



CLIFF

FIRST MAN IN
BLACKSTONE

11 FEBRUARY - 10 MARCH 2022

REID



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CLIFF REID

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BLACKSTONE

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40 EXHIBITION STREET
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

FOREWORD

words by ben clark

MANAGING DIRECTOR, D'LAN CONTEMPORARY

We're delighted to open our 2022 exhibition calendar with *Cliff Reid: First man in Blackstone*.

Cliff Reid is widely regarded as a leader of Ngaanyatjarra culture who enjoyed a devoted following amongst serious Australian and international collectors of First Nations art. The artist had solo shows, most notably with William Mora Galleries, and participated in several group exhibitions with leading gallerists of the day.

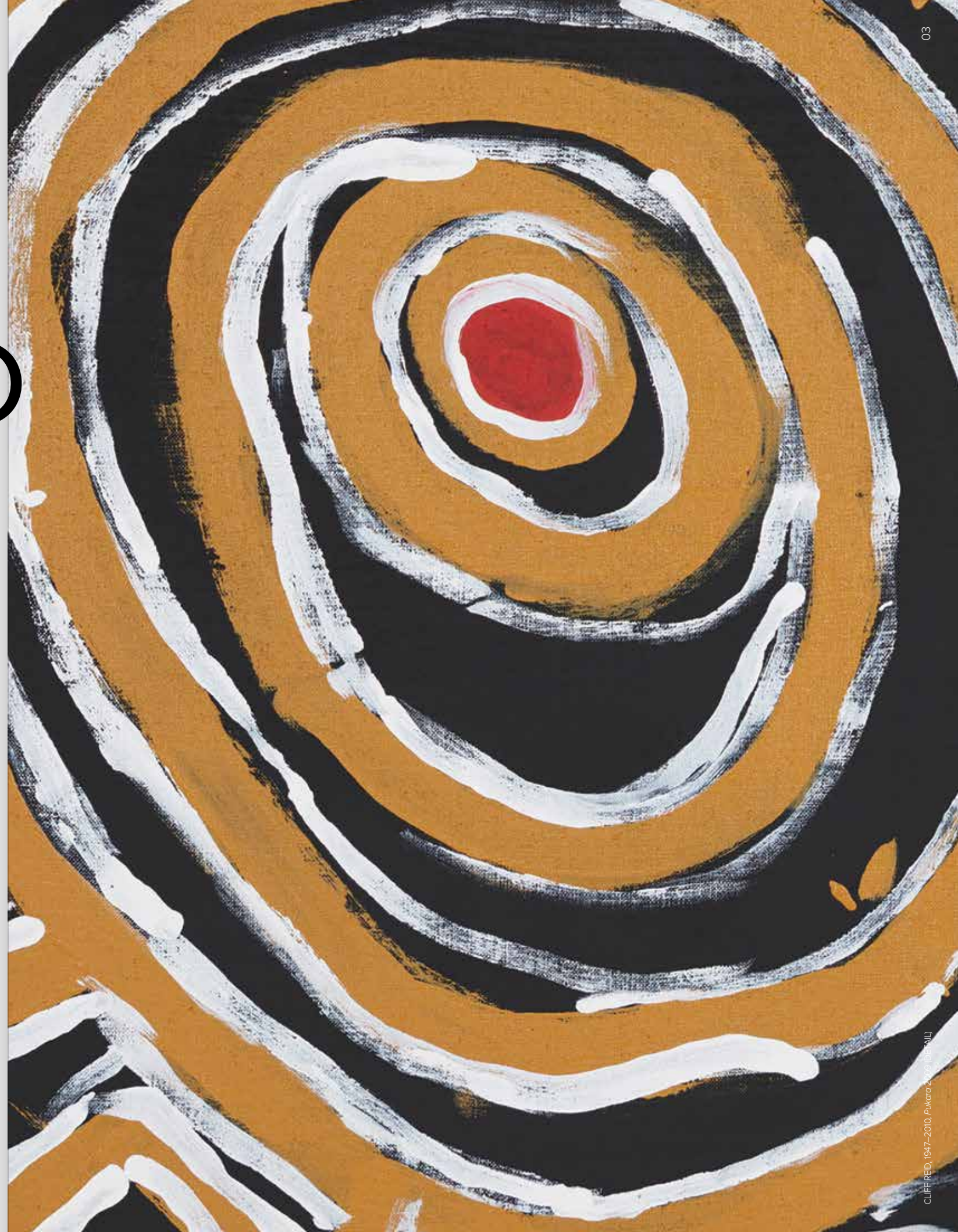
In the mid 2000s, a fire at Papulankutja Artists had a devastating impact on the archive of key works from Blackstone. It is estimated that only forty of Cliff Reid's works remain in existence today.

We are therefore grateful to our domestic and international vendors that have entrusted us to assemble an incredible selection of works that span the artist's entire creative period. Many of the works in the exhibition were collected by Swiss - based collector Arnaud Serval. Arnaud's prescient wisdom in assembling a comprehensive body of Cliff Reid's work over 20 years ago - and his willingness to share these works with audiences once again - has enabled us to highlight the cultural and artistic achievements of the artist.

The development of D'LAN Contemporary exhibitions requires commitment and expertise across many specialist areas beyond our own team. We invest significantly in helping build the narrative and context of our exhibitions and developing market appreciation of the artists we work closely with. We typically commence the process many months before opening, and in this instance have worked closely with Madeleine van der List, art centre manager of Papulankutja Artists throughout.

I want to acknowledge the effort, energy and enthusiasm Madi has brought to this project as well as the board of Papulankutja Artists who granted us permission to fashion an idea into a concept, which in turn developed into this exhibition.

Finally, I am delighted to announce that with the launch of this exhibition, we have also been appointed as the exclusive representative of The Estate of Cliff Reid. This is a first for our business and will see D'LAN Contemporary working more closely with the Papulankutja Artists to further develop market appreciation and awareness for Cliff Reid's physical and digital assets in the future.



