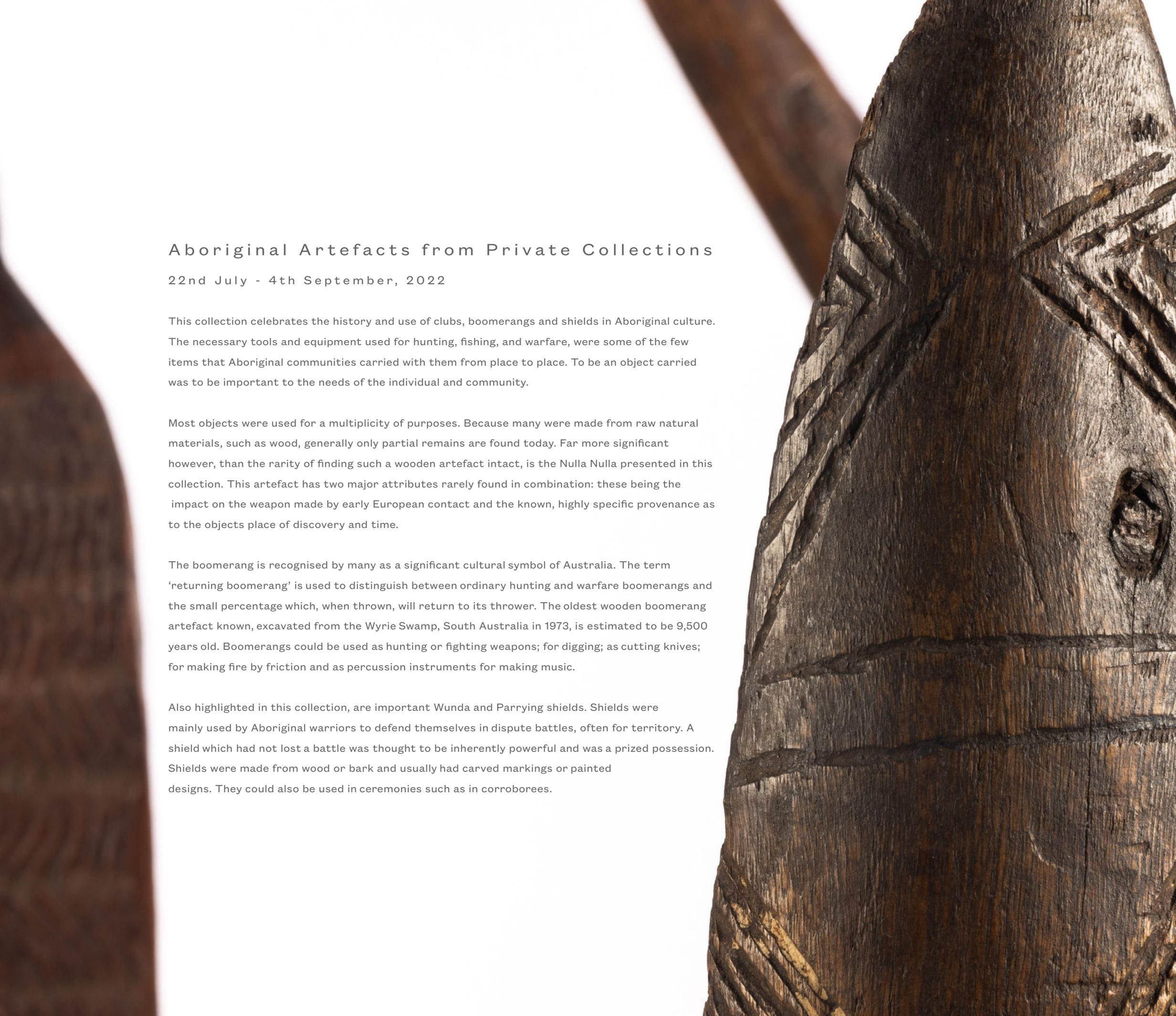




Aboriginal Artefacts from  
Private Collections

22nd July - 4th September, 2022

A close-up photograph of a dark, weathered wooden artefact, likely a shield or a boomerang, featuring intricate, raised carvings of geometric patterns. The wood has a rich, dark brown patina with visible grain and some knots. The background is a plain, light color, making the dark wood stand out.

