

SIGNIFICANT

14 May — 27 June 2026

Melbourne/Naarm, Sydney/Gadigal, New York/Lenapehoking



Welcome to *Significant* 2026.

What makes compiling this important annual exhibition so compelling is the unexpected discovery of rare masterworks — never quite knowing where or when they will appear.

This year was different.

As early as last year, I was approached by a long-standing client and friend about selling an important group of early Papunya paintings from the pivotal 1971–72 period. Assembled over fifteen years, the *Carey Lyon and Jo Crosby Collection of early Papunya paintings* illuminates a seminal moment in Australian art history. We are proud to present ten significant works by pioneering artists including Kaapa Mbitjana Tjampitjinpa, Johnny Warangula Tjupurrula, and Uta Uta Tjangala. This collection evokes a time that is widely regarded as the genesis of the contemporary Aboriginal art movement.

This collection, alongside several other major works — among them Shorty Lungkata's *Man Dreaming* 1972 and the rarely seen *Special Ceremony* 1972 by Yumpululu Tjungurrayi — forms the heart of this year's *Significant*. The early Papunya paintings will be presented as a dedicated exhibition at our Melbourne Gallery, with Gallery Director Luke Scholes delivering a series of talks exploring this profoundly significant body of work.

Looking beyond this extraordinary section, we have returned to the roots of a most dynamic artistic tradition.

A rare Rainforest Shield from North Queensland, originally collected by Karil Domin (1882–1953), stands as one of the earliest examples in our presentation. Its age, patina, and craftsmanship speak to a generational legacy that anchors our understanding of where this creative genius began.

Important contemporary artists represented this year include Rover Thomas, Queenie McKenzie, Albert Namatjira, Emily Kam Ngwarray, Wimmitji Tjapangati, Eubena Nampitjin, Ronnie Tjampitjinpa, and Naata Nungurrayi. Major works by Warlimpirrnga Tjapaltjarri, Paddy Bedford, Sally Gabori, Nyapanyapa Yunupingu, Nongirrnga Marawili, Timo Hogan, Patju Presley, and Keith Wikmunea are also featured — the latter making his first appearance in *Significant* with *Theewith / My White Cockatoo Totem* 2025.

In May 2026, D'Lan Galleries will once again collaborate with Pace Gallery, New York, to present a survey exhibition of Emily Kam Ngwarray. As a pivotal historical figure, Emily represents a unique bridge between Australian First Nations art and the global contemporary art market. Her extraordinary trajectory continues unabated — an achievement we, as a nation, should be immensely proud of.

We look forward to welcoming you to our galleries to experience *Significant* 2026.

D'Lan Davidson



SIGNIFICANT

Early Papunya paintings

14 May — 27 June 2026

Melbourne/Naarm

John Tjakamarra

Johnny Warangula Tjupurrula

Kaapa Mbitjana Tjampitjinpa

Mick Wallankarri Tjakamarra

Shorty Lungkata Tjungurrayi

Timmy Payungka Tjapangati

Yumpululu Tjungurrayi

Walter (Talpulpa) Tjampitjinpa

Uta Uta Tjangala

EARLY PAPUNYA PAINTINGS:

A BRIEF HISTORY

Luke Scholes

In the early 1970s, at Papunya in the Western Desert of Central Australia, a small group of men gathered to paint aspects of their cultural lives onto small scraps of timber. Papunya had been built in the late 1950s to accommodate the growing influx of people from the surrounding deserts, settlements and cattle stations. Roughly a decade later, in the late 1960s, a number of Papunya's different cultural groups began to invite others to observe and participate in their ceremonial activities. Such occasions, often undertaken at night on the fringes of the community, were a feature of the unique and intensifying unions that developed at Papunya. It was within this atmosphere of cultural exchange that the foundations of the Papunya painting movement were laid.

At the time, the artistic economy at Papunya was limited to the sale of watercolour landscape paintings and small wooden carvings. Artists often approached settlement staff and the occasional tourists, seeking to supplement the meagre income available in Papunya. Kaapa Tjampitjinpa, an Anmatyerr man with Ngaliya (Southern Warlpiri) associations, was renowned in Papunya as a charismatic larrikin. For a time, he attempted to emulate the success of the watercolourists; however, he began experimenting with salvaged acrylic and enamel paint on board – presumably due to his inability to afford his own materials. Inspired by his knowledge and experience of ceremony, Kaapa began to create unique schematic depictions of ceremonial grounds and their performers.

Kaapa was among a group of artists and carvers who occupied Papunya's abandoned settlement office, utilising it as their studio. It was within this unimposing building that a group of painters – led by Kaapa – gave rise to a new genre of art. Senior Aboriginal men including Mick Wallangkarri Tjakamarra, Walter Tjampitjinpa, Mick Namarari Tjapaltjarri and Johnny Warangula Tjupurrula began to apply ancient Western Desert iconography onto substrates of found timber. Historically these designs appeared upon the bodies of ceremonial participants and the objects in their possession. Such designs are considered as Tjukurrtpjanu (from the Dreaming): iconography that has been passed down from ancestral beings to ritual participants as evidence of the existence of the Tjukurrtpa (Dreaming). Their work was subsequently purchased by Geoffrey Bardon, a school teacher at Papunya who regularly visited the artists and began to collect their painted 'archetypes' with increasing enthusiasm. After his appointment as the school's art teacher, Bardon's relationship with the men evolved into the role of an active commissioner.

Bardon was tasked with facilitating the creation of a series of murals on walls within the Papunya school. He encouraged a number of the painting men to take up the idea. School staff, including Long Jack Phillipus

Tjakamarra, Billy Stockman Tjapaltjarri, Kaapa Tjampitjinpa and others, created three small murals depicting the Widows' Dreaming, Wallaby Dreaming and Snake Dreaming. The climax of the mural project was the Honey Ant Dreaming mural, which had strong associations with the surrounding landscape and was important across a number of the cultural groups in the community. The creation of the Honey Ant Dreaming mural is widely recognised as a defining moment in the history of the Papunya painting movement.

The school murals and the activity of the painting group began to attract the attention of visitors to Papunya, one of whom was Jack Cooke, then district welfare officer for the Southern Division (Central Australia) of the Northern Territory. After a brief encounter with Kaapa Tjampitjinpa at the Old Settlement Office, Cooke agreed to try to sell some of Kaapa's paintings on his behalf in Alice Springs. From a group of paintings that would soon arrive, Cooke entered three into the Caltex Art Award in Alice Springs. On 27 August 1971, in a highly unexpected turn of events, one of Kaapa's paintings, *Men's Ceremony for the Kangaroo, Gulgardj* 1971, was awarded equal first prize. On the strength of Kaapa's win, Cooke managed to sell all of Kaapa's remaining paintings, which provoked a surge of interest in painting at Papunya.

Soon after, in September, Bardon took a group of nearly thirty paintings into Alice Springs to show to a number of galleries. He eventually came upon the Stuart Art Centre, a small gallery that operated within the grounds of a local caravan park. Here he encountered its gregarious owner, Pat Hogan, who embraced the opportunity to represent the Papunya painters and immediately took carriage of Bardon's entire stock.

At Papunya, groups of men, largely defined by their cultural and familial affiliations, began painting at various locations throughout the community. In an effort to bring the disparate painting groups together, part of an old World War II-style Nissen hut at the centre of the community was made available for use as a studio. Within its dimly lit confines, the artists met to paint, sing and converse. Over the next three months, a further one hundred paintings were delivered to Alice Springs.

