



ochre, and ink
ZHOU XIAOPING
A CHINESE ARTIST IN ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIA

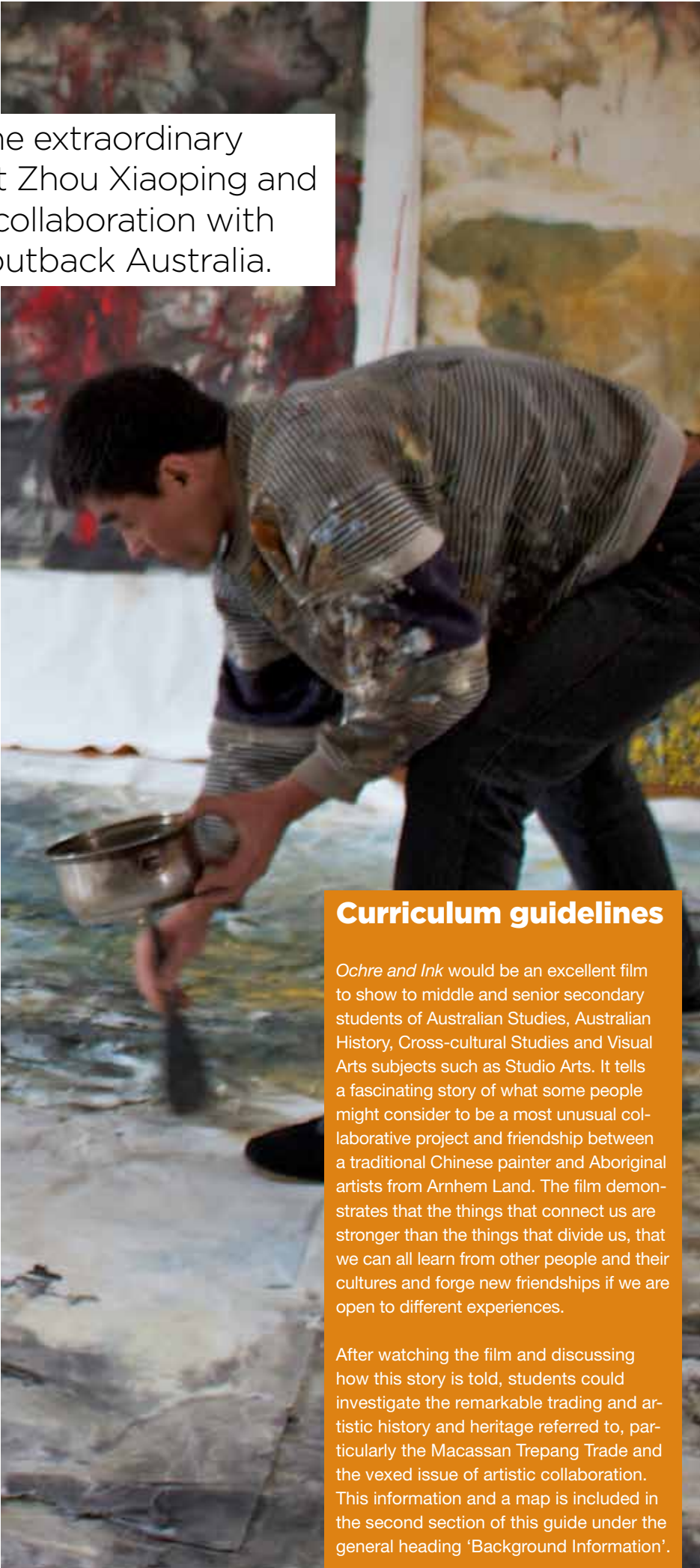
A **STUDY GUIDE** BY MARGUERITE O'HARA



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A man in a grey and white striped sweater is bent over, painting on a large canvas. He is holding a metal bowl in his left hand and a brush in his right. The background shows other parts of the artwork, including a section with red and white patterns.

Ochre and Ink tells the extraordinary story of Chinese artist Zhou Xiaoping and his inspiring 23-year collaboration with Aboriginal artists in outback Australia.

Synopsis

Xiaoping trained as a traditional Chinese brush painter in Anhui Province in China. When he arrived in Australia in 1988, he knew almost nothing about the country. On a whim, he travelled to the heart of the outback, where he was surprised to see Aboriginal people for the first time. He became fascinated with their art and culture and they welcomed him into their communities where the artists showed him their techniques of painting with ochre on bark.