## Aboriginal Artefacts from Private Collections

22nd July - 4th September, 2022

This collection celebrates the history and use of clubs, boomerangs and shields in Aboriginal culture. The necessary tools and equipment used for hunting, fishing, and warfare, were some of the few items that Aboriginal communities carried with them from place to place. To be an object carried was to be important to the needs of the individual and community.

Most objects were used for a multiplicity of purposes. Because many were made from raw natural materials, such as wood, generally only partial remains are found today. Far more significant however, than the rarity of finding such a wooden artefact intact, is the Nulla Nulla presented in this collection. This artefact has two major attributes rarely found in combination: these being the impact on the weapon made by early European contact and the known, highly specific provenance as to the objects place of discovery and time.

The boomerang is recognised by many as a significant cultural symbol of Australia. The term 'returning boomerang' is used to distinguish between ordinary hunting and warfare boomerangs and the small percentage which, when thrown, will return to its thrower. The oldest wooden boomerang artefact known, excavated from the Wylie Swamp, South Australia in 1973, is estimated to be 9,500 years old. Boomerangs could be used as hunting or fighting weapons; for digging; as cutting knives; for making fire by friction and as percussion instruments for making music.

Also highlighted in this collection, are important Wunda and Parrying shields. Shields were mainly used by Aboriginal warriors to defend themselves in dispute battles, often for territory. A shield which had not lost a battle was thought to be inherently powerful and was a prized possession. Shields were made from wood or bark and usually had carved markings or painted designs. They could also be used in ceremonies such as in corroborees.



Maker Unknown  
A Nail- Headed Club known as a Nulla Nulla or  
Wadi, Finely Engraved Hunting & Ceremonial  
Boomerang & Hunting Boomerang  
late 19th Century, or early 20th Century  
dimensions variable  
\$10,800 sold as a trio



Maker Unknown

A Nail- Headed Club known as a Nulla Nulla or Wadi  
late 19th Century,

The Wonnarua people of Murrurundi  
a hand carved weapon, wrought from dense hardwood, with  
dark chocolate brown patina of some age, the club is imbedded  
on the thickened bulbous end, with early iron horseshoe nails.

The Nulla Nulla handle is serrated,  
for ease and security of grip.

68.5 cm high  
\$10,800 sold as a trio

Provenance

The Wonnarua people of Murrurundi,  
Upper Hunter New South Wales and its surrounds  
Acquired in the Upper Hunter Valley of New South Wales, at  
Murrurundi, between the years 1929 and 1933 by Mr. Henry  
Cooke "Bennie" Dent. Mr Dent was Stud Master at Harben  
Vale, a significant grazing property owned by Mr. Frederick  
White, and hence by direct decent from Mr. Dent to Ms. Cherry  
Ripe food writer, journalist, broadcaster, and author of Sydney.



Maker Unknown

A Finely Engraved Hunting & Ceremonial Boomerang  
late 19th Century, or early 20th Century  
of bi-convex section with sharpened ends,  
the face engraved with a fine and sinuous design,  
possibly representing the course of a river system.

old dark chocolate brown patina

63 cm L x 6.5cm wide

with stand

\$10,800 sold as a trio

Provenance

The Wonnarua people of Murrurundi,  
Upper Hunter New South Wales and its surrounds  
Acquired in the Upper Hunter Valley of New South Wales,  
at Murrurundi, between the years 1929 and 1933  
by Mr. Henry Cooke "Bennie" Dent.

Mr. Dent was Stud Master at Harben Vale, a significant  
grazing property owned by Mr. Frederick White, and hence  
by direct decent from Mr. Dent to Ms. Cherry Ripe food  
writer, journalist, broadcaster, and author of Sydney.

