

Reflecting on the 48 days

In 2019 artists from the Hopevale Arts and Culture Centre created illuminated artworks responding to what happened on the banks of Waalumbaal Birri (Endeavour River) in 1770.



They Burnt the Piggy-Piggies 2019

by Gertie Deeral, Dingaal

National Museum of Australia

Cook was in trouble. He and his men took too many turtles and didn't share. This is against Bama law. We have rules about how many turtles can be hunted and also how they are butchered. We have to follow our cultural laws.

Cook had animals on the Endeavour including pigs, dogs, chickens and goats. Cook had some piglets that got killed when Bama set fire to his camp. Some pigs got away and made our country their home. We still hunt wild pigs today.



No Blood Will Be Shed 2019

by Wanda Gibson, Nugal

National Museum of Australia

Cook was stranded in Cooktown for 48 days while his ship was being repaired. It was mostly a peaceful time between the crew and local Guugu Yimidhirr people. However, there was one very serious event. Bama discovered that Cook and his crew had hunted and collected turtles. They found 12 of them on the Endeavour. Bama tried to throw the turtles back into the water but Cook's crew stopped them. The Bama became very angry. Taking too many turtles without permission from traditional owners is against our law. Bama confronted Cook and his crew with spears and weapons. Cook's crew fired shots and some Bama were injured.

Joseph Banks's journal explained that an old man, who would have been a senior leader, came forward with a spear with a broken tip. This was a symbol for his people to lay their weapons and spears down. The site they were standing on was a special place where disputes had been traditionally resolved. Cook and his men were very lucky. No blood had been shed. This is an important story as it is the first time reconciliation between Indigenous Australians and Europeans happened. When you visit Cooktown, you can go and see the Reconciliation Rocks. There is a plaque marking this special place which tells you the story.

Reflecting on the 48 days

In 2019 artists from the Hopevale Arts and Culture Centre created illuminated artworks responding to what happened on the banks of Waalumbaal Birri (Endeavour River) in 1770.



Twelve Turtles 2019

by Wanda Gibson, Nugal
National Museum of Australia

Cook and his men were hungry. They went out and hunted turtles. They were easy pickings. However, Cook didn't understand our law. The turtle is very sacred to us. There are many cultural protocols around the hunting and butchering of the animal. Bama saw 12 turtles on board Cook's ship. They got very upset and angry and even tried to throw the turtles over the side of the ship but Cook's men stopped them.

This is when the trouble started. Bama came back to Cook's camp with spears and weapons. Cook's men fired shots and some Bama were hit, but not killed. It was a very scary situation. There could have been serious bloodshed.



Reconciliation Rocks 2019

by Madge Bowen, Bulgun
National Museum of Australia

Cook's men were going out in their smaller boat and hunting our turtles. They were taking too many. The Bama went onto their ship and saw 12 turtles. The Bama tried to throw them back into the sea. Cook and his men stopped them. The Bama left and told the other Bama about Cook and his men taking the turtles. They returned with their spears and weapons to confront Cook. The Bama also set a fire that burnt Cook's camp. Shots were fired and some Bama were hurt.

The Guugu Yimidhirr tribal leader was an old man. He stopped the conflict. He showed his people a spear with a broken tip. He was saying to his people to lay their weapons down. That no blood should be shed.

My painting shows the Reconciliation Rocks that are the place where Cook and his crew and the Guugu Yimidhirr reconciled. Prime Minister Scott Morrison sat with us ladies at Reconciliation Rocks when he visited Cooktown last year.

Reflecting on the 48 days

In 2019 artists from the Hopevale Arts and Culture Centre created illuminated artworks responding to what happened on the banks of Waalumbaal Birri (Endeavour River) in 1770.



Three Bama in a Canoe 2019

by Wanda Gibson, Nugal
National Museum of Australia

Cook and his crew were very lucky. The Endeavour was badly damaged after hitting the reef off what is now known as Cooktown. They were able to get the ship off the reef and sailed it into Waalumbaal Birri (Endeavour River) where they set up camp. When they arrived they saw men in a canoe and a naked woman and child in the distance. They must have been a bit surprised.

Cook and his crew were stranded for 48 days. They collected local timber to repair the Endeavour. During their stay they had interactions with the Guugu Yimidhirr people.



Showing a Knife 2019

by Wanda Gibson, Nugal
National Museum of Australia

One of Cook's men stumbled onto a group of Bama sitting around a campfire. There had been tensions between the crew and Guugu Yimidhirr. He was very scared and unsure what to do. He decided the best thing to do was to go and sit down with the Bama. They must have been surprised. The crewman had a knife which he showed the Bama, who then passed it around the campfire and then gave it back to the man. The man then got up from the campfire and headed off into the scrub. The Bama called out to him. He was heading in the wrong direction. The Bama pointed him in the right direction back to his camp.

Reflecting on the 48 days

In 2019 artists from the Hopevale Arts and Culture Centre created illuminated artworks responding to what happened on the banks of Waalumbaal Birri (Endeavour River) in 1770.



Gangarru 2019

by Dora Deemal, Binthi
National Museum of Australia

When Cook was stranded in Cooktown he tried to learn some of the Guugu Yimidhirr language. He and Joseph Banks were fascinated by the Gangurru. They tried to say it but couldn't pronounce it properly and said 'kangaroo'. The word Kangaroo is now known all over the world.



Ganhaarr [crocodiles] Going Past Captain Cook 2019

by Daisy Hamlot, Thuppi
National Museum of Australia

That Cook, he was surprised to see the big Ganhaarr (crocodiles). It was lucky he and his crew weren't eaten. 'Watch out Cook, Ganhaarr is coming for you!'