



SIGNIFICANT

24 JUNE — 29 JULY 2022

D'LAN CONTEMPORARY

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First Nation viewers are advised
that this catalogue contains images
of deceased persons.

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Cover: EMILY KAME KNGWARREYE
Untitled – Alhalkere 1990 (detail)
synthetic polymer paint on linen
180 × 120 cm

Previous: GEORGE TJUNGURRAYI
Untitled – Kirrimalunya 2009 (detail)
synthetic polymer paint on linen
244 × 183 cm

SIGNIFICANT





Foreword

We are thrilled to present this year's iteration of *Significant* 2022. I am most pleased that this year's annual exhibition collectively represents the finest selection of artworks available to the market.

The year 2022 marks a significant year for First Nations Australian art. Not only are we continuing to see a most dramatic shift in market perception – both here and abroad – but we are seeing the work of this nation's finest contemporary artists getting institutional recognition through major forthcoming international exhibitions.

Shorty Lungkata's masterpiece *Snake Family Dreaming near Snake Hole* 1972 leads the exhibition. This extraordinary early board was previously held in Geoffrey Bardon's personal collection and has only recently come to light – being privately held since being acquired from Bardon in 1997 and previously on loan to the National Gallery of Australia.

This critical painting forms the corpus for the significant collection of early boards in this exhibition catalogue. It highlights a formidable grouping of 1971–1973 images that many believe are among the most important works to be adequately considered in Australian art history.

Many other contemporary highlights are illustrated, including George Tjungurrayi's monumental *Untitled – Kirrimalunya* 2009, and two of the most exquisite and rarely seen works by Doreen Reid Nakamarra depicting the important rockhole sites of Ngaminya and Marrapinti. And a group of five stunning artworks by the often-overlooked artist Boxer Milner Tjampitjin have been discovered in various collections.

D'Lan Contemporary's continuing efforts are to further progress markets for well-established artists and help progress other areas in the market that may be overlooked or under-represented, which truly deserve recognition. Boxer Milner Tjampitjin is undoubtedly one of those artists.

Finally, any catalogue would not be complete without the enigmatic presence of Emily Kame Ngwarreye. *Untitled – Alhalkere* 1990 is, without question, one of Emily's pinnacle pictures and perfectly rounds out the vital body of work that we collectively present herein. Here, Emily's recurring subject of the Emu Dreaming is captivating, complex and highly resolved. In the words of Janet Holt, it sits among the most exciting works the artist ever painted.

We warmly welcome you to the opening and events aligned with this extraordinary exhibition. And look forward to seeing you in person at our city gallery, so please make sure to make yourself known to the team and myself.

D'LAN DAVIDSON

DIRECTOR, D'LAN CONTEMPORARY

**SHORTY LUNGKATA****TJUNGURRAYI**

circa 1912–1987

Snake Family Dreaming near Snake Hole 1972synthetic polymer paint on
composition board
45.5 × 40 cm**PROVENANCE**Geoffrey Bardon, Sydney
Aboriginal and Pacific Art, Sydney
Private Collection, United Kingdom**LITERATURE**Geoffrey Bardon and James Bardon,
*Papunya — A Place Made after the
Story: The Beginnings of the Western
Desert Painting Movement*, Miegunyah
Press, Carlton, 2004, p. 118 (illus.)
Judith Ryan and Philip Batty,
*Tjukurrjtjanu: Origins of Western
Desert Art*, National Gallery of Victoria,
Melbourne, 2011, p. 235 (illus.)**EXHIBITED**On Long Term Loan to the
National Gallery of Australia
*Tjukurrjtjanu: Origins of Western Desert
Art*, National Gallery of Victoria, An
NGV Touring Exhibition, 30 September
2011 – 12 February 2012, The Ian
Potter Centre: NGV Australia,
Federation Square, Melbourne;
Musée du quai Branly, Paris,
9 October 2012 – 20 January 2013

AUD 350,000

SHORTY LUNGKATA TJUNGURRAYI painted his first works in the early months of 1972, possibly with the encouragement of his classificatory brothers Charlie Tjaruru (Wartuma) Tjungurrayi, Yala Yala Gibbs Tjungurrayi and Yumpululu Tjungurrayi. During this seminal period in desert art making, Lungkata was an intermittent, though significant contributor to the emerging art movement at Papunya. During 1972, he created approximately fifty finely executed paintings, some featuring snake stories like the one in *Snake Family Dreaming near Snake Hole*.

This extraordinary work captures Lungkata as an inexperienced, though gifted artist. Purportedly

his very first painting, *Snake Family Dreaming near Snake Hole* is a remarkably accomplished attempt at narrative storytelling in a new visual form of synthetic paint on composition board. Lungkata's signature style of bold iconography and irregular dotting helped define a distinctly Pintupi aesthetic. His innate sense of composition enabled him to blend figurative depictions of animals and humans alongside esoteric designs including concentric circles, crosses and radiating lines.

Lungkata's name first appears in Pat Hogan's authoritative Stuart Art Centre stock book in the ninth consignment of paintings delivered to Alice Springs, in April of 1972. According to

Geoffrey Bardon, the artist's friend and facilitator, *Snake Family Dreaming near Snake Hole* was created in the Men's Painting Room at Papunya in February 1972. Enamoured with Lungkata's presence and his singular approach to mark making, Bardon acquired the painting for his own collection. Bardon was an obsessive, though astute collector of the men's paintings. Like all fanatical collectors, he was willing to part with paintings from his collection when better examples appeared. *Snake Family Dreaming near Snake Hole* remained in Bardon's private collection for many years, suggesting his reverence for this work within Lungkata's early oeuvre.

The life and artistic practice of Shorty Lungkata Tjungurrayi has been of significant interest to artists, curators, and researchers for fifty years. Pre-eminent scholar Fred Myers, Silver Professor of Anthropology at New York University, spent time living with Lungkata during 1973–1974. Lungkata was a close friend of Myers and, during his fieldwork, one of his primary informants. Myers and the historian R.G. (Dick) Kimber have identified comparative works by Lungkata as having associations with the site of Lampintjanya. Located west of the large salt lake of Kaarkurutintjinya (Lake MacDonald) in Western Australia, Lampintjanya features a large claypan where the activity of two ancestral Kuniya (Carpet Snakes, *Aspidites ramsayi*) resulted in the formation of two large rocky channels at this site. Lampintjanya is also Lungkata's birthplace. It is highly likely that the place that Bardon recorded as 'Snake Hole' is Lampintjanya. According to Myers:

*Shorty often painted this story. Some of the paintings evoke a ground design from ritual, and the story is one in which two snakes get angry with each other and send sorcery back and forth.*¹

Much like the preparation and enactment of ceremonies, painting is an opportunity for Aboriginal artists to affirm their knowledge and experience of the land for which they have custodial rights. Lungkata's creation of *Snake Family Dreaming near Snake Hole* –

while surrounded by his cultural peers in the interior of the Men's Painting Room – was also an attempt by the artist to articulate his deeply personal and cultural connection to this significant place.

In this extraordinary example of his early practice, Lungkata's signature dotting masks the presence of the ancestral Kuniya as they make their way to the claypan at Lampintjanya, depicted in this painting by the large roundel. On the fringes of the claypan at Lampintjanya, a small succulent plant, mungilpa, grows abundantly. When dried, it provides scores of tiny seeds, which are collected, ground into seedcakes, roasted and eaten. The extensive claypans throughout this area, and the profusion of mungilpa they provide, sustained large groups of people during periods of ceremonial activity.

The paintings completed during the 1971–1972 period mark the beginnings of the Western Desert art movement and are now regarded as some of Australia's most treasured cultural, historical and artistic items. Shorty Lungkata Tjungurrayi produced several paintings that are justly considered icons of the Papunya art movement. *Snake Family Dreaming near Snake Hole* should be considered alongside other important paintings such as *Goanna Love Story* 1972 (Papunya Community School Collection, Araluen Art Centre), *Untitled* (Yumari) 1972 (National Gallery of Victoria) and *Women's Dreaming (Two Women)* 1972 (Art Gallery of New South Wales).

Snake Family Dreaming near Snake Hole was included in the much-heralded *Tjukurrjtjanu: Origins of Western Desert Art* at the National Gallery of Victoria in 2011 and then travelled to the Musée du quai Branly in Paris in 2012–2013. It has also been loaned and exhibited separately at the National Gallery of Australia and the National Gallery of Victoria.

LUKE SCHOLES

1. Myers, in Sotheby's, *Important Aboriginal Art*, Melbourne, 30 June 1997, lot 22, p. 24 (illus.).



ALBERT NAMATJIRA

circa 1902–1959

*Mt Giles from near**Mt Hermannsburg* circa 1936

watercolour and pencil on board

26.5 × 30 cm

PROVENANCE

Jocelyn Beatrice Thorn, Widgee

Station, Western Australia

By descent

Ian MacGregor Thorn

AUD 36,000

Born in 1902, ALBERT NAMATJIRA was about thirty-four years of age when he painted *Mt Giles from near Mt Hermannsburg*. Tantalisingly, the work was created around the time that Namatjira first met the travelling watercolourist Rex Battarbee, who recorded their encounter in his diary.

*I was speaking with Albert this afternoon [Tuesday 13 June 1936] and he showed me a watercolour he did of the Church. I think it is very good for a beginner easily up to a white beginner. Albert is keen to go out painting with me and has been telling me of good places to go.*¹

The appearance of this previously unknown painting, signed 'Albert', therefore raises an intriguing question: was it painted before or after Namatjira's fateful encounter with the lean returned serviceman who would become his friend and mentor? Before embarking on that question, it is important to acknowledge that Albert was highly regarded as a draftsman, who produced a variety of carved and burnished items for the tourist market, before he met Battarbee.

To achieve a nuanced appreciation of Namatjira's artistic trajectory, it is important to note that the expeditions he shared with Battarbee (1936, 1938, 1939) were not his first opportunity to observe a European artist painting en plein air. From 1932, Namatjira found work as a tour guide, sometimes observing artists, including Jessie Traill and Una Teague, painting the scenic wonders of Palm Valley, while he tended his camels.² In addition, Namatjira

also travelled with Ernst Kramer, a lay preacher who sketched elevations of prominent landmarks as they passed through Kukatja Country.³ Namatjira clearly grasped the potential of landscape painting. In 1934, upon seeing an impromptu exhibition of paintings by John Gardner and Rex Battarbee at the Hermannsburg schoolhouse, he requested a set of watercolour paints and brushes.⁴ Namatjira's interpretation of Country, in picturesque terms, commenced before his initial first encounter with Battarbee. While Battarbee's instructions on framing a scene and mixing paint were important, they complemented Namatjira's already impressive range of artistic capabilities.

Clues to the origins of this particular painting can be found in the work itself. Firstly, the painting is signed 'Albert', verifying that it was produced before 1938, when the artist adopted his father's name, thereafter signing his work 'Namatjira Albert' and, more famously, 'Albert Namatjira'.⁵ Secondly, the lateral mountain range that constitutes the painting's distant horizon is detailed in pencil before being lightly tinted with a watercolour wash. Here Namatjira's process is more akin to that used by Kramer than it is to Battarbee's more painterly approach. A third property, the site at which Namatjira sat as he sketched the scene, points to another important aspect of the painting's creation. The form of the mountains corresponds precisely with those shown in several of Namatjira's later paintings, including *Mt Giles* (c.1938, NGA) and *Landscape with Figures* (c.1938–1939, Art Gallery



of Ballarat). That particular view of a distant Mt Giles comes into register only when climbing a hill adjacent to the Finke River, a perch within easy walking distance of Namatjira's residence. This favoured painting site is roughly equidistant between Mt Hermannsburg (which Namatjira also painted from this location) and the mission.

Mt Giles from near Mt Hermannsburg was not produced on expedition; rather, the painting was executed close to home. Determined to perfect his technique, Namatjira was a supremely talented individual who, when he painted this early landscape, was on the very cusp of national recognition. That it was painted preceding, or immediately after Namatjira's first expedition with Battarbee, makes this an especially alluring work.

JOHN KEAN

1. Rex Battarbee Diaries, Saturday 13 June 1936.
2. Jane Hardy, 'Visitors to Hermannsburg: an essay in cross-cultural learning', in *The Heritage of Namatjira: The Watercolourists of Central Australia*, William Heinemann Australia, Port Melbourne, 1992, p. 152; Martin Edmond, *Battarbee and Namatjira*, Girimondo Publishing Company, Artamon, 2014, p. 118.
3. 'Albert' was then a would-be evangelist – Ernst Kramer, *Report of the Western Tour 1932*, PRG 1322, Series 1–11, Kramer Family, Mortlock Library, Adelaide.
4. Alison French, *Seeing the Centre: The Art of Albert Namatjira 1902–1959*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2002, p. 8; Barbara Henson, *A Straight Out Man: Pastor F.W. Albrecht and Central Australian Aborigines*, Melbourne University Publishing, Carlton, 1994, pp. 74–75.
5. Hardy, 1992, p. 157.

ALBERT NAMATJIRA

circa 1902–1959

*MacDonnell Range**Country* 1946

watercolour and pencil on paper

28 × 40 cm

PROVENANCE

Claude Hotchin, King Edward

Hotel Ballroom, Perth

Private Collection, Western

Australia, acquired from the above

EXHIBITED*Albert Namatjira*, Claude Hotchin,

Perth, 18 November –

29 November 1946, cat. no. 20

AUD 54,000



ALBERT NAMATJIRA's painting *MacDonnell Range Country* (1946) was created when the artist was at the height of his powers. Namatjira commenced painting immediately upon acquiring a watercolour painting kit in May 1935. His first exhibition was held to acclaim at the Melbourne Town Hall in August 1938. When war with Germany was declared in September 1939, Namatjira and his mentor, Rex Battarbee, were camped peacefully, painting and sharing stories in Ormiston Pound, deep within the Western MacDonnell Ranges. It was at this time that Namatjira's compositional skill came to the fore, augmented by using a camera's viewfinder through which he identified and framed the scene to be painted.¹

The war brought privation to the Finke River Mission at Hermannsburg, as it did to people across the continent. Art supplies were scarce, even for Namatjira, whose works were keenly sought by a growing band of southern admirers. Despite this, Namatjira improvised and created exquisitely detailed miniatures on the inner surface of woomeras. With watercolour paper unavailable, he also substituted inch thick slabs of ininti, a local softwood that absorbed watercolour like paper and could be cut from trees that grew along creek beds near Hermannsburg.²

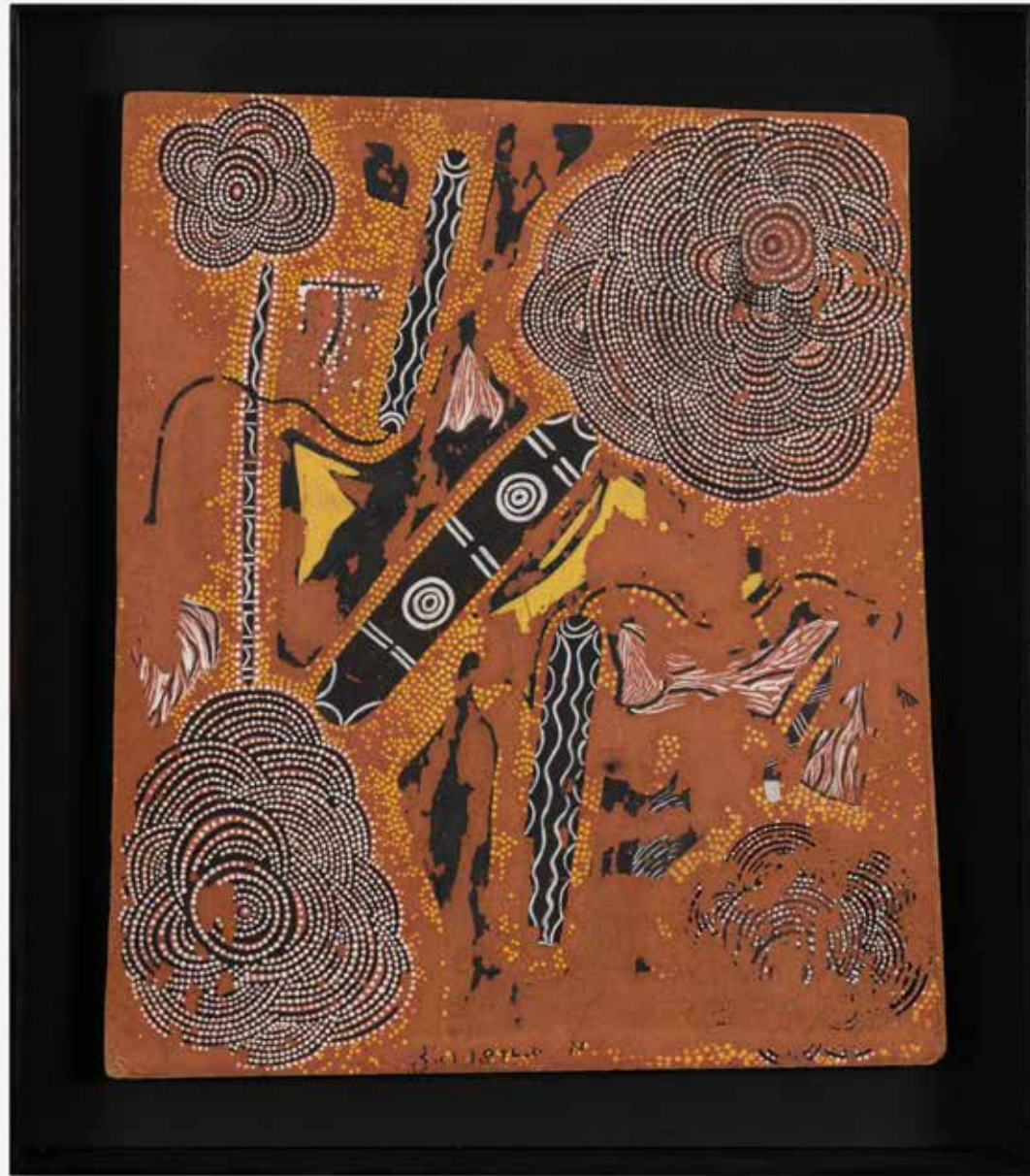
By 1946, Namatjira's access to materials had increased and, as a result, he was able to produce enough works on paper for two solo exhibitions. The first was presented at the South Australian Society of Arts in Adelaide, the second at the King Edward Hotel Ballroom in Perth. It was at the latter that *MacDonnell Range Country* was exhibited.³ 1946 was a successful year for the artist, and Namatjira was able to retire his trusty camels and purchase a robust International trayback truck; he also received his first tax assessment.⁴

The works Namatjira completed during that year were among the artist's finest. Painted en plein air, they captured the drama of ancient landscape with economical precision. In *MacDonnell Range Country*, Namatjira leads the viewer's eye over a low rocky rise and across a plain to a gap in the ranges, with its promise of deep shade and cool water. The forms of each feature are established with confident linear brushstrokes, and then modulated with a deeper tone of the same colour, each successive landform receding further towards blue. Deeper cracks and weathered crags are emphasised with even darker tone of the same hue. Space and colour are in consort. While powerful rolling forms with high eroding strata dominate the painting, the surface is unified by the abstract language of the artist's brushstrokes, musical in their fluidity.