He visits the famous artist Johnny Bulunbulun and his family at their remote outstation in Arnhem Land. Xiaoping and Johnny are working on paintings for a major exhibition to be held in Beijing on the theme of the 300-year trade in Trepang (sea cucumber) from the Aboriginal people of northern Australia via Macassan traders to China. The artistic collaboration between the Aboriginal artists and Xiaoping is not without controversy.

Johnny Bulunbulun's wife Laurie and other family members attend the *Trepang Exhibition* opening at the imposing Capital Museum in Beijing and later Xiaoping shows his Aboriginal friends some of the fascinating sights of Beijing.

PLEASE NOTE: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander viewers are advised that this program contains images and voices of people who have passed away.

Curriculum guidelines

Ochre and Ink would be an excellent film to show to middle and senior secondary students of Australian Studies, Australian History, Cross-cultural Studies and Visual Arts subjects such as Studio Arts. It tells a fascinating story of what some people might consider to be a most unusual collaborative project and friendship between a traditional Chinese painter and Aboriginal artists from Arnhem Land. The film demonstrates that the things that connect us are stronger than the things that divide us, that we can all learn from other people and their cultures and forge new friendships if we are open to different experiences.

After watching the film and discussing how this story is told, students could investigate the remarkable trading and artistic history and heritage referred to, particularly the Macassan Trepang Trade and the vexed issue of artistic collaboration. This information and a map is included in the second section of this guide under the general heading 'Background Information'.



People appearing in the film

Zhou Xiaoping (pron: Joe Shau-ping) is a Chinese-born and -educated Melbourne-based artist. In Chinese, the family name is written first followed by the given name.

Johnny Bulunbulun (JBB) was born just after the Second World War near the Arafura Swamp of Central Arnhem Land. His paintings have been widely exhibited throughout Australia and in Beijing.

Marcia Langton grew up in Queensland and is a descendant of the Yiman people. She is a leading authority on contemporary social issues in Aboriginal affairs. In 1993 she was awarded an AM (Order of Australia) for her services to Anthropology and for her advocacy of Indigenous rights over two decades. She was appointed Founda-



tion Professor of Australian Indigenous Studies at the University of Melbourne in 2000, after five years as Professor at Charles Darwin University.

Laurie Maarbudug – Johnny Bulunbulun’s wife

Chips Mackinolty – artist

Murray Garde – linguist and teacher

How did this film come to be made?

James Bradley and John Fitzgerald had been good friends at school and university. Thirty years later, in 2008, they met up at a meeting of old friends.

While James had become a well-known film editor, specialising in documentaries on Indigenous stories, John had studied Chinese language, culture and history and was now Professor of Asian Studies at La Trobe University in Melbourne.

After a few beers, John reckoned he had a great story for a documentary. He knew an artist named Zhou Xiaoping who had come to Australia in 1988, become fascinated with Aboriginal people and culture and, although he now lived in Melbourne, spent months every year working with Aboriginal artists in Arnhem Land.

James immediately saw the potential in this story, and arranged to meet Xiaoping at his studio in Melbourne.

John Fitzgerald had been right – Xiaoping was a fascinating character, and his art was an amazing fusion of Chinese tradition with Aboriginal influence and subject matter. James shot some test footage with Xiaoping and on a handshake they agreed to collaborate on a documentary about this unique story.

During the first shoot in Arnhem Land, producer/director James Bradley and cinematographer Murray Lui drove Johnny Bulunbulun, his wife Laurie and six other people from Wurdeja outstation to the remote beach at Boucaut Bay to film a fishing scene. Their 4WD vehicle got bogged in the sand, and then the clutch burnt out, so they were well and truly stuck.

Everyone was keen to catch some fish, so James and Murray left the vehicle where it was bogged and filmed Johnny, Laurie and Xiaoping and some kids catching and cooking fish. Then Xiaoping showed Johnny photographs of their collaborative paintings that he had recently finished in Melbourne. Eventually, Johnny decided to use the crew’s sat-phone to call Jacob back at the community and ask him to come and tow the 4WD off the beach, as the tide was coming in.

A few hours later, Jacob arrived, and everyone got involved in a major operation that involved digging a track through the sand, covering it with some stray sheets of roofing iron and branches cut from shrubs, and as night fell, slowly towing the vehicle back to the community.