In a period lasting just eighteen months, '20 or so men' created over a thousand paintings that are now regarded as some of Australia's most treasured cultural, historical and artistic items. The insight the paintings provided into the storied landscapes of Central Australia changed the way Australians conceive the continent on which they live, and significantly shifted the trajectory of Australian art.

On 16 November 1972, Papunya Tula Artists was officially incorporated. All of the major painters, along with a number of significant Elders, were made shareholders of the company. Papunya Tula Artists continues to operate in the Western Desert region and is regarded as one of Australia's most successful Aboriginal-owned businesses.

JOHNNY WARANGULA TJUPURRULA
c. 1920 – 2001
Luritja and Pintupi languages

Water Dreaming 1971
synthetic polymer paint on composition board
60.3 × 12.1 cm (23.7 × 4.8 inches)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, painted at Papunya, Northern Territory
Geoffrey Bardon, Sydney, New South Wales
Margaret Carnegie AO and Sir Roderick Carnegie AC,
Melbourne, Victoria
Museum Art International, South Australia
John W. Kluge, United States of America (1993)
By descent
Private collection, United States of America
Important Aboriginal Art, Sotheby's, Melbourne,
Victoria, 5 June 2012, lot 34
Carey Lyon and Joanne Crosby, Melbourne,
Victoria, acquired from the above

LITERATURE
Geoffrey Bardon and James Bardon, *Papunya – A Place
Made after the Story: The Beginnings of the Western Desert
Movement*, Miegunyah Press, 2004, p.161 (illus.)

The Papunya artists painting during the early 1970s often favoured slender timber substrates such as the one used by Johnny Warangula Tjupurrula for *Water Dreaming* 1971. This may have been due to the proportionate similarities they share with shields and men's ceremonial objects that – before the advent of acrylic painting – carried similar designs.

Water Dreaming is associated with the soakage water site of Kalipinypa, approximately 400 kilometres west of Alice Springs. During the early period of painting activity at Papunya, Kalipinypa was a constant source of inspiration for several of the painting men. Kalipinypa is where the ancestral man Winpa, often referred to as the 'Lightning Man', clapped his boomerangs and 'sang up' a massive storm. Winpa's presence in this painting is represented by the U shapes at the centre of the composition. The sinuous lines above and below show water running across the surface of the earth.

Painted with house paint on a salvaged piece of composition board, this early work by Warangula was initially collected by an interested school teacher, Geoffrey Bardon. Bardon had become aware of a small band of men who had repurposed an abandoned settlement building as a studio. Warangula was an active painter at this time and would often paint on whatever surface he could find. Bardon remembered:

... Johnny Warangkula Tjupurrula kept coming to me with more paintings on the strangest of surfaces, such as thin or thick strips of particle boards and miscellaneous salvaged off-cuts from Alice Springs Timber & Joinery...¹

This painting remained in the collection of Geoffrey Bardon for many years until it was purchased by Mrs Margaret Carnegie AO, one of very few serious collectors of early Papunya paintings in the 1980s. In May 1986, Carnegie and her son Sir Roderick Carnegie AC purchased sixty-five early boards from Bardon, who had sourced the paintings during his time working with the painting men at Papunya in 1971–72.

Luke Scholes

1 Bardon, Geoffrey and James Bardon. *Papunya: A Place Made After the Story: The Beginnings of the Western Desert Painting Movement*. Carlton: Miegunyah Press, 2004, pp. 36–7.



JOHNNY WARANGULA TJUPURRULA
c. 1920 – 2001
Luritja and Pintupi languages

Old Man's Medicine Story 1971
synthetic polymer paint on composition board
30.5 × 45 cm (12 × 17.7 inches)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, painted at Papunya, Northern Territory
Stuart Art Centre, Alice Springs, Northern Territory,
consignment 5, painting 54
Private collection, Queensland
Important Aboriginal Art, Sotheby's, Melbourne,
Victoria, 29 June 1998, lot 215
Private collection, Tasmania, acquired from the above
Australian Indigenous Art, Mossgreen Auctions,
Sydney, New South Wales, 16 May 2017, lot 31
Carey Lyon and Joanne Crosby, Melbourne,
Victoria, acquired from the above

LITERATURE
Geoffrey Bardon and James Bardon, *Papunya – A Place
Made after the Story: The Beginnings of the Western Desert
Movement*, Miegunyah Press, 2004, p. 299 (illus.)

Johnny Warangula Tjupurrula was painting alongside his good friend Kaapa Tjampitjinpa in the winter of 1971, together igniting the bushfire that became the contemporary Aboriginal art movement. Both men were rainmakers and remained in creative dialogue during the critical first years of painting at Papunya. Kaapa and Warangula were also song men, as committed to ceremony as they were to painting, and each brought a performative verve to their respective careers as artists. Kaapa and Warangula were responsible for many of the conceptual breakthroughs that gave Papunya Tula art its initial form, though they approached painting quite differently. While Kaapa conceived his paintings with precision, Warangula was more intuitive, relying on the fluency of his wrist and the urgency of his attack. In this way, his paintings are a visual equivalent of the verses he sang – assured, spontaneous and inflected.¹

The title of the current board, *Old Man's Medicine Story*, was ascribed by the school teacher Geoffrey Bardon. The title, however, does not reveal Warangula's specific narrative intent.² Likewise, two versions of early documentation for the painting, both prepared by Bardon, provide contradictory information. Having worked extensively with the artist, and documented his paintings on a range of themes, my analysis of the iconographic elements in the current work led me to the conclusion that this is a Women's Dreaming, most probably at the site Kampurarrpa on the eastern fringe of Warangula's Country.

The artist delighted in telling the story of the women being observed at a distance by an old man, Yina, who sang out to them repeatedly: 'Po! Po! Po!' Yet they did not hear Yina's cries, and continued collecting bush foods. Despondent and believing the women had rejected him on account of his ugliness, Yina trudged to the west, his sexual yearning unfulfilled, until he happened upon his yumari (mother-in-law) at a site of that name. The illicit sexual engagement between Yina and his yumari was painted with great energy by Warangula's countrymen, Charlie Tarawa Tjungurrayi and Uta Uta Tjangala.

John Kean

1 John Kean, *Dot, Circle and Frame: The Making of Papunya Tula Art*, Upswell Publishing, Perth, 2023.
2 Bardon frequently used the term 'Medicine' as a bowdlerism to describe paintings with overt sexual depictions.



KAAPA MBITJANA TJAMPITJINPA
c. 1920 – 1989
Anmatyerr, Arrernte and Warlpiri languages

Honey Ant Travelling Dreaming 1971
earth pigments on bondcrete on plyboard
61 × 29 cm (24 × 11.4 inches)

PROVENANCE

The Artist, painted at Papunya, Northern Territory
Geoffrey Bardon, Sydney, New South Wales
Margaret Carnegie AO and Sir Roderick Carnegie AC,
Melbourne, Victoria
Anthony Knight OAM & Beverly Knight,
Melbourne, Victoria
*The Anthony & Beverly Knight Collection of Early Papunya
Art*, Sotheby's, Melbourne, Victoria, 28 May 2013, lot 4
Carey Lyon and Joanne Crosby, Melbourne, Victoria,
acquired from the above

LITERATURE

Geoffrey Bardon and James Bardon, *Papunya: A Place
Made After the Story: The Beginnings of the Western Desert
Movement*, Miegunyah Press, Carlton, 2004, p. 207,
painting no. 342 (illus).

