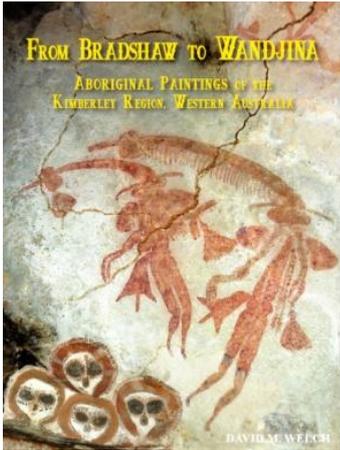


Kimberley Society

Book Note



From Bradshaw to Wandjina: Aboriginal paintings of the Kimberley region, Western Australia by David M. Welch. Australian Aboriginal Culture Series No. 12, [David M. Welch Publications](#), Darwin, 2016. Soft cover, 102 pages, 240 x 170 mm, prolific full colour images, RRP \$25.

In this book David covers the range in painted styles of the Kimberley rock art from the earliest examples of irregular infill animals in what he calls The Archaic Period, through the Bradshaw or Gwion styles to Wandjinas (often spelt Wanjinas in current usage) and the limited examples of paintings of the Contact Period which portray European items.

David has many publications relating to Kimberley rock art – he cites 26 references in this publication – and is well qualified to comment on Kimberley rock art having been researching it for about 30 years. One of his long-standing views of the long history of Aboriginal art in the Kimberley is that of progressive change in styles rather than abrupt change with long periods in between.

In this latest book, he again argues for this progressive change and illustrates similarities between accoutrements depicted in ancient rock paintings and those worn by Aboriginal people engaged in ceremonial dances in recent times, or depicted in early photographs from the early 1900s.

David developed his own nomenclature for Kimberley rock art more than 20 years ago, and he has always avoided the whitefella name Bradshaw in his publications. It was therefore surprising to see Bradshaw in the title of this book, but he does explain the history of this term (named after explorer Joseph Bradshaw who first reported the figures) and he continues to use his preferred nomenclature of Tasselled Figures (Tassel Bradshaws or Ngunuru Gwions), Bent Knee Figures (Sash Bradshaws or Yowna Gwions), Kimberley Dynamic Figures (Elegant Action Figures or Dynamic Gwions), and Straight Part Figures (Clothes Peg Figures or Dalal Gwions).

The Wandjina section of the book contains many images of spectacular paintings, some not previously published. There are also summaries of important mythologies associated with Wandjinas, and a section on Totemic (Dreaming) sites.

This small book is a great addition to the literature on Kimberley rock art and is a must for anyone with an interest in this subject. Copies are available at Boffins Bookshop in Perth and at other outlets listed on David's website.

Mike Donaldson