

MAPARNTJARRA  
JACKIE KURLTJUNYINTJA GILES

5 APRIL – 5 MAY 2023



1

## FOREWORD

I first met Mr. Giles in 2006 with Kayili Art Advisor at the time, Michael Stitford, when we flew into Warburton, Western Australia in a light plane. Sitting crossed-legged by the side of the tarmac waiting for us was Mr. Giles. He cut an imposing figure with red dreadlocks, coloured by kangaroo blood, I was later to learn.

Having heard many stories of his great powers as a healer and of his wide travels to many parts of the Western Desert to perform, often in the company of white nurses, amazing feats of healing on his people, I was immediately struck by his presence. Here indeed was a man of high distinction.

The works in this exhibition embody all the power and force of this great artist, these works will endure long after his stories are no longer told.

**WILLIAM MORA**  
William Mora Galleries



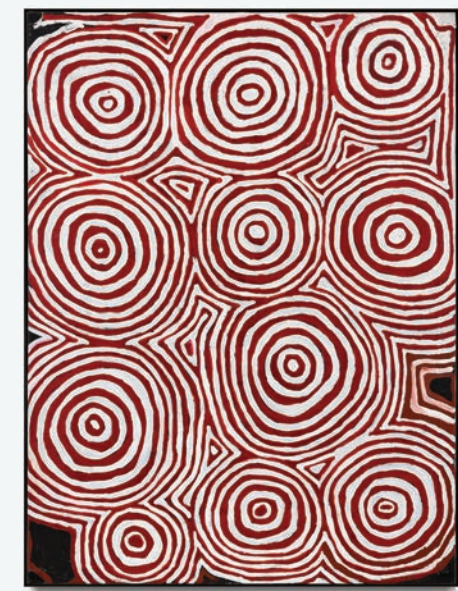
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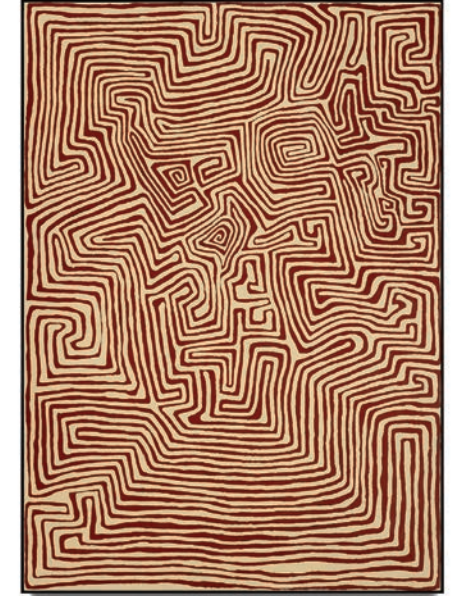
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## MAPARNJARRA: JACKIE KURLTJUNYINTJA GILES

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GEORGES PETITJEAN

When describing his work, Jackie Kurtljunyintja Giles Tjapaltjarri, a native Ngaanyatjarra speaker, was sparse with words. Only the occasional admonition when referring to particularly dangerous places for the non-initiated, such as Kalkuratintja west of Kintore, that are depicted with acrylic paints on canvas gave a hint as to the highly secret and sacred subject matter.

Tjamu Tjamu east of Kiwirrkura, an important Kangaroo Dreaming site in the heart of the Great Sandy Desert where Jackie Giles was born around 1945, also features frequently in his pictures. Several sites along the Kangaroo or *Malu* Dreaming track are represented in Giles' paintings: Tjutalpi, Witunkuntja, Wirti, Makarra, Millmillpa and Kurryl. For a large part of his life he led a nomadic existence, during which he travelled over large tracts of land between the area of Kiwirrkura to present-day Patjarr. Patjarr, a remote community at the edge of the Gibson Desert about 900 km from Alice Springs, established in 1992 as an outstation of Warburton 243 km further west, was the place where Jackie Giles predominantly lived and worked until his death in 2010.

During his life Giles was renowned as a man of a high degree of initiation and as a medicine man (*Maparnjarra* in the Ngaanyatjarra language). The powers of these traditional healers include the gift of seeing into the bodies and even the spirits of others. In his practice as a medicine man Giles often worked side by side with Western nurses to treat patients, thus bridging two worlds. The pre-colonial world he knew as a child and a young man and the realm of the European-Australian ways met in the practice of healing the sick.

In his acrylic paintings, Jackie Giles refers to the traditional formal language of the desert.

Concentric circles, multiple rectangles and parallel lines are prominent in this visual language. They are graphic symbols traditionally found on rock surfaces, wooden shields and sacred objects.