CLIFF REID

1947–2010

Kilykilykari 2005

synthetic polymer paint on linen

101.6 x 101.6 cm

PROVENANCE

Papulankutja Artists, Western Australia, cat. no. 05–1087

Marshall Arts, Adelaide

Private Collection

NFS



CLIFF REID

1947–2010

Tjilika 2007synthetic polymer paint on canvas
101.6 x 101.6 cm

PROVENANCE

Papulankutja Artists, Western Australia, cat.no. 07–14
Marshall Arts, Adelaide
Private Collection

AUD 12,000

**CLIFF REID**

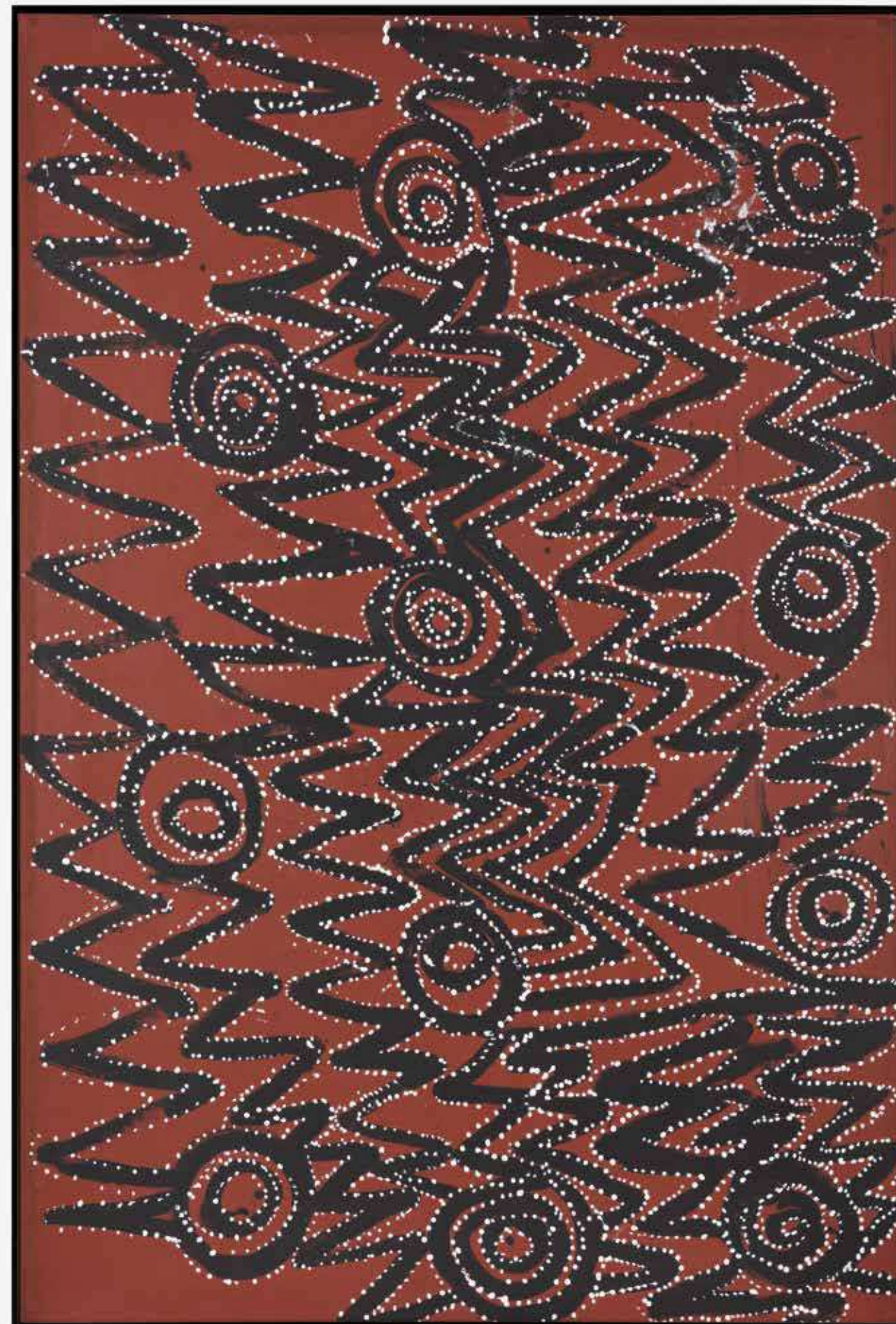
1947–2010

Tingarri 2008synthetic polymer paint on linen
152 x 101 cm

PROVENANCE

Papulankutja Artists, Western Australia, cat. no. 08–107
William Mora Galleries, Melbourne
The Collection of Arnaud Serval, Switzerland

AUD 16,000



CLIFF REID

words by vanessa merlino

HEAD OF RESEARCH, D'LAN CONTEMPORARY

FIRST MAN IN BLACKSTONE

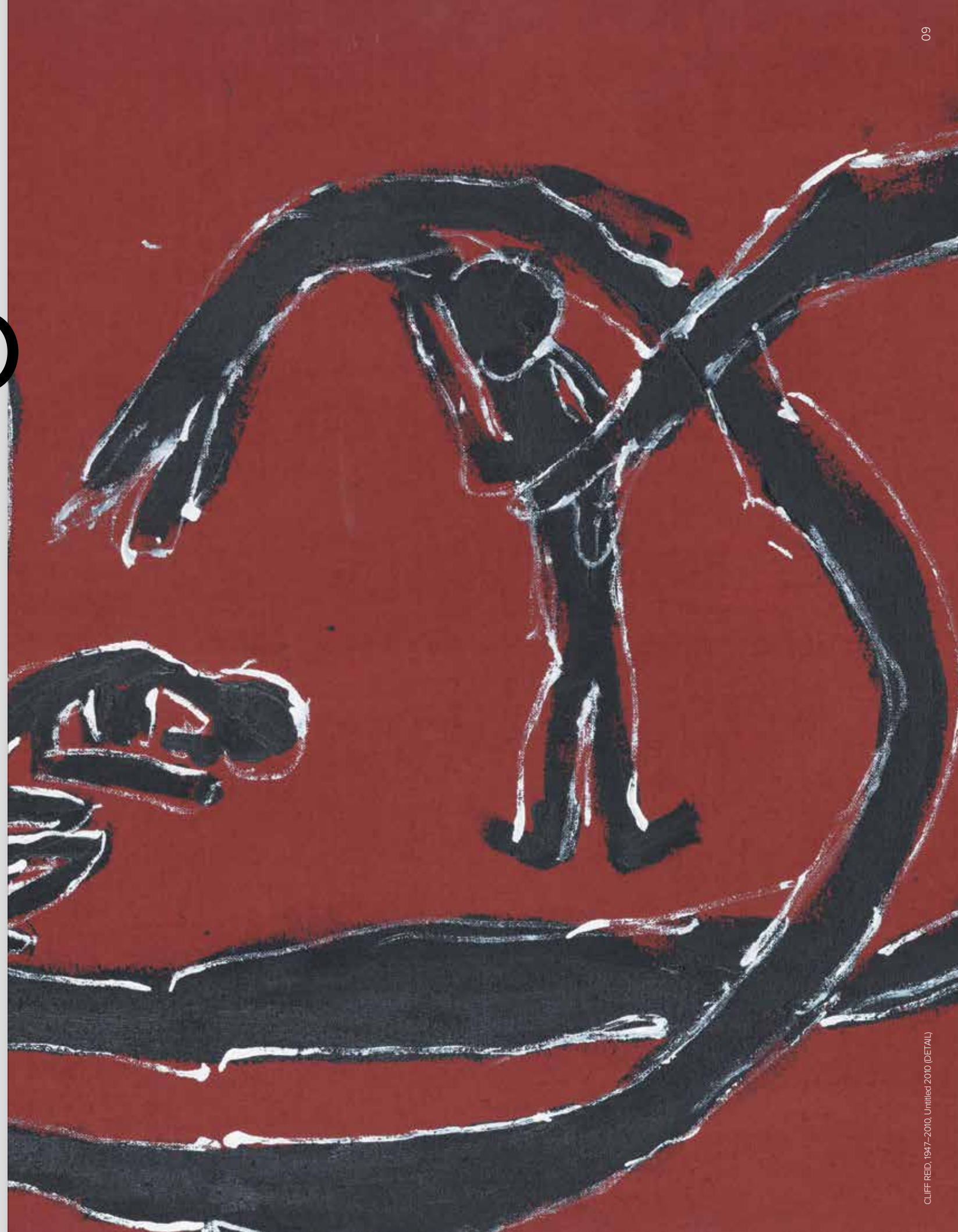
Immediate, eclectic, raw and direct, Cliff Reid's paintings reflect the vigour of the Ngaanyatjarra region. Uniquely shaped by paralleled oral and visual storytelling traditions, his work is essentially derived from Ngaanyatjarra Law and its imprint in ancient rock art, reinforced by his exposure to Christianity. His distinctive style encompasses the cosmological expansiveness of the Dreaming and its demonstrative human elements. Cliff executed his paintings with conceptual sophistication driven by his curiosity about the world and his desire to express traditional cultural pedagogy. By avoiding overworked technical elements, Cliff Reid enhanced the communicative function of his art practice becoming one of the most esteemed narrators of Ngaanyatjarra culture and unique artists of the time.