Namatjira's landscapes are lovingly painted images of Pmere (Country). Even now, three-quarters of a century after its production, *MacDonnell Range Country* provides the viewer with an invitation to travel with the artist — to see Country as he does — with the knowledge of where to find comfort, solace and sustenance.

JOHN KEAN

1. Battarbee gave Namatjira a 'Brownie Box' camera in 1938 and the pair enjoyed developing their film under the stars on the 1939 expedition; see Martin Edmond, *Battarbee and Namatjira*, Girimondo Publishing Company, Artamon, 2014, p. 153.
2. Rex Battarbee Diaries, Saturday 2 July 1938.
3. The current painting is most likely to have been 'Catalogue No 20, McDonnell Range Country' in *Albert Namatjira*, November 1946, Claude Hotchin.
4. Ruth Megaw, 'A brief chronology', in Jane Hardy, Vincent Megaw and Ruth Megaw, *The Heritage of Namatjira: The Watercolourists of Central Australia*, William Heinemann Australia, Port Melbourne, 1992, p. xix.



BILLY STOCKMAN

TJAPALTJARRI

circa 1927–2015

Untitled 1972

synthetic polymer paint
on composition board
64 × 54.5 cm

PROVENANCE

Acquired at Papunya 1972–1973
Laurie Owens, Sydney

AUD 40,000

The fragmented image that this remarkable object presents is somewhat of a visual manifestation of the feverish activity and disorder of the genesis of the Papunya art movement. This was the moment when the visual culture of the desert burst forth to affirm the enduring presence and cultural knowledge of Central Australian Aboriginal people.

Though damaged through years of neglect, BILLY STOCKMAN TJAPALTJARRI's late-1972 untitled painting remains a compelling artefact of an art movement that changed Australian art history. More importantly, however, it symbolises a relationship of mutual respect between two men: Billy Stockman Tjapaltjarri and Laurie Owens.

As the former superintendent of Papunya, Owens is one of a handful of non-Indigenous people who can claim to have witnessed what really happened at Papunya in 1971. History now tells us that Owens was far from a distant and casual observer of Papunya's painting enterprise. He was in fact a pivotal figure in the creation and survival of the company the painters would form, Papunya Tula Artists.

Billy and Laurie got to know each other further when they served together on the inaugural board of Papunya Tula Artists. At their very first meeting on 30 October 1972, Billy attended as a director and

Owens in his official capacity as company secretary. Owens worked tirelessly to ensure Papunya Tula's proper governance and financial viability. He maintained enormous sympathy for the struggling enterprise and its troubled artistic director, Bardon.

After their initial flowering, the early Papunya paintings, composed largely on discarded sheets of composition board, were quickly superseded by the large and impressive paintings the Papunya artists began to produce. Throughout the late 1970s and as far forward as the early 1990s, the Papunya 'boards', as they became known, were largely seen as insignificant precursors to more contemporary forms of Aboriginal art. Owens was not immune to sharing these sentiments, and thus this painting, and one other in his collection, 'were relegated to minor notice'. Owens 'had them stuck up in the roof with some other things in cartons and wrappers, and just left there and thought they'll be of not account and one day I'll do something with them'. As interest in Aboriginal art began to increase, the secondary market championed the 'boards' as the founding documents of contemporary Aboriginal art.

LUKE SCHOLES


MICK NAMARARI
TJAPALTJARRI

circa 1927–1998

Untitled 1972

 synthetic polymer paint
on composition board
69.5 × 57.5 cm

PROVENANCE

 Acquired at Papunya 1972–73
Stuart Art Centre, Alice Springs,
cat. no. 19200
Laurie Owens, Sydney

AUD 160,000

This previously unseen work by one of Papunya's most celebrated artists, MICK NAMARARI TJAPALTJARRI, was purchased in 1972 by the outgoing superintendent of Papunya, Laurie Owens. Hard working and empathetic, Owens was responsible for the administration and function of the Papunya community. Despite his immense workload, Owens was drawn into the orbit of the Papunya painting men and quickly became an important advocate for their fledgling painting enterprise.

Upon his arrival at Papunya in August 1971, Owens immediately saw great potential in art and craft activity at Papunya. Mary White, an adviser on Aboriginal projects to the Craft Council of Australia, described Owens as a 'very sympathetic Superintendent' and 'an exceptional person' who was 'doing his best to de-institutionalise the settlement'. White was particularly impressed to discover that Owens was 'full of ideas for a craft complex' similar to what he had observed operating in Ernabella under the guidance of Winifred Hilliard.

For decades, Owens' role in the fragile months leading up to the establishment of Papunya Tula Artists remained unappreciated. However, research now confirms that Owens was intimately involved in its administration and governance. He drafted its articles of association, consulting directly with the artists throughout the process. He applied for vital funding to install the artists' friend and facilitator, Geoffrey Bardon, as artistic director, ordered vital materials and acted as an empathetic conduit between the artists and the Welfare Division of the Northern Territory.

When Bardon had to abruptly depart his role as artistic director of Papunya Tula Artists in July 1972, it was Owens who was left to assist the painters in his absence. At this time, hundreds of paintings had accumulated in the Men's Painting Room, including Namarari's Untitled 1972. Records show that Owens occasionally provided upfront payments to select artists who were suffering financial hardship, later to be reimbursed by the artists' representative, Pat Hogan. He facilitated

the sale of paintings to visitors to the community and oversaw the dispersal of artists' payments from the Stuart Art Centre.

When interviewed about the sale of this work recently, Owens, now in his mid-eighties, remembered:

I used to go to the shed and watch him painting. There was something very thought provoking about Mick.

If I may say, God lived in that man. You looked in his eyes and there was tragedy and a depth of reflection in the way that he would look at you. And that really touched me quite a lot. I just felt that there was something spiritual about Mick. What more can I say?

Born in sandhill country at Marnpi, south-east of present-day Kintore (Walungurru), Mick Namarari Tjapaltjarri's first years were spent in the bush. Due to drought and the infringement of pastoral activity on his homelands, as a young boy Namarari and his extended family group journeyed to the ration station at Haasts Bluff. As a teenager, he was persuaded to work with his relative Charlie Tjaruru Tjungurrayi in the cattle industry in the Areyonga region. Namarari settled at Papunya in the late 1950s, where he served as one of several councillors. It was in this role that Owens first encountered Namarari. Soon after, Owens would discover that Mick was an emerging artist among Papunya's painting men. Namarari was a significant

contributor to the first consignments of paintings to leave Papunya for sale in Alice Springs. As time passed, he revealed himself to be an incessant innovator, unbound by social, cultural or market expectations.

Untitled 1972 is adorned with Namarari's finely stippled dotting, which playfully segments its concentric circles. The fine orange linework is used to punctuate his bold design. It is difficult to propose the subject matter of Untitled 1972 given that Namarari deployed such imagery to symbolically depict a broad range of places and things. The looped 'U' shapes may possibly depict the seated presence of ancestral figures. The concentric circle can represent any number of things, from campfires, hills and water sources to ceremonial grounds. The elongated forms that frame each side of the picture may depict sacred objects in the possession of those seated.

The disclosure of previously unknown pictures from this unique moment in Australian art history is becoming increasingly rare. It is equally rare to encounter items with such fascinating provenance. The time has come for Owens and his family to part with this extraordinary painting and for it to enter the discourse surrounding Papunya and the art movement that came from it. Much more than an extraordinary work of art, it is an object that binds two men and speaks to the remarkable history of contemporary painting at Papunya.

LUKE SCHOLES





UTA UTA TJANGALA

circa 1926–1990

Old Man Dreaming 1972

synthetic polymer powder
paint on composition board
60 × 50 cm

PROVENANCE

Stuart Art Centre, Alice Springs, cat. no. 1272117
Private Collection, Adelaide
Wallbri and Pintupi Art, Barossa Arts Festival, Barossa Valley, 1973
Private Collection
Important Aboriginal Art, Sotheby's Melbourne, 28 June 1999, lot 194
Private Collection, United Kingdom

LITERATURE

Hetti Perkins and Hannah Fink (eds), *Papunya Tula: Genesis and Genius*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2000, p. 27 (illus.)
Judith Ryan and Philip Batty, *Tjukurrjtjanu: Origins of Western Desert Art*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2011, p. 138 (illus.)

EXHIBITED

Papunya Tula: Genesis and Genius, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 18 August – 12 November 2000
Tjukurrjtjanu: Origins of Western Desert Art, National Gallery of Victoria, An NGV Touring Exhibition, 30 September 2011 – 12 February 2012, The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, Federation Square, Melbourne;
Musée du quai Branly, Paris, 9 October 2012 – 20 January 2013

AUD 280,000

The exploits – sexual and otherwise – of the old man Yina were a favoured topic of several of the early Papunya painters, none more so than UTA UTA TJANGALA. *Old Men Dreaming* 1972 is one of a series of paintings featuring Yina as central protagonist that Uta Uta created in the founding years of the Papunya art movement.

Apparently spurned by a group of women camped at Kampurrarpa, Yina travelled to the site of Yumari, dragging his distended penis, which became a long sand dune marking his path. At Yumari, he rose in the night to copulate with his mother-in-law (yumari in Pintupi), thereby breaking one of the most strictly enforced prohibitions in Aboriginal culture. Accordingly, appalling punishments were visited upon Yina, his tormented sexual organs parting company with his body to travel independently over the Country. Equally eventful, and occasionally traumatic, occurrences were inflicted upon Yina at other connected places. Although Yina's narratives contain important messages in relation to Aboriginal Law, stories

of his escapades are often recounted with much humour by Pintupi people. The anthropologist Fred Myers remembers Uta Uta as 'an excitable sort of man, wildly expressive and playful'. One can imagine a man of this description recalling Yina's unfortunate adventures. Myers' account of Uta Uta also provides insight into his rare artistic agility, where strong visual emphasis was ascribed to the varied details of place and story, resulting in diverse compositions of object and form.

This finely executed example displays a highly assured composition. The dramatic use of negative space around the perimeter of the substrate suspends the composition in space, magnifying its bold iconographic design. According to notes collected by Pat Hogan, the exclusive commercial agent of the Papunya artists at the time, the journey of Yina's testicles is represented in *Old Men Dreaming* 1972 by the meandering white dots at the centre of this composition. Though well concealed beneath fine dotting, another vital component of this work are three ceremonial objects. The presence

of these objects within this composition may simply allude to the items that Yina carried with him; they may also connect the story of Yina to the soakage water site of Ngurrapalangunya, east of Yumari.

At Ngurrapalangunya, Yina encountered the Kungka Kutjarra (Two Women) and the squat ancestral being Tjuntamurtu (Short Legs). Earlier, the Kungka Kutjarra had danced for Tjuntamurtu and in so doing created the claypans at Ngurrapalangunya. As Yina approached, he frightened the two women, who fled to the west. Tjuntamurtu, however, ran to a nearby escarpment, where he attempted to conceal himself in a cave. Upon trying to enter the cave, he found it full of sacred ceremonial objects (perhaps similar to the ones depicted in *Old Men Dreaming*). He frantically tossed the ceremonial objects from the cave to make room for himself, thus creating a nearby hill.¹

Ngurrapalangunya was Uta Uta's conception site. It is central to the area in which he and his extended family lived prior to journeying to the government settlements in the east. At the time this work was created, Uta Uta and many other Pintupi had spent decades living away from their homelands, where they were determined to return and again distinguish themselves as the 'people from the west'. At Papunya, painting gave voice to a generation of disaffected Aboriginal men and established their enduring presence in the land. It was an opportunity to animate the stories of their home country and alert kartiya (outsiders) to its social and cultural value. During this time, Uta Uta produced a startling succession of singular works, each loaded with designs previously confined to

the body, ceremonial objects, and rock or ground constructions. Painting, like the land it represented, was an expression of his identity, and the revelation of the land's secret and 'dangerous' places was a deliberate attempt to 'look after' it, by warning kartiya to stay away from its sacred sites.

The high esteem in which Uta Uta was held among his ritual peers enabled him to depict with authority objects and designs which were considered by some to be of a secret/sacred nature. The painted ceremonial hats, tjurunga and various other ceremonial regalia were a primal display of his ceremonial knowledge and experience, visual flirtations with cultural taboos. As Myers expresses it, Uta Uta and others 'worked on the edge' of what was considered 'safe'. Some considered this a deliberate tactic intended to provoke a reaction from others in the Papunya community who had ridiculed the 'New Pintupi' (the most recent Pintupi to come out of the desert) for their lack of facility in dealing with and understanding white people. Others questioned the ability of the painters to comprehend the permanence and portability of their newly created cultural objects and their potential social impact. Undoubtedly, however, it was a potent expression of the cultural lives of the men who created them, who at this time were caught in a dramatic state of flux.

LUKE SCHOLES

1. For more information on the activity of Yina, see Fred Myers, *Painting Culture: The Making of an Aboriginal High Art*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2002.





TIM LEURA TJAPALTJARRI

circa 1934–1984

Possum Story 1972

synthetic polymer powder
paint on composition board
61 × 44.5 cm

PROVENANCE

Geoffrey Bardon, Sydney
Aboriginal and Pacific Art, Sydney
Private Collection, United Kingdom

LITERATURE

Geoffrey Bardon and James Bardon,
*Papunya – A Place Made after the
Story: The Beginnings of the Western
Desert Painting Movement*, Miegunyah
Press, Carlton, 2004, p. 234 (illus.)

AUD 280,000



Tim Leura Tjapaltjarri, Men's Painting Room, Papunya, 1972,
photo Allan Scott

TIM LEURA TJAPALTJARRI was an independent thinker. In addition to his encyclopedic knowledge of Anmatyerr traditions, Leura possessed an abiding interest in European belief systems. He was a fluent English speaker who frequently used metaphor to convey metaphysical aspects of his culture. Although he was quietly spoken, Leura became a vital interlocutor for a sequence of Papunya Tula art advisors, and consequently his contribution to the development of the contemporary art movement went well beyond the finely crafted paintings he produced.¹

Leura's cosmopolitan outlook was derived from prolonged intercultural experience. He worked as a labourer at Pine Creek Station, in the Top End of the Northern Territory, as a teenager, where he came in contact with American servicemen.² He was a stockman at Napperby Station, the country of his birth, and later worked at Hamilton Downs, Narwietooma and Glen Helen Stations on Arrernte Country to the south.³

In the early 1970s, while keeping his distance, for several months Leura observed the newly arrived art teacher, Geoffrey Bardon, supplying materials to a growing group of men. Leura knew the value of his labour and initially chose to work independently of the painting movement, preferring to sell his paintings to Pat Hogan at the Stuart Arts Centre in Alice Springs.⁴

In his own time, Leura arranged to meet Bardon.⁵ It was only then, in February 1972, that Leura joined the Pintupi, Luritja, Warlpiri and Anmatyerr men who gathered to work at the eastern end of the Papunya Town Hall, a space now known as the Men's Painting Room. Leura was already familiar with the fine sable brushes used by his Arrernte relatives, the watercolour artists Keith Namatjira and Joshua Ebatarintja.⁶ Leura's deft touch, apparent in *Possum Story*, demonstrates that he was an accomplished painter before he joined the larger painting group.

Possum Story was created at this critical juncture (in April–May 1972) as Leura began to experiment with more ambitious compositions to capture the complexities of ceremonial performance on a two-dimensional surface.⁷ While other artists chose to reproduce ceremonial icons, or improvise with signs and patterns to signify their ancestral Country, Leura aimed to codify multi-modal aspects of ceremony with formal precision.

In this phase of his career, Leura painted the ceremonies of instruction for post-initiate novices. These are multi-modal events consisting of the preparation of large scale ground mosaics, the construction of towering ceremonial poles, the display of sacred objects and the application of designs to the bodies of performers. As the ceremonial ground is prepared, verses associated with those ancestors are sung, the timbre of men's voices intensifying in the fading twilight. At a given moment, decorated performers emerge from behind windbreaks – re-embodied in the form of totemic heroes. Sacred designs on their bodies are illuminated by firelight while their steps retrace the paths of the ancestors. Leura aimed to communicate the sensory complexity of ritual performance with geometric clarity.

A key to understanding this *Possum Story* can be found in the depiction of the tracks of the Possum ancestors. Interestingly, these tracks are shown using two distinctly different schemas. The first is encoded within the zigzag design. A close examination of any section of the design reveals the pattern is comprised of a succession of small 'E'-shaped motifs; these are the paw prints of the Rrpwamper (Brush Tailed Possum, *Trichosurus vulpecula*) ancestors. Rrpwamper are a tree dwelling species that nest in the hollows of river red gums that line dry creek beds in Anmatyerr Country. As daylight fades, possums emerge from their hollows, descending to cross the earth to feed on the foliage and flowers of ironwood trees that dominate the adjacent plains.⁸ The possums leave sweeping marks with their tails as they move over the earth, a characteristic that is emulated by men in ceremony. In this instance, Leura has used zigzag

lines to mimic the marks made by the possum's tail. The design elements within tywerrenge (elongated oval objects that embody the spiritual essence of the Rrpwamper ancestors) employ a different schema. Here, the sinuous line that runs the length of the objects signifies the possum's sweeping tail, while the sets of concentric circles that intersperse those lines are the possum's paw prints. It is most likely that the short bars adjoined to each of these concentric circles represents an 'opposable thumb', characteristic of the possum's hind feet, a distinctive feature that makes them such formidable climbers.

Most early Papunya artists undercoated their works with red ochre to represent the ceremonial earth; in contrast, Leura has chosen to paint on a papery white board. It is tempting to think that Leura was 'writing' his account of the Rrpwamper ceremony on a blank white surface to convey the equivalence of his ancestral narrative to the sacred text printed on the crisp pages of a Christian Bible.⁹

JOHN KEAN

1. Geoffrey Bardon and James Bardon, *Papunya – A Place Made after the Story: the Beginnings of the Western Desert Painting Movement*, Miegunyah Press, Carlton, 2004, pp. 37–38; John Kean, 'Tim Leura Tjapaltjarti', in Judith Ryan and Philip Batty, *Tjukurrjanu: Origins of Western Desert Art*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2011, p. 181.
2. Personal communications with the author at Papunya 1978–1979, confirmed in an email exchange with Dick Kimber, 28 September 2019.
3. Bardon and Bardon, 2004, p. 87.
4. Pat Hogan's records courtesy the archive of Beverley Knight.
5. Leura's entrepreneurial cousin Kaapa Tjampitjinpa arranged the meeting, Bardon and Bardon, 2004, pp. 87–88.
6. Vivien Johnson, *Once Upon a Time in Papunya*, University of New South Wales Press, Randwick, 2010, p. 29.
7. John Kean, *Dot, Circle and Frame: How Kaapa Tjampitjinpa, Tim Leura, Clifford Possum and Johnny Warangula created Papunya Tula art*, Doctoral Thesis, University of Melbourne, Carlton, 2020, pp. 148–178.
8. See the reference to ironwood trees in Bardon and Bardon, 2004, p. 234.
9. Leura was a Christian, whose inherited beliefs were enfolded into the creation stories of Genesis, personal communication, Alice Springs, 1978.