Similar circles and lines also appear in ceremonial ground paintings. Within the perimeters of the rectangle or square, he plays with these forms, creating bold new compositions. The power

and the meaning of the traditional symbols are maintained, however, and sometimes are even enhanced. Particularly striking

is the uninterrupted straight line. This graphic technique results in dynamic and rhythmical images, dominated by monumental forms, and suggests the deeper meaning of the Dreaming.

Jackie Kurtljunyintja Giles' work is represented in major collections of Indigenous Australian art in Australia and overseas. The Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS) specially commissioned an artwork, having as a subject Tjamu Tjamu, by Giles as a permanent, site-specific work of art on the façade of the new AFTRS school building at the Entertainment Quarter at Moore Park in Sydney. The launch took place in August 2009 in the presence of the artist, Hetti Perkins, senior curator at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, and *Samson and Delilah* director Warwick Thornton.

Internationally, in 2008 his work was shown next to that of Dorothy Napangardi, Kathleen Petyarre and Lilly Kelly Napangardi in conjunction with the work of the Belgian conceptual artist Marcel Broodthaers. The exhibition *Nomads in Art* took place at AAMU – Museum of contemporary Aboriginal art in Utrecht, the Netherlands.

**JACKIE KURLTJUNYINTJA GILES**

circa 1935 – 2010

©The Estate of Jackie  
Kurtljunyintja Giles

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COVER: *Tjamu Tjamu 2007*

synthetic polymer paint on linen  
151 × 212 cm

PROVENANCE

Kayili Artists, Western  
Australia, cat. no. 07-174  
William Mora Galleries, Melbourne  
Estate of Jackie Kurtljunyintja Giles

AUD 24,000

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1. *Tjamu Tjamu 2007*

synthetic polymer paint on linen  
102 × 51 cm

PROVENANCE

Kayili Artists, Western  
Australia, cat. no. 07-145  
William Mora Galleries, Melbourne  
Estate of Jackie Kurtljunyintja Giles

AUD 8,500

2. *Wangurnu 2009*

synthetic polymer paint on linen  
76 × 102 cm

PROVENANCE

Kayili Artists, Western  
Australia, cat. no. 09-126  
Short St Gallery, Broome  
The McGeoch Collection, Melbourne

AUD 9,600

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3. *Tjamu Tjamu 2009*

synthetic polymer paint on linen  
152 × 152 cm

PROVENANCE

Kayili Artists, Western  
Australia, cat. no. 09-084  
William Mora Galleries, Melbourne  
Estate of Jackie Kurtljunyintja Giles

AUD 20,000

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4. *Tjamu Tjamu 2007*

synthetic polymer paint on linen  
76 × 102 cm

PROVENANCE

Kayili Arts, Western  
Australia, cat. no. 07-191  
Marshall Arts, Adelaide  
McGeoch Collection, Melbourne

AUD 9,600

5. *Purrungu 2009*

synthetic polymer paint on linen  
102 × 72 cm

PROVENANCE

Kayili Artists, Western  
Australia, cat. no. 09-055  
William Mora Galleries, Melbourne  
Estate of Jackie Kurtljunyintja Giles

AUD 9,600

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6. *Tjamu Tjamu 2007*

synthetic polymer paint on linen  
208 × 207 cm

PROVENANCE

Kayili Artists, Western  
Australia, cat. no. 07-128  
William Mora Galleries, Melbourne  
Estate of Jackie Kurtljunyintja Giles

AUD 36,000

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7. *Tjamu Tjamu 2007*

synthetic polymer paint on linen  
101 × 100 cm

PROVENANCE

Kayili Artists, Western  
Australia, cat. no. 07-077  
William Mora Galleries, Melbourne  
Estate of Jackie Kurtljunyintja Giles

AUD 11,000

8. *Kalkuratintja 2007*

synthetic polymer paint on linen  
102 × 76 cm

PROVENANCE

Kayili Artists, Western  
Australia, cat. no. 07-120  
William Mora Galleries, Melbourne  
Estate of Jackie Kurtljunyintja Giles

AUD 9,600

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9. *Purrungu 2007*

synthetic polymer paint on linen  
102 × 76 cm

PROVENANCE

Kayili Artists, Western  
Australia, cat. no. 07-062  
William Mora Galleries, Melbourne  
Estate of Jackie Kurtljunyintja Giles

AUD 9,600

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10. *Tjamu Tjamu 2006*

synthetic polymer paint on linen  
214 × 152 cm

PROVENANCE

Kayili Artists, Western  
Australia, cat. no. 06-020  
The Thomas Vroom Collection,  
The Netherlands  
Bonhams, Sydney, 6  
September 2015, lot 74  
The Le Pley Collection, Western  
Australia

AUD 25,000