Cliff Reid was born in the bush in 1947 at Warnan in Western Australia. As a Ngaanyatjarra man, Cliff was raised understanding his country as created and maintained by the ancestral figures and their laws. At the age of ten, Cliff moved to the Warburton Mission, established in 1934. Like most Ngaanyatjarra people, the Mission provided the first and only port of Western contact at the time. In his formative years, Cliff attended the mission school while his parents continued to live in the bush, returning only to trade dingo scalps for stores, tinned meat, sugar, flour, and tea.

Life was busy and regimented for the young Cliff, who had fond memories of his time boarding as a student. Religious

education was the pinnacle of the boy's daily life which set the measure of discipline that drove the flow of the daily routines. Cliff would spend his school holidays travelling with his parents across their country, where he continued to learn the spiritual and biological order of his traditional lands. His religious education was balanced with cultural instruction from his family and burgeoning knowledge of the Tjukurrpa – Dreaming. Cliff would later reflect on how he valued the strict cultural instruction of both traditions.¹ From these two pedagogical pillars sprang Cliff Reid's unique craft of visual storytelling.

When the Mission closed around 1960, Cliff moved south towards Laverton and worked on various sheep stations for the next ten years before returning to Warburton. He met and married his second wife Ruby, the daughter of Ngaanyatjarra Lawman and leader Fred Forbes. Cliff's marriage to Ruby provided the foundation for a lived reconciliation between Law and Christianity, a sentiment that his father-in-law actively promoted and practised. Ruby was Cliff's true love match, and the two were equal partners in life. When they followed Fred back to the family's country of Blackstone, Cliff and Ruby were at the heart of the community's art centre, eventually helping incorporate Papulankutja Artists in 2003. Cliff and Ruby's son Thomas Reid remembered him to be 'the first man in Blackstone', for his curiosity and capacity across mediums would inspire other men to take up the brush.²



CLIFF REID

1947–2010

Wati Kutjarra 2009synthetic polymer paint on linen
127 x 65 cm

PROVENANCE

Papulankutja Artists, Western Australia, cat. no. 09-819
William Mora Galleries, Melbourne
The Collection of Arnaud Serval, Switzerland

AUD 8,000

**CLIFF REID**

1947–2010

Wati Kutjarra 2009synthetic polymer paint on linen
151 x 103 cm

PROVENANCE

Papulankutja Artists, Western Australia, cat. no. 09-1151
William Mora Galleries, Melbourne
The Collection of Arnaud Serval, Switzerland

AUD 16,000





CLIFF REID

1947–2010

Tingari 2009

synthetic polymer paint on linen

152 x 100 cm

PROVENANCE

Papulankutja Artists, Western Australia, cat. no. 09-1282

William Mora Galleries, Melbourne

The Collection of Arnaud Serval, Switzerland

AUD 16,000



The sacred country that surrounds Blackstone is rich with ancestral activity such as the Tingarri Dreaming and the Dreaming of the Wati Kutjarra - Two Goanna Men. Cliff examined the boundaries and possibilities of these critical narratives and drew from these visual languages' raw, communicative elements.

The Tingarri Dreaming is a dominant narrative that crosses over vast swathes of Ngaanyatjarra and Pintupi country to the North East. These tremendous ancestral beings move across the country in great hordes. They devour the landscape with novices in tow as they pass through it.³ The Tingarri motif, used in ceremonial body design, has a robust, geometric quality that consists of an endless extension of circles interconnected with lines. When depicting the Tingarri, Cliff often adheres to traditional iconography. Appearing straightforward in its simplicity, the dragged brushwork and sparse dotting, however, capture the life and movement of the enveloping hordes. The Tingarri is also depicted through the geometric forms in carved shields, the *purnu* - woodcarving - tradition that spans the Ngaanyatjarra Lands. Cliff is open and direct in his transference of design from one medium to another. *Tingarri* 2009 (09-1283) is a superb example of Cliff's explicitness in sharing the authority of Law with the world.

Perhaps the most compelling of Cliff Reid's paintings are the figurative works appearing across his career that echo representative elements of the rock art of Ngaanyatjarra

country. The depicted human form is a powerful communicative tool equal to the traditional iconography. These scenes have multiple human players engaged in various acts with many works left untitled to whet the imagination. Rough, white outlines are applied to emphasise the players who appear to be painted hastily and void of dotting that might ask more of the composition. These figures are often associated with the multifarious activities of the Wati Kutjarra - Two Goanna Men Dreaming, who are embodied in the landscape near the community of Blackstone.

An immense narrative that crosses over a great expanse of Ngaanyatjarra and Pintupi country, the activities and adventures of the Wati Kutjarra Dreaming, to the outside observer, provides the most comprehensible characterisation to desert life. The Two Men are essentially interlopers who act as disrespectful tourists in other people's lands and venture into many quarters of the country. Nevertheless, they made many things happen, such as creating rockholes and water sources and revealing vital information to bring on the abundance of food. Although their power and personalities often display arrogant and boastful spectacles, their actions in the Dreaming ultimately serve the Ngaanyatjarra people.

In his depiction of the Wati Kutjarra, Cliff Reid reveals his conceptualism of its Dreaming and how its nuances and complexities necessitate various representation methods.

