap'.

'Back at camp, he carefully trimmed off the outer fibrous layers of the bark. With these shavings he lit a fire on which he threw the burling sheet, inner side downwards. The heat was not sufficient to burn the bark, but enough to turn some of its sap into steam and make the whole piece pliable. After a few minutes he put it down on the ground and weighted it with boulders so that it would harden absolutely flat. This was to be his canvas.'

ochres on bark
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of Emily Nicol in memory of Bill Nicol, member of staff, Melbourne Teachers College (1939–68), 1985
The sheet of bark had now dried and painting could begin. Magani put it flat on the ground and sat cross-legged in front of it. By his side he placed a cockle shell and several cigarette tins, all full of water. He ground a red pebble on a small piece of sandstone, tipped the ochre into the cockle shell and daubed the resulting paint over the bark with his fingers, to make a solid red ground for his design. Each figure he roughly outlined with the orchid stem, having chewed its end to make it juicy. For the detailed painting, he used three different brushes—a twig with a chewed splayed end which produced broad lines, another with a burred end which he used for stippling, and a third with a trailing fibre attached to the tip with which, by drawing it skilfully and steadily across the bark, he made thin delicate lines.

David Attenborough, 1963

8. Untitled [Breeding ground for mosquitoes, woman, dilly bags, birds and eggs] c. 1930s
ochres on eucalyptus bark
The Leonhard Adam Collection of International Indigenous Culture, the University of Melbourne.
Collected by Rev. EA Wells
1960.2229

I asked Magani why he painted. He was mystified by the question. His first answer was simply that we had asked him to do so. But he painted before we came to Maningrida. Why? Because [he was given] money for the barks and with that he could buy tobacco at the store. For some time this was the only answer I could extract from him. But it could not be the only one, for Magani and his people, as we knew from the rock paintings and from the records of the early explorers, had been painting long before any white people came here to buy the paintings. ‘We always bin makim’, was Magani’s only reply.

David Attenborough, 1963

Margaret Stones
born Colac, Victoria, 1920; lives Melbourne

watercolour
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Purchased with funds from the Charles Duplan Lloyd Trust 1974
1974.0003

Margaret Stones’s natural gifts as a botanical artist are evident in some of her earliest work created in the 1940s. In later works such as Rhododendron lochiae, Stones demonstrates not only the quality and development of her art, but its outstanding, internationally acclaimed legacy.

10. Pittosporaceae. Pittosporum sp. Banks ex Gaertn. late 1940s
pen and ink, watercolour
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of the Russell and Mab Grimwade Bequest 1973
1973.0135

11. Myrtaceae. Syzygium sp. [Lilly-pilly] late 1940s
pen and ink, watercolour
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of the Russell and Mab Grimwade Bequest 1973
1973.0133

Margaret Stones usually worked indoors, although some work was made in the field. She drew from both dried specimens and cut living plants. She avoided the use of photographs and welcomed expeditions to see flowers in their natural habitat. While accuracy was always a vital element in creating an illustration, so too was the design of critical importance. Rendering the liveliness of a plant
meant that she always looked closely at it in order to discover its most natural aspect. The distinctiveness of each individual plant encouraged Stones to begin each drawing afresh and she focused on one plant specimen at a time to capture its aliveness.

**12. Proteaceae. Banksia sp. L. late 1940s**  
watercolour  
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of the Russell and Mab Grimwade Bequest 1973  
1973.0138

Margaret Stones never worked in a separate studio, preferring instead to work on a table with south-facing light in Australia and north-facing light in the northern hemisphere, and the simple equipment and materials of the botanical artist: a microscope, pencils, watercolours, ink and paper.

After looking closely at the details of a plant specimen, she established the composition by turning the plant to decide on its placement on the sheet of paper. She began by drawing with a sharpened 2H or 4H pencil. An HB pencil was then used to rapidly capture the design before focusing on finer details. The use of the microscope to enable the viewing of the plant through magnification allowed her to understand its structure. Traces of pencil were intentionally left to provide contour and to describe fine details.

watercolour  
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of the Russell and Mab Grimwade Bequest 1973  
1973.0336

pen and ink, watercolour  
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of the Russell and Mab Grimwade Bequest 1973  
1973.0134

Sometimes Margaret Stones would work for a full day without taking a break. Each of her drawings has its own unique qualities achieved through the understanding of the characteristics of a plant and through careful contemplation of the subject.