STUDENT ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1 After watching the film

1. Different backgrounds, places and styles ... and common interests

- How do the opening scenes of this documentary establish the links between Chinese and Australian Aboriginal culture?
- Describe the Huangshan (Yellow Mountain) landscape in Anhui province where Xiaoping learned to be an artist.
- In what ways is the landscape of central Australia unlike the landscapes where Xiaoping learned his art and from the Australian cityscape of Melbourne where he now lives and works for at least part of the year? Are there any similarities in the country of central Australia and Anhui?
- How did travelling further north into Arnhem Land really ignite Xiaoping's interest in Aboriginal people, in their distinctive culture and artwork?
- In what ways do artist Chips Mackinoly and teacher/linguist Murray Garde find Xiaoping's interest in Aboriginal culture and art quite unexpected?
- What were some of the things about going into remote homeland communities that surprised Xiaoping? How is his natural curiosity expressed in the way he responds

to people and new experiences in this remote community?

- How was 'the language barrier' between Xiaoping and the Aboriginal people less of a problem than might have been anticipated?
- What did Xiaoping see as shared features of his painting technique and that of the Aboriginal artists?
- *The individual traditions of art production in the Western European tradition are not shared by Aboriginal people. And so, if a senior artist sees a younger person or*

somebody else who's got an interest in what they're doing ... they take them under their wing ... this is how they're taught to produce art in a place like Western Arnhem Land.
– Murray Garde

I trained as Chinese brush painter. My teacher or my masters tell me to go out and not just work in the studio ... so I went to the market or train stations or bus stations to draw people, from life.
– Zhou Xiaoping

List some of the things that influence and form the creative work of an artist, such as early learning, place, colleagues, etc.

How are the differences in how and what people paint, as well as where they grew up and their cultural heritage and identity, usually reflected in their work? Give some examples.

2. Dealing with cultural sensitivities

- What traditional activities did Xiaoping take part in with his Aboriginal colleagues that were important to them and a learning experience for him?
- What happened when he went to





Darwin University to study for a Masters in Art?

What was he accused of because of the way he painted Aboriginal people?

- *Art is an expression of the human condition and humans have always had an interest in difference. Aboriginal people get treated as a bit kind of precious ... and for me that view sort of puts them again back into a box where they're not allowed to be humans interested in difference, or Chinese people are not allowed to be interested in other cultures. They've just got to stay on this side of the line.*

– Murray Garde,
linguist and teacher

Do you understand what Garde is suggesting here and do you agree with him?

- When they collaborate on a painting, incorporating their own distinctive styles and images, what problem arises in relation to how their work is viewed by others?
- How did you respond to the works Bulunbulun and Xiaoping produce together?
- What do you think about how the difficulty of the kangaroo

plate painting (titled *Dialogue*) is resolved?

- Explain Marcia Langton's view about why some people objected to the sharing of space, styles and ideas on a canvas?
- What kind of sharing of practices and techniques is revealed in the combined work of artists Johnny Bulunbulun and Xiaoping? Is it more than just a merging and overlaying of different stylistic elements?
- How is Xiaoping's approach to his work and disagreements shown to be underpinned by a respect for Aboriginal cultural beliefs?

3. The Macassan connection and Beijing – trepang, dharripa and haishen

Aboriginal people were welcoming Macassans who'd come to collect Trepang, the sea slug, which was a Chinese delicacy, from at least 1750. And the Macassans were then on-trading it to China, so as a result today in many Aboriginal ceremonies there are interpretations of Macassan material culture and so our idea is to bring those Aboriginal stories to life through this exhibition and remind people of these old relationships.

– Marcia Langton explaining

the history of Macassan trading with Arnhem Land people

- Why is the Macassan story of trepang fishing and contact with Aboriginal Australians such an appropriate subject for collaborative work between Johnny Bulunbulun and Zhou Xiaoping?
- How did the trip to China to attend the Beijing exhibition in April 2011 become a different kind of journey for Xiaoping and others from the one that was originally planned?
- *We have found a person who works with us, a person we can trust, a person like ourselves. It's good that he will stand up for our sacred lands, the foundations of our culture.* – Laurie Maarbudug

I like them and they like me too. So we become a family member. This keeping me continue and continue.

– Zhou Xiaoping

What do these reflections about the relationship between Xiaoping and the people of Arnhem Land tell us about the strength of this friendship?

- List some of the common factors showing how these artists from very different places understand and respond to the world?



ACTIVITY 2 Reflecting on the film / Connecting with different worlds

1. The Funeral

In the film, we witness part of the funeral procession of Johnny Bulunbulun. Here is an account from the film's director (James Bradley) and cinematographer (Murray Lui) of the events surrounding the funeral.