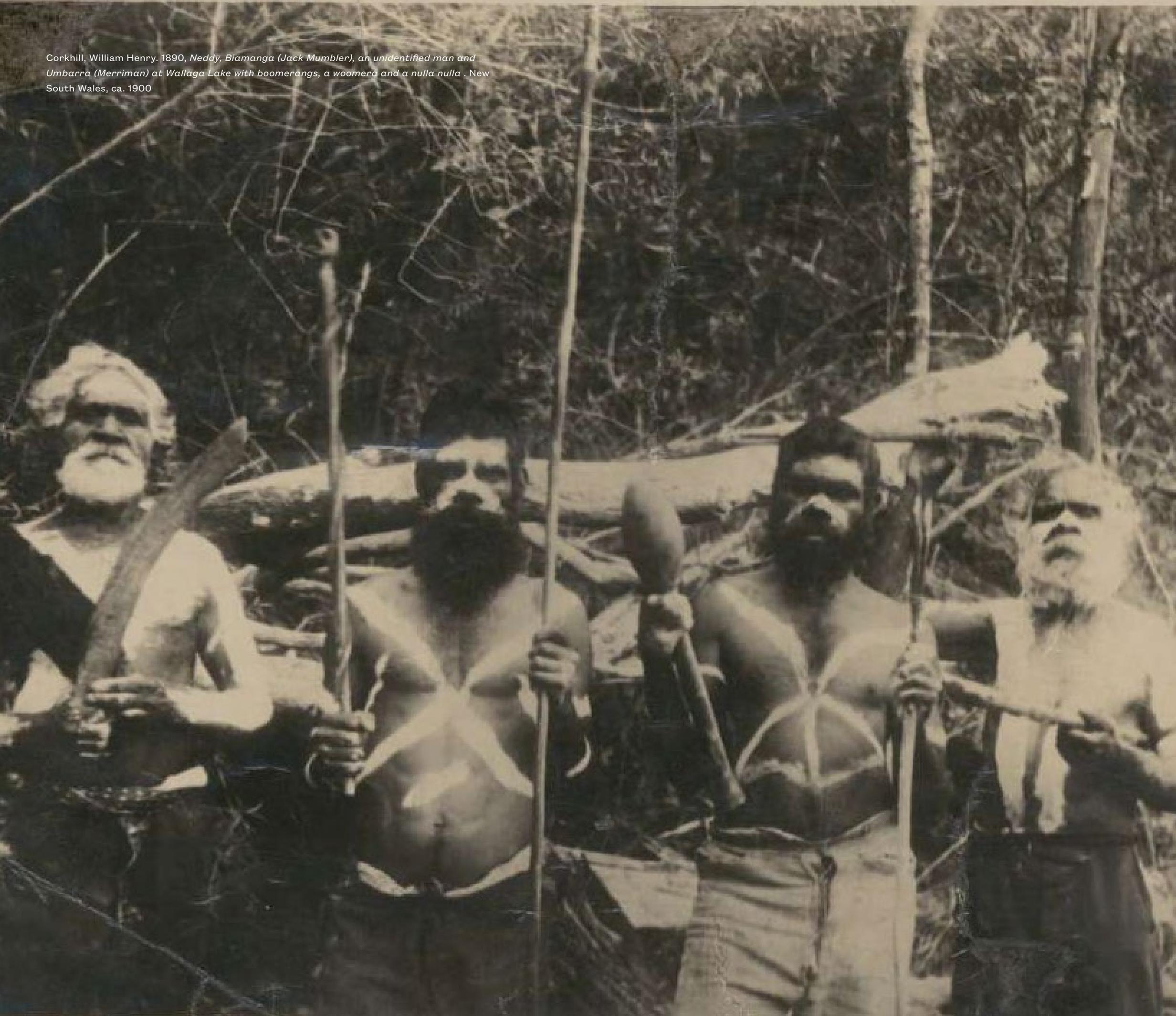


Maker Unknown  
A Hunting Boomerang  
Late 19th Century, or early 20th Century  
of bi-convex section with sharpened ends  
old dark chocolate brown patina  
66 cm length x 5.5cm wide  
with stand  
\$10,800 sold as a trio

Provenance  
The Wonnarua people of Murrurundi, Upper Hunter  
New South Wales and its surrounds  
Acquired in the Upper Hunter Valley of New South  
Wales, at Murrurundi, between the years 1929 and  
1933 by Mr. Henry Cooke "Bennie" Dent.