**UTA UTA TJANGALA**

circa 1926–1990

*Kangaroo and Emu
at Putjanya* 1973synthetic polymer paint on
composition board
79 × 60.8 cm**PROVENANCE**Papunya Tula Artists, Northern
Territory, cat. no. UU731135
Geoffrey Bardon, Sydney
Aboriginal and Pacific Art, Sydney
Private Collection, United Kingdom

AUD 120,000



Uta Uta Tjangala at Muyin outstation, circa 1987, photo John Corker

UTA UTA TJANGALA was conceived at Nurrapulangu, an ephemeral claypan in the heart of the Western Desert. He grew up traditionally, surviving a succession of droughts, and as a young man travelled widely, visiting distant relatives and participating in exacting ritual.

It was not until 1956, when his brother-in-law Charlie Tarawa (Tjaruru) Tjungurrayi appeared with his camels and a bag of unfamiliar food, that Uta Uta decided to leave his desert homeland and head for the ration station at Haasts Bluff — many days' march to the east. Convinced that his family would be safer at the station, Uta Uta set out towards the desert by himself to collect other kinfolk who had remained at Yumari, near his birthplace. It was an epic journey, comprising successive marches, many through unfamiliar country. After several years of settled life at Haasts

Bluff, Uta Uta and his family were relocated to a new government settlement — Papunya.

The Pintupi suffered greatly at Papunya; many old people passed away, while three of Uta Uta's children died in infancy. Desperate to gain greater control over their destiny, the Pintupi established an outstation at Yaiyai, to Papunya's west. During this time, Uta Uta took every opportunity to return to his Country, visiting ancestral sites and performing ceremonies associated with his land, where they had most resonance.¹

The current work, *Kangaroo and Emu at Putjanya*, was painted at Yaiyai a few months after the outstation was established. The community initially camped in tents and behind windbreaks near a magnificent dry riverbed. Senior men, most of whom contributed to the formation of the contemporary art movement at Papunya, gathered

regularly to paint in the shade of the towering river red gums that fringed the river. The expansive energy of *Kangaroo and Emu at Putjanya* perfectly encapsulates the liberation felt by the Pintupi painters after years of humiliating dependence at Papunya.

A young PhD candidate, Fred Myers, was living with the Pintupi at Yaiyai during the first two years of the outstation movement. Myers worked closely with the men of Uta Uta's generation, recording the artists' interpretation of their paintings as they were produced. Fortunately, Myers interviewed Uta Uta (accompanied by his friend Wartuma) on completion of *Kangaroo and Emu at Putjanya*.² Referring to the notes he drafted fifty years earlier, Myers writes:

*Friday, Nov. 2, 1973. The central circle is said to be Putjanya ... It is identified as a cave. It is Wati Kutjarra [JK: two rebellious youths with magical powers] and it is in the sandhills. Two men are looking for kangaroo [FM: I think it is actually euro], carrying their spears. And couldn't find him. "Clever fellow, hid. Kanala (euro) sleep inside pinki (cave), kulpi." "Two men go walkabout at night, looking for that euro. He asleep in cave. See tracks of the joey, 'Him bin here.' This place is inside sandhills, white man can't find it." Uta Uta imitates man holding spear and looking.*³

Uta Uta delighted in treading the line between revelation and secrecy, especially at Yaiyai, where he worked with unconstrained ritual energy. Myer's notes, taken at the men's painting camp, reflect the artist's propensity for disclosure. It is notable that Uta Uta embraced the 'dangerous' Kangaroo and Euro theme, for it is a subject that a man of lesser ceremonial stature would know to avoid.⁴ Uta Uta heightened the danger of revelation by showing the realistically represented Kanala (Euro ancestor) in proximity to a sacred cave, where only initiated men may enter. Myers continues, describing how the painting's apparently abstract elements signify particular landmarks and the traces of ancestral action:

*... some of the small circles are their fires, one is a soakage, and the larger circles on the outside corners are where the two men went walkabout (hunting) at night. The larger tracks are the kangaroo, I think, and the smaller the euro/joey. I love the little kangaroo painted in there. Pretty unusual.*⁵

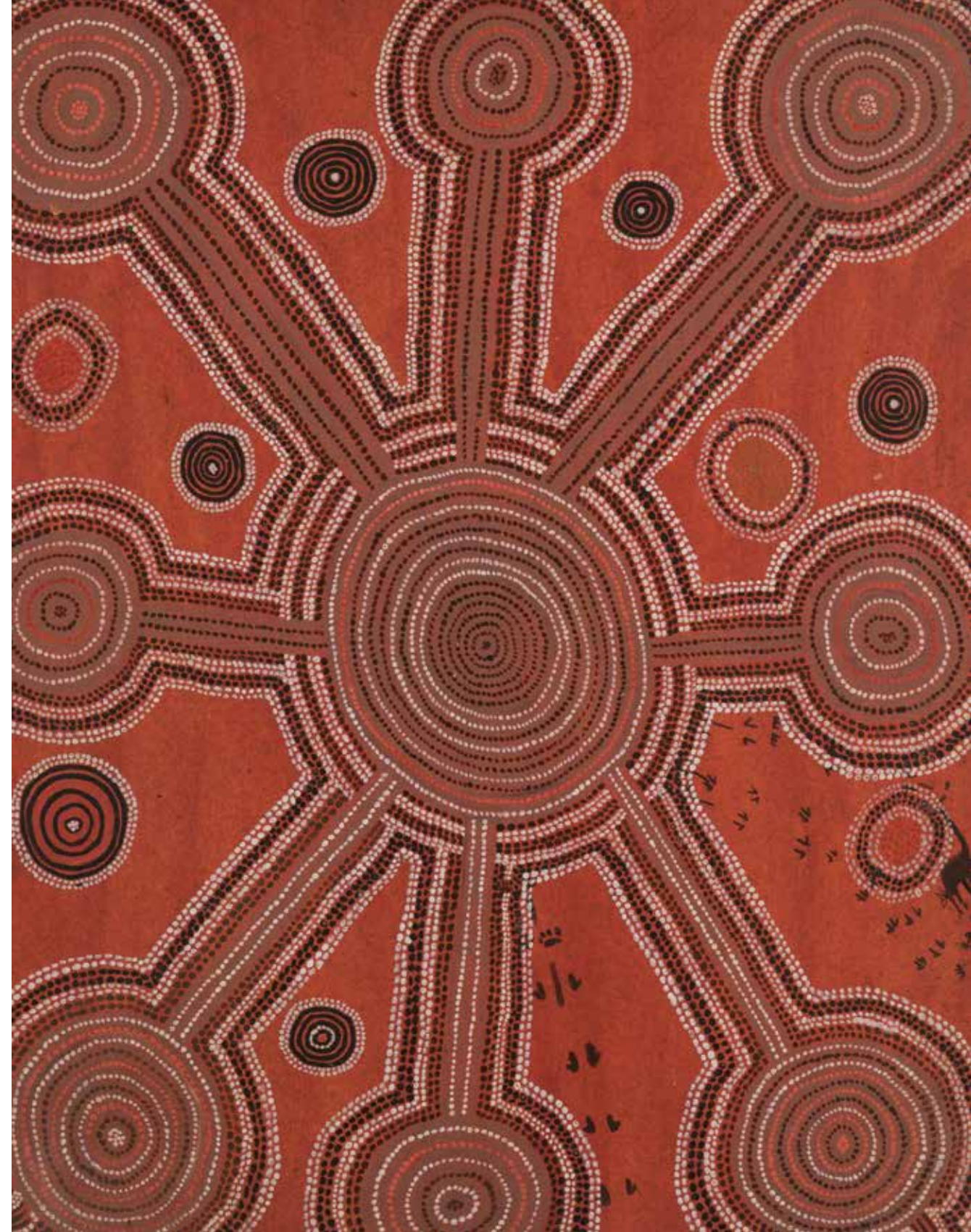
Uta Uta is arguably the most dynamic of the founding Papunya Tula artists; Uta Uta being possessed of a volatile temperament, his painting encapsulates his larger-than-life persona. His early boards, including *Kangaroo and Emu at Putjanya*, have a boundless physical presence, vigorously pushing out into space. One senses the artist's hand has become proficient through a lifelong practice of 'painting up' performers for ceremony. However, it should not be assumed that Uta Uta's apparent urgency negates the multivalent complexity at which his paintings operate.

Kangaroo and Emu at Putjanya derives its impact from its abrupt changes in scale and frames of reference. The Country, as represented by the sets of roundels, is painted at a grand scale, the hypnotic multiplicity of the concentric circles emphasising the power of the land. In contrast, the totemic heroes and their tracks are miniaturised.

While Uta Uta's paintings have much in common with those of his peers, their presence is matchless. Uta Uta was a figure of heroic proportions — in equal measure explosive and touchingly sensitive. Paintings such as *Kangaroo and Emu at Putjanya* ensure that the legacy of a life lived at mythic scale survives.

JOHN KEAN

1. Vivien Johnson, *Lives of the Papunya Tula Artists*, IAD Press, Alice Springs, 2008, pp. 25–28.
2. Myers has maintained a close association with the Pintupi and is currently the Silver Professor of Anthropology at New York University.
3. Myers, email correspondence with the author, 2 April 2022.
4. Mike Warangula Tjakamarra in conversation with the author at Yamunturrngu, May 2021.
5. Myers, email correspondence with the author, 2 April 2022.





SHORTY LUNGKATA

TJUNGURRAYI

circa 1912–1987

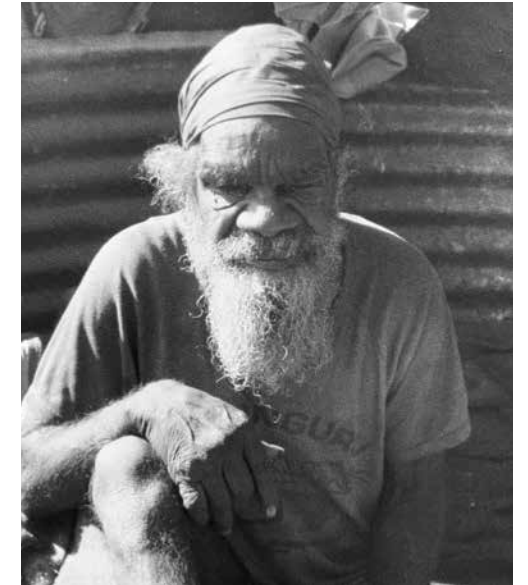
*Piwi – Tawny Frogmouth –
Dreaming at Walulkirritjinya*
1973

synthetic polymer powder
paint on composition board
78.8 × 60.5 cm

PROVENANCE

Geoffrey Bardon, Sydney
Aboriginal and Pacific Art, Sydney
Private Collection, United Kingdom

AUD 120,000



Shorty Lungkata Tjungurrayi at his windbreak at Walungurru, 1985, photo Jackie Kerin

SHORTY LUNGKATA TJUNGURRAYI burned bright among his peers. When I met him at Warawiya outstation in 1977, Lungkata was wearing a cobalt-blue satin ‘cowboy’ shirt fastened with mother of pearl press studs, his goatee heavily beaded with red ochre. He had just returned from a series of exacting ceremonies and radiated a form of personal power that I had not previously encountered.¹ Lungkata addressed newcomers insistently in his language, maintaining direct eye contact to ensure that you understood his intent, if not his words. Eventually I learned that Lungkata was a powerful ngangkari (traditional healer), esteemed as a healer and, in equal parts, feared as a sorcerer.² On several occasions, I witnessed Lungkata stripped to his briefs, dancing on his toes, rattling his spears in anger with one hand and waving a woomera in the other. Already in his mid sixties, Lungkata was fit and dangerous.

From the mid 1970s until his death in 1987, Lungkata maintained a close relationship with the anthropologist Fred Myers. Their rapport enabled the academic to assemble detailed biographic and mythic information that appears in Myers’ seminal treatise *Pintupi Country, Pintupi Self*.³ Fortuitously, Myers had his pen at the ready when Lungkata completed the current painting. Referring to notes of an interview conducted almost fifty years earlier, Myers writes:

Tuesday, Nov. 6, 1973 at Yayayi ... (Shorty Lungkata Tjungurrayi) told me it [the painting] was related to the place Walulkirritjinya [his father's place] and that it was Piwi Tjukurrpa (Tawny Frogmouth). He said "him been walkabout" (referring to the Frogmouth). But the larger central circle is [where] "they went in [to the earth], purrkarring (got tired), all going

in here ... Ngurra pulka. Piwi [the major place for the ancestral Piwi]". The smaller circles on the perimeter are kurkapi (desert oaks), which are the piwi as they are perishing, no water. I think it identifies these features as pulpa (anthills, termite mounds), "Ngurra pulka, Camp". Then I have noted that he said that feature 3 in my notes, the smaller big circle is "camp". They [the Piwi] went to 3 and then to 1 (the bigger circle).⁴

Critically, Lungkata informed Myers of both the totemic ancestor evoked and the locale, enabling this work to be contextualised within Lungkata's oeuvre. The subject, Piwi (Tawny Frogmouth, *Podargus strigoides*) is a night bird with large yellow eyes and a huge gape. The Tawny Frogmouth Dreaming appears to be fairly localised, in contrast with the better known 'travelling' Kangaroo Euro Dreaming that also passes through the artist's father's Country at Walulkirritjinya.⁵ The painting's previous title, *Travelling Ceremonial Dreaming*, is somewhat misleading, therefore, as it appears that the Piwi Tjukurrpa (Dreaming) would only be celebrated by local clans, whereas longer songlines (including the Kangaroo Euro Dreaming) travel over a vast swath of land and their celebration binds the members of several distinct cultural groups. Lungkata often painted the Kangaroo Euro Dreaming at Walulkirritjinya, yet this more intimate rendering discloses particular visual qualities that would come to distinguish the artist's mature work.

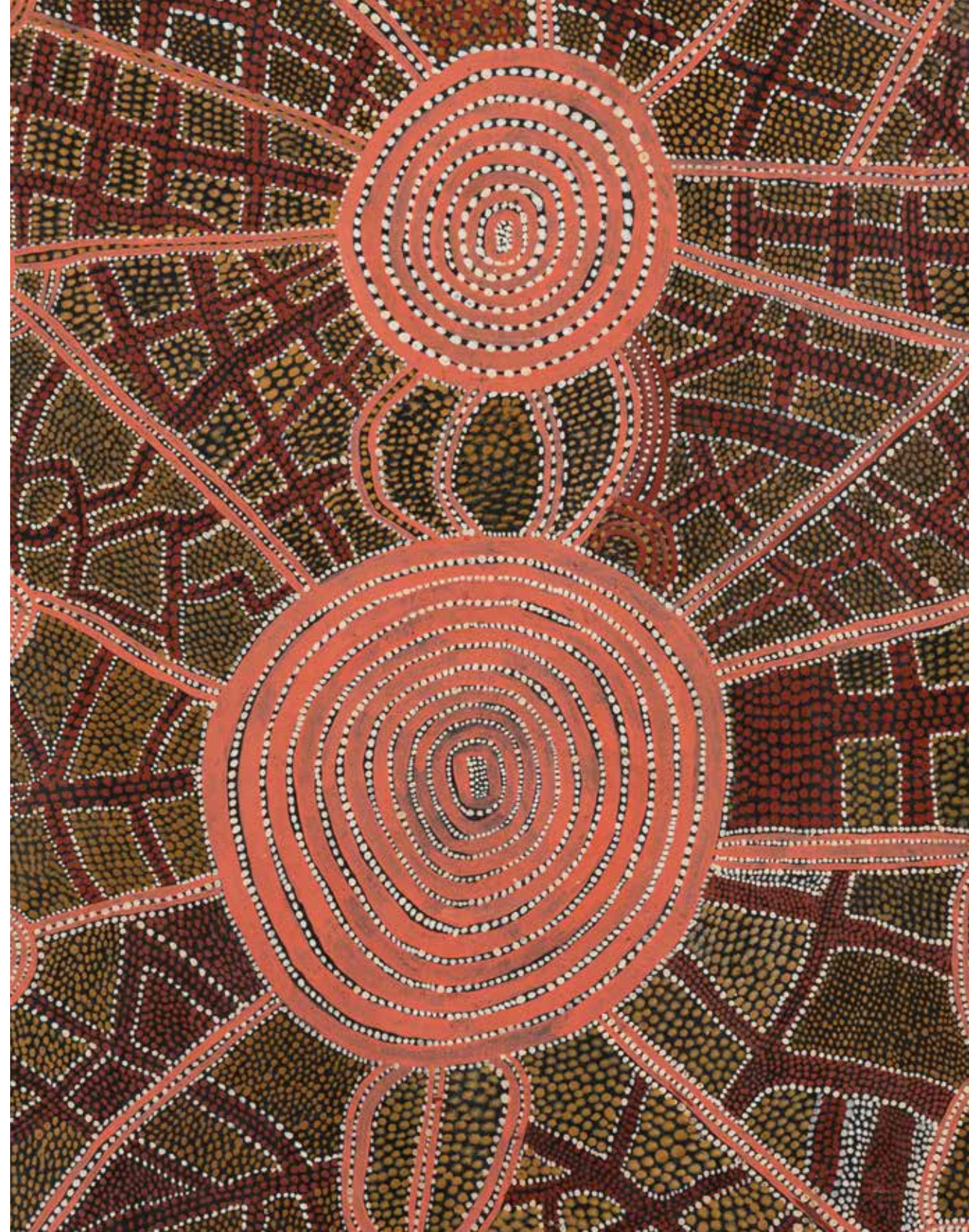
Uniquely, among the Pintupi painters of the 1970s, Lungkata commences his major roundels with an oval rather than a circle. The two major sets of concentric circles represent significant sites, the largest of which is the ngurra (home), where the Piwi ancestors are believed to reside deep within the earth. The paths of the Piwi flying between various kurkapi (desert oak, *Allocasuarina decaisneana*) are clearly marked by interconnecting lines. The abundance of kurkapi (smaller roundels) that frame the composition provides an important clue to the environment, for these graceful trees are restricted to dune country. Kurkapi offer deep shade during the heat of day and at night; they fill the space with