CLIFF REID,
circa 1947–2010

Tingarri 2009

synthetic polymer paint on linen
121 x 76 cm

PROVENANCE

Papulankutja Artists, Western Australia, cat. no. 09-1283
William Mora Galleries, Melbourne
The Collection of Arnaud Serval, Switzerland

AUD 8,000



CLIFF REID,
circa 1947–2010

Tingarri 2009

synthetic polymer paint on linen
120 x 91 cm

PROVENANCE

Papulankutja Artists, Western Australia, cat. no. 09-1287
William Mora Galleries, Melbourne
The Collection of Arnaud Serval, Switzerland

AUD 10,000



CLIFF REID

1947–2010

Purria Pukarna 2009synthetic polymer paint on linen
100 x 151 cm

PROVENANCE

Papulankutja Artists, Western Australia, cat. no. 09-1292

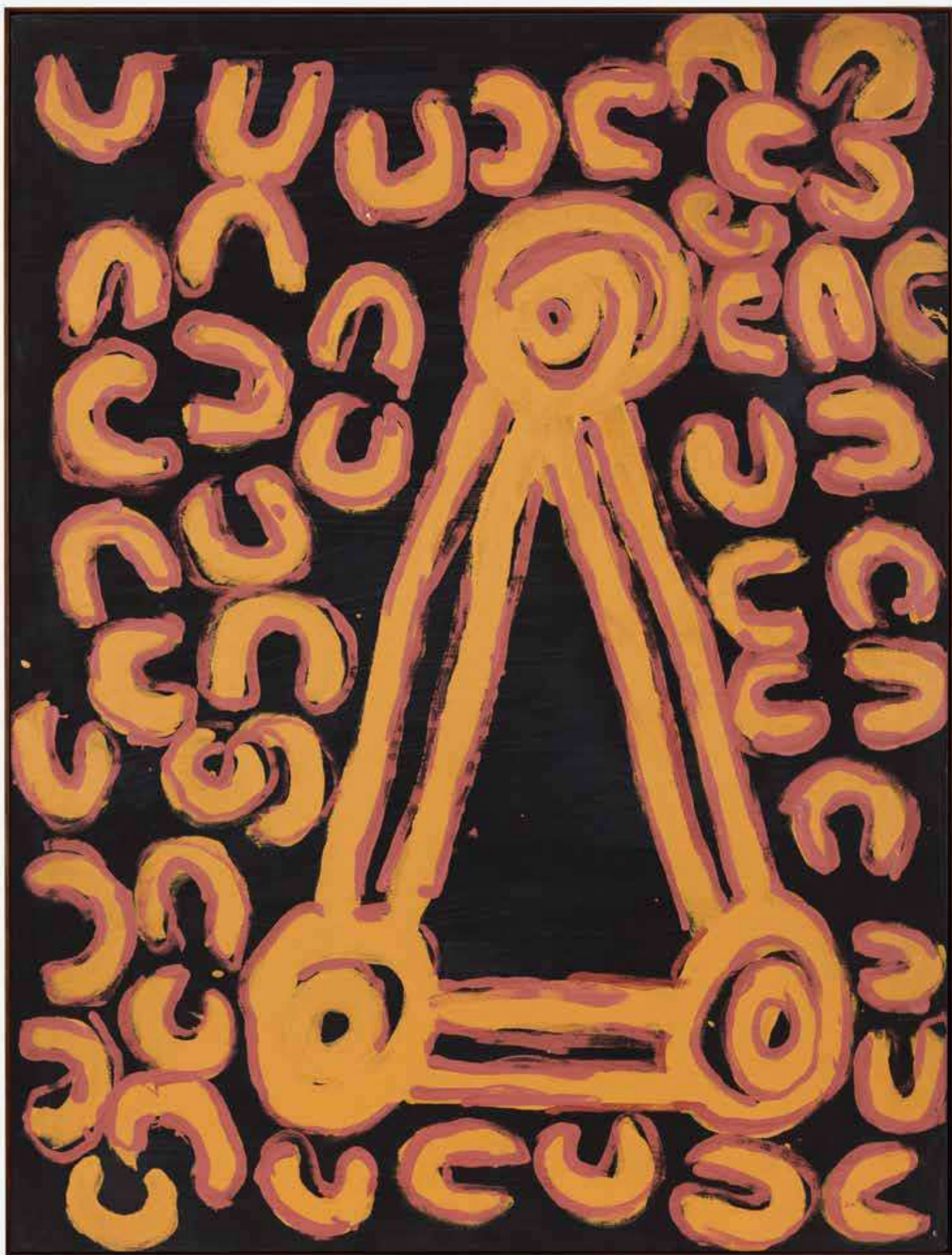
William Mora Galleries, Melbourne

The Collection of Arnaud Serval, Switzerland

AUD 16,000





**CLIFF REID**

1947–2010

Wati Kutjarra 2009

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

99 x 75 cm

PROVENANCE

Papulankutja Artists, Western Australia, cat. no. 09-1294

William Mora Galleries, Melbourne

The Collection of Arnaud Serval, Switzerland

AUD 8,000

CLIFF REID

1947–2010

Wati Kutjarra 2009

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

122 x 61cm

PROVENANCE

Papulankutja Artists, Western Australia, cat. no. 09-1295

William Mora Galleries, Melbourne

The Collection of Arnaud Serval, Switzerland

AUD 8,000

**CLIFF REID**

1947–2010

Pukara 2009

synthetic polymer paint on linen

122 x 90cm

PROVENANCE

Papulankutja Artists, Western Australia, cat. no. 09-1300

William Mora Galleries, Melbourne

The Collection of Arnaud Serval, Switzerland

AUD 10,000



**CLIFF REID**

1947–2010

Wati Kutjarra 2010

synthetic polymer paint on linen

76 x 148 cm

PROVENANCE

Papulankutja Artists, Western Australia, cat. no. 10–61

William Mora Galleries, Melbourne

The Collection of Arnaud Serval, Switzerland

AUD 18,000

CLIFF REID

1947–2010

Untitled 2010

synthetic polymer paint on linen