Mr. Dent was Stud Master at Harben Vale, a  
significant grazing property owned by Mr. Frederick  
White, and hence by direct decent from Mr. Dent to  
Ms. Cherry Ripe food writer, journalist,  
broadcaster, and author of Sydney.

Corkhill, William Henry. 1890, *Neddy, Biamanga (Jack Mumbler), an unidentified man and Umbarra (Merriman) at Wallaga Lake with boomerangs, a woomera and a nulla nulla*. New South Wales, ca. 1900





Maker Unknown  
A Large, Hunting & Fighting Boomerang, circa 1860  
from North Western New South Wales  
or Southern Queensland  
of bi-convex form, long and slightly curved in shape,  
with sharpened ends, old dark chocolate brown  
patina  
97 cm long x 7 cm wide  
with stand  
\$3,200

Provenance  
Arthur Beau Palmer Gallery, 2006  
Private Collection, Queensland  
Private Collection, Sydney



Maker Unknown

A large, finely engraved Hunting & Ceremonial  
Boomerang, from Northwestern New South Wales  
or Southern Queensland

Late 19th Century, or early 20th Century

Of bi-convex section with sharpened ends, the face  
engraved with a fine and sinuous design, possibly  
representing the course of a river system.

old dark chocolate brown patina

81cm length x 5.5cm wide

\$3,200

Provenance

Private collection, New South Wales

This handmade object, of some age and great  
beauty, had two lives. One being a hunter's  
weapon, designed to specifically bring down large  
game on the hop. The other being ceremonial, as  
a finely carved men's object used in ceremony, for  
men's eyes only. A fine and important example of an  
Indigenous artifact that is prized on many levels.



Basedow, Herbert, c. 1920, *Australian Luritja man demonstrating method of attack with boomerang under cover of shield*, National Museum of Australia

Wunda Shields were once used across a large portion of the vast state of Western Australia. Like many forms of Aboriginal Shields, Wunda Shields were used in fighting for protection against projectile weapons, such as spears and boomerangs. They were also carried by performers in ritual contexts, especially when re-enacting specific male ancestral stories.





Maker Unknown

An Exceptional Wunda Shield, Western Australian,

Late 19th Century

Tightly carved and engraved hardwood and natural pigment.

This particularly strong Wunda Shield is an elongated ovoid form, the front decorated with fluted linear designs divided into three sections to

form a zig-zag motif infilled alternately with red and black earth

pigments. The reverse of the Wunda Shield is marked with fine fluted

linear engraving and a raised loop handle.

77.5 cm length x 19cm wide

\$7,000

Provenance

Reputedly collected in the Coolgardie region, Western Australia

Private collection, Queensland

Associated work

Wunda Shield, Western Australian, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New

York, USA, accession number: 1979.206.1532

Adorned with bold zigzag patterns consisting of a series of longitudinal grooves accented with red and black ocher, Wunda Shields were once used across a large portion of the vast state of Western Australia. Like

many forms of Aboriginal Shields, Wunda Shields were used in fighting for protection against projectile weapons, such as spears and boomerangs. They were also carried by performers in ritual contexts, especially when

re-enacting specific male ancestral stories.

Basedow, Herbert, c. 1920, *Australian Luritja man demonstrating method of attack with boomerang under cover of shield*, National Museum of Australia



Parrying Shields among desert peoples were both practical implements, used for defence against weapons thrown or wielded by an opponent, and in turn important ceremonial trade items. Parrying Shields were often exchanged along a complex system on inland trade routes, some shields were ultimately used by individuals living hundreds of miles from the place where they were made.



Maker Unknown  
A Museum Quality Parrying Shield,  
Late 19th Century  
In fine condition, of elongated flat ovoidform,  
stone axe incised  
hardwood with circle motifs to the front of the  
shield. Fine, full fluting to the reverse of the  
shield and a superb, raised handle.  
The surface of this important object displays a  
deep rich dark chocolate aged patina  
81 cm long x 12 cm wide  
with stand  
\$4,800



Maker Unknown

A Museum Quality Parrying Shield,

Late 19th Century

In fine condition, of elongated flat ovoidform, stone axe incised  
hardwood with circle motifs to the front of the shield.