At Papunya in 1971, a mural with Honey Ant
ancestors as its subject was painted at the local
school. Conceived by Kaapa Tjampitjinpa, it had the
imprimatur of senior kutungula (manager) 'Old' Mick
Wallankarri Tjakamarra. Kaapa first sketched the
original design on a small sheet of paper, then folded it,
handing it to the school teacher Geoffrey Bardon.
The design was perfectly proportioned for a long wall
facing a courtyard playground. According to Bardon,
the design was quickly approved and painted with
astonishing fluency.¹

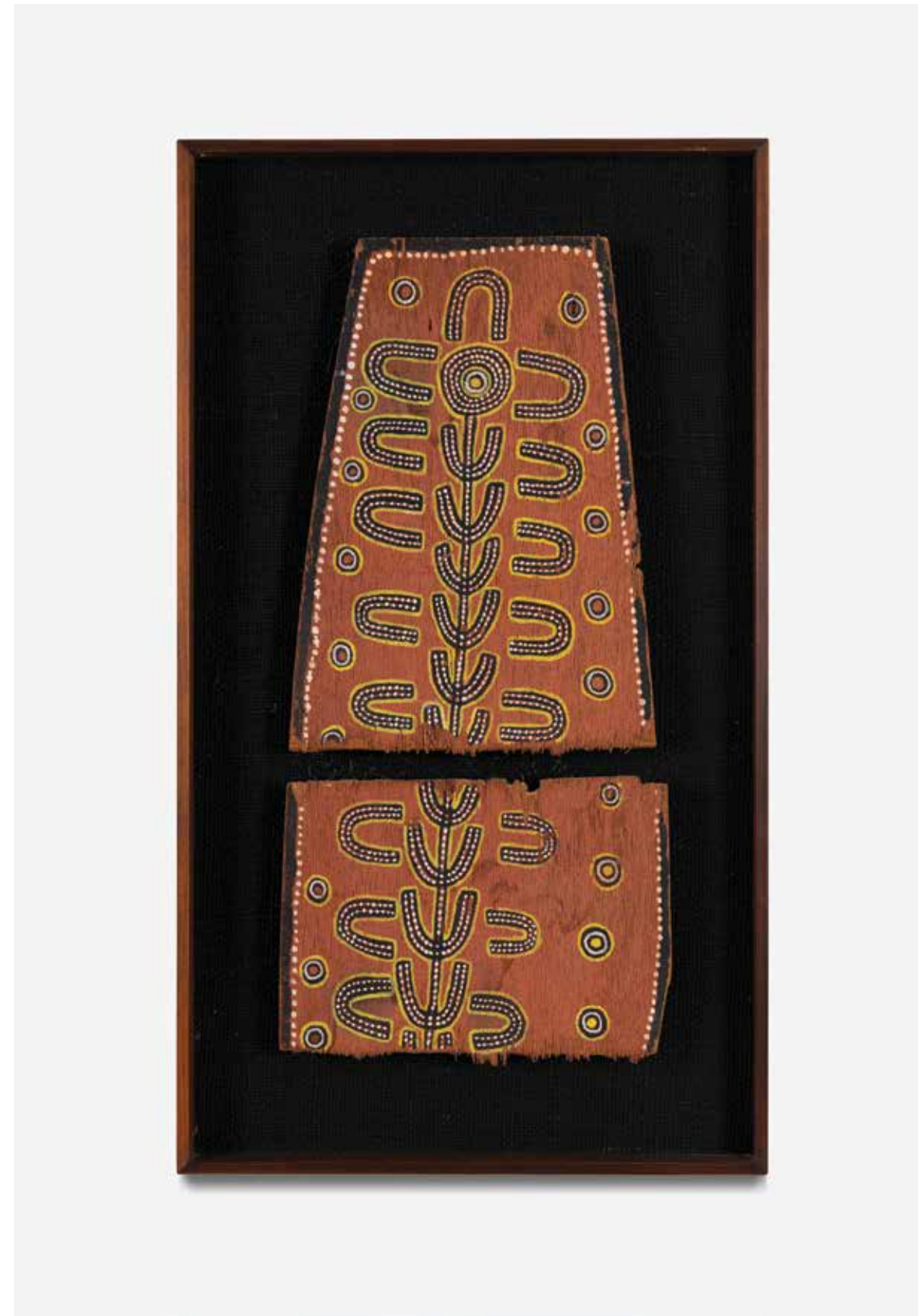
The sacred (but not restricted) Honey Ant
design would be seen by school children and
their parents, as well as expatriate teachers and
visiting government officials. Kaapa's mural was a
political statement intended to affirm the primacy
of Indigenous spiritual association to the site on
which the school was constructed.

The Honey Ant mural was soon painted
over by education department contractors, yet its
significance at local and national levels persists as an
outward sign of the cultural renaissance underway
at the community, a development that resulted in
the creation of the contemporary Aboriginal art
movement.² Kaapa Tjampitjinpa's *Honey Ant Travelling
Dreaming* 1971 is a contemporaneous and tangible link
to the legendary mural and its creator. Moreover, it is
one of a handful of examples of the songline painted
by Kaapa on portable media.

Kaapa was a sophisticated thinker, knowledgeable
in ceremonial law as well as being familiar with
transcultural printed media. His earliest paintings
might have been created with materials scrounged
from the school art room and salvaged from derelict
buildings, but Kaapa possessed a rare capacity to
distil three-dimensional ceremonial imagery to create
perfectly balanced and executed designs. The clarity
of Kaapa's line and the economy of his compositions
are testament to his intellectual acuity, and to his role
as a go-between, crucial to the formation of Australia's
most significant art movement.

John Kean

- 1 Geoffrey Bardon, *Aboriginal Art of the Western Desert*,
Rigby, Adelaide, 1979, p. 14.
- 2 John Kean, *Digging for Honey Ants: Revisiting the Papunya
Mural Project*, 2021, [https://www.index-journal.org/
issues/monument/digging-for-honey-ants-revisiting-
the-papunya-mural-project](https://www.index-journal.org/issues/monument/digging-for-honey-ants-revisiting-the-papunya-mural-project)



SHORTY LUNGKATA TJUNGURRAYI

c. 1920 – 1987

Pintupi language

Man Dreaming 1972

synthetic polymer paint on composition board
55.1 × 55.8 cm (21.7 × 22 inches)

PROVENANCE

The Artist, painted at Papunya, Northern Territory
Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs, Northern Territory
Graeme Marshall, South Australia, acquired from
the above

Private collection, South Australia, acquired from
the above in the late 1980s

LITERATURE

Judith Ryan and Philip Batty, *Tjukurrjanyu: Origins
of Western Desert Art*, National Gallery of Victoria,
Melbourne, 2011, p. 225 (illus.)

EXHIBITED

On Long Term Loan to the Art Gallery of South
Australia, Adelaide, South Australia

Tjukurrjanyu: 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,
Victoria; Musée du quai Branly, Paris, 9 October 2012 –
20 January 2013

Shorty Lungkata Tjungurrayi painted his first works
in early 1972, most likely with the encouragement of
his classificatory brothers Charlie Tarawa (Wartuma)
Tjungurrayi, Yala Yala Gibbs Tjungurrayi and
Yumpululu Tjungurrayi. During this seminal period in
desert art-making, Lungkata became an intermittent,
though significant contributor to the emerging
art movement at Papunya. In 1972, he created
approximately fifty finely executed paintings featuring
diverse compositions and experiments in style.