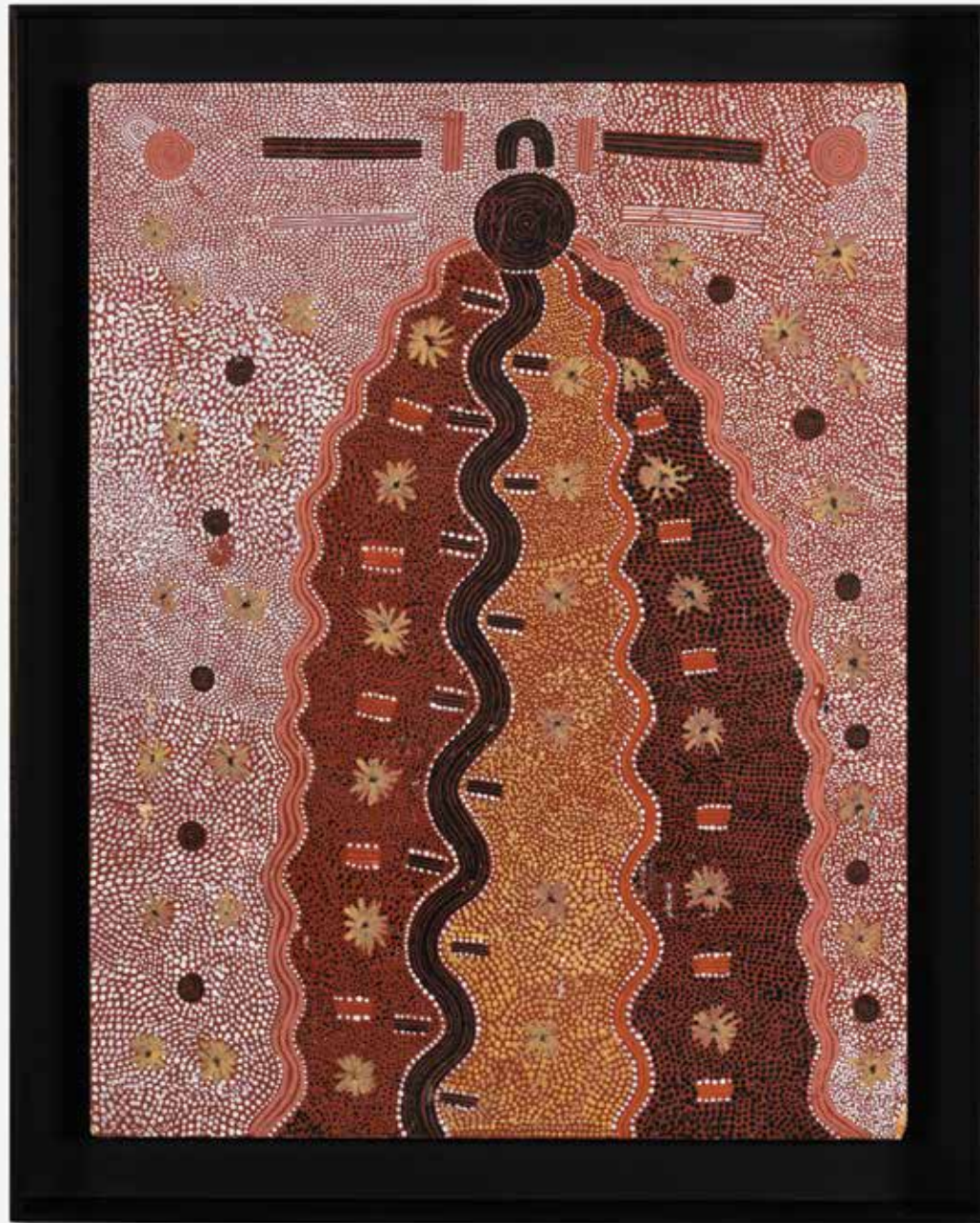
a melancholy swishing chorus as the wind whooshes through their innumerable pendulous needles. As the seasons pass, the foliage drops to the ground, accumulating to form a thick mat that suppresses the growth of other plants. It is likely, therefore, that the background pattern represents a mosaic of red earth and yellow ochre needles, a mesmerising characteristic of the airy woodlands dominated by desert oaks. In addition to a ground covering of unmixed paint, the artist has mixed a little white into red ochre paint to produce a distinctive salmon tone used for the spidery scaffolding that hovers above the patterned backdrop.

Created a few months after the Pintupi established an outstation at Yaiyai, fifty kilometres from Papunya, the painting depicts the artist's Country, much further to the west, in the vicinity of the Northern Territory–Western Australian border. Works created at Yaiyai provided a vehicle by which the Pintupi could envision their distant homelands and plan for their eventual return to the Country of their birth, a heroic endeavour they achieved in the early 1980s. The portrait that accompanies this essay was taken at Walungurru/Kintore in 1985. It shows Lungkata as an old man with Parkinson's disease. His ability as ngangkari having faded, Lungkata appears at ease with his destiny, when after two decades of exile he returned to his ancestral land.

JOHN KEAN

1. The rituals were colloquially referred to as 'red ochre ceremonies'.
2. John Kean, 'Getting back to country: painting and the outstation movement 1977–79', in Hetti Perkins and Hannah Fink (eds), *Papunya Tula: Genesis and Genius*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2000, p. 221.
3. Lungkata is referred to by an alternate name 'Maantja', Fred Myers, *Pintupi Country, Pintupi Self: Sentiment, Place and Politics among Western Desert Aborigines*, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington DC, 1986, pp. 79–89.
4. Myers, email correspondence with the author, 2 April 2022.
5. Neither Myers nor the author are aware of other 'Piwi' paintings from the region. It is notable that the Kangaroo and Euro Dreaming is also associated with another night bird, the diminutive kunkara (owlet nightjar, *Aegotheles cristatus*).





**DINNY NOLAN
TJAMPITJINPA**

circa 1928–2012
Untitled – Water
Dreaming 1973

synthetic polymer paint
on composition board
78.6 × 61 cm

PROVENANCE

Papunya Tula Artists, Northern
Territory, cat. no. DN730905
Private Collection, Adelaide
Private Collection, Northern Territory

AUD 36,000

DINNY NOLAN TJAMPITJINPA was born near Yuendumu. His father, Palapanda Tjangala, was the brother of Kaapa Tjampitjinpa's father. Dinny Nolan and Kaapa were regarded as brothers, and as such, were custodians of several sites along the Water Dreaming songline.¹ The Tjampitjinpa brothers frequently worked together, occasionally on the same canvas, as was the case when they produced the magisterial *Storm Ancestors and Mikantji* (1984, Arts Centre Melbourne).

I interviewed Kaapa about that work shortly after its completion. The following narrative, based closely on Kaapa's account, shows how various Water Dreaming songlines are linked across arid Australia.

—
Originally, two old men sat, each at his own camp, hundreds of kilometers apart. They sang into existence all the different elements of a storm: lightning, thunder, clouds, wind, rain and hail. When all the elements had amassed, the storms were then sent off on a destructive path across the land. Descendants of these original rainmakers, and those associated with important sites along the storm's paths, have the knowledge and power to make rain by reiterating the song of the original rainmakers.

They're making rain, Tjampitjinpa, Tjangala, they're singing. Tjakamarra, Tjupurrula too. After one week you'll see 'im cloud. [From] no cloud you'll see 'im cloud. Every way lightning, then big wind, from song. Start 'im rain now, rain e'll come out.

One of the original storms was created at Kalipinyapa, a deep well in Pintupi country. It travelled over the land to Watypunya where it coincided with another great storm coming from

Irralyingilya in Alyawarr country to the east. The two storm ancestors traveled together to Mirrarwarri (which means mirage), where they fought violently. As the two storms moved across the land, they carried Kirrkalanji (Peregrine Falcon). They went through Mikantji, up to Kurlpurluntu in Warlpiri country and on to Kuruntji lands, continuing until they reached the sea.

(Then they) bin turn back again, come right back to Mikantji. Altogether, whole lot. Everything all here long Mikantji. That Tjangala, Tjampitjinpa, all finish now, Tjakamarra, Tjupurrula and all.

After their epic journey, all the storm ancestors seeped into the earth at Mikantji leaving the many soakages that now mark the site.²

—
The current painting was produced in August–September 1973. The set of black concentric circles at the top of the painting is likely to represent Mikantji, the pivotal Water Dreaming site in the region. The painting's key iconographic elements are shared along a network of Water Dreaming songlines that extend for thousands of kilometres.

JOHN KEAN

1. Vivien Johnson, *Lives of the Papunya Tula Artists*, IAD Press, Alice Springs, 2008, p. 88.
2. This is a lightly edited extract of the narrative previously published as Kaapa Tjampitjinpa and John Kean, 'Ngapa Tjukurrpa: Storm Dreaming', in Fred Myers and Henry Skeritt (eds), *Irrititja Kuwarri Tjungu/Past and Present Together, Fifty Years of Papunya Tula Artists*, Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection of the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 2021, p. 110.

DARBY JAMPIJINPA ROSS

circa 1905–2005

Liwirringki Jukurrpa 1990synthetic polymer paint on linen
183 × 122 cm**PROVENANCE**Warlukurlangu Artists, Northern
Territory, cat. no. 169/90
Private Collection, Victoria

DARBY JAMPITJINPA ROSS was born in the bush at Wakurlpa, near Ngarlykirlangu, the present site of Yuendumu, around 1905. When he passed away aged almost 100, his community believed him to have been the oldest Warlpiri person alive, if not the most senior man alive. Over his long life, Darby Ross retained lived experiences of pre- and post-European contact and became an extraordinary leader and educator of his culture and Country. Surviving atrocities against his family at the hands of early pastoralists, Darby Ross navigated his changing world as a cultural mediator, always with an acute focus on his ancestral Country, which lay north of Yuendumu.

In 1928, his family members were killed during the Coniston Massacre. In this infamous event, 100 Indigenous people were killed at the soakage site over an accumulation of matters including competition for water and food, cattle poaching and reprisal killings in the drought-affected Country. Darby Ross survived the Coniston Massacre and began to travel as a stockman. From the 1950s, he would play an essential role in the broader acceptance of Indigenous knowledge systems and intellectual property. Darby Ross was a translator of many languages and a collaborator, informant and consultant for scientific, geographic and anthropological expeditions. He was primarily responsible for the acceptance of the Baptist Church in Yuendumu, helping build the church

LITERATURESimon Wright (ed.), *Darby Jampijinpa Ross: Make it Good for the People*, Griffith Artworks and University, Queensland, p. 28 (illus.)**EXHIBITED**

Darby Jampijinpa Ross: Make it Good for the People, DELL Gallery at Queensland College of Art, South Brisbane, 23 August – 28 September 2008; Araluen Centre for the Arts, Alice Springs, 22 November 2008 – 25 January 2009

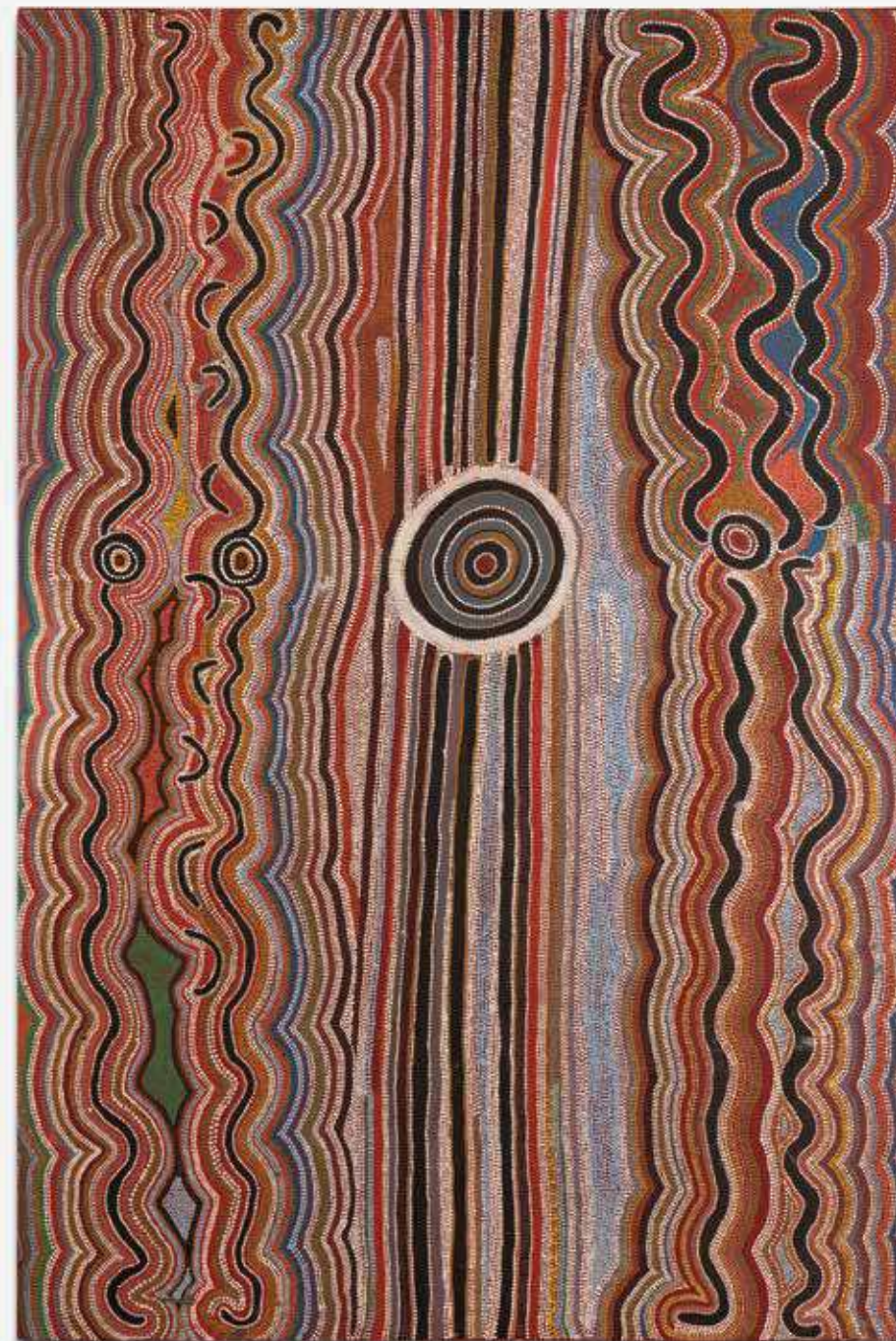
AUD 65,000

and becoming an important representative for communal religious affairs. During the 1960s, he was visiting curator at the South Australian Museum and was instrumental in motivating community members to conceive and construct the Yuendumu Men's Museum, which opened in 1971. Together with other men who were to become instrumental in the acrylic painting movement at Yuendumu, Darby painted a prominent mural on the walls inside the museum.

A much respected Warlpiri Elder, rainmaker and owner of many important sites, Darby Ross became a founding member of the Warlukurlangu Artists Association when it was established in 1985–1986. With attention to his Jukurrpa or Dreaming of Yankirri (Emu), Ngapa (Water), Pamapardu (Flying Ant), Liwirringki (Blue Tongue, or Burrowing Skink) and Watiyawanu (Wattle and Acacia seed), Darby Ross developed a bold and gestural style that pulsed with ancestral energy. He was included in numerous exhibitions, including *Dreamings: The Art of Aboriginal Australia* in New York in 1989 and *Colour Power: Aboriginal Art post-1984* at the National Gallery of Victoria in 2004.

VANESSA MERLINO

—
Simon Wright, 'Darby Jampitjinpa Ross 1905–2005', in Simon Wright (ed.), *Darby Jampijinpa Ross: Make it Good for the People*, Griffith Artworks and University, Queensland, pp. 59–61.





UTA UTA TJANGALA

circa 1926–1990

Untitled 1989

synthetic polymer paint on linen
181.5 × 121.5 cm

PROVENANCE

Papunya Tula Artists, Northern
Territory, cat. no. UU8907103
Corporate Collection, Paris
Private Collection, Switzerland

AUD 70,000

RONNIE TJAMPITJINPA

born circa 1943

Untitled – Yunala 1999

synthetic polymer paint on linen
122 × 122 cm**PROVENANCE**Papunya Tula Artists, Northern
Territory, cat. no. RT9910185Private Collection, Melbourne
Aboriginal Art, Sotheby's,
Melbourne, 26–27 July 2004,
lot 274Private Collection, United
States of America

AUD 36,000

—

This painting depicts designs associated with the rockhole site of Yunala, west of the Pollock Hills in Western Australia. This is the artist's country. In mythological times a large group of Tingari Men came from the west and camped at this site before continuing their travels to Lake Mackay. Since events associated with the Tingari Cycle are of a secret nature no further detail was given. Generally, the Tingari are a group of mythical characters of the Dreaming who travelled over vast stretches of the country, performing rituals and creating and shaping particular sites. The Tingari Men were usually followed by Tingari Women and accompanied by novices and their travels and adventures are enshrined in a number of song cycles. These mythologies form part of the teachings of the post initiatory youths today as well as providing explanations for contemporary customs.

As appears on the Papunya
Tula Artists documentation.



GEORGE TJUNGURRAYI

born circa 1943

Untitled – Kirrimalunya 2009

synthetic polymer paint on linen

183 × 244 cm

PROVENANCE

Papunya Tula Artists, Northern

Territory, cat. no. GT0901002

Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne

Private Collection, Miami

EXHIBITED*Desert Painters of Australia,*

Gagosian, Hong Kong, 24 September

– 7 November 2020

AUD 180,000



**DOREEN REID NAKAMARRA**

circa 1955–2009

Untitled – Ngaminya 2005

synthetic polymer paint on linen
122 × 91 cm**PROVENANCE**Papunya Tula Artists, Northern
Territory, cat. no. DR0508200
Private Collection, South Australia**EXHIBITED**Annual Pintupi Show, Papunya Tula
Artists, Alice Springs, November 2005

AUD 38,000

Few artists have found ease crossing between the strict truths of ancestral narratives and the expectations of a non-Indigenous audience. DOREEN REID NAKAMARRA, however, balanced the two worlds with pride and drew inspiration from the cultural divide. It propelled and shaped her practice, allowing her to become one of the leading painters to come out of the Western Desert.

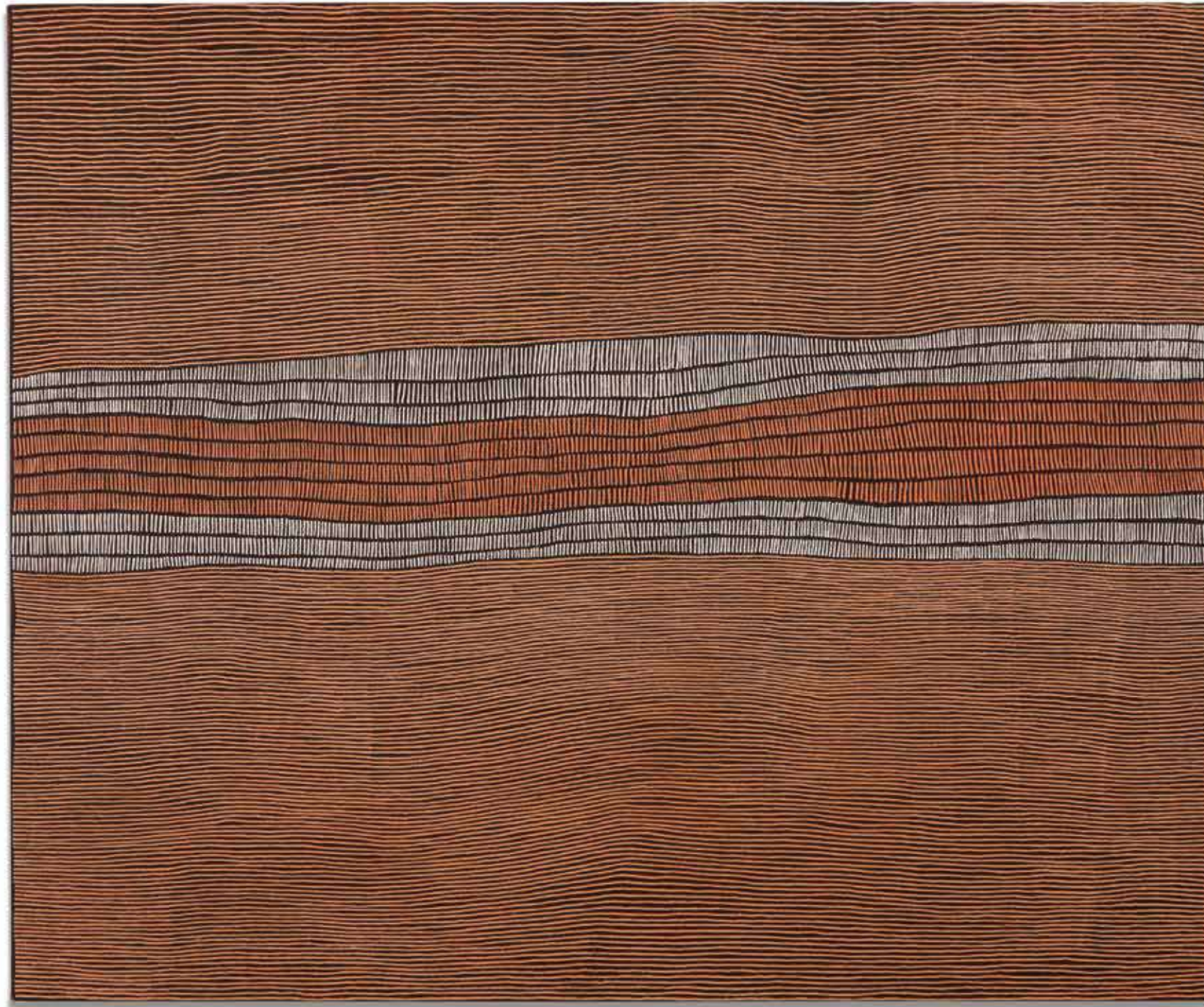
Doreen was born in the desert east of the settlement of Warburton in Western Australia and moved to the community of Kiwirrkurra, where she married artist George Tjampu Tjapaltjarri. After a steady but modest start to painting where Doreen had watched and learned from her husband, her work reflected the dichromatic minimalism of his paintings. However, by 2003, Doreen had carved out a unique stylistic interpretation of the women's sites of the Kana Puta with a particular focus on Marrapinti and Ngaminya. At these sites, the ancestral women made nose bones and ceremoniously pierced the nasal septa of the participating young women, and collected the desert raisin *kampurarrpa* (*Solanum centrale*). After George Tjampu's passing in 2005, her husband's gift of the ancestral narratives surrounding Kiwirrkurra grounded Doreen's belonging within the community, and the Tingari Women's journeys that she depicted.