75 x 151 cm

PROVENANCE

Papulankutja Artists, Western Australia, cat. no. 10-62

William Mora Galleries, Melbourne

The Collection of Arnaud Serval, Switzerland

AUD 18,000



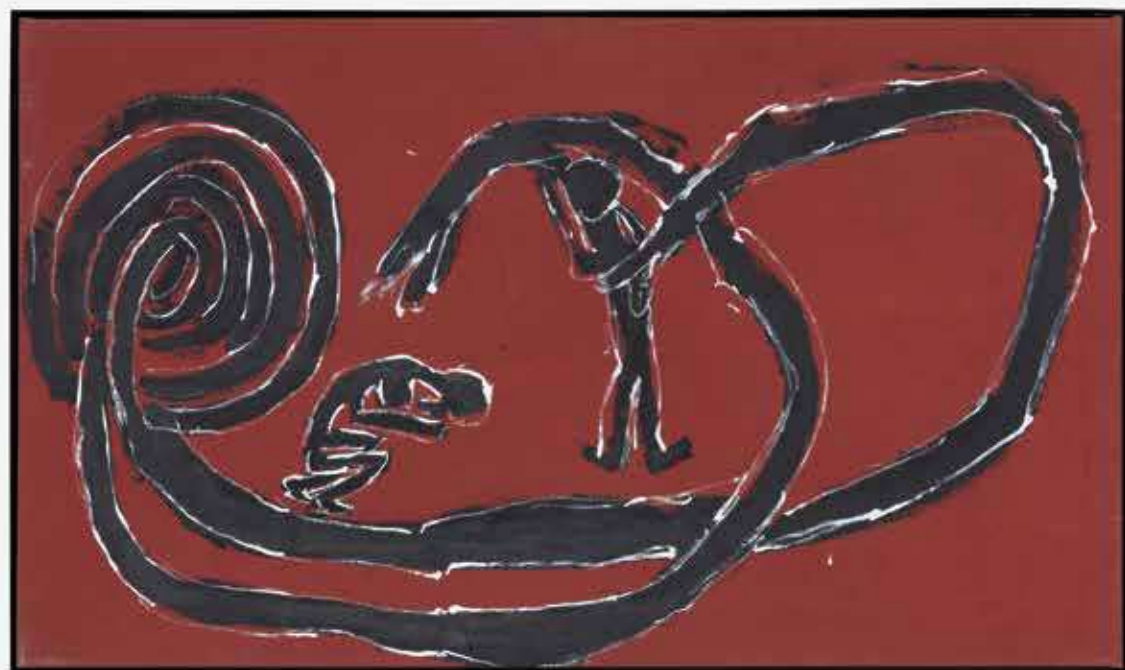
CLIFF REID

1947–2010

Untitled 2010

synthetic polymer paint on linen
101 x 60 cm**PROVENANCE**Papulankutja Artists, Western Australia, cat. no. 10-66
The Collection of Arnaud Serval, Switzerland**LITERATURE**Tim Acker and John Carty (eds.)
Ngaanyatjarra: Art of the Lands, UWA Publishing,
Western Australia, 2012, p. 31 (illus)

AUD 10,000

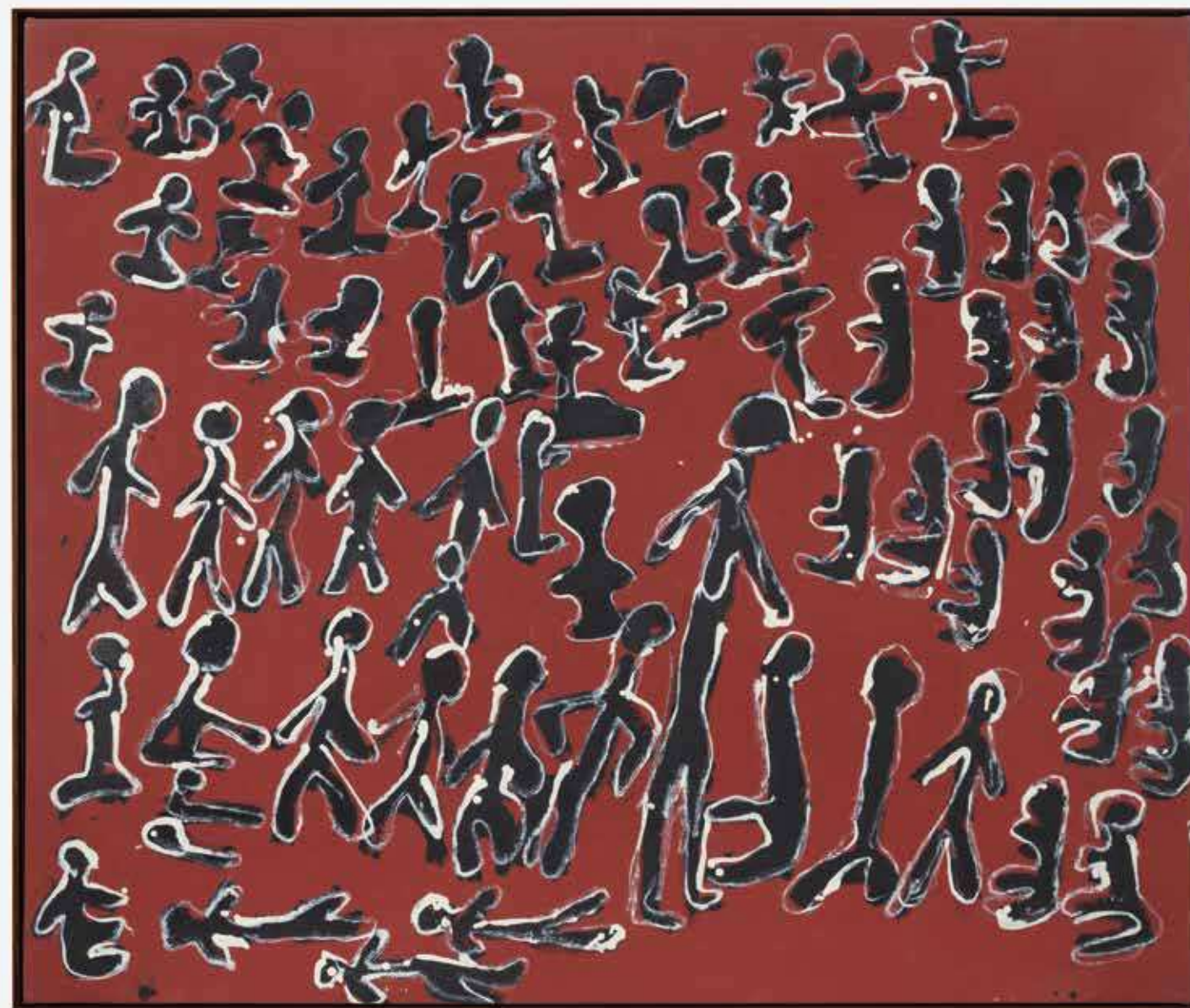
**CLIFF REID**

1947–2010

Untitled 2010

synthetic polymer paint on linen
101 x 121 cm**PROVENANCE**Papulankutja Artists, Western Australia, cat. no. 10-69
William Mora Galleries, Melbourne
The Collection of Arnaud Serval, Switzerland

AUD 15,000



It can be delicately minimal as represented in *Wati Kutjarra* 2009 (09–1151) or embodied iconographically as in *Wati Kutjarra* 2009 (09–1295). However, when depicting chapters of the narrative through figurative storytelling methods, Cliff plays with the function of the ‘open story’ revealed to children and the culturally uninitiated. The open story, which contains the seeds or clues to higher knowledge, is a concept in both the rock paintings found in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands and the Christian parables to which he was exposed in childhood.

In *Wati Kutjarra* 2010 (10–61), the scene depicts the two Goanna Men arguing which direction to go after arriving at the Blackstone range. In a typical show of their temperament, they trick each other with a disguise. However, they transform simultaneously so that neither is recognisable to the other. Although roughly executed, the appearance of the human form is arresting and instantly personifies the ancestral beings, inviting the viewer to ponder the presence of a greater narrative.