Man Dreaming is rich in form and colour. Its
deceptively simple composition consists largely of
staccato-like dotting that expands and contracts across
the entirety of the painting surface. Two imposing arc
shapes represent two seated ceremonial men, wearing
carefully articulated body paint designs, one decorated
with fine line and circles, the other with a sinuous
line with a roundel at each end. Beside the men is
an impressive ceremonial object that fills the height
of the irregularly shaped board. The designs on the
object may refer to snakes or specific water sources.
The decorated men seated alongside the prominent
ceremonial object suggests a ceremonial setting.

Pre-eminent scholar Fred Myers and the
historian R.G. (Dick) Kimber have both identified
comparable works by Lungkata as being associated
with the site of Lampintjanya. One of the narratives
at Lampintjanya involves two Kuniya (Rock Python)
ancestors who arrived at this site carrying sacred
objects. After placing their objects down, they made
a fire and began to dig a hole. The varied patches of
colour at the centre of the composition may suggest
the presence of the fire and/or the hole the ancestors
dug. It may also represent the small succulent plant
mungilpa that grows abundantly around the claypan
at Lampintjanya. When dried, mungilpa 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.

This is the first time *Man Dreaming* has been
offered for sale in nearly forty years. The current
owners purchased it in the late 1980s from Graeme
Marshall, who advised Papunya Tula Artists in the
early 1970s. It was included in the much-heralded
Tjukurrjanyu: 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 2012–13.
Since then, it has been on long-term loan to the Art
Gallery of South Australia, where it has remained on
permanent display.

Luke Scholes



YUMPULULU TJUNGURRAYI
c. 1930 – 1998
Pintupi language

Special Ceremony 1972
synthetic polymer paint on composition board
65 × 47 cm (25.6 × 18.5 inches)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, painted at Papunya, Northern Territory
Stuart Art Centre, Alice Springs, Northern Territory,
consignment 12, painting 8
Geoffrey Bardon, Sydney, New South Wales
Private collection, Queensland, acquired from the above
Aboriginal Fine Art, Menzies, Sydney, New South Wales,
9 November 2005, lot 38
Private collection, Melbourne Victoria, acquired from
the above

LITERATURE
Geoffrey Bardon and James Bardon, *Papunya: A Place
Made After the Story: The Beginnings of the Western Desert
Movement*, Miegunyah Press, Carlton, 2004, p. 388,
painting no. 342.

As a boy, Yumpululu Tjungurrayi travelled with his family over the Country between Jupiter Well and Kiwirrkurra, in the Gibson Desert of Western Australia. He arrived at Papunya in 1964 and later became an active member of the men’s painting group that emerged in the early 1970s.

While maintaining a distinctly Pintupi aesthetic, Yumpululu’s expressive early paintings often present unique assemblages of eclectic iconography. In this example, Yumpululu has painted a gathering of men who appear to be preparing fires for ceremonial purposes.

The dominant forms in this work are kutitji (beanwood shields). Kutitji are multipurpose tools that can be used for the making of fire, the fluted surface of the soft wood providing an ideal hearth. The friction-based technique involves the placement of dry grass upon the surface of the shield, which is then rapidly rubbed with the thin edge of a hardwood spear thrower to create combustion. This repeated activity left blackened saw marks on the shield, often in the form of intersecting lines, which Yumpululu has carefully articulated in this painting.

In notes on this painting prepared by the school teacher and artists’ assistant Geoffrey Bardon, the sinuous lines are recorded as ‘small snakes’. As they were for his classificatory brother Yala Yala Gibbs Tjungurrayi, snakes were a relatively consistent theme in Yumpululu’s paintings. Typically, the movement of ancestral snakes was responsible for the creation of important water courses. Various other iconography shows the presence of spears and boomerangs belonging to two ceremonial men. The playful organic form at the base of the painting suggests smoke from the fires, which appear in the form of small concentric circles.

This is one of two concurrent paintings that Yumpululu created at this time using a similar composition and palette. Both paintings were completed sometime in April 1972 and were later included in the 12th consignment of paintings to be sold at the Stuart Art Centre in Alice Springs. Writer and historian Dick (R.G.) Kimber, who knew Yumpululu for over two decades, described him as: ‘an engaging character who often had a puzzled look which could instantly break into laughter’.

Luke Scholes



UTA UTA TJANGALA

c. 1926 – 1990

Pintupi language

Big Corroboree with Water 1972

synthetic polymer paint on composition board
66 × 63 cm (26 × 24.8 inches)

PROVENANCE

The Artist, painted at Papunya, Northern Territory
Stuart Art Centre, Alice Springs, Northern Territory,
consignment 19, painting 89

Private collection

Fine Tribal Art and Aboriginal Paintings, Sotheby's,
Sydney, New South Wales, 3 December 1994, lot 612
Museum Art International, Adelaide, South Australia,
cat. no. 94004

John W. Kluge, United States of America

Aboriginal Art from the Collection of John W. Kluge,
Mossgreen Auctions, Melbourne, Victoria, 6 June 2012,
lot 15

Private collection, Melbourne, Victoria, acquired
from the above

Australian Indigenous & Oceanic Art, Day 1, Mossgreen
Auctions, Melbourne, Victoria, 22 July 2014, lot 55

Carey Lyon and Joanne Crosby, Melbourne, Victoria,
acquired from the above

Uta Uta Tjangala's formidable personal energy is
mirrored in every gesture he makes as a painter.

His compositions typically push at the edges of
the board, demanding the viewer's attention.

Big Corroboree with Water 1972 is no exception.

According to the anthropologist Fred Myers,
who has worked with Pintupi people from the
mid 1970s to the present, the site celebrated is
Marrpurinya (literally 'root place'), a permanent
water place south of the vast salt pan Wilkinkarra/
Lake Mackay. Marrpurinya is associated with a
party of Tingarri Men, and a group of Rain Men.
In 1973, when Myers documented a subsequent
painting by Uta Uta featuring the same site, the artist
revealed that the ancestral Rain Men discovered
a group of sacred boards hidden underground at
Marrpurinya. Sensing their importance, the Rain
Men concealed the boards in their hair-buns, and
proceeded to steal away with them.¹ The painting's
composition depicts post-initiatory ceremonies
performed to celebrate the actions of the Tingarri
and Rain ancestors at Marrpurinya.

Big Corroboree with Water was created under the
arched roof of the legendary Men's Painting Room,
where senior custodians from Central Australia and
the Western Desert came together to show each other
sacred designs from distant songlines. Anmatyerr artist
Kaapa Tjampitjinpa was the unofficial leader of the
thirty artists who assembled in the painting room, and
the composition of *Big Corroboree with Water* shows his
influence. Uta Uta is the most muscular of the founding
Papunya-based artists and the scale of his personality
shines through in the brightness and clarity of *Big
Corroboree with Water*. Although Kaapa's compositions
are used as a guide to the general arrangement of
ritual paraphernalia, the feeling conveyed by Uta
Uta is distinctly different. Whereas Kaapa's paintings
are perfectly resolved, almost ethnographic, Uta Uta
addresses the viewer directly and loudly: 'I am boss for
this ceremony – and its important'.

There is a powerful sense of figure and ground
in the works that Uta Uta and Kaapa created in 1972,
a similarity that was due, in large part, to the unique
circumstances that brought artists from very different
cultural backgrounds together for a few short months
in Australia's most significant atelier.