We travelled with Zhou Xiaoping to the community of Wulkabimirri near Ramingining for the very sad occasion of Johnny Bulunbulun's funeral. Johnny's family gave permission for filming straight away, but several days passed and it seemed that the funeral was going to be postponed for weeks.

Then we were asked to meet with the traditional owner Jimmy to explain everything again and ask his permission for filming. It seemed that some of the old men were worried that ceremonial leaders from other communities might not approve of filming the coffin or the ceremonial procession. The men decided to discuss it further that night and give us their decision in the morning.

Next morning one of the men came and told us that Jimmy had a dream that night in which the deceased came to him and said: 'Why are you stopping them from filming my funeral? I am a famous artist and my funeral should be seen around the world'. After that, the ceremony went ahead and the crucial scenes were filmed.

- Do you think it was important for footage of Johnny Bulunbulun's funeral to be part of this film? Explain your reasons.
- How are the ceremonial dance and the exhibition in Beijing an important aspect of memorialising and honouring the life and work of Johnny Bulunbulun?

2. Huangshan (Yellow Mountain)

A few days after the exhibition opening in Beijing, producer/director James Bradley and associate producer/Translator Cathy Li flew with Zhou Xiaoping to his home town Hefei in Anhui Province. Then they travelled by taxi, bus and cable car to Red Cloud Peak in famously misty Huangshan.

After staying the night in the atmospheric but run-down Beihai Hotel, they set off early to walk across the mountains, filming Xiaoping in the landscape as they went. They couldn't see much in the thick mist that enveloped everything, and soon found themselves descending and ascending thousands of stone stairs across the jagged peaks. James was finding it hard, slow work climbing with a small backpack and the camera gear, until a young Chinese man offered to carry the camera, and quickly took on the role of camera assistant, while his girlfriend chatted happily to Cathy about her scientific studies.

By lunchtime they'd all reached the Jade Screen Scenic area and enjoyed a hot meal together, sheltering from the bitter wind in a small restaurant. They took another cable car down to the town in the valley, but returned next morning to find a beautiful clear and sunny day above the clouds.

So they were able to film the best of both misty and clear weather in mystical Huangshan for the opening and closing scenes of *Ochre and Ink*.



The filmmakers

Ochre and Ink

A Yellow Mountain Films and
Nirvana Films Production

WRITER AND DIRECTOR James Bradley

PRODUCERS Rachel Clements &
James Bradley

EDITOR Karen Johnson

CINEMATOGRAPHER Murray Lui

SOUND RECORDIST David Tranter

MUSIC Caitlin Yeo

SOUND DESIGN Liam Egan

SOUND MIX Andy Wright

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER Cathy Li

The account of the funeral of Johnny Bulunbulun and the story of the trip to Huangshan in China are but two of several revealing stories about the making of this film.

- What are some of the other scenes in the documentary that show the value and richness of being open in a cross-cultural experience?
- Identify any scenes in the film that you thought were especially revealing about why this story matters?
- How important is the sharing of meals shown to be in several of the meetings between Xiaoping and Johnny Bulunbulun's family, e.g. eating trepang in China?
- Apart from Xiaoping's growing understanding and affection for his Aboriginal friends in Arnhem Land, how is the making and watching of films such as *Ochre and Ink* important in forging closer ties between people from different places and cultures?
- In the final scene of the documentary, Xiaoping is descending Huangshan (Yellow Mountain) in a cable car. What is the tone and feeling of this scene? Why do you think the filmmakers ended *Ochre and Ink* with this scene?

3. Artistic cross-cultural connections, collaborating with respect

In his director's statement, James Bradley, the writer and director of *Ochre and Ink* has this to say about the controversy:

[The film] tells a moving story of cross-cultural friendship and artistic collaboration with elements of humour, controversy, and tragedy. We see Zhou Xiaoping develop from an enthusiastic but naive young man into an engaging and passionate character who has established genuine friendships with many Aboriginal people.

Xiaoping's art practice incorporates an inventive fusion of traditional Chinese

techniques including painting with black ink on rice paper, designs on blue and white glazed porcelain, and watercolour landscapes. Combining a sensitive interpretation of Aboriginal subjects and culture with his great enthusiasm for collaboration with masterful Aboriginal artists, Xiaoping's work breaks exciting new ground in the field of cross-cultural art, bringing together two ancient cultures in a fresh and quite profound way.

