

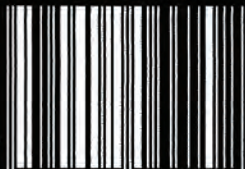


BETWEEN THE
MOON
AND THE
STARS

MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY NORTHERN TERRITORY



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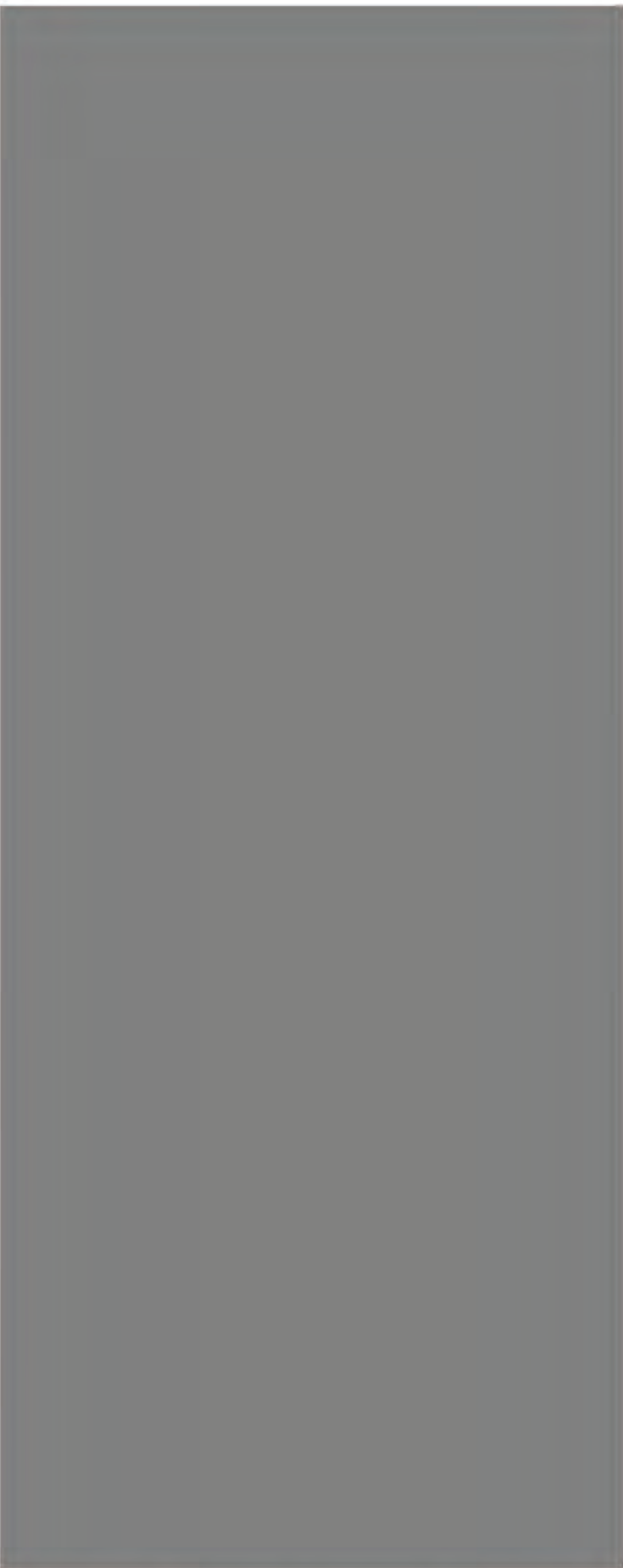
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Many artists deploy the pictorial motif of a full moon to cast a gothic gloom foreshadowing aberrant happenings in a netherworld. In prints by Milan Milojevic from the *Night and day* series, 2016, mutant beasts emerge under the light of a full moon to forage for food in a dark and eerie forest. Also evoking the fairytale genre, Tracey Moffatt casts her young heroine asleep in a gloomy forest in a print from the *Invocations* series, 2000. The trees look aghast, perhaps fearful for the innocent child, while the full moon hovering above warns of ghoulish things to come. In a print by Therese Ritchie, *Darwin Cup*, 2016, a horse is depicted hurtling itself over a cliff edge at Nightcliff Beach. A full moon suspended in the inky sky above is the symbol that gives meaning to its absurd behaviour. Jazmina Cininas draws upon werewolf legends and their manifestations in popular culture in the print *Blood sisters*, 2016. Referencing the cult trilogy of *Ginger Snaps* - Canadian horror films that tell the story of two sisters who become werewolves - Cininas depicts the sisters in a transition state beneath a blood red Moon. In many versions of werewolf lore a full moon is necessary to trigger transition. The blood moon also references women's menstrual cycles. In early history menstruation was thought to synchronise with the Moon's phases, so that women experienced their bodies 'harmonized with the rhythms of the cosmos.'²⁸ Indeed the word menstruation means 'moon change' in some languages.²⁹ Blood moons can also function as dire portents of things to come. Their menacing associations are mentioned in the *Book of Revelation* and even to this day they can be interpreted as a malevolent omen.

For other artists the night sky engenders a sense of belonging. Gumatj/Rrakpala artist Ms G. Yunupirju (Star Lady) from Arnhem Land paints *Garak the Universe*, intricately weaving a multitude of petite dots and elegant star-shaped lines on three *larrakitj* (ceremonial poles). Yunupirju recalls looking up at the stars since she was a child. "Every night since I was born I have been looking at the stars... There they are - so many - leading us from Earth to the heavens." For Yunupirju the stars are a unifying influence. The "stars show us that we are all the same underneath. We can all look at these stars whichever sky we are looking at."³⁰ Angela Cavalieri notes a time when she was seeking a sense of place in the night sky. As a second generation Italian migrant Cavalieri reports occasions when she has felt out of place in Australia. Like Yunupirju she looked to the night sky to draw comfort from the stars above. In her massive linoprint, *The time*, 1998, the starry firmament is actually depicted below the Earth. This inversion speaks not only of the position of her family's homeland in Italy relative to Australia, whereby during the Australian day it is the European night, but also the way in which the desire to find answers in the stars is foundational to cultures around the world.

For William Robinson the cosmos is not a separate sphere but an integral part of lived experience. In his painting *Moonshine landscape*, 1987, he invites us to think of the Moon and stars not as entities discrete from the Earth but rather as intimately enmeshed with life on this planet. He depicts himself at the centre of his universe. His reflection in a body of water is encircled by a sphere

Ms G Yunupirju (*Star Lady*), *Garak, the universe* 2004, natural pigments on stringybark wood, (a) 215 x 24 cm, (b) 222 x 19 cm, (c) 214 x 13.5 cm, Telstra Collection, MAGNT



Jazmina Cininas
Blood sisters 2016
reduction linoprint
69.5 x 56 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Australian Galleries, Melbourne & Sydney



Jazmina Cininas
Each full moon, Sandie craves a Bloody Mary 2015
reduction linoprint
54 x 34.5 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Australian Galleries, Melbourne & Sydney