John Kean

- 1 Email correspondence with the author, 10 March
2026, including notes of Fred Myers' conversation
with Uta Uta, 1973.



UTA UTA TJANGALA
c. 1926 – 1990
Pintupi language

Untitled – Man's Travelling Dreaming 1972
synthetic polymer paint on composition board
91.5 × 13 cm (36 × 5.1 inches)

PROVENANCE

The Artist, painted at Papunya, Northern Territory
Howard Patrick, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory,
acquired directly from the above in the early 1970s
D'Laan Contemporary, Melbourne, Victoria
Carey Lyon and Joanne Crosby, Melbourne, Victoria,
acquired from the above in 2019

This early Papunya painting was originally acquired directly from the artist by a staff member of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in the 1970s. A related example created in 1973, *Man Lying at Yumari*, features an almost identical composition and was created upon a similarly shaped substrate. Viewed comparatively, *Man Lying at Yumari* provides some insights into the possible interpretation of *Untitled – Man's Travelling Dreaming*. The iconography featured in the 1973 example presents an abstracted form of the ancestral man Yina, including his testicles and penis.

Yina was an ancestral sorcerer whose sexual exploits were a favoured subject of a number of the early Papunya painters. At Kampurrarpa, Yina was spurned by a group of women, and so travelled west, dragging his distended penis, which became a long sand dune marking the path of his passage. Eventually he reached the site of Yumari, where 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.

Uta Uta Tjangala was born at Dovers Hills, far west of Papunya. The severe drought of the late 1950s led a large group of people, including Uta Uta and his family, to make the journey from their homelands to Haasts Bluff at the end of 1956. Uta Uta was working as a school gardener when he was encouraged to draw with pencils and crayons on paper. Eventually he was provided with brushes, paint and board alongside a number of other Pintupi men.

Uta Uta's compulsion to paint was driven by a concern that his sons gain knowledge of their distant homelands. During this time, many children were born in Papunya, separated from the land they were to inherit culturally. Uta Uta and his wife, Walangkura Napanangka, had four sons, three of whom were born in Papunya, and it was partly through the recently acquired cultural activity of painting that such an education could be provided.

Luke Scholes



JOHN TJAKAMARRA
c. 1937 – 2002
Pintupi language

Untitled 1972
synthetic polymer paint on composition board
55 × 55 cm (21.7 × 21.7 inches) (irregular)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, painted at Papunya, Northern Territory
Stuart Art Centre, Alice Springs, Northern Territory,
consignment 19, painting 247
Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs, Northern Territory
Important Aboriginal Art, Sotheby's, Melbourne, Victoria,
30 June 1997, lot 187
Private collection, Sydney, New South Wales
Aboriginal Art, Sotheby's, Melbourne, 30 July 2006, lot 85
Private collection, Melbourne, Victoria, acquired
from the above
D'Lan Contemporary, Melbourne, Victoria
Carey Lyon and Joanne Crosby, Melbourne, Victoria,
acquired from the above

EXHIBITED
Papunya Tula, Twenty-one Years, Araluen Art Centre,
Alice Springs, Northern Territory, October 1992

John Tjakamarra was born on Country surrounding Kurlkurta, south-west of the salt lake Kaakurutintjinya (Lake Macdonald) in Western Australia. Despite travelling widely across his ancestral lands, Tjakamarra didn't encounter Europeans until 1962, when he and his family had brief interactions with a Northern Territory Welfare Branch patrol. It was during this time that Tjakamarra learnt about the increasing number of Pintupi people who had begun to congregate at various communities and missions in the east. In 1964, Tjakamarra and his extended family walked hundreds of kilometres to the Papunya settlement to reconnect with family members and relatives.

In the early 1970s, Tjakamarra and other men began producing small paintings on salvaged sheets of timber. This was the beginnings of an art movement that would reshape Australian art history. Known colloquially as 'Papunya boards', the paintings produced during this time are now some of Australia's most treasured cultural items. Tjakamarra became a significant contributor to Papunya Tula Artists, the company the artists formed in November 1972. It was at about this time that this painting was created. *Untitled* remained the property of Papunya Tula Artists for twenty-five years before the company decided to sell the work in 1997. Although the original description of the related narrative has been lost, the designs indicate a ceremonial scene with four people around a camp or sand painting, with other ground painting designs, or objects, in each of the quadrants of the board. The work bears the unique stippling that is a hallmark of the early style of the artist.

Luke Scholes



WALTER (TALPULPA) TJAMPITJINPA
c. 1912 – 1981
Pintupi language

Water Dreaming 1972
synthetic polymer paint on composition board
42 × 22.5 cm (16.6 × 8.9 inches) (irregular)

PROVENANCE

The Artist, painted at Papunya, Northern Territory
Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs,
Northern Territory, cat. no. 1272069
Graeme Marshall, South Australia,
acquired from the above
Fine Aboriginal Art, Bonhams & Goodman,
Sydney, 17 November 2004, lot no. 42
Private collection, South Australia

Walter (Talpulpa) Tjampitjinpa was a prolific contributor to the first three years of the painting movement at Papunya, and *Water Dreaming* 1972 epitomises the gestural directness he brought to his short but intriguing oeuvre. Tjampitjinpa's compositions are characterised by a winding freedom of movement derived from the iconography of the Kapi (Water) and Liru (Western Brown Snake) Dreaming sites for which he was custodian.

Here, Tjampitjinpa uses bold marks to convey the scalding power of the original storm and the resulting flood waters that Winpa (the Lightning ancestor) propelled east from Kalipinypa. Twisting braided lines express the force of the flood as it finds its path through swales, a torrent crashing into debris (three straight bars) – the impeded running water allowing the flood to seep into the earth, fostering the emergence of new life. Egret, Emu and human ancestors will soon gather to feast when the waters subside.

The roughly hewn edges of Tjampitjinpa's board appear to swell with the force of the interlaced black lines that have been applied so economically with a few bold strokes. The resulting negative shapes are precisely punctuated with black, white and yellow-ochre dots, providing intensity and accent to what was already a powerful statement. The dots are likely to represent the rain and the abundance of bush foods pushing through the moistened earth after the passing of the storm.

The shape of Tjampitjinpa's board closely resembles one which Timmy Payungka Tjapangati created, *Corroboree Site Two* c. 1973 (National Gallery of Australia).¹ Given the irregular shapes of the boards, and the directness of both artists' attack, it is quite possible that these works were created while the two painters were in dialogue, as was frequently the case with artists working cheek by jowl in the Men's Painting Room.