pen and ink, watercolour  
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of the Russell and Mab Grimwade Bequest 1973  
1973.0137

It was always important to Margaret Stones to render a plant as a living thing. Her natural creative instinct and swiftness while working assisted her to capture a plant's aliveness before it wilted or was subject to natural colour-change. Sometimes this included the need to incorporate the unpredictability of the natural movement of leaves or buds and even the growth of a plant overnight.

watercolour  
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Purchased with funds from the Charles Duplan Lloyd Trust 1973  
1973.0539

**17. Preliminary sketches for Poaceae. Themeda triandra Forssk. [Kangaroo grass] c. 1975**  
pencil, watercolour  
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of the artist 1976
watercolour
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Purchased with funds from the Charles Duplan Lloyd Trust 1973
1973.0540

watercolour
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Purchased with funds from the Charles Duplan Lloyd Trust 1973
1973.0543

The scientific identification of a plant requires accurate rendering that only the hand of an accomplished botanical artist can achieve. The artist can indicate the way a flower is structured, its internal structure, how it is positioned on its stem, and its leaves and roots in a way that no camera can. The artist can also portray the plant’s growing cycle simultaneously in a single drawing and on a single sheet. All of these elements contribute to the botanical classification of a plant and to this European way of seeing and recording nature.

pencil, watercolour
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of the artist 1976
1976.0002

The immense variation possible in the depiction of complicated scientific illustration means that the botanical artist must be technically proficient. Over time, the botanical artist naturally develops knowledge of botany because the connection between ‘knowing’ about a plant and really ‘seeing’ it is vital. It is usual that botanical artists work collaboratively with botanists to ensure botanical accuracy.

Margaret Stones never received training in botanical art. However, through her meetings with botanists, including John Turner, who was professor of botany and plant physiology at the University of Melbourne in the mid-1940s, she was introduced to the study of botany. She also developed a serious interest in the history of botanical illustration.

John Gould Artist
born Lyme Regis, Dorset, 1804; arrived Hobart 1838; departed Sydney 1840; died London 1881

Henry Constantine Richter Lithographer
born Brompton, England, 1821; died 1902

Hullmandel and Walton Printer
active c. 1840s–60s

21. *Licmetis nasicus* (Long-billed cockatoo) c. 1846–47
hand-coloured lithograph
originally published in vol. 5 of *The birds of Australia*, 7 vols, London, 1840–48
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of the Society of Collectors 1951
1951.0002

I have seen many individuals of this species in captivity, both in New South Wales and in this country; and although they appear to bear confinement equally as well as the other members of the family, they seemed more dull and morose, and of a very irritable temper.
That the gradual investigation of the interior of Australia will lead to the discovery of many new and interesting objects, is proved by the recent acquisition of the lovely species here represented, which was killed by Mr. Gilbert in the newly-located district to the northward of the Darling Downs in New South Wales.

John Gilbert was an ornithologist and taxidermist who visited Australia with John and Elizabeth Gould in 1838. He met Gould at the Zoological Society of London and became his principal collector in Australia. Gilbert was killed by a spear on Ludwig Leichhardt’s overland expedition to Port Essington in 1845.

John Gould regretted having never experienced this bird in its natural habitat: ‘No bird is more shy in disposition or more difficult of approach, its feeding-ground and resting-place being always in the most exposed situation, such as spits of land running out into the sea, large morasses, etc., where it can survey all around’.

It is a bird of powerful flight, and performs journeys of vast extent from one part of the country to another: when near the ground the action of the wings is very laboured; but when soaring in a series of circles at such a height in the air as to be almost imperceptible to human vision, it appears to be altogether as easy and graceful; it is while performing these gyrations that it frequently utters its hoarse croaking cry.