Untitled – Ngaminya 2005 can be recognised as a breakthrough work for Doreen at this time. This work was exhibited in the highly anticipated Annual Pintupi Show at Papunya Tula Artists in

Alice Springs in 2005, and propelled Doreen onto the scene, where she commanded attention as a refined and skilled artist. Developing a style that reverberated the subtle intricacies of the desert, Doreen evolved a sophisticated minimalism that saw her included in a stream of national and international exhibitions including the 2008 Sydney Biennale *Revolutions: Forms that Turn*, curated by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev. Commissioned to create work especially for the Biennale, Doreen produced a mesmerising, large scale work which depicted the undulating sandhills surrounding Marrapinti in Western Australia. Her painting was unconventionally laid flat on a raised platform between the sound pieces of Italian Futurist Luigi Russolo and a sound installation by Janet Cardiff and Georges Bures Miller. The painting drew the public to the epicentre of Pier 1, where it was exhibited, forming a crucial part of the holistic experience of voluminous waves and movement, journeys and revolutions.

In 2009, soon after returning from an exhibition in New York, Doreen fell ill with pneumonia and passed away suddenly. Her premature death sent shock waves through her community and the art circles that had embraced her. Doreen's rising career was cut short and ended before she entered the profound realms of old age, where she would have no doubt produced paintings that fully realised the conceptual unveiling of the ancestral narratives.

VANESSA MERLINO

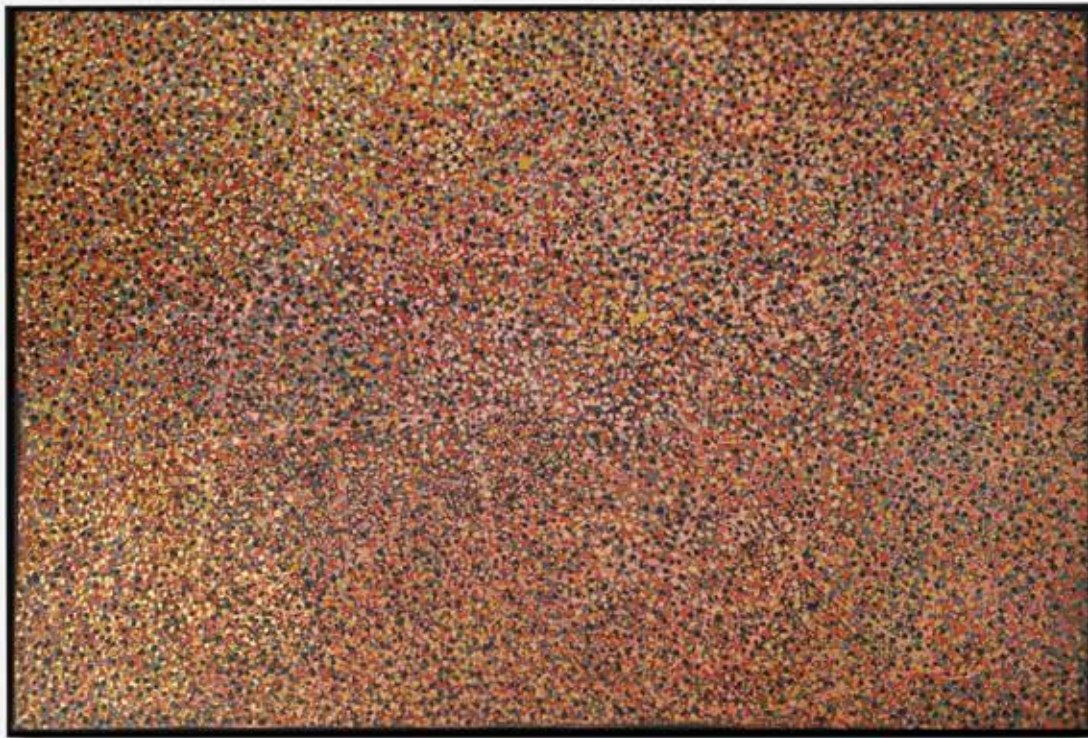
**DOREEN REID NAKAMARRA**

circa 1955–2009

Untitled 2009

synthetic polymer paint on linen
152 × 183 cm**PROVENANCE**Papunya Tula Artists, Northern
Territory, cat. no. DR0803094
Private Collection, Darwin**EXHIBITED***Western Australian Indigenous
Art Award, Art Gallery of
Western Australia, Perth, 25 July
– 15 November 2009*

AUD 96,000



EMILY KAME KNGWARREYE

circa 1910–1996

Untitled – Alhalkere 1990

synthetic polymer paint on linen

120 × 180 cm

PROVENANCE

Delmore Gallery, Northern

Territory, cat. no. OG02

Private Collection, South America

Private Collection, France

Cooeee Art, Sydney

Private Collection, Sydney

AUD 500,000

Ceremony rejuvenates the spirit, as rain does the land, as does EMILY KAME KNGWARREYE in the remarkable masterpiece *Untitled – Alhalkere 1990*. We are captured by the heightened complexity within this work and her careful, studied progress across her canvas. This work sits among the most exciting works that Emily ever painted.

The Emu mythology rests here; it is Emu Country. Kngwarreye's first canvas was titled *Emu Woman*, and she would give titles like *Emu All Over* to other works. We find dot-shrouded tracks and gain an awareness of her serious and satisfied demeanour as she carefully created this masterpiece following the summer rains of February 1990. Her desire is to hold and define her response to this season, and she paints Alhalkere with reverence for the real essence and importance of the seasonal profusion that abounds around her. As custodian of this site, her role is to look after and protect all species that must be held there to re-seed Country after drought and bushfires.

An ochre-pink lineal substructure defining the custodial Atnulare Yam is first laid across the canvas, and this is followed by a dense layering of carefully placed dotted workings that are tonally modulated by the maturity of the food sources that fattened emus. Included is the yellow 'kame' seed-bearing daisy of the atnulare, and a small green fruit, a rare native gooseberry (*Cucumis melo*), which will ripen to a pale yellow in winter when other fruit nutrients are few. Most importantly, this gooseberry is passed through the emu's system undigested, which helps its spread over the land.

Kngwarreye's personal perspective is of her experience identifying the dried parent plant of the gooseberry when foraging for fruits as part of her education as a young woman – and the current spatial view of the land. She is happy that such abundance quickly fattens the emu chicks, with the male emu protecting them from predators. Good seasons always return.

JANET HOLT



KATHLEEN PETYARRE

circa 1935–2018

*Thorny Devil Lizard**Dreaming* 1997

synthetic polymer paint on linen

123 × 182 cm

PROVENANCE

Gallerie Australis, South Australia,

cat. no. GAK 100698131

Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne,

cat. no. AK 4295

Private Collection, Melbourne

LITERATURE

Christine Nicholls and Ian North (eds),

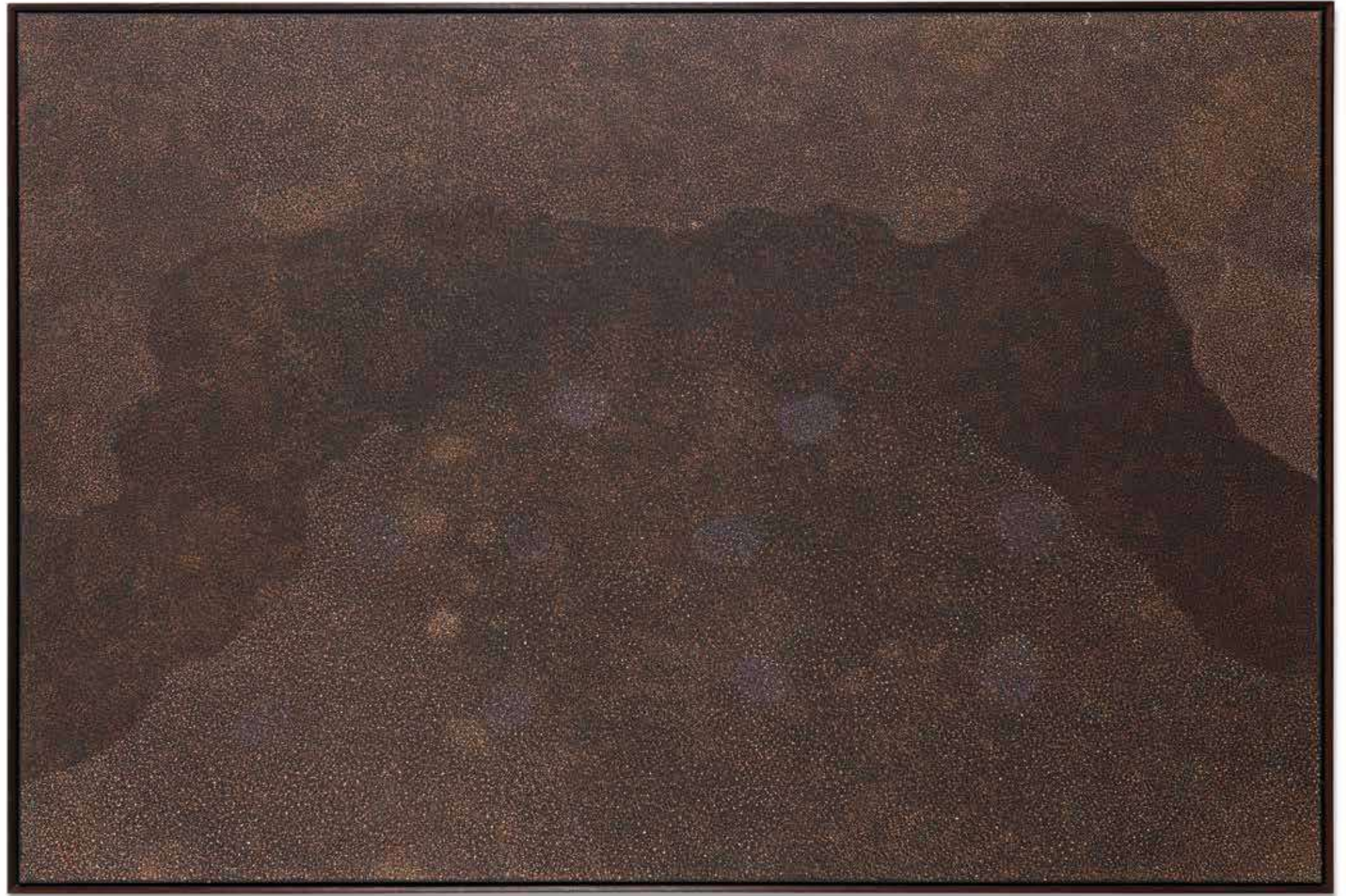
*Kathleen Petyarre: Genius of Place /**Essays by Christine Nicholls and Ian**North*, Wakefield Press, Kent Town,

South Australia, 2001, p. 58 (illus.)

EXHIBITED*Kathleen Petyarre: Ankherrthe**My Dreaming*, Alcaston Gallery,

Melbourne, 24 July – 15 August 1998

AUD 40,000





Boxer Milner Tjampitjin

Sometime in the 1930s Boxer Milner started life as a yawu (fish) growing inside a river. When his mother and father tried to eat him, the fish didn't taste right. They realised it wasn't a fish at all but the jarriny spirit of their unborn boy. Milnga (his bush name) took his human form shortly afterwards, born on the river he was fished out of. He grew up along the river and was initiated into its Law, meanings and silences. He matured in a changing world, populated by the strange cattle and cattlemen who had taken root in his Country in the decade before his birth. He was a talented horseman; over time he became head stockman at Sturt Creek Station. He became 'Boxer Milner' working his Country between worlds. When he became too old to work that river Country, he turned his hand to painting it.

Where the old desert painters were focussed on the concentric circles that depicted rockholes and soakwaters deep in the desert, Boxer was cutting the canvas with swathes of white paint. A river man, he was painting different Country, and painting Country differently. Where other Balgo artists were painting the water found underground, Boxer was painting water that poured from the sky and surged through the landscape. He was painting the force of the water: not its eternal qualities but its transformative ones, the way it shapes the land and the people who belong to it.

Boxer painted *Purkitji*, the flood plain beside Sturt Creek, and *Walyarra*, the flooding. In the early blue-water phase the water runs clear and fast. After the blue-water comes the white, the colour of the *Palkarnar*. This is the legendary 'milkwater' stage of the flooding cycle, when the waters of the Sturt becomes cloudy from the clay soils washing into the river from its northern banks.

JOHN CARTY

Extract from John Carty, *Balgo: Creating Country*, UWA Publishing, Western Australia, 2021, p. 249.

**BOXER MILNER
TJAMPITJIN**

circa 1935–2009
Sturt Creek 2000

synthetic polymer paint on linen
150 × 75 cm

PROVENANCE

Warlayirti Artists, Western
Australia, cat. no. 964/00
William Mora Galleries, Melbourne
Private Collection, Melbourne
Important Aboriginal Art, Sotheby's,
Melbourne, 25 July 2005, lot 249
Private Collection, Melbourne

AUD 25,000

—

Boxer has painted a section of his traditional country along the banks of Sturt Creek. This country is north of Balgo and is a long, fresh water creek that drains into Parrakur, or Lake Gregory, west of Balgo. Boxer has painted the many, myriad channels of the creek. The blue line represents the main channel, while the others are paths that the flood waters that feed the creek take, often through different country.

As appears on the Warlayirti Artists documentation.




BOXER MILNER
TJAMPITJIN

circa 1935–2009

Warla 2001

synthetic polymer paint on linen
180 x 120 cm

PROVENANCE

Warlayirti Artists, Western
Australia, cat. no. 3/01
Thornquest Gallery, Queensland
Private Collection, Queensland

AUD 40,000

—

In the plains of Aboriginal desert art overrun with dots, Boxer Milner's dots rise, literally, above the rest. Using the wooden end of the brush he applied meticulous dot upon dot, loading the end of the stick with paint and placing it upon a previous dot, creating tiny peaks of pigment. Uneven in their height and hues, these undulations of colour bring depth and dimension to his works.

Where other Balgo artists fused dots into luminous fields or lines, blending and flattening their 'dottiness', Boxer never did. He not only preserved the dot: he accentuated it. Dot upon dot, he sculpted space, time, and depth out of the two dimensions of the canvas. If anything, Boxer turned the dot into an increasingly *representational* aesthetic device. He made it mean something, rather than just highlighting the meaning of other things.

John Carty, *Balgo: Creating Country*, UWA Publishing, Western Australia, 2021, p. 253.

BOXER MILNER
TJAMPITJIN

circa 1935–2009
Karntawarra 2001

synthetic polymer paint on linen
180 × 120 cm

PROVENANCE

Warlayirti Artists, Western
Australia, cat. no. 733/01
Framed Gallery, Darwin
Private Collection, Canberra

AUD 30,000

Boxer has painted some of his country along the floodplains and channels of Sturt Creek, or Purkitji. The hook shapes are the channels and tributaries of Purkitji running through the red sandy country of the area, while the blue line is the main channel of Purkitji. The yellow area represents the yuka, or spinifex plains, of the area.

As appears on the Warlayirti Artists documentation.





BOXER MILNER

TJAMPITJIN

circa 1935–2009

Purkitji 2002

synthetic polymer paint on linen
149,5 × 75 cm

PROVENANCE

Warlayirti Artists, Western
Australia, cat. no. 824/02
Private Collection
Aboriginal Art, Lawson-Menzies,
Sydney, 25 May 2004, lot 117
Private Collection, Melbourne

AUD 18,000

—
Purkitji is the Tjaru name for Sturt
Creek, north of Balgo. This is important
country for Boxer, and the central
vertical line depicts the main channel
of Purkitji. The smaller hook shapes
are the many, small tributaries that
run into Purkitji. The main horizontal
channel in the painting shows the
river flowing from Carranya Station.

As appears on the Warlayirti
Artists documentation.

