



"Old Long Necked Turtle"

This painting, representing a long necked turtle, once decorated the inner walls of a wet weather bark hut in a remote area of the Australian bush. Totemic images like the turtle, crocodile, kangaroo or fish were often painted directly on the inner panels of the eucalyptus bark huts and shelters the Aboriginals erected during their peregrinations.

Gunwinggu Tribe, Oenpelli, Northern Territory, Australia. Natural pigments on un-prepared eucalyptus bark. 74 cm x 39 cm.

This is a bark of not only very high pictorial quality but it is of historical importance as well being that it was collected in the field in 1956 by Dorothy Bennett and has Bennett's collection no "12" on recto. She was a renowned pioneer, along with the legendary James Davidson in collecting and bringing aboriginal artwork to the public. Works from Bennett's collection, as from that of Davidson, found their way into many important early collections of aboriginal art, including the Australian State collections.

See the early photograph by Wright & Son from 1871 showing a bark shelter.

Literature:

III. : WALKABOUT the Early Art of the Australian Aborigines – and a Selection of Early Eskimo Art.
Galerie Meyer, Paris, 2012, fig. 3.