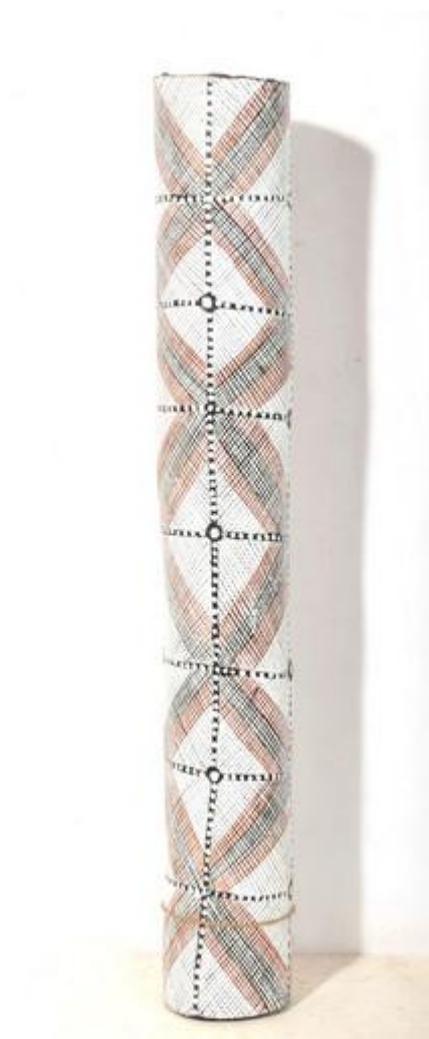


## Hollow Log - Lorrkon



The Lorrkon or bone pole coffin ceremony is the final ceremony in a sequence of mortuary rituals celebrated by the people of Arnhem Land.

The ceremony involves the placing of the deceased's bones into a hollow log which is decorated with painted clan designs and ceremonially placed into the ground where it remains until it slowly decayed over many years.

The hollow log is made from a termite hollowed Stringybark tree (*Eucalyptus tetradonta*) and is decorated with totemic emblems.

The western Arnhem Land version of the Lorrkon ceremony involves the singing of sacred songs to the accompaniment of *karlikarli*—a pair of sacred boomerangs used as rhythm instruments.

In the past, the final evening of the ceremony involved dancers decorating themselves with kapok down. Today cotton wool is more commonly used. Much of the final segments of the ceremony are

conducted in the secrecy of a restricted mens' camp.

The complete ceremony may stretch over a period of two weeks, but on the last night the bones of the deceased, which have been kept in a bark container (or more recently wrapped in cloth and kept in a suitcase) are taken out, painted with red ochre and placed inside the hollow log. This ceremony may take place many years after the person has died.

At first light on the final morning of the Lorrkon ceremony, the men appear, coming out of their secret bush camp carrying the pole towards the womens' camp. The two groups call to each other using distinct ceremonial calls. The women have prepared a hole in which to stand the pole and when it is upright, women in particular kinship relationships to the deceased, dance around the pole in a jumping/shuffling motion. The Lorrkon is then often covered with a tarpaulin and left to slowly decay.

**Reference: Maningrida Arts & Culture, Northern Territory - Australia**