Ochre and Ink raises some rarely discussed themes around cross-cultural art practices, including issues of cultural appropriation and the role of sometimes paternalistic arts administration bureaucracies. In commenting on the story of the



'Kangaroo Plate' painting (titled Dialogue), Marcia Langton expresses her strong opinion that some 'white advisors' are 'a new form of patrol officer'. The other side of the argument is not presented, but it is hoped that Marcia's comments will provoke thought and discussion around this thorny issue.'

From traditional rock art to the highly decorative so-called 'dot paintings' that often tell dreamtime stories, to the work of contemporary urban artists, Aboriginal art is strikingly diverse in intention, style, subject matter, media and execution. Like much contemporary art, influences are many and varied and arise through a range of connections, interactions and experiences.

- Why do you think many people are understandably sensitive and protective of Aboriginal art and images?
- What does it mean to appropriate another artist's images?
- Are you aware of any recent controversies in the world of art prizes in Australia where an artist has been accused of using and reworking someone else's work?
- Is Xiaoping guilty of doing this in his collaborative work with Johnny Bulunbulun?

Discuss how well you think the styles and approaches of these artists meld together in some of the work we see in the film or at the website of the Trepang Exhibition at <http://www.trepangexhibition.com/unique-opportunity/>.

Many artists have been, and will continue to be, accused of appropriating other artists' work, either through using their images, composition, subject matter and/or style. To read more about this complex and often quite sensitive issue, see <http://nga.gov.au/Exhibition/Tillers/Default.cfm?MnuID=4&Essay=5>. (This article is about the work of Imants Tiller, an Australian painter of Latvian descent, who some people have accused of cultural insensitivity in relation to his paintings.)



We should have one spirit, us and them, join together, and build a common foundation.
– Laurie Maarbudug in Beijing

Background information

A. Indigenous cultural protocol

(See boxed section below)

B. Map showing the proximity of Indonesia to the northern parts of Australia. (Right)

Boats sailed from South Sulawesi, one of the larger Indonesian islands whose main port city was Makassar, and is now called Ujung Pandang.



http://epress.anu.edu.au/apem/boats/mobile_devices/ch04.html

- Approximately how far is Indonesia from Darwin in comparison with the distance between Melbourne and Darwin?

C. The Macassan trepang trade

It has been estimated that Macassans were visiting the north coast of Australia from the 1660s. Macassans sailed from the island of Sulawesi in Indonesia to catch and process trepang, otherwise known as sea cucumber. They then traded the trepang to China, who considered them delicacies and aphrodisiacs. Trepang was Australia's first export to China. They look a bit like slugs, a name which is sometimes used to describe them. Many Asian communities regard them as a delicacy.

(You can see pictures of trepang at this National Museum of Australia site <http://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/australian_journeys/gallery_highlights/slideshow_1_2.html>.

Extensive trade within the South-East Asian waterways had been happening for over a thousand years before the trepangers arrived in Australia, and while the Chinese traders largely dominated the water, the Macassan trepangers sailed their small, dangerous boats south, often annually at the beginning of the monsoon or wet season (December, January), and returned home mid-year, to trade the trepang in Indonesian and Chinese ports. Trepang boats have been documented

from North-East Arnhem Land to the Kimberley coast.

The Macassans faced violent confrontations with some Aboriginal people, but formed strong friendships with other communities and families, many in the North-East of Arnhem Land. The visitors were given permission to set up camps and trepang processing centres for long stretches of time. It has been documented that some Macassan boats had crews of up to sixty people and that thirty-four boats containing 1056 people visited Croker Island in 1829.

The Macassans traded items with the Aboriginal people, including cloth, rice, iron pots and tools, knives, opium and alcohol. In return, Aboriginal people allowed them to harvest on their lands, often working side by side with the Macassans, as shown by old photos, paintings and etchings, as they split, cooked, dried and smoked the trepang. For almost 200 years, these two groups of people forged strong alliances through trade, marriage and friendship. It is believed that some Aboriginal people travelled back to Indonesia with the trepangers in their small boats. There are people of Aboriginal ancestry living in Indonesia today. While much of this travel was adventurous and exploratory, there are stories of Yolngu women being forced into marriage and also of the kidnapping of women by trepangers.

It is believed that the Macassans were the first outside visitors to the Aborigi-

A NOTE FROM THE FILMMAKERS:

Ochre and Ink is the story of the collaboration between Zhou Xiaoping and Johnny Bulunbulun (JBB), an Aboriginal artist from the Maningrida area in north-east Arnhem Land.