BOXER MILNER
TJAMPITJIN

circa 1935–2009
Purkitji 2004

synthetic polymer paint on linen
180 × 120 cm

PROVENANCE

Warlayirti Artists, Western
Australia, cat. no. 189/04
Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne
Private Collection, Melbourne

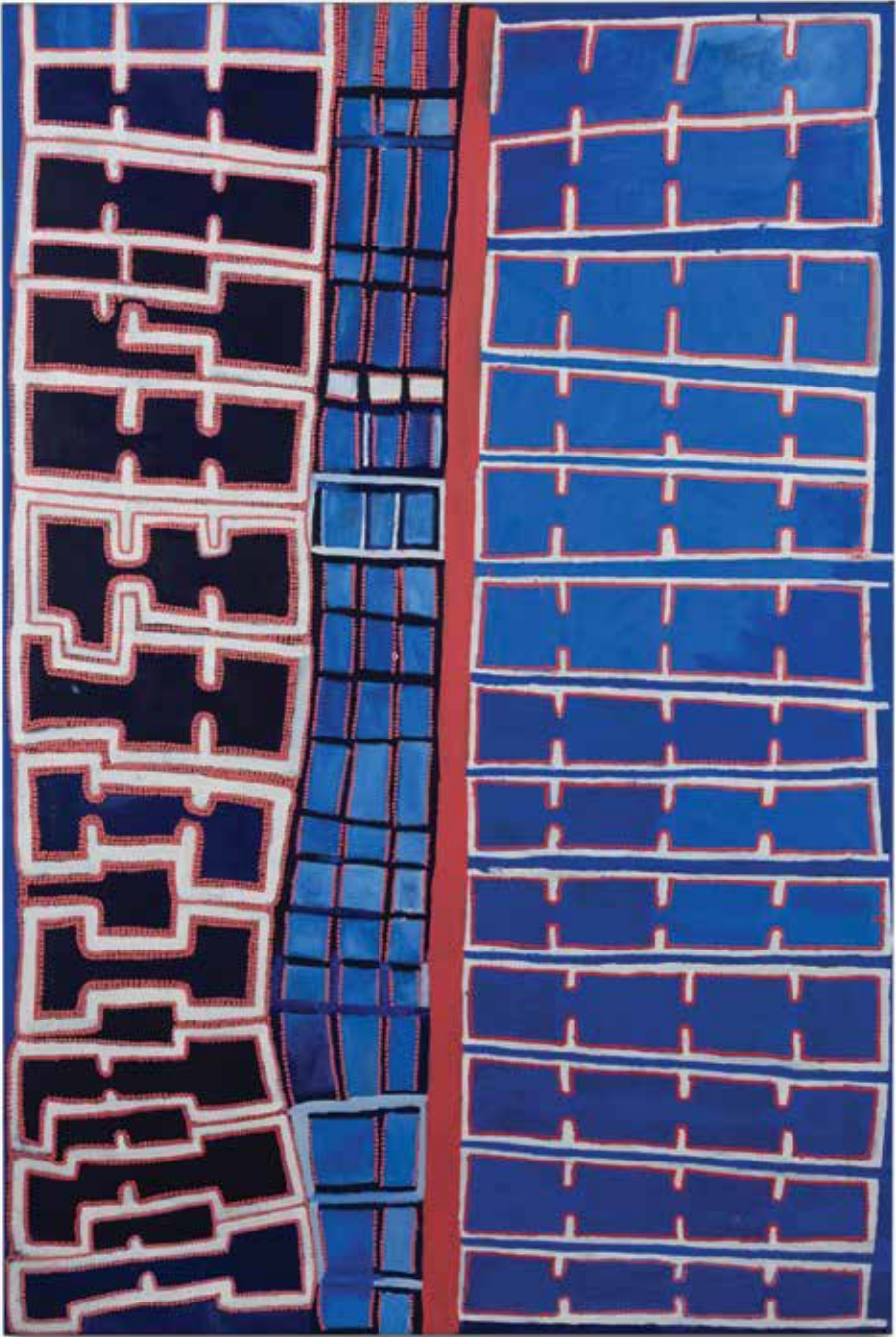
EXHIBITED

Balgo 2005, Gallery Gabrielle
Pizzi, Melbourne, 2005
The World in Painting, developed
by Heide Museum of Modern Art,
Melbourne; Newcastle Regional
Gallery, Newcastle, 21 February –
9 May 2009; Latrobe Regional
Gallery, Morwell, 27 June – 23 August
2009; Warrnambool Art Gallery,
Warrnambool, 19 September –
15 November 2009

AUD 40,000

Boxer has painted some of his
traditional country, found along the
middle stretches of Purkitji (Sturt
Creek). The main channel of Purkitji
is depicted as the central line of
the painting, while the right side of
the painting depicts the floodwater
flowing down Purkitji. The section
to the left of the painting depicts
the milkwater which forms when
Purkitji is filled to capacity.

As appears on the Warlayirti
Artists documentation.





WAKARTU CORY SURPRISE

circa 1929–2011

Jili – Sandhills 2009

synthetic polymer paint on linen

120 × 120 cm

PROVENANCE

Mangkaja Arts, Western

Australia, cat. no. 102/09

Raft Artspace, Alice Springs

Private Collection, Melbourne

EXHIBITED

Sitting Down with Jukuja and Wakartu;

in partnership with Mangkaja Arts

and Ildiko Kovacs, Raft Artspace,

Alice Springs, 19 June – 11 July 2009

AUD 16,000

WAKARTU CORY SURPRISE was born in the Great Sandy Desert in 1929. Her early life was spent travelling around with her husband, living and working on different stations after her parents both died when she was a baby living in the desert. She came to Fitzroy Crossing in Western Australia in the 1950s but only began painting at Karrayili Adult Education Centre in the early 1980s when the art movement in the area was burgeoning. When Mangkaja Arts was established in 1984, Cory Surprise was one of the first twenty painters of the inaugural art centre.

‘When I paint, I think about my country and where I have been travelling across that country. I paint from here (points to head – thinking about country) and here (points to breasts, collarbone and shoulder blades – which is a reference to body painting). When I paint, I am thinking about Law from a long time ago. No one taught me to paint. I put down my own ideas.’¹

A confident, natural and usually solo painter, Cory Surprise welcomed a change in

the studio in 2008 when Ildiko Kovacs, the Sydney-based abstract artist, came to Mangkaja Arts to participate in a three-week residency. Kovacs and Surprise, in particular, experienced a synergy in their practices and the two artists intuitively worked side by side, enjoying the companionship and their shared love of painting. *Jili – Sandhills* 2009 is one of the resulting works from this time and was exhibited alongside inspired works from Kovacs at Raft Artspace in 2009. The group of paintings was a celebration of this extraordinary residency, with a new vibrancy in the colours of Surprise’s work and a subtle yet significant shift in Kovacs’ paintings. A moment of beauty in cross-cultural exchange and creative dialogue, where the artists were reciprocally peer and teacher.

VANESSA MERLINO

1. Wakartu Cory Surprise artist’s biography, Mangkaja Arts Resource Agency.

DANIEL WALBIDI

born 1983

Winpa and all the Jila 2010synthetic polymer paint on linen
100 × 60 cm**PROVENANCE**Short St Gallery, Western
Australia, cat. no. 27774
Private Collection, Melbourne

AUD 24,000

Winpa was a rainmaker who lived and hunted all over Yulparitja Country in the far west of the Great Sandy Desert. When he got old and tired, he returned to his home – Winpa Jila – where he turned into a snake and laid down to rest in the waterhole, creating the ‘living water’ that is found there. Winpa Jila was for everybody, an important meeting place where people would travel and perform rainmaking ceremonies. DANIEL WALBIDI has painted his father’s Country ever since he was a young man and his affiliation with these traditional lands, Winpa in particular, reflects the same convergence that nurtured his coastal upbringing.

Daniel lived his entire life on the north-western Australian coast at the small remote community of Bidyadanga, formerly La Grange Mission, on the traditional homelands of the Karajarri people. He grew up among five language groups that congregated there – Karajarri, Juwaliny, Mangala, Nyangumarta and Yulparitja – and was raised surrounded by the Dreaming stories associated

with the vast desert landscape. Before ever setting foot in the desert, Daniel painted the Dreaming narratives that captured his imagination from the images that were conjured in his mind. In 2007, however, Daniel accompanied a group of senior Yulparitja artists to make an emotional homecoming back to Yulparitja Country, where he visited the sites of Winpa and Kirriwirri in his father’s homelands. Following this revelation of experiencing the Country first-hand, Daniel’s style evolved, his canvases bursting with colour and complex compositions that capture the multiple layers of information that lie beneath the surface of the Country. In *Winpa and all the Jila* 2010, Daniel has painted the large waterhole that is connected underground to the surrounding yenta (creeks) and jila (living water) of the landscape. Daniel has also painted the abundance of mayi (bush food) that is dotted over half the tali (sand dunes).

VANESSA MERLINO

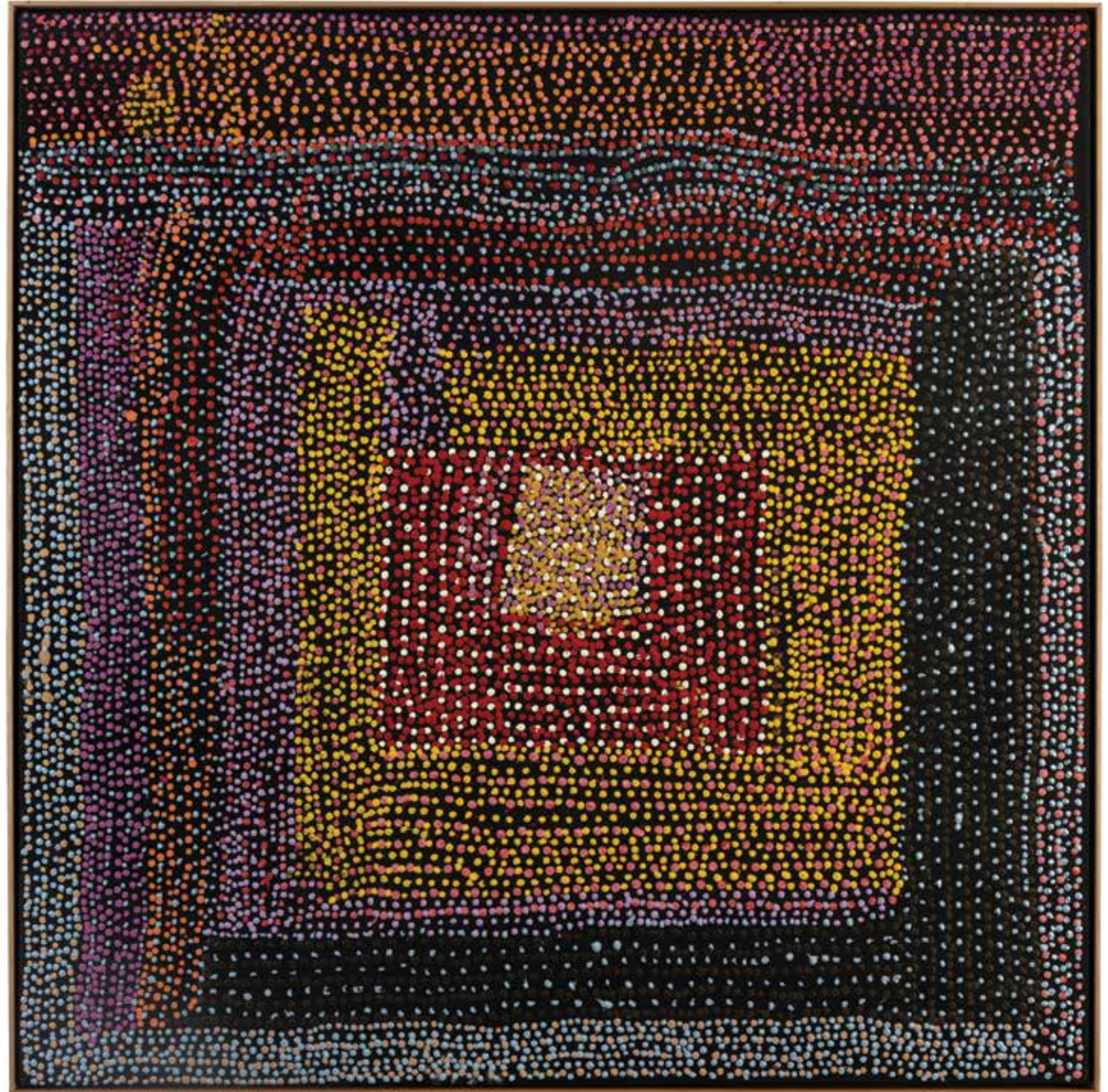
TOMMY MITCHELL

circa 1943–2013

Wakalpuka 2011synthetic polymer paint on canvas
101.5 × 101.5 cm**PROVENANCE**Warakurna Artists, Western
Australia, cat. no. 418-11
Private Collection, Melbourne

AUD 14,000

—

Tommy Mitchell was born in the desert
the Warakurna side of Papulankutja.This painting is from Tommy's mother's
and uncle Tjunka Lewis's country.
Tommy Mitchell says the painting
is about Tjunka's country and a
special place called Wakalpuka.It's a story about the Patjarrtja (native
quoll, sometimes referred to as native
cat). This animal was travelling around.
You cannot find the Patjarrtja anymore,
they have become extinct from the
region. Too many wild feral cats.As appears on the Warakurna
Artists documentation.



KUNMANARA CARROLL

circa 1950–2021

Walungurru 2011

synthetic polymer paint on linen

150 × 90 cm

PROVENANCE

Ernabella Arts, South

Australia, cat. no. 81–11

Short St Gallery, Western Australia

Private Collection, Melbourne

AUD 22,000

When KUNMANARA CARROLL started painting upon his retirement in 2009, he had spent more than fifty years fulfilling many diverse services and leadership roles in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands. During his first two years as an artist, he explored his burgeoning love of painting at Ernabella Arts, where he could continue to maintain his culture and contribute as a senior leader in his community. Drawing on memories from his past, his father's Country in the Western Desert became a trustworthy source of inspiration and the recurrent subject of his paintings. At the age of eighteen, Kunmanara would leave it behind and move south-east after his parents passed away within only a few months of each other.

Walungurru 2011 depicts the sand dune country of Walungurru near Kintore in the Northern Territory, where Kunmanara's father comes from. Here, the Wanumpi – water snake – cuts through the sandy landscape, making a road and bringing water with him as he travels. The water at this place is protected and controlled as long as the Wanumpi resides there.

In 2011, Kunmanara would participate in a five-week Watiku (men's) workshop, a ceramic residency led by Blue Mountains based ceramists Simon

Reece and Kirk Winters. This experience would spark an interest in clay and sharpen the technique of slab building and sgraffito which would become a partner method to Kunmanara's painting practice. Over the following years, he would continue to explore his father's Country in both paint and clay with longing, focus and dedication. In 2017, after many years of painting from memory, he undertook a journey to return to his custodial lands deep in the Western Desert. Heading north-west from Ernabella, past his birthplace of Haasts Bluff, he walked Country not visited since his childhood, such as Walungurru (Kintore), Wilkinkarra (Lake Mackay) and the distinctive cross-shaped rockhole of Yumari. The journey he took would heal the relics of his past and awaken a vividly sensitive body of work that would propel him as a renowned and accomplished artist and ceramicist until his passing in 2021.

VANESSA MERLINO

Concerning his family and community, the name Kunmanara is retained to align with the Pitjantjatjara mortuary beliefs. At a point in the future (nominated by his family/community) his name will be restored.

JAN BILLYCAN

circa 1930–2015

All the Jila 2011synthetic polymer paint on linen
107 × 60 cm**PROVENANCE**Short St Gallery, Western
Australia, cat. no. 27634
Harvey Art Projects, United
States of America
Private Collection, Melbourne

AUD 12,000

—

This is all the Jila in my country including Karrparti, Kawarr, Jurntiwa and Wirrguja jila (living water). It also shows Dodo, Kartal, and Kiriwirri and Yukarri and others. When I was young, I walked all around these places, with my mum and daddy. In living water there is a quiet snake. Sometimes he rises up, but we sing him down, sometimes he can travel and bring rain.

As appears on the Short St Gallery documentation.



**BILLY THOMAS****JOONGOORA**

circa 1920–2012

*Kangaroo and Spear
Dreaming* 2002natural earth pigments and
synthetic binder on canvas
100 × 80 cm**PROVENANCE**Red Rock Art Gallery, Western
Australia, cat. no. KP2004
Private Collection, Melbourne

AUD 18,000

—

This work refers to a ceremony performed prior to a kangaroo hunt. It is held at a place called Whaarla in the Great Sandy Desert where there are many waterholes and is described by the artists as 'flat like an airport'. During 'dry' time, rock kangaroos were hunted with spears (shown as straight lines connecting the circular shapes, rockholes). Kangaroos were hunted from rockhole to rockhole. The ceremony brought good luck to the hunters.

As appears on the Red Rock Art Gallery documentation.

BILLY THOMAS**JOONGOORA**

circa 1920–2012

*Kangaroo and Spear**Dreaming* 2001

natural earth pigments and
synthetic binder on canvas
80 × 60 cm

PROVENANCE

Red Rock Art Gallery, Western

Australia, cat. no. KP11

Tineriba Gallery, South Australia

Private Collection, Melbourne

AUD 14,000

BILLY THOMAS JOONGOORA was a stockman and tracker in Mirriwong Country, which lies in the East Kimberley region of Western Australia and stretches across to the Keep River National Park in the Northern Territory. When he came to Waringarri Aboriginal Arts in Kununurra in 1994 to take up painting, he entered the epicentre of the ochre painting movement, which had begun in the Kimberley almost two decades prior. The style and form that Billy Thomas developed would place him outside the recognisable company of his predecessors Rover Thomas, Rusty Peters, George Mung Mung and Queenie McKenzie, whose fields of colour would map and reflect the vast surrounding Country. The rare white ochre that Billy would dig from beneath the dry Kimberley rivers was applied to his canvases not in the balanced and resolved compositions of his peers, but as a means to depict the dissipating familiar motifs of the Australian desert.

Kangaroo and Spear Dreaming 2001 and 2002 represent the final stylistic shift that Billy Thomas Joongoora's work entered around this time.

The white ochre has become the defining impression of his paintings. It is the working material employed to shape, erase and rework the activities of the Dreaming. If there is red ochre or black underneath, it is only made visible where Thomas wishes to scrape the thick white ochre back to reveal its existence. At other times, the only hint that remains is in those instances where a hue of pink or brown comes in and out of focus beneath the surface. The rockholes, snakes, sandhills or windbreaks that Billy Thomas Joongoora depicts are drawn, materially and experientially, from a vast swath of the Country. From the dry plains of his Wangkajunga home at the edge of the Great Sandy Desert to the lush freshwater of Mirriwong Country.

VANESSA MERLINO

—
Darren Jorgenson, 'Billy Joongoora Thomas: nature, time and painting', in Henry Skeritt (ed.), *No Boundaries: Aboriginal Australian Contemporary Abstract Painting*, DelMonaco Books, Nevada Museum of Art, pp. 104–117.





PADDY BEDFORD

circa 1922–2007

Lightning Creek 2005

natural earth pigments and synthetic
binder on composition board
80 × 100 cm

PROVENANCE

Jirrawun Arts, Western Australia,
cat. no. PB CB4 2005.51
Paddy Bedford Trust
The Estate of Paddy Bedford

LITERATURE

Linda Michael (ed.), *Paddy Bedford*,
Museum of Contemporary Art,
Sydney, 2006, p. 163 (illus.).

AUD 100,000

GOOWOOMJI NYUNKUNY PADDY BEDFORD was a senior Gija lawman who became a critical figure in East Kimberley painting. His paintings were the manifestation of his embodiment of the Ngarranggarni, representing the Laws and Dreamings of his mother's and father's Country. In protecting the integrity of cultural law, he developed a new visual language. His impeccably balanced compositions were felt far beyond his homeland, reaching audiences outside the vast songlines and becoming the most potent vehicle for the advocacy of reconciliation.

The year 2022 marks the end of the Estate of Paddy Bedford. Fifteen years after the artist's passing, the final works from the select group of paintings have now all been released. In one sense, this closes a unique chapter in Australian art history. In another, it opens it anew, freeing the last pieces of his opus to complete his series and continue to enrich the cultural landscape, educate others in Gija knowledge and language, and hold the true history of the East Kimberley region.

