

YURIYAL ERIC BRIDGEMAN

Yal



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NEW
ART

"Mi yal. Yalkope ale, wi si, mala."
[I am a Man. Brothers stand up, sing-out, and
give the war cry.]

Yuriyal Eric Bridgeman, 2022



IMAGES > [Front cover] Yuriyal Eric Bridgeman and Haus Yuriyal, *Ole, Tikopi*, 2022, archival digital print on Hahnamuhle cotton rag, 109 x 125cm. > [Right] Yuriyal Eric Bridgeman and Haus Yuriyal, *Moskitos*, 2022, archival digital print on Hahnamuhle cotton rag, 109 x 125cm. Images courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery

YURIYAL ERIC BRIDGEMAN

Yal

My name is Yuriyal, a title given to me by my family during my early years of travel back to ples. The photographic works in this exhibition, YAL, focus on artistic collaborations with members of my Yuri tribe of Simbu Province, and my diasporic family in the Waghi Valley of the Highlands of Papua New Guinea. I have been developing work with a group of my tribesmen for over a decade. We have built our practice around things that are significant to us as men – tradition and custom, contemporary stories, ceremony, the presentation of bilas, tribal fighting and games of Rugby, while finding a collective language in the form of kuman paintings.

Mipela latest generation. Mekim samting bilong taim bipo na nau wantaim.

[We are the latest generation. We make things from the old times mixed with the new.]



IMAGE > Yuriyal Eric Bridgeman, *Yal* [installation view], 2022. Image courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery. Photograph: Theresa Harrison Photography.



IMAGE > Yuriyal Eric Bridgeman, *Ya!* [installation view], 2022. Image courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery.
Photograph: Theresa Harrison Photography.

Haus Yuriyal, the name of our artist collective, is positioned in the Waghi Valley of PNG. As a male, I acknowledge the position I came to hold within my tribe and community, accepting of the love and respect given to me by my uncles, brothers and yalkuna. The kuman occupies an important space in our male identity and the memory of our warrior forefathers. Fighting, just like Rugby League requires coordination, strategy and design. Our practice has been guided by ancestral knowledge, skills and experiences. We find our power through colour and optics as much as physical strength, inscribing our names and identification through graphics and familial language.

Mi bilas na sanap wantaim Gikope, kalap kalap long ples

bilang bubu meri long Kundiawa.

[I dressed in full bilas with my mother and my sisters and danced atop my grandmother's mountain in Kundiawa.]

Kuman are made for presentation in the field of battle, where bilas is a process of beautification, of shedding one's skin, to be adorned and presented to the tribe and onlookers in your best form. Historically we belong to a warrior culture and our shields are a form of its expression. When used in conflict it becomes a provider of protection for the tribe, that may be perceived by others as a threat or something of visual beauty. The physics involved in NRL formations and Guernsey designs are comparable to a tribal fight, the designs adorning each shield providing a geometric distortion in the landscape while serving as communicative weapon.

Taim bilong fait mipela goma yal. Na taim bilong pilai rugbi mipela bilas olsem Eels.

[When it's time to fight, we rub black ash over our body.

When it's time to play rugby, we dress in our Paramatta Eels jerseys.]

We are all Parramatta Eels supporters, and I became interested in the relationship between Rugby League and tribal warfare. Our local team, the Moskitos, is made up of generations of my uncles who proudly wear their yellow and blue each weekend. Telling stories about ples and memories of fights from before, watching the rugby on weekends, and drawing shields in the hausman is how we spend our time together.

Bun bilong toktok I kam long hausman.

[The bones and strong points of the talk come from the Men's house.]



IMAGE > Yuriyal Eric Bridgeman, *Ya!* [installation view], 2022. Image courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery. Photograph: Theresa Harrison Photography.



IMAGE > Yuriyal Eric Bridgeman, *Yal* [installation view], 2022. Image courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery.
Photograph: Theresa Harrison Photography.

We fabricate paintings, not shields. Instead of fighting, we practice our stories through discussion and workshop in the hausman. Guided by Yalkope principles in a contemporary context, our group is diasporic, made up of members belonging to Yuri and parts of Jiwaka, Enga and Southern Highlands Provinces. We built a round house that became multi-purpose, a studio, a community meeting place, and living quarters – yal iki. I remember it was National Election time in 2017 when we produced our first squad of shield paintings.

Mrin wai, ka wai, main wai elapin o.

[The source of kind words and actions is the heart.]

Our tribal association Yuri Alaiku Kuikane Association (YAKA) have offered guidance and support in our artistic efforts to change the dialogue surrounding warfare and conflict by providing a positive outlet for men to practice and exchange cultural knowledge. YAKA was formed at the end of 2012 out of the great need to end tribal warfare in our region in South Simbu and has remained successful in this objective since its initiation.

Yu bilong mi na mi bilong yu.

[You belong to me, and I belong to you.]

Presented in this show of photographic works is a story of war and peace, and a vision what we are fighting for – ples. I reflect on what it means to be a man, a fighter with his weapon or shield, and how Rugby League and creative practices may help quell the effects of tribal warfare. The shield is a positive reinforcement, an embodiment of important cultural information, and a portrait of a man by its own standing. The shield paintings that stand alongside this exhibition demonstrate my work as Yal, a solitary man working away from my tribesmen, but constantly thinking of them.