Tragically, JBB passed away in May 2010. JBB's wife Laurie, son Paul and brother Peter have signed release forms supporting the ongoing inclusion of JBB in our documentary.

We have been granted permission to use JBB's image and art in *Ochre and Ink*, and for promotion and publicity use. We have similar permission forms from the Wulkabimirri and Wurdeja communities for JBB's funeral, traditional songs and ceremonial dances used in the film.

All Indigenous IP rights in the paintings shown in the film remain with JBB's family or the other artists involved. All representation of Indigenous people, art, culture and places remain in the control of the appropriate Indigenous people and cannot be used for any other purpose outside of *Ochre and Ink* without permission from the appropriate people. This includes any interpretations of traditional art or culture discussed in the film, and translations.



nal people of Arnhem Land, and their historical visits have left many imprints on Yolngu culture that continue today. Clan flags in different colours are a symbolic link to the past relationships and these cross over into culture, for example the red flag dance and the yellow flag song. Archaeological evidence of the Macassan presence in Yolngu lands, such as wells and buildings, are prevalent today. The trepangers planted crops including the tamarind tree, which is now spread all over the Top End.

The Macassan word ‘ruppiya’, derived from the Malay ‘rupiah’ and meaning ‘loan’, is used by Yolngu today as the term for ‘money’. Among other things this suggests that the concept of money was introduced to Arnhem Land prior to white settlement and well before Aboriginal people were allowed to earn it themselves.

Matthew Flinders was the first British explorer to encounter Macassans on the coast of Arnhem Land, during his circumnavigation of Australia in 1803. His journal notes that he met a fleet of 60 trepanger boats with total crews of about 1000 men. He documented his discussions with the Macassan fleet captain, Pobassoo, who spoke of violent conflicts with Aboriginal people, including getting speared in the knee himself. Flinders honoured this meeting by naming that stretch of water ‘Malay Road’ and called the island that had sheltered the trepangers ‘Pobassoo’s Island’.

From 1824, the British established forts throughout the Arnhem Land coast, including on Melville and Croker Islands and the Coburg Peninsula, with the view to engage with the trepang trade and to develop trading ports within the South-East Asian waters. The British settlements were abandoned by 1850.

In 1884, the South Australian government, who were presiding over what would become the Northern Territory, introduced taxes against the Macassan trepangers. And finally, in 1906, the South Australian government prohibited the Macassans from trading the trepang from northern Australia. It is believed that Using Daeng was the last Macassan sea captain to travel to visit Australia, returning to his Indonesian home in 1907.

Even now, over 100 years since the last Macassan trepanger visit, the Yolngu people of Arnhem Land remember their friends through songs, ceremonial dances, oral history and paintings. The relationship between the two cultures, as evidence shows, was largely one of equality and respect, and not domination.

The history between Aboriginal people of the coastal north of Australia and the Macassans contradicts the widely held view that Aboriginal people and their culture before white settlement was isolated and static. They were engaged in international

trade, and the inclusion of Macassan references in cultural activities shows that Aboriginal people were, in fact, adaptable to change.

Johnny Bulunbulun’s ancestors were among those who formed friendships with the trepangers and this old relationship has many resonances within the family history.

- What kind of evidence is there that Macassans from Indonesia travelled to Northern Australia where they developed a trade in trepang that necessitated forming relationships with the Aboriginal people of Arnhem Land?
- How might such connections be reflected in the rock art that was a central part of Aboriginal life?
- What are some of the linguistic connections?

Here are some Yolngu words used in this film:

balanda – white person or stranger

dharriipa – trepang

manymak – good or well

motj – totemic ancestor

rarrk – cross-hatching in artwork



D. Chinese art – ink on paper

Zhou Xiaoping was trained in traditional Chinese painting by a Master in his hometown of Hefei. This study took him many years. Chinese painting as an artform that began around 4000 BC, and it has continued to develop for the last 6000 years. After Buddhism was introduced from India in the first century AD, Chinese painting moved from being used on other crafts such as pottery and carved jade, and moved towards religious murals and figures. From about 1000 AD, paintings of historical characters and everyday stories became popular.

Landscape painting as a genre was established by the fourth century, with two separate styles: 'blue-and-green' and 'ink-and-wash'. The ink-and-wash, as practiced by Xiaoping, relies on skilful brushwork and changing degrees of concentration of ink.