John Kean

- 1 The NGA website states that *Corroboree Site Two* was painted c. 1973; however, I argue it is likely to have been created during the 'interregnum' in 1972, before the painting's first owner, Peter Fannin, became manager of Papunya Tula Artists. <https://searchthecollection.nga.gov.au/object/16755>



KAAPA MBITJANA TJAMPITJINPA
c. 1920 – 1989
Anmatyerr, Arrernte and Warlpiri languages

Budgerigar Dreaming 1972
synthetic polymer paint on composition board
50.5 × 25 cm (19.9 × 9.8 inches)

PROVENANCE

The Artist, painted at Papunya, Northern Territory
Private collection, acquired from Papunya in 1972
Fine Contemporary and Aboriginal Art, Sotheby's Australia,
Melbourne, Victoria, 28 November 1995, lot 636
Private collection, Sydney, New South Wales
D'lan Contemporary, Melbourne, Victoria
Carey Lyon and Joanne Crosby, Melbourne, Victoria,
acquired from the above

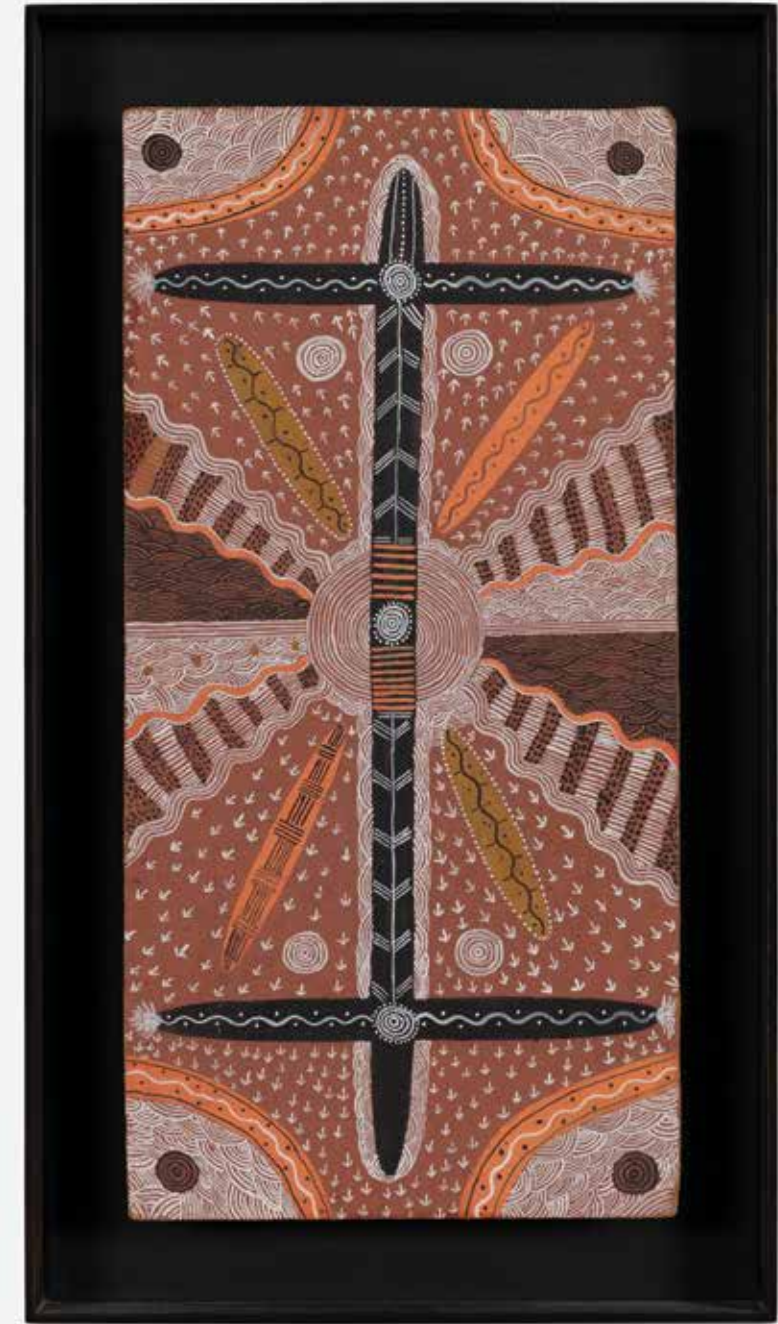
A compositional challenge that lies at the core of contemporary desert art is how the dynamic three-dimensional reality of the ceremonial ground can be represented on the static two-dimensional rectangular surface of Western art. Kaapa Tjampitjinpa used his *Budgerigar Dreaming* series as his means of resolving this. The intellectual rigour with which Kaapa sought solutions to this challenge is a measure of his significance to Australian art. At the local level, Kaapa was a singularly influential figure, and the compositional templates he trialled informed the development of Papunya Tula art.¹

Kaapa produced at least fourteen compositional variations on the Budgerigar theme before he arrived on this version. All of Kaapa's *Budgerigar* paintings contain representations of sacred boards, string constructions and roundels, while some versions also include ceremonial poles and signs, indicating figures and their windbreaks. Kaapa uses dots sparingly, if at all, but there is a trend towards increased elaboration at the conclusion of the series, where, as is the case with the current work, small (reversed) arrows signify numerous Budgerigar ancestors moving from the wider landscape into the apwelhe (men's ceremonial area). This work is unique in its use of overlapping patternisation as an alternative to dotted infill, a technique that the founding Papunya-based artists trialled in late winter 1972.

Budgerigar Dreaming 1972 also encompasses an esoteric level of meaning, conveyed by Kaapa with symmetry and graphic finesse. Budgerigars are metaphorically potent in Anmatyerr culture, where vast flocks of Atetherr congregated near waterholes – and the *flash* of their twisting, iridescent flight is interpreted as a manifestation of the Dreaming. More specifically, the abrupt descent of the flock to water is likened to the enthusiasm of initiates gathering on the ceremonial ground eager to learn Budgerigar Law. The painting's contrapuntal patination and diagonal thrust appear to have satisfied Kaapa's search for thematic, compositional and technical perfection.

John Kean

- 1 John Kean, *Dot, Circle and Frame: the Making of Papunya Tula Art*, Upswell Publishing, Perth, 2023, pp. 231–237.
- 2 Kean, 2023, pp. 226–230.



MICK WALLANKARRI TJAKAMARRA
c. 1906 – 1996
Kukatja and Ngalia languages

Bush Tucker Story 1972

synthetic polymer paint on composition board
40 × 30 cm (15.7 × 11.8 inches)

PROVENANCE

The Artist, painted at Papunya, Northern Territory
Stuart Art Centre, Alice Springs, Northern Territory,
consignment 12, painting 5

Private collection, Adelaide, South Australia
Aboriginal Art, Sotheby's, Melbourne, Victoria,
9 July 2001, lot 159

Private collection, Sydney, acquired from the above
D'Lan Contemporary, Melbourne, Victoria
Carey Lyon and Joanne Crosby, Melbourne,
Victoria, acquired from the above

Born in the first decade of the twentieth century, Mick Wallankarri Tjakamarra was one of three senior men whose approval was instrumental to the creation of the Honey Ant mural at the Papunya School in August 1971. Wallankarri's authority was derived from his role as kutungula (caretaker) of the site that gives Papunya its name, and he was a critical artist and advocate during the first decade of the painting movement at Papunya.

Bush Tucker Story, created in the Men's Painting Room in the winter of 1972, depicts ancestral events at the artist's birthplace, Watikinpirri, now the Newhaven Wildlife Sanctuary. Fortuitously, a related painting by Wallankarri, depicting the same themes, and using very similar pictorial elements, won the Caltex Art Award in Alice Springs in August 1972. Titled *Water Dreaming with Bushtucker* (1972, Araluen Arts Centre), the prize-winning work also employs near-identical materials. We can therefore be confident that both paintings were painted during the same phase. The boards depict the convergence of the Water Dreaming and Yala (Yam) Dreaming at Watikinpirri. Tellingly, there is an abundance of yala plants growing at Watikinpirri.