Cliff was explicit in how his work was derived from the pigment art that adorns the rock faces, both ancient and recent manifestations of the Dreaming. A glimpse into the vast cosmos of the Wati Kutjarra, his paintings perform the same function as this ancient form of storytelling, as an interpretive device that depicts both everyday and secret/

sacred themes. Through the fabled origins of the Wati Kutjarra story, Cliff applies the same Christian depictive methods to urge westerners to understand the wealth of his culture as he was urged to understand the foundations of western religion.

While many artists often avoid discussing the connections between the open and restricted elements of desert culture, Cliff Reid's practice draws from these twin influences. He was a remarkable artist whose work demands attention in how it seizes and delivers its raw messages and did not use obscure associations as a barrier or endpoint at which no more can be known. Cliff Reid was ultimately concerned with documenting and communicating the value and authority of his culture. His interest in storytelling would allow him to collect the tools of both his traditional and western experiences. His work can be understood as a manifestation of reconciliation between the two.

- 1 Robyn Williams, *Places and Stories: Mapping Ngaanyatjarra Art-Making Practices*, 2017, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Technology, Sydney.
- 2 John Carty, ‘Papulankutja’ in *Ngaanyatjarra: Art of the Lands*, Tim Acker and John Carty (eds) UWA Publishing: Western Australia, 2012, p. 175.
- 3 David Brooks, *Dreamings and Connections to Country Among the Ngaanyatjara and Pintupi of the Western Desert*, 2011, unpublished PhD thesis, Australian National University, Canberra.