The Chinese brush is an important factor to the distinctive style of traditional Chinese painting. It has a very fine tip, allowing detailed use. The instruments used for calligraphy and painting are, in essence, the same, so developments in the art of calligraphy can be transferred to painting. Brush

techniques demonstrated in Chinese painting include line drawings, shade, texture and dotting.

Ink has been used in Chinese painting and calligraphy for more than 2000 years. Ink is ground on a painter's stone and mixed with water, creating ink of various shades and density. It is possible to use this method to produce works balancing light and darkness, and to create feeling in a subject.

Chinese paper, when it was first produced around 100AD, was made from materials including pulp, bark and fishing nets. Today, there are various textures and qualities of Chinese paper, often called 'rice paper' by westerners. The paper is very absorbent and its texture will dictate the spread of ink, i.e. whether the ink will sink into the paper or if it will gloss across the surface. The painter will often lay the paper down on the floor to paint on it, and a traditional glue is used to stick the paper onto canvas or other mounting material.

There are elements in composition of traditional Chinese art that surprise a western audience. Painters have complete freedom to omit backgrounds

to place prominence on foreground objects. Leaving 'blanks' is common and these white areas are considered genuine parts of the paintings. Sometimes the painter will write words in the empty places.

E. Aboriginal art

Australian Indigenous art is the oldest ongoing tradition of art in the world. Initial forms of artistic Aboriginal expression were rock carvings, body painting and ground designs, which date back more than 30,000 years.

The quality and variety of Australian Indigenous art produced today reflects the richness and diversity of Indigenous cultures and the distinct differences between tribes, languages, dialects and geographic landscapes. Art has always been an important part of Aboriginal life, connecting past and present, the people and the land, and the supernatural and reality.

Indigenous art ranges across a wide variety of media from works on paper and canvas to fibre and glass. Introduced media such as printmaking, fabric printing, ceramics and glassware now complement traditional arts and crafts.

The story of the way these art forms are produced runs parallel to the history and experiences of the artists themselves. It reflects customary trading patterns, a struggle for survival and the influence of governments and churches.

A market in Indigenous artefacts has existed between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples since they first came into contact. After colonisation, artefact sales occurred on a widespread basis throughout south-eastern Australia.

The prominence of Indigenous art is due in part to the motivation and considerable effort of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, particularly painters, who have played a major role in introducing both Australia and the rest of the world to Australia's Indigenous cultures. The Western Desert art movement has come to be seen as one of the most significant art movements of the twentieth century.