John Gould, c. 1846–47

22. *Platycercus splendidus*, Gould (Splendid parakeet) c. 1846–47
hand-coloured lithograph
originally published in vol. 5 of *The birds of Australia*, 7 vols, London, 1840–48
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of the Society of Collectors 1951
1951.0020

John Gould, c. 1846–47

hand-coloured lithograph
originally published in vol. 6 of *The birds of Australia*, 7 vols, London, 1840–48
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of the Society of Collectors 1951
1951.0008

John Gould, c. 1847–48

hand-coloured lithograph
originally published in vol. 6 of *The birds of Australia*, 7 vols, London, 1840–48
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of the Society of Collectors 1951
1951.0018

John Gould, c. 1847–48

25. John Gould Artist
born Lyme Regis, Dorset, 1804; arrived Hobart 1838; departed Sydney 1840; died London 1881
Elizabeth Gould Artist
born Ramsgate, England, 1804; arrived Hobart 1838; departed Sydney 1840; died England 1841
Charles Joseph Hullmandel Printer
born London 1789, active c. 1819–50, died London 1850

*Lopholaimus antarcticus*, GR Gray (Top-knot pigeon) c. 1846–47
hand-coloured lithograph
originally published in vol. 5 of *The birds of Australia*, 7 vols, London, 1840–48
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of the Society of Collectors 1951
1951.0013
It is strictly gregarious, often traversing the forests in flocks of many hundreds in search of those trees most laden with its favourite fruit; upon discovering which the entire flock alight simultaneously with a rushing noise, clinging to and bearing down the smaller twigs and branches with their weight, for grasping which their broad, hand-like feet seem peculiarly fitted. It is a bird of very powerful flight, and usually flies at a considerable elevation in flocks closely packed together.

John Gould, c. 1846–47

26.

John Gould Artist
born Lyme Regis, Dorset, 1804; arrived Hobart 1838; departed Sydney 1840; died London 1881

Henry Constantine Richter Lithographer
born Brompton, England, 1821; died 1902

Charles Joseph Hullmandel Printer
born London 1789, active c. 1819–50, died London 1850

*Circus jardini*, Gould (Jardine’s harrier) c. 1840–41
hand-coloured lithograph
originally published in vol. 1 of *The birds of Australia*, 7 vols, London, 1840–48
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of the Society of Collectors 1951
1951.0005

Like other members of the genus, it flies lazily over the surface of the plains, intently seeking for lizards, snakes, small quadrupeds and birds; and when not pressed by hunger, reposes on some dried stick, elevated knoll, or stone, from which it can survey all around.

John Gould, c. 1840–41

27.

John Gould Artist
born Lyme Regis, Dorset, 1804; arrived Hobart 1838; departed Sydney 1840; died London 1881

Elizabeth Gould Artist
born Ramsgate, England, 1804; arrived Hobart 1838; departed Sydney 1840; died England 1841

Charles Joseph Hullmandel Printer
born London 1789, active c. 1819–50, died London 1850

*Podargus humeralis*, Vig. and Horsf. (Tawny-shouldered podargus) c. 1840–41
hand-coloured lithograph
originally published in vol. 2 of *The birds of Australia*, 7 vols, London, 1840–48
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of the Society of Collectors 1951
1951.0012

Like the rest of the genus, the Tawny-shouldered podargus is strictly nocturnal, sleeping throughout the day on the dead branch of a tree, in an upright position across, and never parallel to, the branch, and which it so nearly resembles as scarcely to be distinguishable from it.

I have frequently shot one without disturbing its mate sitting close by; it may also be knocked off with sticks or stones, and sometimes it is even taken with the hand: when aroused, it flies lazily off with heavy flapping wings to a neighbouring tree, and again resumes its slumbers until the approach of evening, when it becomes as animated and active as it had been previously dull and stupid.

John Gould, c. 1840–41

28.

John Gould Artist
born Lyme Regis, Dorset, 1804; arrived Hobart 1838; departed Sydney 1840; died London 1881

*Nestor productus*, Gould (Phillip Island parrot) c. 1846–47
hand-coloured lithograph
originally published in vol. 5 of *The birds of Australia*, 7 vols, London, 1840–48
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of the Society of Collectors 1951
1951.0011

‘Like all the other members of the extensive family of *Psittacidae* [parrots], it bears captivity remarkably well, readily becoming contented, cheerful, and an amusing companion’, John Gould wrote, c. 1846–
47. European settlement had led however, to intrusions upon its natural habitat: ‘I regret to state, that, in consequence of the settlement of Norfolk Island, the native haunts of this fine bird have been so intruded upon, and such a war of extermination been carried on against it, that if such be not the case already, the time is not far distant when the species will be completely extirpated, and, like the Dodo, its skin and bones become the only mementos of its existence’.