CLIFF REID

1947–2010

Untitled 2010

synthetic polymer paint on linen
101 x 121 cm

PROVENANCE

Papulankutja Artists, Western Australia, cat. no. 10-72

William Mora Galleries, Melbourne

The Collection of Arnaud Serval, Switzerland

AUD 15,000

**CLIFF REID**

1947–2010

Wati Kutjarra 2010synthetic polymer paint on linen
111 x 124 cm

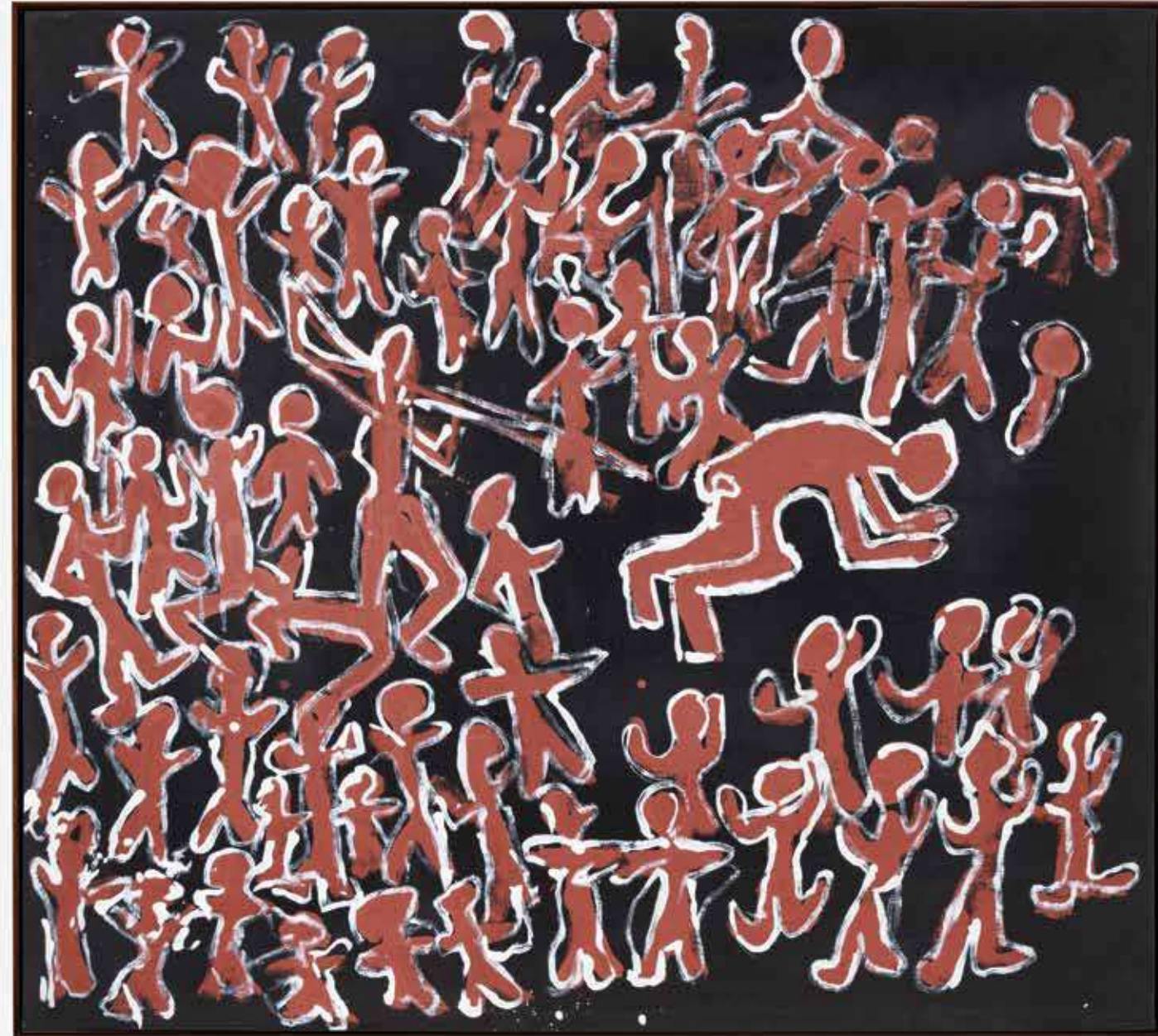
PROVENANCE

Papulankutja Artists, Western Australia, cat. no. 10-236

William Mora Galleries, Melbourne

The Collection of Arnaud Serval, Switzerland

AUD 16,000



CLIFF REID

1947–2010

Untitled 2010

synthetic polymer paint on linen
122 x 101 cm

PROVENANCE

Papulankutja Artists, Western Australia, cat. no. 10–73

William Mora Galleries, Melbourne

The Collection of Arnaud Serval, Switzerland

AUD 12,000

**CLIFF REID**

1947–2010

Untitled 2010

synthetic polymer paint on linen
110 x 125 cm

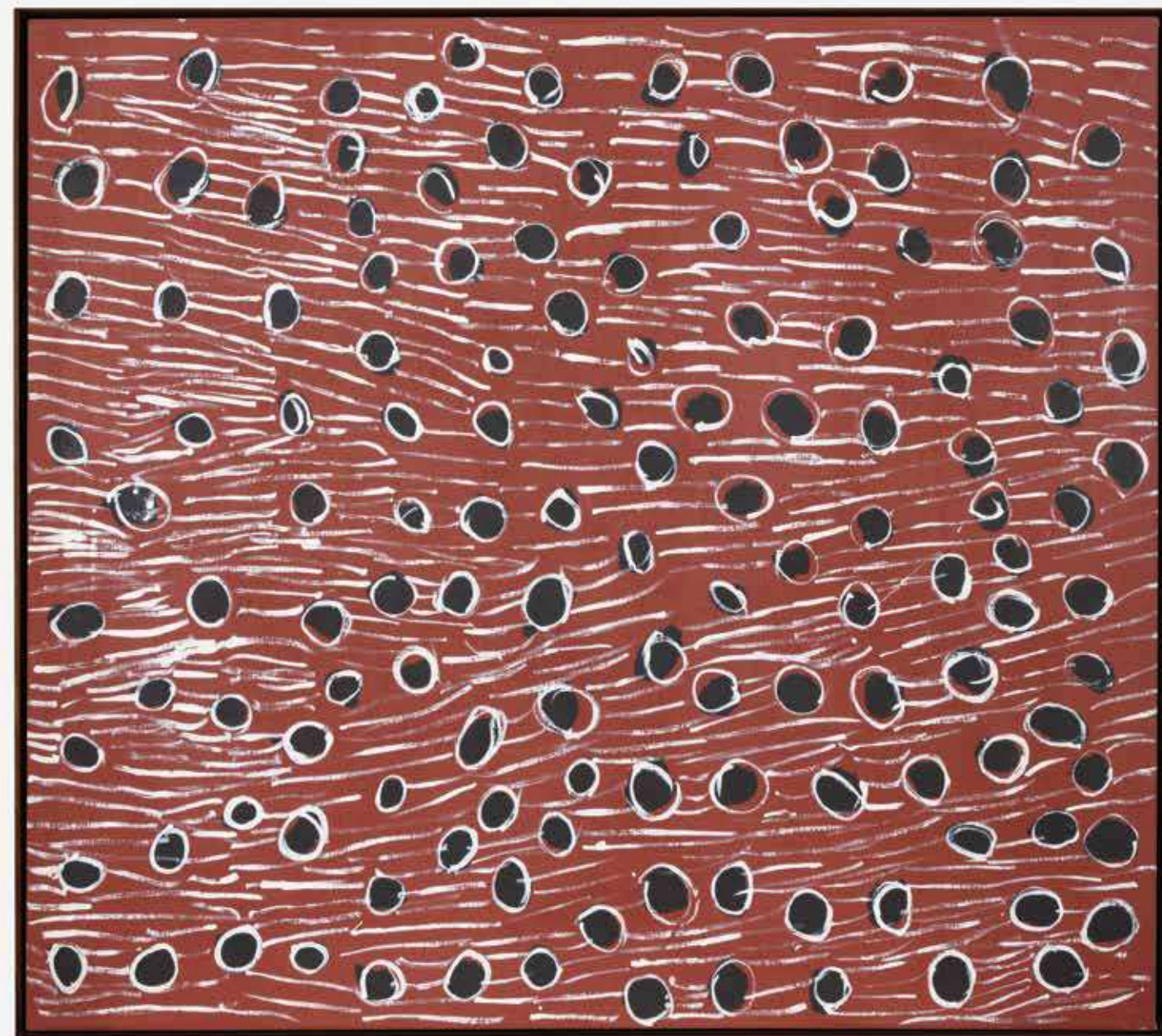
PROVENANCE

Papulankutja Artists, Western Australia, cat. no. 10–245

William Mora Galleries, Melbourne

The Collection of Arnaud Serval, Switzerland

AUD 14,000



CLIFF REID

1947–2010

Untitled 2010

synthetic polymer paint on linen

76 x 152 cm

PROVENANCE

Papulankutja Artists, Western Australia, cat. no. 10-247

William Mora Galleries, Melbourne

The Collection of Arnaud Serval, Switzerland

AUD 14,000

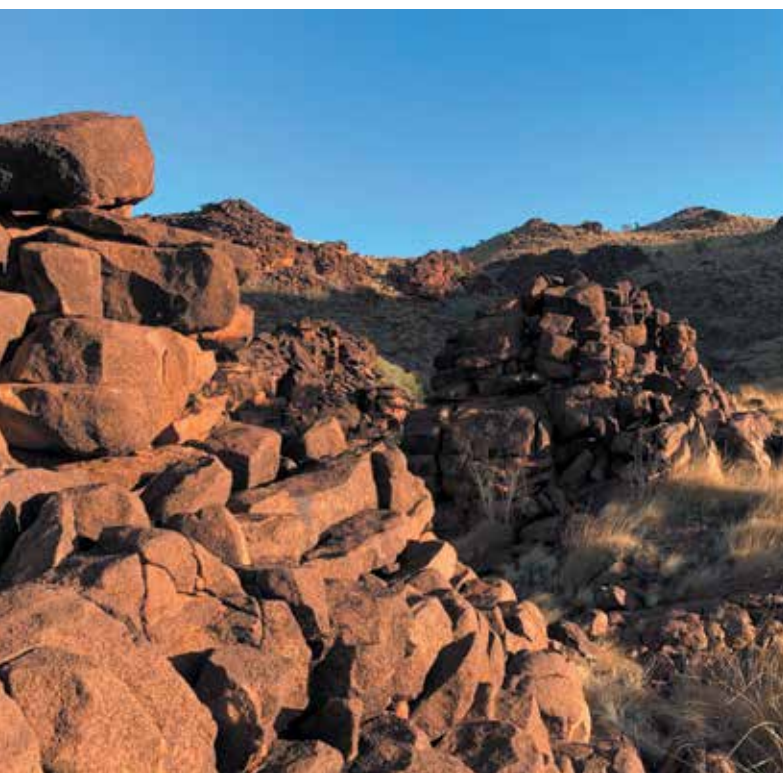


PAPULANKUTJA ARTISTS

words by Madeleine van der List

ART CENTRE MANAGER, PAPULANKUTJA ARTISTS

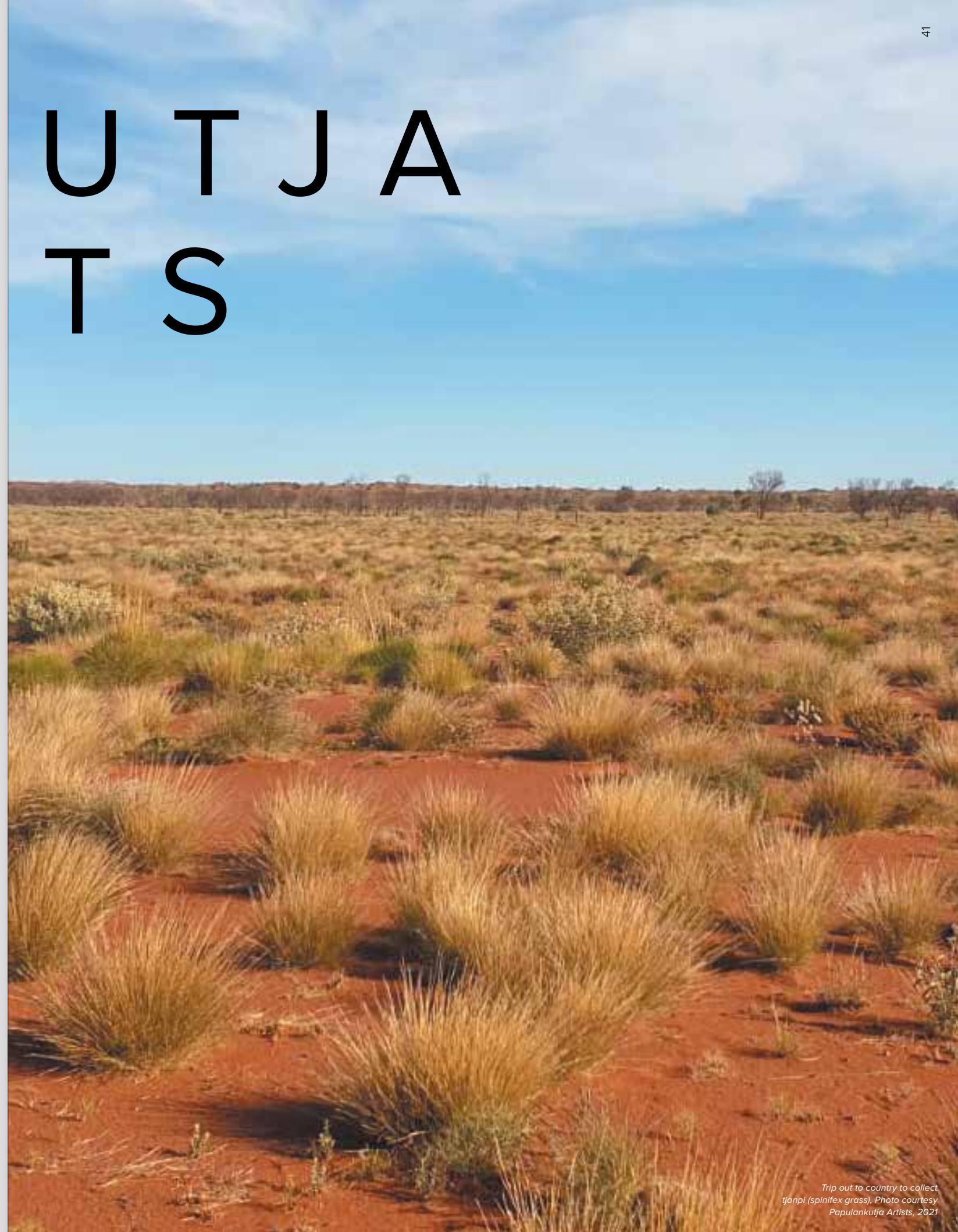
Papulankutja Artists is an Aboriginal owned not-for-profit corporation operating in Blackstone Community on the Ngaanyatjarra Lands in Western Australia. Papulankutja (Blackstone) community is approximately 900kms west of Alice Springs and 1575kms north-east of Perth. The art centre like most across the Ngaanyatjarra Lands was originally a women's centre where painting was encouraged as an activity for both men and women since the mid-1980s. As the Aboriginal art market boomed it became necessary to establish a framework that protects the artists. Papulankutja Artists was officially established in 2003. Five years later in 2009 Papulankutja Artists moved into a purpose-built art centre. The art centre until today extends services to artists in Mantamaru (Jameson) community, 75kms to the west of Papulankutja.



Singing rock, photo courtesy Papulankutja Artists 2019