Lightning Creek 2005 and *Queensland Creek* 2004 represent two sites that are, in part, in Paddy Bedford's father's Country. They lie close to one another north-east of Bedford Downs, near the Durack Range. Lerndijwaneman – Lightning Creek – is

where Birnkirrbal, the Bush Turkey or Bustard, camped when it left the Emu, who would have relentlessly kept walking if it hadn't become stuck on Mount King. The entwined Dreamings of the Emu and Bush Turkey illuminate the phenomenon of day and night. The fate and fortitude of the Emu and Bush Turkey made the Law of sleep for the Gija people.

Paddy Bedford tells the story:

The emu came travelling with people from the west, from Tableland Station country, they came along through the gaps in the hills. Then the emu got stuck when she came down the hill there (at Mount King). She was stuck like that then when the Turkey kept going. The turkey went on through the gap down to open Country and made camp.

'I will stay here camping', she said. She spoke using those words. Because of these words, we sleep at night. She is the one who made camp for all of us. She is the one who brought sleep into existence for us in the Dreamtime.

VANESSA MERLINO

—
Paddy Bedford, in Linda Michael (ed.), *Paddy Bedford*,
Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 2006, pp. 80 & 98.

PADDY BEDFORD
circa 1922–2007
Queensland Creek 2004

natural earth pigments and synthetic
binder on composition board
80 × 100 cm

PROVENANCE
Jirrawun Arts, Western Australia,
cat. no. PB CB3 2004.18
Paddy Bedford Trust
The Estate of Paddy Bedford

LITERATURE
Linda Michael (ed.), *Paddy Bedford*,
Museum of Contemporary Art,
Sydney, 2006, p. 161 (illus.).
AUD 100,000




RAMMEY RAMSEY

born circa 1935

Gija and Worla 2003

natural earth pigments with
synthetic binder on linen
122 × 135 cm

PROVENANCE

Jirrawun Arts, Western Australia,
cat. no. RR-7-2003-24

Raft Artspace, Northern Territory

Private Collection, Victoria

Aboriginal Fine Art, Lawson~Menzies,
Sydney, 23 May 2007, lot 11

Private Collection, Melbourne

EXHIBITED

Jirrawun Jazz, Raft Artspace,
Darwin, August 2003

AUD 24,000

PADDY BEDFORD

circa 1922–2007

Queensland Creek 1998

natural earth pigments with
synthetic binder on linen
122 × 135 cm

PROVENANCE

Jirrawun Arts, Western Australia,
cat. no. PB 1998.22
William Mora Galleries, Melbourne
Ray Foley, Tasmania
Art Mob, Tasmania
Grant Smith, Melbourne

LITERATURE

Linda Michael (ed.), *Paddy Bedford*,
Museum of Contemporary Art,
Sydney, 2006, p. 144 (illus.).

EXHIBITED

Paddy Bedford: My Country,
William Mora Galleries, Melbourne,
18 November – 12 December, 1998

AUD 120,000

—

This country is considered to be highly dangerous – Paddy’s mother, father and brother all died in this place – and nobody visits the area. At the top left and right of the painting are hills at the bottom of which lies waterholes. A river (indicated by the black ochre) runs through the remote country which cannot be accessed by the road (the road stops short of this place and is represented by the vertical red strip).

As appears in the catalogue *Paddy Bedford: My Country*, the first solo exhibition of the artist, presented by William Mora Galleries and held at Flinders Lane, Melbourne, in 1998.





**QUEENIE NAKARRA
MCKENZIE**

circa 1930–1998

High Country on Texas

Down Station 1998

natural earth pigments and
synthetic binder on canvas
100 × 140 cm

PROVENANCE

The Estate of Queenie
McKenzie, cat. no. QE50
Red Rock Art Gallery,
Western Australia
Private Collection, Melbourne

AUD 36,000

—
This painting shows much of the high country of Texas Downs Station. In the top left of the work are the Moorndoo Hills which give rise to the Wunaba Spring (shown in the pink) a favourite swimming hole. This country is associated with Moon Dreaming (garrkiny). The hills in the right hand side of the work are part of Yoonoor Country in the Kilfoyle area between Texas Downs and Mistake Creek. In the Dreamtime, the snake travelled through this country and it became what it is today. She set off from the little ridges, she kept going up and down the hills looking as she went. She climbed up Jawoorroogji and Jimarabji (centre of the work). When she got to the fourth hill called Darrgayil she camped with her niece and they listened to all the hills she had left behind talking. She said to her niece, 'you and me won't wait for them', after that she climbed up behind Darrgayil and made a big waterhole called Larrini where she stayed for good (two hills at the bottom of the work).

As appears on the Red Rock Art Gallery documentation.



ROVER THOMAS JOOLAMA

circa 1926–1998

Untitled – Corroboree

Painting 1985

natural earth pigments and bush
gum on composition board
61 × 88 cm

PROVENANCE

Painted at Turkey Creek
(Warmun) in March 1985
Waringarri Arts, Kununurra,
cat. no. PB1/101
Important Aboriginal Art, Sotheby's,
Melbourne, 30 June 1997, lot 1
The Thomas Vroom Collection,
The Netherlands
Aboriginal Art – Thomas Vroom
Collection, Sotheby's, London,
10 June 2015, lot 66
Private Collection, Sydney

AUD 120,000

—

This painting represents the country
around Turkey Creek including the
highway and the creek. The painting
relates to a corroboree dreamed
by Rover depicting the death of an
old woman in a vehicle accident at
the creek crossing. The corroboree
goes on to tell of the journey of the
woman's spirit back to her country.

As appears on the Waringarri
Arts label verso.

ROVER THOMAS JOOLAMA is regarded as the father of the modern painting movement in the eastern Kimberley region of north-west Australia. After decades of social and cultural disruption for Aboriginal people living in the region, a cultural renewal flourished in the wake of Cyclone Tracy, which flattened the city of Darwin, the capital of the Northern Territory, on Christmas Eve 1974. The cyclone continued to wreak havoc in the Kimberley to the west, where Thomas's aunt was fatally injured in a car accident that occurred on a road near Turkey Creek that had been flooded by the cyclonic rains. She was being taken by the Flying Doctor service to hospital in Perth, but she died along the way. In a series of dream visitations in the following year, the spirit of Thomas's deceased aunt described to him her journey across the Kimberley, from west to east, from where she witnessed the destruction of Darwin by an ancestral Rainbow Serpent in the guise of a cyclone. The catastrophic event was interpreted by Aboriginal Elders across the Kimberley as a warning

to maintain culture and language in the face of ever increasing consequences of non-Aboriginal settlement in the area. The revelations disclosed to Rover Thomas involved a ceremony – the Kurirr Kurirr – about the woman's spirit journey, including the songs, choreography and designs which were painted on boards carried by the performers. The painted boards eventually led to the creation by East Kimberley artists of paintings in the same style, though not necessarily associated with the ceremony nor the cataclysmic events of 1974.

Nonetheless, *Corroboree Painting* 1985 does allude to the scene of the car accident. Characteristically, Thomas's semi-abstract style of painting suggests a planar view of the landscape. Rather than depicting the event in figurative detail, Thomas paints the site where the event occurred. To him, the land was a living entity that bears the scars and marks of all who pass through it.

WALLY CARUANA

WAIGAN DJANGHARA

circa 1929–1996

Untitled – Two Wanjinas 1979

natural earth pigments and
synthetic binder on canvas
93 × 132 cm

PROVENANCE

Likely Mary Macha, Perth
Private Collection, Western Australia

AUD 30,000

WAIGAN DJANGHARA (1929–1996) belongs to the Beromalar moiety, whose moiety totemic birds are Jiringkun/Panar (Owlet Nightjar/Brolga). Waigan's wife, Ignatia Djanghara (1930s–1990s), is of Buruna moiety, which has Watoi/Kurongkali (White-spotted Nightjar/Brolga) as moiety totems.

Waigan and Ignatia Djanghara were two of the quiet artists working at Kalumburu in the 1970–1980 period. Most of their work was relatively small and either painted on bark or engraved on pieces of slaty rock. The couple also produced a lot of fine craftwork using their detailed knowledge of traditional resources and technology. In 1979, the renowned photographer Richard Woldendorp was commissioned by art dealer Mary Macha to record the activities of many Kimberley artists. In ninety-eight images, Richard Woldendorp photographed the Djangharas making bark buckets, pleat-ended bark bowls, a didgeridoo and bush string, and making a fire with a set of firesticks. No images were made of the pair painting. Waigan and Ignatia often combined their talents when producing craftworks or paintings.

The painting opposite is one of two paintings by Waigan that are exceptional for being of large scale and executed on canvas. In 1979, Mary Macha introduced canvas to the Kalumburu artists, and it may be that these works were produced at the workshop she ran – in terms of other works by Waigan they are outstanding depictions of Wanjina beings.

The Wanjina at left appears round-eyed as if startled by the presence of the viewer, while the one at right seems suspicious, the narrowed eyes considering the viewer as an intrusion, or possibly

a threat. Both images convey the sense of cyclopean bulk and potency, and are quite different from the much more prevalent smaller works produced by these artists.

Traditional techniques are used, the background first being painted with resin fixative mixed with ochre, and then covered with a spatter of white onmal – pigment that is sprayed from the mouth – before painting of the actual images is commenced. Fine stippling infills the body of the Wanjinas and is also used as an interstitial fill between the larger and smaller motifs. The latter include Ungkud – Rainbow Serpents – and the birds, which possibly represent Waigan's moiety totem bird, Panar, the Bustard. Other motifs are items of material culture. By the hand of the Wanjina at left is a bark bucket with its string handle – a reflection of the importance of the role of wild honey, not only for the Wanjinas, but also for the humans who followed them. A hafted stone axe, nyarli, the prime tool for extracting honey from beehives rests near this Wanjina's head. The oval figures divided by a band with scalloped ends represent the heavy log shields, yuwan or jinjin, used by the Kalumburu men for both fighting and as dance regalia, and boomerangs, karli. The name karli indicates that boomerangs are imported items of material culture, prestigious trade goods that come into the Kalumburu area from the Fitzroy River basin to the south.

The viewer of this painting becomes the object as these powerful figures scrutinise them: Who are you? What do you want?

KIM AKERMAN



SIGNIFICANT

MAKER UNKNOWN

Bathurst or Melville Islands
Untitled – Tiwi Dance Clubs
circa 1920

natural earth pigments on
carved hardwood
59 × 8 cm; 56 × 9 cm;
60 × 5 cm; 54 × 6 cm;
51 × 4 cm; 43 × 5 cm;
39 × 5 cm (7)

PROVENANCE

The Maker, Bathurst or Melville
Islands, Northern Territory
Victor Godfrey Pratt, Queensland
By descent
Kenneth Pratt, Queensland
Private Collection, Western Australia

AUD 18,000

This exquisite collection of pre-World War II Tiwi Islands dance clubs was collected and owned by Victor Godfrey Pratt, Lance Corporal in the 2/25th Australian Infantry Battalion.

V.G. Pratt was born in Kilcoy, Queensland, in 1919. When he was twenty-one, he joined the 2/25th Battalion, formally raised in Brisbane on 1 July 1940. The battalion subsequently trained at Grovely in Queensland and, between 23 October 1940 and 1 February 1941, in Darwin. During this time, V.G. Pratt collected these Tiwi clubs, which would have come from neighbouring Bathurst or Melville Islands.

V.G. Pratt would later play a significant role in the Battle of Merdjayoun beside Sir Roden Cutler during the Syria–Lebanon Campaign of World War II, in June 1941, between Vichy French and predominantly Australian Allied forces in Lebanon. V.G. Pratt died on 19 June 1941.

After returning from Darwin in February 1941, and before his deployment on 7 April 1941, Victor Pratt left his collection of Tiwi artefacts with

his brother, Kenneth Pratt. After Victor’s death, his brother would mount the clubs on a wall in memoriam, where they remained untouched for decades until late 2019.

These ceremonial objects are a fine example of the artists’ spectacular craftsmanship and individual flair. Designed in various shapes, dancing clubs range from throwing clubs and hand combat fighting sticks to the intricately carved and painted barbed spears. Usually displayed and wielded at Pukumani ceremonies, clubs that are rounded and grooved with flattened tops are termed takamuli or murrukuwunga. Rubbed with red ochre and banded with yellow or white pigment, or decoratively painted, these were some of the first items collected for cultural institutions in the twentieth century.

VANESSA MERLINO

Provenance details provided in letter from the vendor.
Jennifer Isaacs, *Tiwi: Art, History, Culture*, The Miegunyah Press, Melbourne University Publishing, Carlton, 2012.



ARTIST UNKNOWN
 Bathurst or Melville Islands
 Untitled – Pukumani
 Ceremonial Designs
 circa 1950

natural earth pigments
 on eucalyptus bark
 52 × 35 cm

PROVENANCE
 The Artist, Bathurst or Melville
 Islands, Northern Territory
 Private Collection, Adelaide

AUD 22,000

ARTIST UNKNOWN
 Groote Eylandt
 Untitled 1965

natural earth pigments
 on eucalyptus bark
 64 × 34.5 cm

PROVENANCE
 The Artist, Groote Eylandt,
 Northern Territory
 Margaret Wilkinson, Northern Territory
 By descent
 Jenny Wilkinson, Northern Territory
 Private Collection, Western Australia

AUD 12,000

YIRAWALA

circa 1903–1976

Rainbow Serpent and Eggs

circa 1970

natural earth pigments

on eucalyptus bark

81.5 × 26 cm

PROVENANCE

The Artist, Minjilang – Croker

Island, Western Arnhem Land

Sandra Le Brun Holmes, Sydney

Aboriginal Art, Sotheby's, Melbourne,

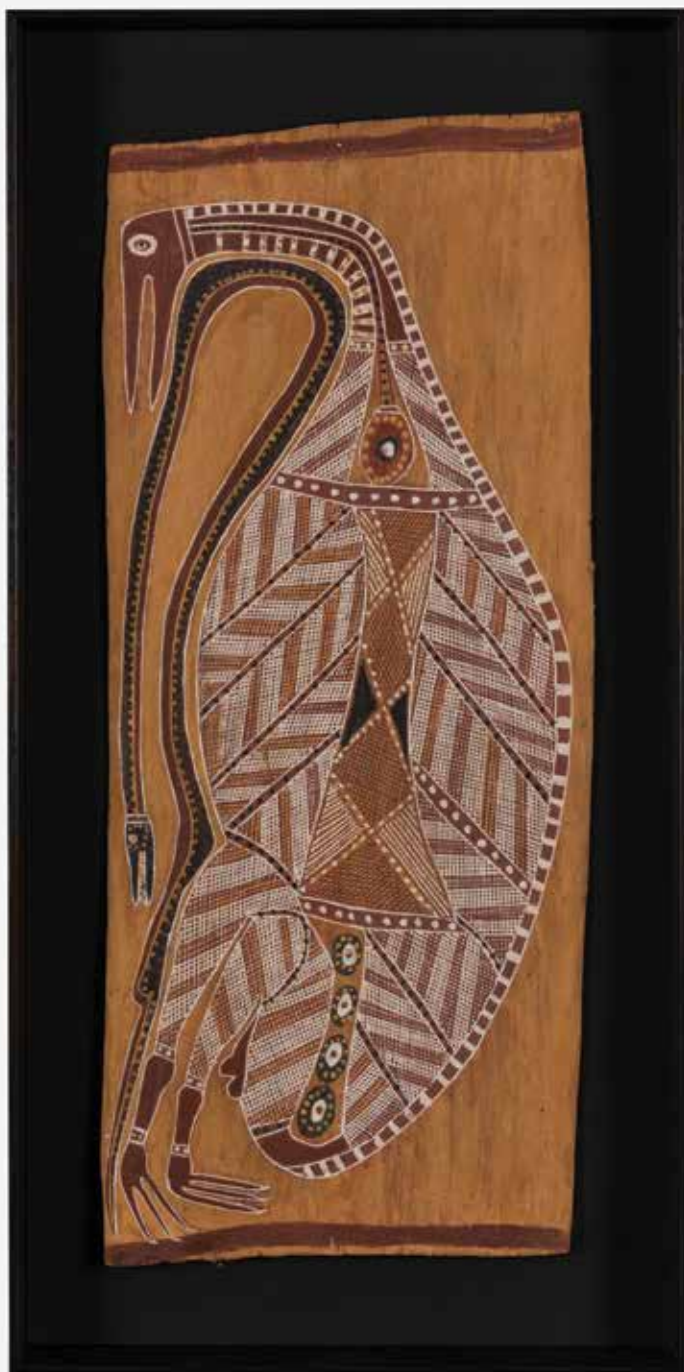
24 November 2009, lot 52

Private Collection, Sydney

See *Maralaitj*, *Ngalyod* and *Sacred Emu* and *Lumahlumah's Daughters*, 1970s, both works in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia, in Sandra Le Brun Holmes, *Yirawala: Painter of the Dreaming*, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1994, plates 115 and 120 respectively.

AUD 28,000





YIRAWALA

circa 1903–1976

Bush Turkey and Snake

circa 1970

natural earth pigments

on eucalyptus bark

70 × 29.5 cm

PROVENANCE

The Artist, Minjilang – Croker

Island, Western Arnhem Land

Sandra Le Brun Holmes, Sydney

Aboriginal Art Sotheby's, Melbourne,

24 November 2009, lot 101

Private Collection, Sydney

AUD 24,000

YIRAWALA was a senior Kuninkju artist, ceremonial leader, Law keeper, 'clever man' – medicine man and healer – Elder of the Gunwinggu language group. Born around 1903 at Marrkolidjbanin in the Liverpool River region of western Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory, Yirawala spent much of his life living and working at Minjilang – Croker Island, where he passed away in 1976. He was a leading figure in the struggle for land rights against mining interests in western Arnhem Land and strongly promoted Aboriginal art as more than simply ethnographic material.

The bark paintings that Yirawala produced have their origins in the many rock art paintings and sites across western Arnhem Land. He was a gifted artist of high ritual authority, which allowed him to innovate on the art traditions of the Kuninkju people. Among the main modernisations are his exquisitely rendered variations on conventional rarrk – crosshatched clan patterns – his being the first artist to use white pigment as a background, illuminating his paintings in a way that had not previously been seen. Although Yirawala had an extensive repertoire of subjects at his command, most of his work is associated with important

ceremonies of the region, especially the Mardayin, which involves both Duwa and Yirridjdja moieties.

Yirawala believed that unless non-Indigenous people understood that the religion of Aboriginal people was inextricably tied to the land, the tribes were in danger of being wiped out. He believed that his paintings were to be understood and appreciated as more than a commodity. That 'the old prescribed designs were painted to perpetuate the tribal history and the travels of creator beings – they were not art like the white man's, but were like the pages of a sacred book'.¹

Marrkolidjban outstation, where Yirawala lived and worked in the early 1970s, played an important role in the history of the development of the artists that he tutored. There he taught his own sister's son, Peter Maralwanga, the intricacies of painting patterns of rarrk. Maralwanga, in turn, taught his nephew John Mawurndjul how to paint, who, as a teenager, had been inspired by Yirawala.

