

The Cast

CRUSOE KURRDAL (Ridjimiraril)

Crusoe Kurddal is the son of Crusoe Kuningbal and Lena Kuriniya, and the brother of Timothy Wulanjirr and Owen Yalandja. He is known for his large mimih sculptures, which are reminiscent of those made by his father. Crusoe Kurddal started making these sculptures following his father's death in 1984. He is also an accomplished dancer and has performed throughout Australia and overseas.



TEN CANOES is Kurddal's first acting role. A natural performer, he had always wanted to be an actor. When he heard that TEN CANOES was shooting in Ramingining, he approached director Rolf de Heer for a role. After thoroughly enjoying the filmmaking process, Kurddal is now looking forward to appearing in more films in the future.

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JAMIE GULPILIL (Dayindi/Yeeralparil)

Twenty-two year old, Jamie Gulpilil, is the son of the great actor, David Gulpilil. His interest in acting began when accompanying his father to various film shoots and film premieres.

He was born and continues to live in Ramingining, north-eastern Arnhem Land.

TEN CANOES is his first acting role.



RICHARD BIRRINBIRRIN (Birrinbirrin & Associate Producer)

Richard Birrinbirrin is Treasurer of the Aboriginal artist's co-operative, Bula'bula Arts, in Ramingining.

A man with a keen intellect and empiric understanding of balanda and yolngu "ways of life", he is an excellent ambassador for the Art Centre, as well as for Aboriginal Art in general. Birrinbirrin is also an Executive Member of ANKAAA (a peak Indigenous Arts advocacy organisation).

Born in 1953 at Milingimbi mission Birrinbirrin, was initiated on the beach outside his father's (David Malangi) self constructed tin-shed home.

Malangi was always keen that his sons and daughters recieved "two way" (balanda and yolngu) education and Birrinbirrin went on to become a mental health worker for the Ramingining Clinic for 10 years.



As a leader in ceremonies Birrinbirrin is not new to performance. Indeed, he made his public performance debut in New York in 2002. As an accompaniment to The Native Born exhibition, Birrinbirrin and his brother Gulaygulay were commissioned to perform a dada (smoking) ceremony. Birrinbirrin has travelled to Taipei, Tokyo and Canberra to make public art.

A keen supporter of TEN CANOES during its development phase, Birrinbirrin's enthusiasm and assistance provided important introductions of the filmmakers to the Ramingining community.

Birrinbirrin is currently (2005) a recipient of an Australia Council grant for New Work and a well travelled ambassador for Bula'bula Arts Aboriginal Corporation.

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PETER MINYGULULU (Minygululu)

Peter Minygululu, an exhibiting artist, and ceremonial leader, was born near Mirrngatja around 1942.



Minygululu paints the story of his father's country - the land around Mirrngatja, which is on the eastern side of the Arafura Swamp.

During the development of TEN CANOES, Minygululu was consistently supportive of the project. He is not only an authority on making traditional artefacts such as bark canoes, he also remembers the time when poling across the Swamp to collect the magpie geese was an annual event.

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FRANCES DJULIBING (Nowalingu)

When director Rolf de Heer was casting in Ramingining during pre-production, he kept meeting the vibrant and vivacious Frances Djulibing, who at the time worked at the local shop. He quickly believed she would be perfect for the role of "Nowalingu" and promptly cast her as the second wife.

Her enthusiasm was second to none. She had always wanted to be an actor in a film but never thought it was possible given she lived in such a remote area of Australia.



PHILIP GUDTHAYKUDTHAY (The Sorcerer)

Born in 1935, Philip Gudthaykudthay is the most senior artist from Ramingining. Taught by great artists such as his father Dawidi and his uncle Djawa, Gudthaykudthay has been painting since the 1960s. A stealthy old man with a languid gait, *Pussycat*, as he is colloquially known, is a senior ritual leader. His nickname comes from one of his principal totems, *Burruwara*, the native cat —one just has to watch him walk to see the connection.



In the 1960s Gudthaykudthay first sold his paintings through Alan Fidock at the Milingimbi Mission. He was living on the mainland at Nangalala and worked variously as a fencer, stockman and crocodile hunter, while painting in his free time. Gudthaykudthay was the first Ramingining artist to have a solo show. Held at the Garry Anderson Gallery in 1983, the show was a sell-out. Since that time he has participated in numerous national and international exhibitions, including four more solo shows.

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DAVID GULPILIL (The Storyteller)

David Gulpilil was born in 1953, in Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory of Australia. He grew up in a tribal lifestyle in an area north east of the world famous Kakadu National Park where his ancestors have lived for thousands of years.

In 1969 the British director Nicholas Roeg chose David as the lead in the feature film WALKABOUT filmed on location in Northern Australia.

David Gulpilil is one of Australia's most accomplished exponents of traditional Aboriginal dance and the native wind instrument, the didgeridoo. He has toured his dances Australia wide and internationally and has performed with his troupe in the United States, Great Britain and France. He and a group of his native dancers performed at the Australian Pavilion at the World Expo 1985 in Osaka and also in Tokyo.



In 1987 Gulpilil was awarded the Australia Medal, one of the highest awards to Australian citizens, for his services to the Arts.

Gulpilil's career as an actor since WALKABOUT has been extensive. He has appeared in feature films such as MAD DOG MORGAN directed by Philippe Mora and also starring Dennis Hopper; THE LAST WAVE directed by Peter Weir and also starring Richard Chamberlain; STORM BOY directed by Henri Safran; THE RIGHT STUFF directed by Philip Kaufman; DARK AGE directed by Arch Nicholson; DEAD HEART directed by Nick Parsons and starring Bryan Brown; SERENADES directed by Mojgan Khadem; and the Wim Wender's feature film UNTIL THE END OF THE WORLD.

Gulpilil also appeared alongside Paul Hogan in CROCODILE DUNDEE, and choreographed the Aboriginal dance sequences. He also starred in the Australian film RABBIT PROOF FENCE directed by Phillip Noyce.

TEN CANOES is the second feature film working with director, Rolf de Heer. In 2002, Gulpilil received numerous acting awards for his role in THE TRACKER, notably winning Lead Actor at the AFI Awards, IF Awards and the Film Critics Circle Awards. He also won Best Actor at the Tudawali Awards.