29.
John Gould Artist  
born Lyme Regis, Dorset, 1804; arrived Hobart 1838; departed Sydney 1840; died London 1881  
Henry Constantine Richter Lithographer  
born Brompton, England, 1821; died 1902  
Charles Joseph Hullmandel Printer  
born London 1789, active c. 1819–50, died London 1850

*Buteo melanosternon*, Gould (Black-breasted buzzard) c. 1840–41  
hand-coloured lithograph  
originally published in vol. 1 of *The birds of Australia*, 7 vols, London, 1840–48  
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of Dr Ewan Murray Will 1951  
1951.0022

John Gould described the black-breasted buzzard as a ‘fine and noble species’. He remarked that although it did ‘not appear to be common in any part of the colonies’, it ranged ‘over all the southern portion of the country’. Describing the bird, Gould observed that it ‘generally flies high in the air, through which it soars in large circles, much after the manner of the Wedge-tailed eagle; its black breast and the large white mark at the base of the primaries being very conspicuous when seen from beneath’.

30.
Ptilonorhynchus holosericeus, Kuhl (Satin bower-bird) c. 1844  
originally published in vol. 4 of *The birds of Australia*, 7 vols, London, 1840–48  
hand-coloured lithograph  
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of the Society of Collectors 1951  
1951.0003

Gould was fascinated by the formation of what he described as ‘a bower-like structure by this bird for the purpose of a playing-ground or hall of assembly’ and he described in detail the way the bower was built upon a ‘convex platform of sticks firmly interwoven’. While the making of the bower itself was of great interest to him, Gould’s curiosity was enhanced by the way it was decorated. The bower-bird gathered, he wrote, the ‘most gaily-coloured articles’ including ‘blue tail-feathers of the Rose-hill and Pennantian parrots, bleached bones, and shells’. These were ‘strewed about near the entrances’.

31.
Menura superba, Davies (Superb lyre-bird) c. 1842  
originally published in vol. 3 of *The birds of Australia*, 7 vols, London, 1840–48  
The University of Melbourne Art Collection. Gift of the Society of Collectors 1951  
1951.0001

Were I requested to suggest an emblem for Australia among its birds, I should without the slightest hesitation select the *Menura* as the most appropriate, being not only strictly peculiar to Australia, but, as far as it is yet known, to the colony of New South Wales.
Among its many curious habits is that of forming small round hillocks, which are constantly visited during the day, and upon which the male is continually trampling, at the same time erecting and spreading out its tail in the most graceful manner and uttering his various cries, sometimes pouring forth his natural notes, at others mocking those of other birds, and even the howling of the native dog or Dingo.

John Gould, c. 1842

32.
Henry Constantine Richter  Artist and lithographer
born Brompton, England, 1821; died 1902
Hullmandel and Walton  Printer
active c. 1840s–60s

*Thylacinus cynocephalus. Thylacinis (Tasmanian tiger)* c. 1863
Baillieu Library Special Collections, the University of Melbourne

Today the thylacine is considered extinct and has entered the realm of fable, yet the last known thylacine died only seventy-seven years ago at the former Beaumaris Zoo in Hobart in 1936. The thylacine was the largest marsupial carnivore to exist into the twentieth century. Its scientific name means pouched dog with a wolf’s head. Early colonists referred to the thylacine as a ‘tiger’ and feared, despised and wanted to destroy it. It was blamed for killing sheep on farms in the colony, but it is questionable how much this occurred because the thylacine was a shy animal that avoided contact with people. Schemes to rid Tasmania of the mammal were instigated in the 1820s and over the next 100 years it was hunted down and killed relentlessly. Some were captured and placed in zoos, but they did not continue to breed or survive long in captivity. Although there have been reported sightings of thylacines since 1936, there is no hard evidence today of the animal’s continued existence.

Little is known of Henry Constantine Richter, the English artist best known in Australia for his lithographs of thylacines, yet his forty-year long career with John Gould stands as testimony to his talent, skillfulness and dedication. Richter created around 1600 lithographs in the course of his career, mostly for Gould.

John Gould  Artist
born Lyme Regis, Dorset, 1804; arrived Hobart 1838; departed Sydney 1840; died London 1881
Henry Constantine Richter  Lithographer
born Brompton, England, 1821; died 1902
Hullmandel and Walton  Printer
active c. 1840s–60s

33.
*Osphranter rufus* (Great red kangaroo)
John Gould, *The mammals of Australia*, 1863 (vol. II of 3 vols); published by the author, 26 Charlotte St, Bedford Square, London
Baillieu Library Special Collections, the University of Melbourne

This depiction of the head of a male was made by Henry Constantine Richter in the gardens of the Zoological Society in the Regents Park, London. In total Richter made more than half of the lithographs published by John Gould, including all of the plates for *The mammals of Australia*.

