Art of Australia’s First Peoples_1
Key Terms:
The Dreaming
Ancestral Beings
Sacred Energy (djang)
Landscape
Songlines (Mythology)
Sacred Objects (tjuringa)
Moiety (anthrospoken for half of a culture group)
Arnhemland - Yolgnu people, Kininjku people
   Dhuwa and Yirritja Moieties
Kimberley – Bradshaw Figures, Wandjina, Wuruluwurulu and Mimi Spirits
Western Desert
Toa Sculptures – Diyari People – Central Australia
The subjects of many of the paintings—whether on bark, ground or body—are the stories of primordial beings and have their genesis in The Dreamtime.
Songlines: Myths, Maps and Ways of passing information from one generation to the next.
Primordial Ancestors created the world, and the stories of the creation as charters of behavior for community or tribal groups remains the subject of painting.

Rainbow Serpent Rock Painting
Kakadu Park, Arnhem Land
6000-3000 BP

Wandjina Figures, Barnett River
Kimberley Region, Western Australia
1. Yolngu bark painting - Arnhemland
2. Kimberly area – Wandjina painting on rock
3. Western Desert Area Painting on Canvas

AREAS OF INTEREST FOR TRADITIONAL PAINTING AND THE STYLES THAT EVOLVED FROM THEM.
WANDJINA PAINTINGS FROM THE KIMBERLEY


Bradshaw Figure (Rock Painting) Near the King George River. Kimberley Region. 6000 BP

http://www.bradshawfoundation.com/
Bradshaw Figure (Rock Painting) Near the King George River. Kimberley Region. 6000 BP – but possibly as early as 65,000 BP

Mimi Figure. Rock Painting. Kakadu National Park. 3000-1000 BP
TOA OR DIRECTIONAL SIGNS
EARLY INSTANCE OF COMMERCIALIZING TRADITIONAL FORMS
SACRED OBJECTS

VIEWING AND MEANING RESTRICTED TO INITIATED

STONE TJURINGA

Tribe—Aranda Totem—Frog Location—Indarta (Glen Helen between Red Bank Creek and Ormiston Creek) Central Australia

Camps of Ancestral Totemic Frogs now soaks in Indarta Creek

Frogs at camps of Ancestral Totemic Frogs Indarta

The camps of the Ancestral Totemic Frogs become soaks which serve the native people
REVIEW MORPHY’S INTERPRETATION OF ‘WILD HONEY’ BARK PAINTINGS

L. Native Honey Natural Pigment on Bark
Don Gundinga 1984
Dhuwa Moiety Style PARALLEL LINE INFILL

R. Native Honey Natural Pigment on Bark
Jimmy Wululu 1984
Yirritja Moiety Style MESH OF DIAMONDS
Mick Daypurryun
Sacred Waterholes
Natural Pigment on Bark
1988
Dhuwa Moiety

Bandicoot

Dugong or Seacow

Wakuthi Marawili
Fire Dreaming with
Dugong Hunting Story.
Natural Pigment on Bark
1982
Yirritja Moiety
Bandu Marika
Dhuwa Moiety – Variant Style

Turtle Hunting
Natural Pigment on Bark
1987

One of the first women to engage in barkpainting. Originally trained as a print-maker, she approaches her bark painting much as she would approach a linocut.

Creation
Natural Pigment on Bark
1987
Western Arnhem Land: Kininjku and Kunwinjku Language speakers historic style featuring an ‘x-ray’ view of animals/people portrayed

Mimi Spirit spearing a Kangaroo
Natural Pigment on Bark
Collected 1912
Unidentified Artist

Dick Nguleingulei, Kangaroos
Natural Pigment on Bark
1978
K-language style artists – personal and evolved variation of the historic style

John Mawandjull
Rainbow Serpent’s Antilopine Kangaroo
Natural Pigment on Bark
1991
Djawida - Alternative K-language style artist
Nawura Dreamtime Ancestor Spirit
Natural Pigment on Bark
1985

John Mawandjull
Rainbow Serpent’s Antilopine Kangaroo
Natural Pigment on Bark
1991
Note how each abstract element can be interpreted differently. In order to tell or illustrate a different part of the narrative – so that the symbols simultaneously tell different stories, creating a layers of Meaning just as the pictures themselves are created by building up layers of pigment on the bark’s surface.

Note also that the goal of the Yolngu artist (and aboriginal artists elsewhere in Australia) use optical effects to achieve a shimmering surface quality that expresses an idea of agency equal to that of the narrative it embodies.