Driven by ritual celebration and artistic discovery, the painting movement developed at a rapid pace in 1972. A dizzying variety of approaches to the disclosure and elaboration of sacred content were tested, and a palpable sense of excitement pervades the paintings created during the period. That dynamism is exemplified in *Bush Tucker Story*, where two types of embellishment are used on the same board. The Water Dreaming icon, at the bottom of the board, is infilled with swiftly applied over lapping lines, whereas dots are used in the top two-thirds of the work, likely representing the proliferation of bush foods growing after the passing of the ancestral storm. The circular icons refer to the Yala ancestors, growing in the dampened earth.

John Kean



KAAPA MBITJANA TJAMPITJINPA
c. 1920 – 1989
Anmatyerr, Arrernte and Warlpiri languages

Possum Story 1972
synthetic polymer paint on composition board
61 × 17 cm (24 × 6.7 inches)

PROVENANCE

The Artist, painted in the Northern Territory
Peter Fannin, Alice Springs, Northern Territory
Private collection
Blue Chip V Collectors' Exhibition, Niagara Galleries,
Melbourne, Victoria, March 2003, no. 15
Private collection, Melbourne, Victoria,
acquired from the above
D'Lan Davidson, Melbourne, Victoria
Carey Lyon and Joanne Crosby, Melbourne,
Victoria, acquired from the above in 2019

Brush-tailed Possums are portrayed as both combative and lascivious in Anmatyerr Law, their personalities frequently resembling more boisterous aspects of human behaviour. Songlines that celebrate Rrpwamper (Possum) ancestors highlight those characteristics and lend themselves to the commanding symmetry favoured by Kaapa Tjampitjinpa.

Having resolved his approach to the representation of three-dimensional ceremonies within the constraints of the two-dimensional frame of Western art (see *Budgerigar Dreaming* 1972), Kaapa spent the balance of 1972 reconfiguring symbols associated with particular totemic ancestors to create elegant compositions. Rrpwamper are typically signified by sinuous lines (to represent the possum's dragging tail), punctuated with 'E-shaped' marks (representing the possum's paws). In this instance, the tracks of the ancestral Possums lead from each corner to horizontal bars, originally described as spears but, in the ritual context, are likely to be Twyerrenge (sacred objects). The sets of concentric circles, each with four adjacent arcs, are performers at their fires, singing the verses of the songline, as the Possum dancers appear from behind a windbreak and stamp their way towards the centre of the ceremonial ground. Kaapa has ingeniously deconstructed elements of the performers' body paint (consider the arcs and sets of short bars), rearranging them to satisfy the composition. Where earlier imagery was presented on an unadorned ground, by the end of 1972 Kaapa used dotted infill, which, in this instance, represents the food of the Possum ancestors and, simultaneously, anteth (chopped feather or plant material) applied to objects and performers' bodies as symbolically potent embellishment.

Repetition and balance are key elements of Anmatyerr aesthetics and in this work Kaapa has mirrored the narrative element of the Possum songline, creating a composition that is symmetrical along both the vertical and horizontal axis. The recombination of symbolic fragments drawn from ceremony amplifies and transmits the power of the Rrpwamper ancestors.

John Kean



TIMMY PAYUNGKA TJAPANGATI

c. 1940 – 2000

Pintupi language

Two Children at Pirriyapurupurunya 1973

synthetic polymer paint on composition board
79 × 61 cm (28 × 24 inches)

PROVENANCE

The Artist, painted at Yayayi, Northern Territory
Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs, Northern Territory,
cat. no. TP731097

Anvil Art Gallery, Kergunyah, Victoria
Private collection, Victoria, acquired from the above
Aboriginal Art, Lawson-Menzies, Sydney,
New South Wales, 22 November 2006, lot 58
Private collection, Melbourne, Victoria,
acquired from the above

Two Children at Pirriyapurupurunya was created by Timmy Payungka Tjapangati at Yayayi in October 1973. The anthropologist Fred Myers, who was undertaking PhD research at the outstation, documented numerous Pintupi men's paintings upon their completion. Over and above the aesthetic appeal of these works, conversations around the paintings provided Myers with specific information about the relationship of individuals to distant sites, hundreds of kilometres over the visible horizon. This was especially significant for works by Tjapangati, whose Country was further to the north-east than all other Pintupi artists.

Tjapangati told Myers that this work describes a ceremony performed by the Tingarri Men on their journey north of Wilkinkarra (Lake Mackay), near the western edge of Warlpiri Country. The name of the site, Pirriyapurupurunya, indicates that these events occurred during a cold period (pirrya), when winter rains caused water to flow across the land (indicated by the sinuous lines). According to Tjapangati, a cave at Pirriyapurupurunya is adorned with ancient paintings from the Dreaming. The Tingarri showed these sacred signs to a pair of uninitiated youths, teaching them details of Tingarri Law.

When viewed in isolation, the dotted patterns that are contained within segments delineated by sinuous lines provide a fascinating insight into Tjapangati's artistic journey. Firstly, these meandering configurations resemble the shapes of one of Tjapangati's best known works, *Sandhill Country West of Wilkinkarra, Lake Mackay* 1972 (National Gallery Australia) and, secondly, they prefigure the key-shaped paintings, including *Tingari Cycle at Wilkinkarra* 1996 (Art Gallery New South Wales) – a series that characterises the final phase of the artist's illustrious career.

John Kean







SIGNIFICANT

14 May — 27 June 2026

Melbourne/Naarm, Sydney/Gadigal, New York/Lenapehoking

Albert Namatjira
Angelina Pwerle
Bobby West Tjupurrula
Boxer Milner Tjampitjin
Djambawa Marawili
Emily Kam Kngwarray
Eubena Nampitjin
Fred Ward Tjungurrayi
George Tjungurrayi
George Ward Tjungurrayi
Harry Tjutjuna
John Mawurndjul AM
Joseph Jurra Tjapaltjarri
Keith Wikmunea
Kitty Kantilla
Lawrence Pennington
Mirdidingkingathi Juwarnda
Sally Gabori

Naata Nungurrayi
Nongirrnga Marawili
Nyapanyapa Yunupingu
Owen Yalandja
Paddy Bedford
Patju Presley
Patrick Tjungurrayi
Pepai Jangala Carroll
Queenie McKenzie
Ronnie Tjamiptjinpa
Rover Thomas Joolama
Samson Bonson
Timo Hogan
Warlimpirrnga Tjapaltjarri
Wimmitji Tjapangati
Wukun Wanambi
Yukultji Napangati

ARTIST UNKNOWN

An Early Rainforest Shield, nineteenth century
earth pigments on wood
98.5 cm (38.8 inches)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, created in North Queensland
Karel Domin, Prague, Czech Republic
By descent
Private collection, Prague, Czech Republic
Important Aboriginal Art, Sotheby's,
Melbourne, Victoria, 5 June 2012, lot 42
Private collection, Brisbane, Queensland,
acquired from the above

Large painted shields known in the Djirubal language as bigan, such as this kidney-shaped example, are distinctive to the Rainforest peoples of north-east Queensland.¹ Their use extended from the Bloomfield and Endeavour Rivers south to Cardwell and across the Atherton Tablelands. Carried during bruns (inter-clan gatherings), their painted designs signalled clan identity and regional affiliation.² This shield's diamond patterning is characteristic of the Cardwell region. Its impressive scale, sinuous carving and red-brown motifs convey both the power of the holder and the skill of the artists.

