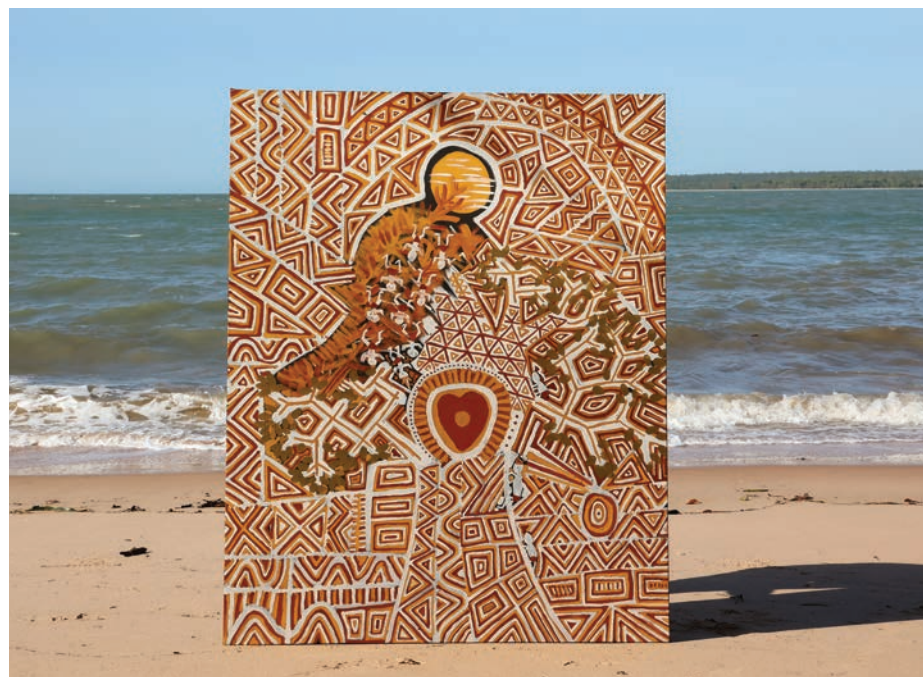


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JOHNATHON WORLD PEACE BUSH



ABOVE: Johnathon World Peace Bush, *No Justice*, 2022. Naturally sourced ochres on canvas, 150 x 120cm.

OPPOSITE: Artist Johnathon World Peace Bush with his work *No Justice*, 2022.

COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND THIS IS NO FANTASY, MELBOURNE.

Poet, artist and human rights advocate **Johnathon World Peace Bush** is one of Australia's most exciting painters. Walking in his father's footsteps, Bush worked as a stockman in Borroloola in an outstation, herding cattle and horses. He moved to Milikapiti in the Tiwi Islands to be with his mother. He

later started working at the Jilamara Arts and Crafts Association. Bush was encouraged by his brother artist, **Kenny Brown**, to delve into creative practice. Over the years, he has grown in his vision and notability in presenting complex histories in such an innovative and deep-feeling way.





In the past couple of years, Bush's work has been highly collected and exhibited with significant institutions, including the Seoul Museum of Art, Korea, Melbourne Art Fair and the National Gallery of Victoria, both in Melbourne, Artspace, Sydney, Northern Centre for Contemporary Art, Northern Territory, and Tarnanthi Festival at the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.

His career has seen him exhibit at a world-stage level to wider audiences and with incredible generosity in re-telling personal stories of people, religion, spirituality and Country.

Using materials from Country disrupts the dominant colonial narratives of the Catholic Bathurst missionary into a deeper story that has impacted generations of Tiwi people. Bush's paintings depict figures drawn from anthropological archival images of Tiwi people and religious individuals in bodypaint and Tiwi ceremonial ornaments. He paints with ochre collected from Melville Island in the three colours of Tiwi; kurrujupuni, arrikin-inga, and yarringa (white, yellow, red). Among the traditional designs appear figures of angels, priests and local people as stories that capture the complex histories of Indigenous life and Western religious iconography. What seems to be an arm holding a spear belonging to a Tiwi man melts into the background, engulfed by culture and a long line of history that predates and blends the introduction of Catholicism to the Island.

Bush is a rising talent in the global art scene as an incredible storyteller integral to the landscape of Australian art. Through his iconic painting style, he holds both histories close together, uplifting love and peace throughout the narratives he depicts. The people Bush represents uphold truth-telling and a deep understanding that healing from the past is key to a better future. For his family, the Island and ultimately, the world he wishes



to live within. Over the past few years, Bush has become recognised for his depth in politics, poetry and painting techniques. His work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, contributed to publications and has been highly collected by major arts institutions.

"Painting means to me a glimpse of the past, a glimpse of the present and a glimpse of the future," says Bush. "Sydney [Contemporary Art Fair] was a stepping stone to share my story with the world. It was the first time working with [my new representative] gallery [This Is No Fantasy, Melbourne] and meeting Vincent [Namatjira] in the big city."

MAYA HODGE

OPPOSITE: Johnathon World Peace Bush, *Seven Tiwi Angels*, 2022. Locally sourced earth pigments on linen, framed, 150 x 120cm.

ABOVE: Johnathon World Peace Bush, *Mother and Child*, 2022. Locally sourced earth pigments on linen, framed, 120 x 120cm.

COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND THIS IS NO FANTASY, MELBOURNE.