



**KIMBERLEY
FOUNDATION
AUSTRALIA**

Researching, preserving and promoting Kimberley rock art.

Kimberley Visions: Rock Art Style Provinces of North Australia

2019



TRADITIONAL OWNER URAH WAINA. DR SAM HARPER. DRYSDALE NATIONAL PARK
PHOTO CREDIT: BALANGGARA ABORIGINAL CORPORATION TAKEN BY: MARK JONES

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KIMBERLEY VISIONS

Kimberley Visions is a 5-year multi-disciplinary archaeological project investigating some of the world's most complex figurative rock art across northern Australia. The *Visions* team is working in Balanggarra Country in the East Kimberley.

Through the support of our donors, KFA committed \$500,000 to this project over 5 years for the researchers to find, record, interpret and manage this invaluable heritage. The project has been led by Prof Peter Veth, Kimberley Foundation Ian Potter Chair in Rock Art at the University of Western Australia (2016-2019) and is currently led by Dr. Sven Ouzman of UWA's Centre for Rock Art Research + Management (2019-2021).

Other project partners include The Western Australian Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Dunkeld Pastoral Company and the Universities of Melbourne, Monash and UWA. International collaboration is enabled through the French Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) and the University of Savoie, France.



OVERVIEW

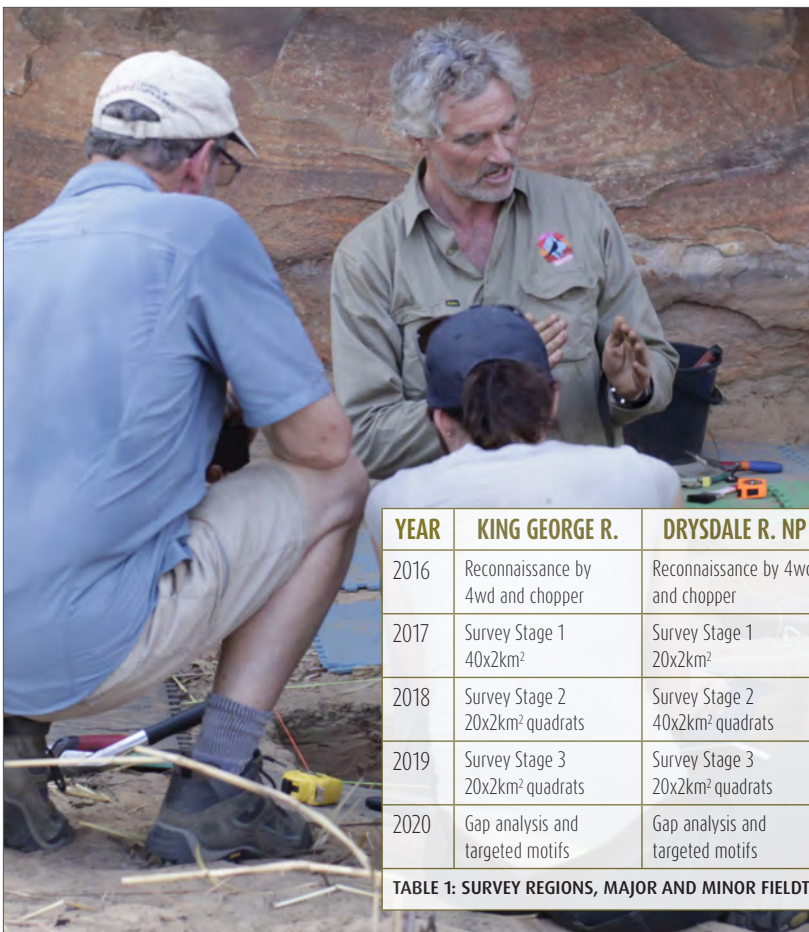
Kimberley Visions is a 5-year multi-disciplinary archaeological project investigating some of the world's most complex figurative rock art across northern Australia. The *Visions* team is working in Balangarra Country in the East Kimberley to find, record, interpret and manage this invaluable heritage. Select sites are also excavated and related archaeologies such as open habitation sites, stone arrangements, pigments sources and similar are integrated into a vast body of data.

Three PhD candidates, 2 Honours students and over a dozen archaeologists are using this data both to understand East Kimberley rock art - and how it connects with other art provinces. These provinces lie to the east, south, west - and even model site distribution to the north on what are now submerged landscapes - as well as links to Island South East Asia's rock art.

This data permits the team to examine stylistic variability of the art within known style provinces, and to map differences in space and time. For example, initial findings include ~50,000 year-old deposits (initial occupation) archaeological deposits in an open context; recovery of individual paint/pigment drops within dateable archaeological deposits; and choreographed placement of specific rock art in the landscape.