VANESSA MERLINO

1. Sandra Le Brun Holmes, *Yirawala: Painter of the Dreaming*, Hodder & Stoughton, Sydney, 1992, p. 3.



MICK KUBARKKU
circa 1922–2008
*Namarrgon – the
Lightning Spirit* 1981

natural earth pigments
on eucalyptus bark
84 × 70 cm

PROVENANCE

The Artist, Gubumi, Western
Arnhem Land
Maningrida Arts & Culture, Northern
Territory, cat. no. K509/OAR
Private Collection, Western Australia

AUD 22,000

—
Namarrgon is responsible for
the violent and sometimes
dangerous electrical storms
during the wet season.
Near Gubumi outstation is a site
where Namarrgon is embodied
in a rock formation. This site
is called Manjelaparra.

As appears on the Maningrida
Arts & Culture certificate.

PETER MARALWANGA
circa 1916–1987
Untitled circa 1978

natural earth pigments
on eucalyptus bark
124 × 53 cm

PROVENANCE

The Artist, Gunwinggu,
Western Arnhem Land
Maningrida Arts & Culture, Northern
Territory, cat. no. R601/ORR
Private Collection, Western Australia

AUD 18,000

**GARY NAMPONAN**

born 1960

*Sharkie and Cripple**Girl* 2006

natural earth pigments and synthetic
binders on carved milkwood
55 × 107 × 55 cm; 104 × 33 × 21 cm (2)

PROVENANCE

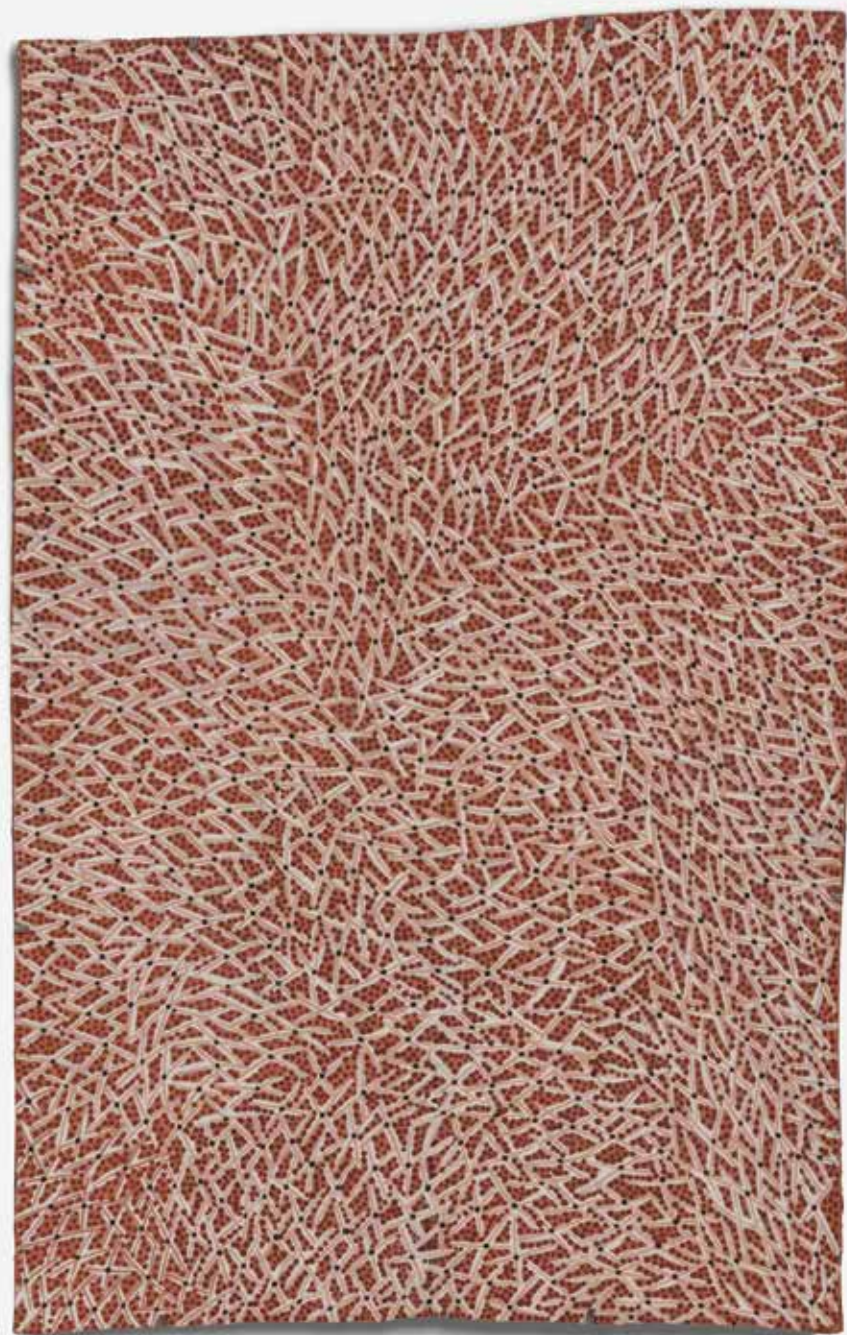
Wik & Kugu Aurukan Art

Centre, Queensland

Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne

Private Collection, Melbourne

AUD 25,000



GULUMBU YUNUPINU

1945–2012

Garak I 2010

natural earth pigments

on eucalyptus bark

74 × 51 cm

PROVENANCE

Buku-Larrnggay Mulka, Northern

Territory, cat. no. 3949X

Private Collection, Melbourne

AUD 18,000

GULUMBU YUNUPINU – also known as the star lady – was the daughter of major Gumatj artist Mungurrawuy Yunupinu. She grew up in Yirrkala, attending school at the old mission house before marrying Djapu artist Mutitjpu Mununggurr and having four children. As an artist, Gulumbu worked in a range of different mediums such as weaving, jewellery and printmaking before she began to focus on bark painting and sculpture. Her innovative images of ganyu – stars, some of which the artist explains are special for Yolŋu – first came to public attention in 2004 when she won the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards with three larrakitj – hollow logs. Having painted a screen of sixty small star-based bark paintings for the World Expo in Hanover, Germany, in 2000, Gulumbu developed this motif, which became her signature style.

Garak I 2010 refers to, but does not specify, two Dreaming stories that the artist was told by

her father as a child, each representing different constellations in the night sky. As she retells these stories for children of the next generation and the broader art-appreciating public, Gulumbu's abstract paintings became unlike any other North East Arnhem Land art, which was almost always based on refined crosshatched sacred design. Even works that were considered to be decorative would employ lines rather than dots. What is unusual about this work compared with other paintings of the region being produced at that time, and even Gulumbu's own work of that period, is the absence of any symbolic or figurative imagery. This bark can be read openly as a non-specific depiction of the Ganyu Dreamings, of which there is no differentiation between the two stories.

VANESSA MERLINO

NYAPANYAPA YUNUPINU

1945–2021

Larrakitj 2012

natural earth pigments on hollow log
227 × 20 × 20 cm

PROVENANCE

Buku Larrnggay Mulka, Northern Territory, cat. no. 4265A
Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney
Private Collection, Melbourne

EXHIBITED

Nyapanyapa Yunupingu – New Work, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney, 27 November – 8 December 2012
The World is not a Foreign Land: New Perspectives in Indigenous Art Practice, Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, Carlton, 16 March – 13 July 2014; ANU Drill Hall Gallery, Canberra, 11 September – 26 October 2014; Cairns Regional Gallery, Cairns, 24 December 2014 – 8 February 2015; Tweed River Art Gallery, Murwillumbah South, 17 April – 14 June 2015; Flinders University Art Gallery, Adelaide, 18 September – 29 November 2015; Latrobe Regional Gallery, Morwell, 24 February – 24 April 2016
20th Biennale of Sydney: The future is already here – it's just not evenly distributed, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 18 March – 5 June 2016.

AUD 35,000



SIGNIFICANT





JOHN MAWURNDJUL

born 1952

Ngalyod 1999

natural earth pigments
on eucalyptus bark
163 × 88 cm

PROVENANCE

Maningrida Arts & Culture, Northern Territory, cat. no. M16821999BP
Annandale Galleries, Sydney
Private Collection, Sydney
D'Laan Contemporary, Melbourne
The Steve Martin and Anne Stringfield Collection, New York

EXHIBITED

Reverance, D'Laan Davidson, Sydney Contemporary, Sydney, 13–16 September 2018
Twenty Aboriginal Paintings, Steve Martin and D'Laan Davidson, UOVO, New York, 15–19 January 2019
From Little Things Big Things Grow: Indigenous Australian Art 1961–2019, Kluge Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection of the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 26 August 2020 – 30 May 2021

AUD 180,000



From Little Things Big Things Grow, Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection, Charlottesville

The zenith of JOHN MAWURNDJUL's figurative work comprises elaborate arrangements featuring Ngalyod. As he said of these paintings at an Annandale Galleries exhibition in 1997, Ngalyod gets 'in my head'. This being is of tremendous importance for all people of western Arnhem Land. Ngalyod is associated with the protection of all sacred Djang sites, where it dwells in sacred waters. Kuninjku say that it 'guards' these sites in association with other Djang and they emphasise its dangerous qualities. Seasonally, Ngalyod is also

said to rise from its home and release the shattering force of the wet season. Water and torrential rain are conduits of Ngalyod's power that bathe the land and bring about renewal and rebirth in the natural and human realms. Rainbows reveal Ngalyod's movement into the sky, and rainbows in other contexts are signs of Ngalyod's presence and power. Mawurndjul's thinking about Ngalyod followed these many lines of association, which generated extraordinary compositions in his figurative work.

The massive figure in *Ngalyod* 1999 emphasises Ngalyod's role in the creation of Country. We can trace the grand loop of the being as it moves between circular shapes representing sacred wells, portals to Ngalyod's home. Ngalyod's body glistens with power as it tunnels from site to site. The detail of Ngalyod's massive jaws is starkly outlined, although the force of this painting comes from the dotted grid of linework and rhythms of crosshatching. Such crosshatching is called rarrk and features in ceremonial art that generates the ancestral power, kun-ngudj, of the design. Mawurndjul has come to be known as a master of the technique.

LUKE TAYLOR

JOHN MAWURNDJUL

born 1952

Dilebang 2008natural earth pigments and synthetic
binder on eucalyptus bark

140 × 80 cm

PROVENANCEManingrida Arts & Culture, Northern
Territory, cat. no. 991-08Raft Artspace, Northern Territory
Markus Spazzapan and Suzanne
Cox Collection, Northern Territory

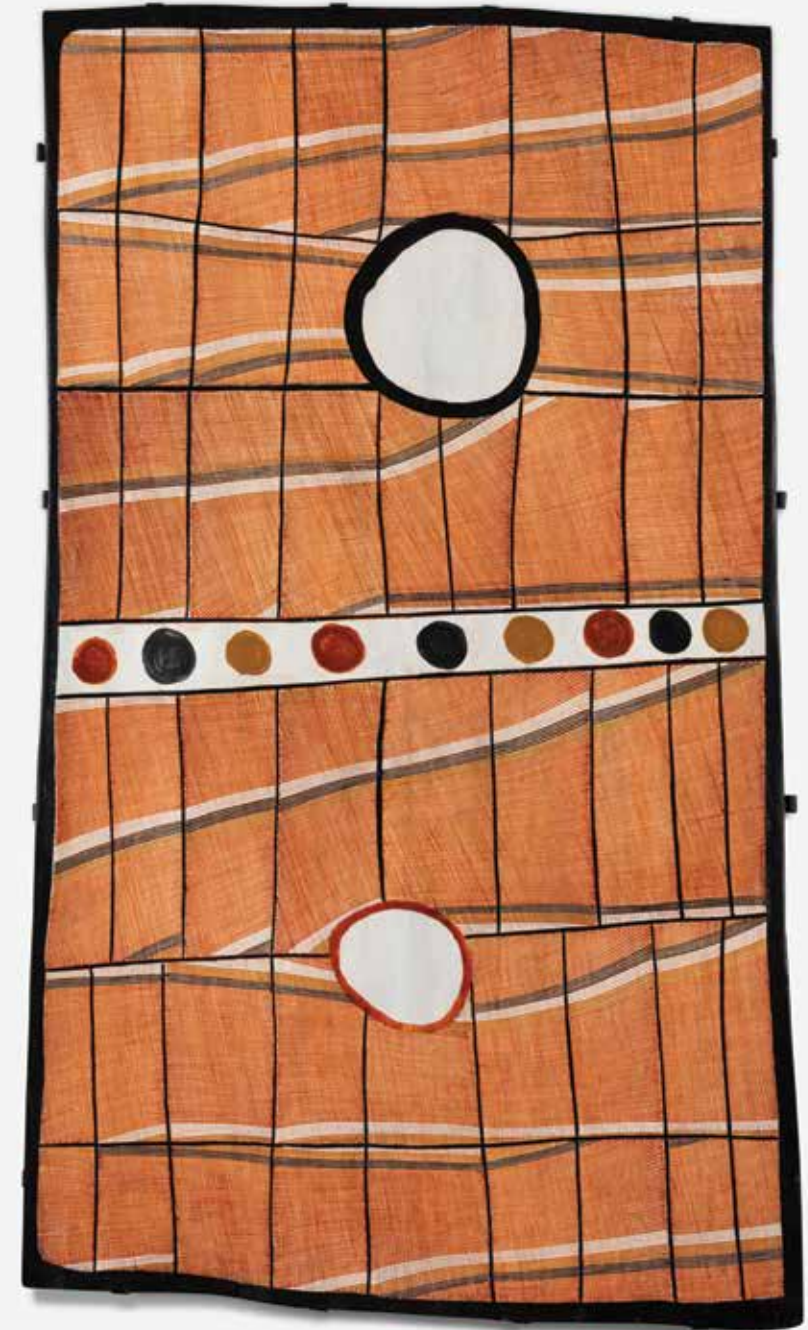
AUD 80,000

—

This work by John Mawurndjul concerns a major patrimoiety ceremony of a secret and sacred nature called 'Mardayin'. Much of the meaning of the iconography in the painting is not in the domain of public knowledge and so it cannot be explained in detail here.

The painting also refers to a site, Dilebang, which is an important ceremonial place for Kuninjku people. This place is also related to Buluwana and her family. In the ancestral time of creation was a great drought. During this time Buluwana and her family camped at Ngandarrayo on Kurulk clan land. They were weak from thirst and close to death. The malevolent gigantic form of the Death Adder snake confronted the group. Buluwana attempted to run away with the rest of her family but was crushed and turned to stone. Today at Dilebang, an arrangement of rocks standing in the ground remains as Buluwana's present day form. Only her head protrudes as a prismic standing stone, the rest of her body is under the ground. Other human remains lying on a rock ledge are said to be the remains of other early ancestors.

As appears on the Maningrida Arts & Culture documentation.



SAMUEL NAMUNJDJA,
1965–2009;
DEBORAH WURRKIDJ,
born 1971;
IVAN NAMIRRKKI,
born 1961;
JOHN MAWURNDJUL,
born 1952;
JAMES IYUNA,
1959–2016;
IVAN NAMIRRKKI,
born 1961

Untitled – Lorrkon
2005 to 2008

natural earth pigments and
synthetic binders on hollow logs
248 cm; 268 cm; 261 cm; 247
cm; 281 cm; 233 cm (6)

PROVENANCE

Maningrida Arts & Culture, Northern
Territory, cat. nos 4965-05; 995-08;
1818-07; 3037-05; 4435-07; 2362-07
Annandale Gallery, New South Wales
Private Collection, Sydney

AUD 140,000





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ABOUT

Formed in 2016, D'Lan Contemporary Pty Ltd offers specialist art advisory and management services.

We present the finest works of art to the market in an annual exhibition, SIGNIFICANT, every June and take pride in sourcing and selling exceptional works of art by Australian Indigenous artists on behalf of clients both here in Australia and overseas.

ETHICS

Our mission is to create a transparent and sustainable marketplace for Australian Indigenous art and to respect and protect the integrity of the artist, the buyer, the seller – and the marketplace – from fraudulent sales or unethical procurement.

We maintain strict ethical practices and only exhibit and sell works of art with a clear line of provenance.

THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS ART (NEIVA)

The National Endowment for Indigenous Visual Arts (NEIVA) is an independent charitable trust fund established to centralise and distribute proceeds from art sales back to Australian Indigenous artists and their working communities.

D'Lan Contemporary allocates 30% of net profits to NEIVA. NEIVA is governed by an independent trustee company and funds are allocated through a grant application process managed by Agency Projects. Funded projects are selected by an advisory board of Indigenous leaders. For more information on NEIVA, visit www.neiva.org.au

COLLECTING AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS ART

Provenance is critically important when buying and selling Australian Indigenous art. A clear line of provenance helps to maintain a healthy and ethical marketplace; providing evidence that the artwork is authentic and assurance that the artist has been adequately recompensed.

- Documentation that can establish provenance includes:
- Community Art Centre Certificate of Provenance/Authenticity
 - Transfer of Ownership Documentation
 - Purchase Receipt or Invoice
 - Inclusion in Auction Catalogues
 - Inclusion in (private and/or institution) Exhibitions, and Exhibition Catalogues
 - Collection/Exhibition Inventory Numbers (private and/or institution)
 - Inclusion in Academic/Art Historical Publications
 - Documented Appraisals

Best Practice for buying Indigenous Australian art is set out by the institutional standards below:

CONTEMPORARY INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN ART (1980–PRESENT)

All contemporary artworks should be accompanied by documentation linking the artwork to the artist via their Community Art Centre or their primary representative.

On the primary market, artworks should only be purchased from Community Art Centres or an official gallery/representative. On the secondary market, the Community Art Centre should be the primary source of provenance for any reputable Indigenous Art Dealer or Auction House. This process aligns with the policy of all Australian institutions.

MODERN INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN ART (1950S–1980)

For artworks created prior to the establishment of Community Art Centres, such as bark paintings, Hermannsburg watercolours, Papunya boards and sculptural artworks made for sale, there is less necessity for Community Art Centre provenance. However, a proven direct link to the artist will impact the value of the work; works from this period with no traceable history tend to have significantly less market value than those that do – even when an artwork is clearly authentic. Highly desirable provenance for modern Indigenous artworks includes Papunya Tula Artists, Stuart Art Centre and Maningrida Arts, or a clear line back to one of the primary collectors such as Geoffrey Bardon, Dorothy Bennett, Sandra Le Brun Holmes or Dr Scougal – who were all active in the 1950s–70s.

ARTEFACTS AND OBJECTS (1880S–1950)

With artefacts, often much of the important collection history has been lost over time. Therefore, a proven provenance can greatly impact the value. Provenance and research should be undertaken to ascertain the origin of the artefact or object, and when and how it left its country of origin, before acquisition. Best practice in this segment is to obtain advice from a trusted expert in the field before buying or selling.

PROTECTION OF MOVEABLE CULTURAL HERITAGE ACT

The *Protection of Moveable Cultural Heritage Act 1985* (PMCH Act) implements Australia's obligations under the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, 1970 (1970 UNESCO Convention), to which Australia is a State Party.

The 1970 UNESCO Convention requires State Parties to ensure that no collecting institution accepts illegally exported items.

The Australian Government administers the PMCH Act through the Ministry for the Arts. The PMCH Act regulates the export of Australia's most significant cultural heritage objects by implementing export controls for objects defined as 'Australian Protected Objects'.

If you have any questions about collecting Australian Indigenous art, please contact us at enquiries@dlandavidson.com.au



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