



## Country

by Warwick Keen (assisted by Noel Wellington)

24 carved poles (blackbutt and iron bark)

Artwork description: *Country* is a collection of 24 poles carved with contemporary Aboriginal designs. The work has been inspired by the dendroglyphs or carved trees that were part of the traditional art and culture of the Aboriginal people of New South Wales. Dendroglyphs were most commonly used to signify important places such as initiation or burial sites. While most commonly taking on geometric forms, dendroglyphs sometimes featured the carved shapes of animals and people.

The artist has taken his inspiration from this traditional practice of carving trees and from his own heritage, always being mindful of the sensitivities associated with traditional designs and their uses. Encouraged and guided by esteemed Aboriginal curator, Djon Mundine, Keen has created a series of contemporary works that are reflective of, but distinct from, traditional images and practices. The works are inspired by sacred practices, but are not sacred objects in their own right, and are able to be displayed openly in public.

*Country* was developed as part of the *Bungaree: the First Australian* exhibition in 2012 and was included as a feature in *Bungaree's Farm* exhibition in 2015. *Bungaree's Farm* was the recipient of the Museum and Galleries Australia National Award in 2015.