FIGURES WITH MULTI-BARR SPEARS AND BOOMERANGS, DRYSDALE RIVER NATIONAL PARK
PHOTO CREDIT: BALANGARRA ABORIGINAL CORPORATION TAKEN BY: MARK JONES



PROJECT TARGETS & TIMELINE

The five-year *Kimberley Visions* project is at the halfway mark. Three catchments comprising a total of 1,087 sites have been recorded. 40,000 motifs and 6,000 anthropomorphs have been photographed and recorded. 100 representative sites have been chosen on the database for auditing and style analyses. In addition 11 excavations have been undertaken.

“The scale, preservation and complexity of the art and archaeology of this huge portion of the north Kimberley is near-unprecedented,” said Prof Peter Veth, the Lead Chief Investigator on the project (2016-2019).

YEAR	KING GEORGE R.	DRYSDALE R. NP	OOMBULGURRI	ROCK ART	EXCAVATIONS
2016	Reconnaissance by 4wd and chopper	Reconnaissance by 4wd and chopper	Reconnaissance by 4wd and chopper	Rapid recording of panel + key motifs	2 small excavations N=2
2017	Survey Stage 1 40x2km ²	Survey Stage 1 20x2km ²	Oomarri 20x2 km ² quadrats	15,000 motifs and c. 3000 anthropomorphs	1-2 rock shelters in each survey area N=4
2018	Survey Stage 2 20x2km ² quadrats	Survey Stage 2 40x2km ² quadrats	Camera Pool area 20x2 km ² quadrats	15,000 motifs and c. 3000 anthropomorphs	1-2 rock shelters in each survey area N=4
2019	Survey Stage 3 20x2km ² quadrats	Survey Stage 3 20x2km ² quadrats	Faraway Bay area 40x2 km ²	15,000 motifs and c. 3000 anthropomorphs	Advanced archaeo- morphological work
2020	Gap analysis and targeted motifs	Gap analysis and targeted motifs	Gap analysis and targeted motifs	5,000 motifs and c. 1000 anthropomorphs	Advanced archaeo- morphological work

TABLE 1: SURVEY REGIONS, MAJOR AND MINOR FIELDTRIPS AND EXPECTED NUMBER OF MOTIFS AND ROCK SHELTER EXCAVATIONS



FIELDWORK 2019

In 2019 *Visions* will focus on two excavations and detailed recording of key rock art sites discovered to date. Work will focus on the top of the Carson plateau. Fieldwork in 2018 identified this area as having hitherto unknown concentrations of rock art.

The Monash/Savoie team will also excavate and record along the Carson escarpment. The team will also spend time in Kalumburu to undertake a variety of archaeological, anthropological and outreach activities.

All this work is conducted with Balangarra Aboriginal Corporation Indigenous Rangers, Traditional Owners – and project partners.

BENEFITS AND IMPACTS

- Collaborative work with Traditional Owners, with over 401 on-Country days
- Significant project quantum directed to Traditional Owners and communities, plus meeting Healthy Country Plan objectives.
- Joint actions with the BAC Rangers have included Firewalks; Site monitoring and rehabilitation; Remote Ranger Base and Coastal survey.
- Collaboration with CSIRO 'Scientists in Schools' programme to conduct outreach to schools in Wyndham, Kalumburu and Perth.
- Hosting of Indigenous partners at UWA for two-way knowledge exchange.
- Helping BAC build a comprehensive registry of sites so as best to manage impacts from human visitation, fire and other environmental factors.
- Helping inform government policy on heritage management.



PROJECT OUTPUTS

- Enabling multi-disciplinary science with over two dozen specialists working in a largely unknown rock art province
- Over 145 days in the field (and many more in the lab)
- 3 peer-reviewed journal articles published 4 more currently in press (and many in preparation), and a major monograph (contract signed) with Sydney University Press for delivery in 2020/21
- Dozens of local and international conference papers, Plenaries and Invited talks: Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Cairns, Perth, Austria, Brazil, Italy, Namibia, Norway, Spain, USA, Vienna. Awards in 2016 for Best Paper (presented with BAC) and 2018 for best Poster.
- Integration of Kimberley rock art into undergraduate Archaeology syllabus at UWA.
- Training of 3 PhD and 2 Honours candidates.
- Synergies with Rock Art Dating project.



TRADITIONAL OWNER URIAH WAINA, DRYSDALE NATIONAL PARK
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KIMBERLEY VISIONS TEAM, DRYSDALE NATIONAL PARK
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