

# BAGU ON THE FORESHORE

The form and imagery of the bagu installation has its origins in the sky. A mystical spirit of fire, would throw the jiman (firesticks) across the sky and a trail of fire would follow. Based on the traditional fire making implements of the Girringun rainforest Aboriginal people, the artists have created contemporary artworks to evoke the spirit of the old people.

Traditionally, the firesticks were made up of two parts, the Bagu (body) and Jiman (sticks). Bagu is normally made from the boogadilla (milky pine tree) and Jiman are made from mudja (wild guava tree) or jiman. The bagu form was founded in the shape of a man, and a spirit design was created with traditional clays and the ochre colours are magirra (yellow), gunggu (red), jilin (charcoal – black) and gaba (white). Magera, jillan, garba are language names for the different coloured clays.

Bagu and Jiman were carried from place to place as the camps were moved. There was a special man person whose job was to look after the fire. The keeper of the fire would not dare to let the fire go out or he would be in big trouble, particularly in the wet season when it was difficult to find dry tinder.

Fire was a very important part of daily life for the old people. It was used for cooking, warmth, making traditional weapons, preserving and for ceremonies. It also provided a central point for social interaction and activities.

Thanks are extended to the Girramay Traditional Owners for their support of this project which is installed on Girramay Country. The Girringun Aboriginal Art Centre was commissioned to undertake this artwork installation on the Cardwell Foreshore in 2013.

Artists Eileen Tep and Charlotte Beeron. Girramay Elder Claude Beeron provided cultural advice.

Project co-ordinator – Girringun Aboriginal Art Centre

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