Fine, full fluting to the reverse of the shield and a superb, raised  
handle. The surface of this important object displays a deep rich dark  
chocolate aged patina

81 cm long x 12 cm wide

with stand

\$4,800

Provenance

Arthur Beau Palmer Gallery, 2007

Private Collection, Queensland

Private Collection, Sydney

Associated work

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Michael C.  
Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller,  
1979 accession Number: 1979.206.1610

Parrying Shields among desert peoples were both practical  
implements, used for defence against weapons thrown or wielded by  
an opponent, and in turn important ceremonial trade items. Parrying  
Shields were often exchanged along a complex system on inland trade  
routes, some shields were ultimately used by individuals living  
hundreds of miles from the place where they were made.



Maker Unknown  
A South-Eastern Parrying Shield,  
Early 20th Century  
carved and engraved hardwood of tapering  
almond form with incised line decoration to  
the shield's front. Traces of infill white ochre.  
Well carved handle to rear.  
78.5 cm long x 11 cm wide  
with stand  
\$3,800

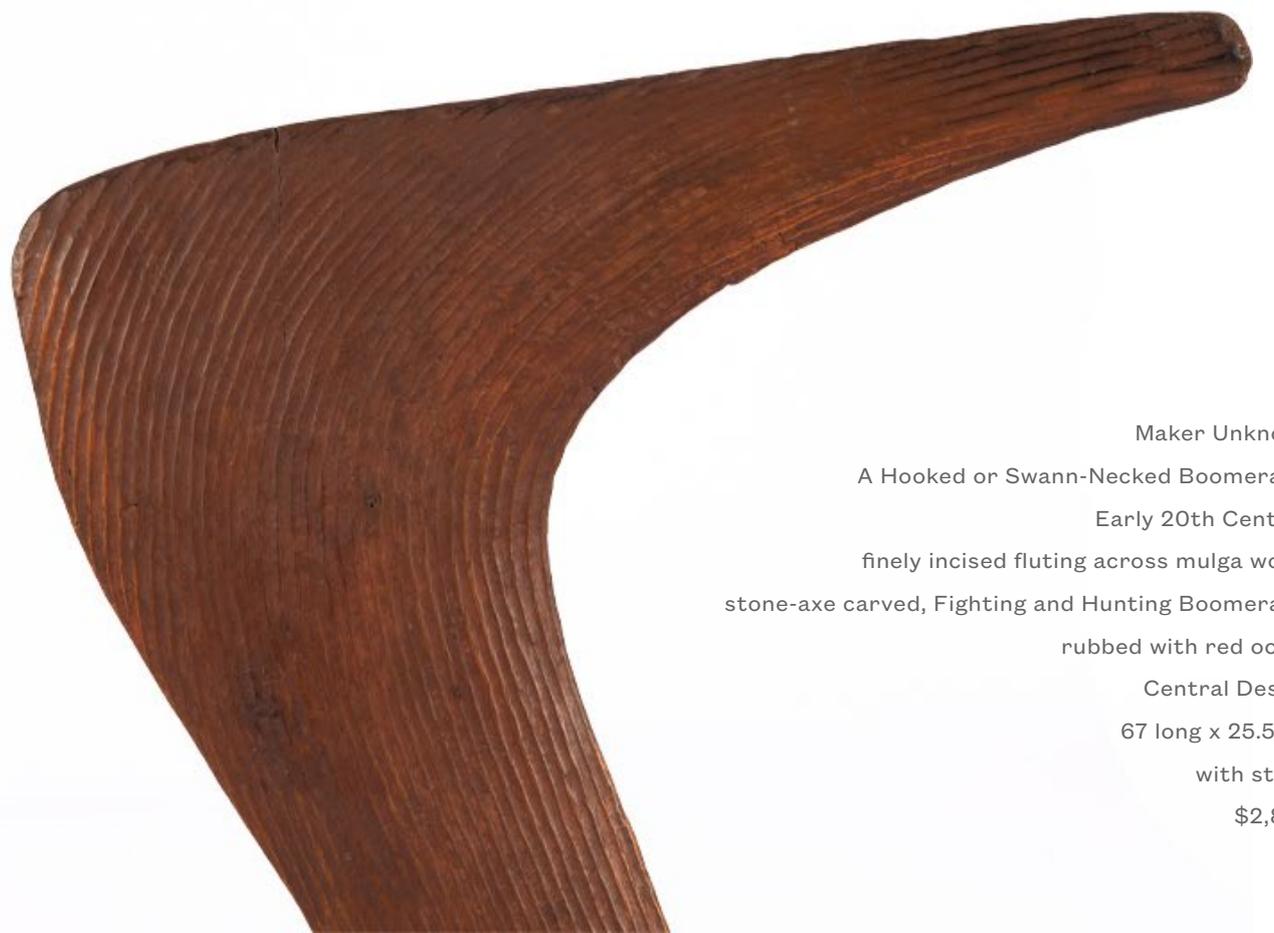
Provenance  
Arthur Beau Palmer Gallery, 2007  
Private Collection, Queensland  
Private Collection, Sydney



