



Short St. Gallery

Jeremiah Bonson

Born 1982
Language Djinang (Murrungun)
Region Maningrida



Biography

Jeremiah Bonson is a Jinang/Marung artist. He was born in Darwin but raised at the outstation Gamourgouyoura, his mother Mathilda's country, and is now living with his wife in Galiwin'ku on Elcho Island. Bonson is a dancer, musician (he plays the yidaki or didgeridoo), painter and sculptor. Although an emerging artist, he was taught his traditional culture and traditional song line (*bourgur*) by his adoptive father Jimmy. His practice is informed by a culture thousands of years old.

Warrah Bun Bun 2010 is a stunning group of eight *mimi* spirits or Mokuy who belong to his mother's dreaming; they are her totem and come from her country of Gamourgouyoura. These spirits sleep during the day and can only be seen at night when they come out to hunt, dance, sing, laugh and play. They are tall and skinny and jubilantly gather water and hunt for food (*natha*) at local billabongs—their favourite food is the yam. But, although they are happy, joyful spirits, they will take you away if you get too close. When they dance, they are covered with ochre, which Bonson represents in his sculptures by the white dots. He skilfully captures the playful spirit of these *mimi*, making them distinctly his own with their armless, slender bodies and friendly faces.

Warrah Bun Bun wonderfully complements the Gallery's collection of works by artists from Galiwin'ku and is the first work of art by Bonson to be acquired by the National Gallery of Australia.

Tina Baum

Curator, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art
in *artonview*, issue 63, spring 2010

Jeremiah has now returned to living and working in Maningrida.