Na ware u aule kol molaki, na Yuri Ahngale Yal mol pai yo.
[Wherever I am in this world, I still belong to my Ahngale clan of the Yuri tribe.]

Yuriyal Eric Bridgeman
March, 2022



IMAGE > Yuriyal Eric Bridgeman,
HAP MAMA KARIM NA PLANIM BEL BATON BILONG EM
[The place where my mother gave birth and planted her/my umbilical cord], *Yal* [installation view], 2022. Image courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery. Photograph: Theresa Harrison Photography.



IMAGE > Yuriyal Eric Bridgeman, *Yal* [installation view], 2022. Image courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery.
Photograph: Theresa Harrison Photography.

GLOSSARY OF TERMINOLOGY

Yuri language

Gi - woman
Gikope - group of women
Kuman - shield
Yal - man
Yalkope - group of men
Yalkuna - close timeless friend/s
Yal iki - men's house

Tok Pisin (Melanesian Pidgin English)

Bilas - adornment, to beautify, dress
Hausman - men's house
Ples - home
Mi - me, I

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This exhibition is presented as part of
PHOTO 2022.



IMAGE > Portrait of Yuriyal Eric Bridgeman. Image courtesy of the artist. Photographer: Mick Richards.

YURIYAL ERIC BRIDGEMAN

Yuriyal Eric Bridgeman lives and works between Brisbane, Queensland, and the Highlands of Papua New Guinea. He has a Bachelor of Photography from the Queensland College of Art, Griffith University, Brisbane (2010). Significant solo exhibitions and commissions include The Fight, Monash Gallery of Art, Melbourne (2017); Haus Man, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney (2012). His work was included in the 22nd Biennale of Sydney, NIRIN, Museum of Contemporary Art, Cockatoo Island, with Haus Yuriyal (2019); The National: New Australian Art, Carriageworks, Sydney (2019) and the 8th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, QAGOMA, Brisbane (2015–2016).

Yuriyal Eric Bridgeman is represented by Milani Gallery, Brisbane.

<http://www.milanigallery.com.au/artist/eric-bridgeman>

LIST OF WORKS

Moskitos, 2010 / 2022
archival digital print on
cotton rag, 109cm x 126cm
Edition of 5
\$5,500

Yalkope, Omdara, 2016 /
2022
archival digital print on
cotton rag, 109cm x 126cm
Edition of 5
\$5,500

Haus Yuriyal, 2019 / 2022
In collaboration with Haus
Yuriyal
archival digital print on
cotton rag, 109cm x 126cm
edition of 5
\$5,500

Mauswara, 2017 / 2022
In collaboration with Haus
Yuriyal
archival digital print on
cotton rag, 126cm x 109cm
Edition of 5
\$5,500

Kaun, 2019 / 2022
archival digital print on
cotton rag, 126cm x 109cm
Edition of 5
\$5,500

Nes, 2017 / 2022
In collaboration with Haus
Yuriyal
archival digital print on
cotton rag, 96cm x 79cm
Edition of 5
\$4,400

Tala, 2017 / 2022
In collaboration with Haus
Yuriyal
archival digital print on
cotton rag, 96cm x 79cm
edition of 5
\$4,400

Mote, 2017 / 2022
In collaboration with Haus
Yuriyal
archival digital print on
cotton rag, 79cm x 96cm
Edition of 5
\$4,400

Kaupa, 2017 / 2022
In collaboration with Haus
Yuriyal
archival digital print on
cotton rag, 79cm x 96cm
Edition of 5
\$4,400

LIST OF WORKS

Bilas, 2011 / 2022
archival digital print on
cotton rag, 109cm x 126cm
Edition of 5
\$4,400

Ples (Bengan), 2010 / 2022
archival digital print on
cotton rag, 79cm x 96cm
Edition of 5
\$4,400

Bepi, 2017 / 2022
In collaboration with Haus
Yuriyal
archival digital print on
cotton rag, 109cm x 126cm
Edition of 5
\$5,500

Yambal, 2017 / 2022
In collaboration with Haus
Yuriyal
archival digital print on
cotton rag, 109cm x 126cm
Edition of 5
\$5,500

Nulai, 2017 / 2022
In collaboration with Haus
Yuriyal
archival digital print on
cotton rag, 109cm x 126cm
Edition of 5
\$5,500

Ole, 2017 / 2022
In collaboration with Haus
Yuriyal
archival digital print on
cotton rag, 109cm x 126cm
Edition of 5
\$5,500

Prices are inclusive of GST

LIST OF WORKS

Shields

Moses, 2019
 enamel on board
 170 x 60 x 4cm
 \$9,000

*Box 2 (Mi Bilong You / I
 Belong to You)*, 2022
 enamel on board,
 170 x 62 x 4cm
 \$9,000

Lewa (Heart), 2022
 enamel on board,
 170 x 60 x 4cm
 \$9,000

Prices are inclusive of GST



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