The art centre provides Ngaanyatjarra artists and other Anangu people the space to express a sense of purpose through creative expression in the telling of Tjukurrpa (Dreamtime), support for the social welfare and well-being of all members and a source of independent income that provides for the artists and their families. The art centre facilitates visual art projects and production in various mediums including painting, tjanpi weaving, purnu carving, jewelry made from local nuts and seeds. The artists have participated in major collaborative exhibitions over the years including Songlines: Tracking The Seven Sisters, and Ngurra with annual participation in key industry events such as Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair, Revealed Exhibition for Emerging Aboriginal Artists, Desert Mob and Tarnanthi to name but a few. In 2021, Papulankutja Artists also began to express their true, multifaceted abilities by having their first showcase of fabric designs facilitated by Flying Fox Fabrics and presented at the Country to Couture fashion show. For a small art centre coming from one of the remotest regions of Australia, Papulankutja Artists do not shy away from diverse audiences to share Ngaanyatjarra culture with the rest of the country and international audiences. With their existing and new stakeholder relationships, Papulankutja Artists are excited at the prospects of continuing to share Ngaanyatjarra culture, lifestyle and Tjukurrpa (Dreamtime) in 2022 and beyond.

Papulankutja Artists work closely with peak bodies Desert Incorporated and Aboriginal Art Centre Hub of Western Australia (AACHWA) to maintain strong governance of the art centre and to participate in the arts worker programs. Papulankutja Artists appreciates the ongoing support of both Desert and AACHWA to keep Aboriginal art centres strong by offering professional development opportunities for artists, artworkers, board members and staff as well as opportunities to come together with other art centres each year. The hope of Papulankutja Artists is to continue growing and stay connected to leave a legacy of strong art and enterprise for future generations.



Trip out to country to collect tjanpi (spinifex grass), Photo courtesy Papulankutja Artists, 2021

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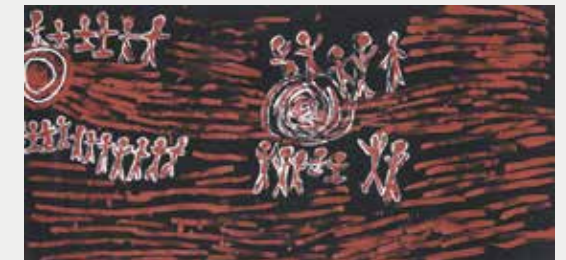
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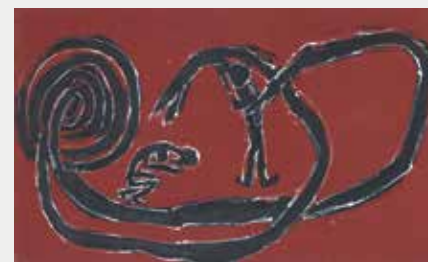
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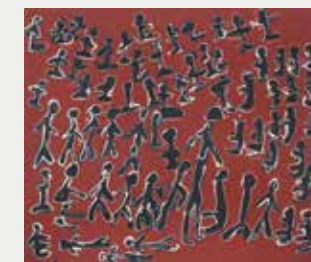
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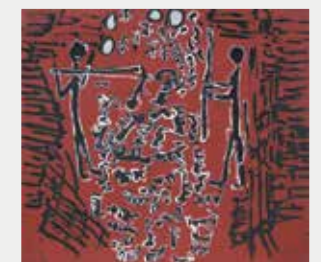
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