Writing of his observation of the great red kangaroo depicted here which was taken from the Australian ‘native wilds’, Gould reported that it had become ‘an object of great attraction to the visitors’ and to naturalists with a special interest in the mammals of Australia. He expressed concern about the threat to the kangaroo caused by ‘civilized man’ on its native land and speculated that it might be saved if it were domesticated in Europe. Although Gould regarded the great red kangaroo as ‘the finest of the Indigenous Mammals of Australia yet discovered’, and lamented over its ‘persecution’, ironically he also wrote of his own pursuit of a male and female kangaroo and her joey near the
Namoi River (New South Wales) and of his ‘lasting recollection’ of the flesh of the male which had sustained him and his party.

34. *Pteropus poliocephalus* (Grey-headed vampire bat) c. 1863
Baillieu Library Special Collections, the University of Melbourne

Like all other bats, the Grey-headed vampire is strictly nocturnal in its habits, and remains during the day suspended from the branches of the larger trees clothing the gullies and mountain sides; at nightfall it sallies forth in search of its natural food, which principally consists of the fruits and berries peculiar to the brushes, the small wild fig when ripe being a favourite article. The enormous numbers that may be seen sleeping pendent from the trees in the more secluded parts of the forest are beyond conception; it is not surprising therefore that the settlers whose abodes may be in the neighbourhood of one of these colonies, should find their peach orchards entirely devastated in a single night. Indeed no one of the native animals is more troublesome to the settlers than this large Bat, which resorting to the fruit-grounds by night, when it is impossible to protect them from its attacks, commits the most fearful havoc.

*John Gould, 1863*

35. John Lewin
born London 1770, arrived Australia 1800, died Sydney 1819

*Crested shrike* [*Falcunculus frontatus*] 1822
John William Lewin, *A natural history of the birds of New South Wales, collected, engraved, and faithfully painted after nature*, 1822 (3rd edn); printed for JH Bohste, Foreign Bookseller to His Majesty, 4 York St, Covent-Garden, by G Schulze, 13 Poland St, London
Baillieu Library Special Collections, the University of Melbourne

When *A natural history of the birds of New South Wales* was published in 1813, it was Australia’s first illustrated book and the first natural history book published in Australia. It was also Australia’s first privately produced publication. This extremely rare book includes some of the earliest copper-plate engravings made in New South Wales.

John Lewin was the first free-settler professional artist in Australia and one of the first settler artists working within the Western art tradition to depict the natural world in Australia. Life in the fledgling colony gave him the opportunity to explore insects and birds that were largely unknown to the rest of the world. Lewin is distinguished for his dexterity in depicting nature first-hand.

Although he always planned to return to England, John Lewin settled in Sydney and died there aged forty-nine years.

36. Artist unknown
Aboriginal Victoria

*Parrying shield* late nineteenth century
wood, natural pigment
The Leonhard Adam Collection of International Indigenous Culture, the University of Melbourne 1960.0689

Shields were widely used across Australia by Aboriginal people traditionally. This Victorian parrying shield was used for protection against blows from clubs because it is characteristically narrow, deep and heavy in weight, but its maker might have intended it as a keepsake because it was made in the latter part of the nineteenth century when Aboriginal life had changed dramatically as a consequence of imposed colonial controls.
Today, with incomplete documentation about the original provenance of many traditional items of Aboriginal material culture in museum collections there is limited information available, yet imagery on this shield suggests Aboriginal immersion in both the natural world and cross-cultural life.

On one side of the shield a hunter is depicted waiting in readiness with a gun. Kangaroos, emus and a dog (or dingo) are depicted alongside a symmetrical floral design reminiscent of decoration found in Western decorative arts that were in turn shaped by cross-cultural exchange with Asia. What appears to be an anchor is also depicted inside a heart shape. Perhaps it refers to a sailor’s tattoo. On the other side of the shield, a scallop-shaped design flanks the four symbols of a pack of playing cards: hearts, diamonds, clubs and spades. The clean finish of the shield suggests it has been made with Western tools.