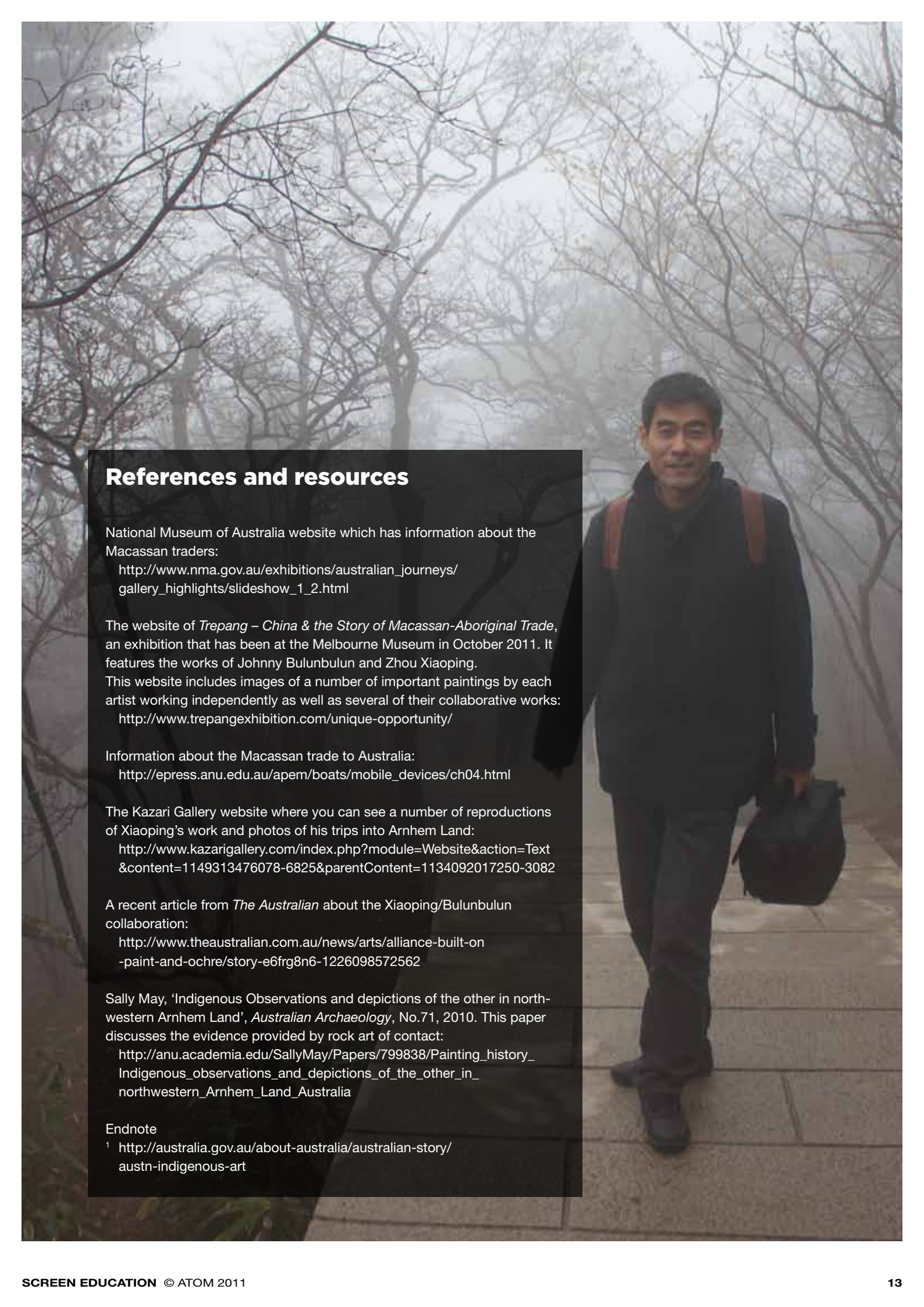
While Aboriginal painting traditions are many thousands of years old, it was not until the 1970s that Indigenous artists began to receive widespread recognition in the West. One of the first, and perhaps most famous, group of Indigenous painters was the Australian Western Desert artists of Papunya Tula.

The styles of the Western Desert were developed for painting on the body or ground but once a local schoolteacher, Geoffrey Bardon (1940–2003), introduced paints and canvas to the community, many locals began adapting their styles to take advantage of these new, Western media.

The result was a flourishing art movement throughout the Western Desert which saw individuals and communities committing their intricate and interesting stories and unique iconography to canvas. This stimulated an arts industry that now generates around \$200 million a year nationally.¹

Investigate the art of Arnhem Land and the extraordinarily beautiful work of Johnny Bulunbulun, especially his bark paintings. The website of the recent Trepang Exhibition at <<http://www.trepangexhibition.com/unique-opportunity/>> is a good place to start.



A man in a dark jacket and scarf walks on a stone path through a misty forest of bare trees. He is carrying a bag. The background is a dense forest of leafless trees under a grey, overcast sky.

References and resources

National Museum of Australia website which has information about the Macassan traders:

http://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/australian_journeys/gallery_highlights/slideshow_1_2.html

The website of *Trepang – China & the Story of Macassan-Aboriginal Trade*, an exhibition that has been at the Melbourne Museum in October 2011. It features the works of Johnny Bulunbulun and Zhou Xiaoping.

This website includes images of a number of important paintings by each artist working independently as well as several of their collaborative works:

<http://www.trepangexhibition.com/unique-opportunity/>

Information about the Macassan trade to Australia:

http://epress.anu.edu.au/apem/boats/mobile_devices/ch04.html

The Kazari Gallery website where you can see a number of reproductions of Xiaoping's work and photos of his trips into Arnhem Land:

<http://www.kazarigallery.com/index.php?module=Website&action=Text&content=1149313476078-6825&parentContent=1134092017250-3082>

A recent article from *The Australian* about the Xiaoping/Bulunbulun collaboration:

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/arts/alliance-built-on-paint-and-ochre/story-e6frg8n6-1226098572562>

Sally May, 'Indigenous Observations and depictions of the other in north-western Arnhem Land', *Australian Archaeology*, No.71, 2010. This paper discusses the evidence provided by rock art of contact:

http://anu.academia.edu/SallyMay/Papers/799838/Painting_history_Indigenous_observations_and_depictions_of_the_other_in_northwestern_Arnhem_Land_Australia

Endnote

¹ <http://australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/austn-indigenous-art>



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