Maker Unknown  
A Hooked or Swann-Necked Boomerang,  
Early 20th Century  
with finely incised fluting across mulga wood, one painted  
end of white and black tones, with cross hatching on the  
handle for ease and security of use, stone-axe carved.  
Fighting and Hunting Boomerang, rubbed with red ochre  
Central Desert  
67 cm long x 18.5 cm wide  
with stand  
\$3,600

Provenance  
Arthur Beau Palmer Gallery, 2006  
Private Collection, Queensland  
Private Collection, Sydney

Associated work  
Swan-neck shape boomerang. [ZM 13/2/2006],  
Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford England



Maker Unknown  
A Hooked or Swann-Necked Boomerang,  
Early 20th Century  
finely incised fluting across mulga wood,  
stone-axe carved, Fighting and Hunting Boomerang,  
rubbed with red ochre  
Central Desert  
67 long x 25.5 cm  
with stand  
\$2,800



Swann-Necked boomerangs were traded across vast regions of Central Australia; however, they were mainly associated with the Warlpiri and Warumungu people in the Tennant Creek area of the Northern Territory. Swan-Necked Boomerangs were used in both fighting and hunting; thrown into a flock of rising parrots or ducks from inland waterholes, these boomerangs had a devastating effect.

This mulga-wood boomerang, like many used in the early 20th Century, is carved from the junction between a tree root and trunk, exploiting the natural curve of the wood to create a strong hook. When the boomerang was used for fighting, the hook might catch on an enemy's shield or club and swing round to strike him on the face or body.

Provenance  
Arthur Beau Palmer Gallery, 2006  
Private Collection, Queensland  
Private Collection, Sydney

Associated work  
Swan-neck shape boomerang. [ZM 13/2/2006], Pitt Rivers  
Museum, Oxford England



Maker Unknown  
A Large Museum Quality Woomera,  
Late 19th Century  
in fine condition, of leaf form, stone axe carved,  
designed with tightly incised working of a line and  
wave motif, with evidence of early ochre. The  
surface & handle of this important object displays a  
deep rich dark chocolate aged patina  
81 cm long x 12 cm wide  
with stand  
\$3,800

Provenance  
Private Collection, Sydney



A Woomera is a spear throwing device used as an extension of a man's hand, enabling a spear to travel at a greater speed and force than possible with only the arm.

Records show that the implement began to be used about 5,000 years ago, although the Mungo Man remains from at least 43,000 years ago show severe osteoarthritis in the right elbow associated with the use of a Woomera.

Like Spears and Boomerangs, Woomeras were traditionally used only by men. The Woomera is held in one hand while the other hand places the butt of the spear on the Woomera's hook; the hollow curved shape facilitates this alignment without looking. The Woomera effectively lengthens the thrower's arm, greatly increasing the velocity of the spear.

The animal's lateral dodging is accomplished by tilting the wing-shape Woomera during the throw for last-second corrections. The kinetic energy of a spear launched from a Woomera has been calculated as four times that of an arrow launched from a compound bow.

This Woomera was made by an important traditional senior man, of a high degree ceremonial status. This woomera could have been made for trade ceremonial exchange item.

Michael Reid OAM

+61 4 39 776 655

+61 2 8353 3500

[object@michaelreid.com.au](mailto:object@michaelreid.com.au)

[michaelreidobject.com.au](http://michaelreidobject.com.au)

