

Symbols and their meaning in Aboriginal Art

In its basic depiction, the individual, family and community unit is easily identified. Changes to this develop from region to region and within the same region.



man in process of initiation



man



woman



child



family



community



tribes



adult or man or woman

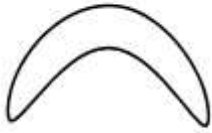


man

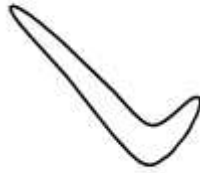


child or child in initiation

Many artworks depict tools, weapons and other utensils used for a variety of activities from digging for witchetty grubs, honey ants and plant tubers to hunting of animals.



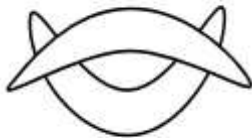
boomerang



hunting boomerang



return boomerang



boomerangs



digging sticks



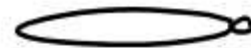
nulla nulla or club



spear



spears



woomera

Symbols are also used to depict locations. Some symbols are used in conjunction with others to depict human activities.



campfire or waterhole


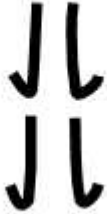

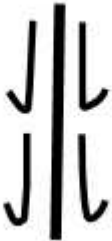





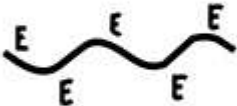




campfire



women teaching children
- the passing down of
knowledge.

Foot prints and other symbols are used to depict wildlife, as well as representing their tracks left in the sand. Some artists depict the wildlife in outline form and 3 dimensional representation, whilst other artist use a particular pattern to portray the wildlife. There are paintings that appear to be pure abstract, with just lines and dots, representing an animal, with the only clue for the non initiated, is the title of the painting.

| | | |
|---|--|--|
|  <p>tracks</p> |  <p>kangaroo tracks</p> |  <p>kangaroo tracks</p> |
|  <p>kangaroo tracks</p> |  <p>kangaroo tracks</p> |  <p>kangaroo tracks</p> |
|  <p>emu tracks</p> |  <p>emu track</p> |  <p>emu dreaming</p> |
|  <p>goanna tracks</p> |  <p>goanna burrows often have multiple entrance</p> |  <p>goanna hole in spinifex country</p> |