As recorded by Walter E. Roth, shields were shaped from fig (*Ficus* sp.) buttresses, worked from either end to form a central boss, and fitted with a carved rear hand grip. By repeatedly soaking and drying the shield, its weight was reduced while maintaining its strength. The shield's surface was then smoothed with a rough stone and painted with mineral pigments that were applied by stick, brush or finger.³

During the nineteenth century, amid the frontier wars, such shields were prized by researchers working in the region. This example was acquired in 1910 by Czech botanist Karel Domin during his travels through Queensland as part of a broader scientific expedition to Australia and Java.

Stephanie Martin

- 1 Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, 'Queensland Indigenous Australian Shields', para 2, <https://www.qagoma.qld.gov.au/stories/queensland-indigenous-australian-shields-australia/>
- 2 Alice Buhrich, 'Dendroglyphs, pictographs and social identity in the wet tropics rainforest of Northeastern Australia', *Archaeology in Oceania*, 60, 2025, pp. 119–131, <https://doi.org/10.1002/arco.5353>
- 3 Kate Khan, Catalogue of the Roth Collection of Aboriginal Artefacts from North Queensland, vol. 1, Australian Museum, Sydney, 1993, p. 63, doi:10.3853/j.1031-8062.10.1993.69



ALBERT NAMATJIRA
c. 1902 – 1959
Western Arrarnta language

Amirre / Spear Thrower– Mt Giles c. 1945
watercolour over pencil on hardwood,
spinifex resin and sinew
13 × 80 cm (5.1 × 31.4 inches)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, created at Hermannsburg,
Northern Territory
Aboriginal Handicraft, Hermannsburg,
Northern Territory
Private collection, Melbourne, Victoria
By descent
Private collection, Melbourne, Victoria
Australian, International & Aboriginal Fine Art,
Bonhams & Goodman, Sydney, Melbourne, 19
November 2007, lot 36
Private collection, Melbourne, Victoria,
acquired from the above

In addition to his watercolour landscapes on paper, Albert Namatjira also painted delicate vignettes on the curved surfaces of amirre (spear throwers). Frequently sold to adventurous tourists, painted amirre are integral to Namatjira’s oeuvre, their elegant form signifying Arrarnta manhood.

Namatjira was crucial to the emergence of a craft industry at the Finke River Mission in the early 1930s, and the symmetry and sanded finish on this amirre epitomises the finesse that Namatjira brought to every aspect of his creative practice. The image of a goanna, and the text ‘Aboriginal handicraft – Hermannsburg – Central Australia’, on the object’s convex outer surface provides graphic evidence linking this object to the ‘cottage industry’ that formed around Namatjira’s entrepreneurship.

On the concave inner surface of the amirre, Namatjira drew an aperture, within which he painted in miniature, the vastness of land that surrounded

him. This vista was gained from an elevated spot, not far from the artist’s home at Ntaria/Hermannsburg, around 1945. I imagine Namatjira looking to his north, with hand cupped to create a ‘viewfinder’, examining the blue shadows cast on Mt Giles in the far distance. The deftness with which the mountain’s deeply folded gullies are conjured with a few sublimely confident gestures, in just two colours, is breathtaking.

Knowing that Namatjira carved and refined the surface of this amirre to his satisfaction, and felt its weight in his hand before commencing to paint, conveys a special sense of intimacy. Far from being minor works, Namatjira’s amirre reflect the totality of his practice. From the economy of the sculpted form, through to the inspired facility with which the land is depicted, this amirre embodies a genius born of the land he portrays.

John Kean



ALBERT NAMATJIRA
c. 1902 – 1959
Western Arrarnta language

Haasts Bluff c. 1950
watercolour over pencil on paper
25.5 × 29.5 cm (10 × 11.6 inches) (reveal)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, painted in Central Australia,
Northern Territory
Estate of Mrs Doreen Grey Bond, South Australia
Gould Galleries, Melbourne, Victoria
Private collection, Melbourne, Victoria,
acquired from the above

Albert Namatjira is frequently associated with the Finke River Mission at Ntaria/Hermannsburg, but the artist also lived for extended periods at the Haasts Bluff station, close to his wife's Country. Ilkalita, later christened Rubina, was the daughter of Wapiti, the ceremonial leader of the Kukatja-speaking people of the area. While it is customary for Arrarnta men to spend time on their wife's Country, Haasts Bluff offered Namatjira the opportunity to seek new vistas, away from the pressures of the mission.

The remarkable bluff that gives its name to the station is the easternmost feature of Unyali, a massive, elevated ridgeline that runs east–west for several kilometres until it falls off into a wide gap separating it from Ulunparru, a similarly rugged massif, and the subject of the current work. Namatjira portrayed both mountains from numerous angles. On this occasion, he chose an elevated spot, to the north of the community, that offered a commanding view of Ulunparru, with the blue hills of Alkipi in the far distance. Namatjira's portrayal of the same mountain, originally titled *Ilum-Baura* (1939, Art Gallery of South Australia), was purchased in the year of its creation, and was the first of his paintings to be acquired into a state collection. Here, Namatjira has cropped the view, emphasising the ragged-red escarpment and its adjacent scree slope falling into a series of low undulating hills.

By the time of this work's creation, around 1945, Namatjira had fully mastered the watercolour medium, his brush expertly capturing the textures of burnt and blackened trees, the grey-green softness of acacia stands, and the precipitous weight of uplifted strata. Namatjira paints Country as one who knows its extremes, and delights in the contrast between its deep shadows and sunstruck crags.

John Kean



BALANG NAKURULK
(JOHN MAWURNDJUL AM)
1952 – 2024
Kuninjku language

Ngarrbek – Echidna 1985
earth pigments on bark
195 × 70 cm (76.8 × 27.6 inches)

PROVENANCE

The Artist, painted at Maningrida, Northern Territory
Maningrida Arts & Culture, Maningrida,
Northern Territory, cat. no. MAW 135
Private collection, Sydney, New South Wales,
acquired from the above in 1986

Born in 1952 at Kubukkan near Marrkolidjban in Western Arnhem Land, artist Balang Nakurulk (John Mawurndjul AM) is recognised as one of Australia's master bark painters. In the mid 1980s, Nakurulk began travelling beyond Arnhem Land for exhibitions and encountered other contemporary art in museums, a pivotal moment that consolidated his singular approach to bark painting and marked the emergence of the artist's 'middle period'.¹ His rising national and international recognition coincided with broader political and cultural shifts – including the work of the Aboriginal Arts Board – that helped reposition Aboriginal art within a contemporary global context.²

Created in 1985, *Ngarrbek – Echidna* is a compelling example from this transformative period. The painting refers to a Kuninjku creation story of the battle between Ngarrbek (echidna) and Ngalmangiyi, the Northern Snake-necked Turtle, a ceremony belonging to the Yirritja moiety. Working within a lineage through which Kuninjku bark painting evolved from rock art traditions, Nakurulk developed his own distinct style, which is evident in this work. On an expansive scale, rarrk (cross-hatching characteristic of Mardayin body painting) is meticulously applied in complex, shifting segments that define and animate the animal's form. The subtle interplay of rarrk across the segmented body holds the gaze with a shimmer that evokes the power of Mardayin in nature, manifest in a sacred place. In some depictions of bambirl (echidna), the head appears as a contrasting field of white pigment set against sprawling rarrk. Here, however, the rarrk flows into the head, just as the animal's form fills the contours of the bark, accentuating the interfolding of surface pigment and fibrous ground. In this way, the animal's form becomes an expression of Nakurulk's interconnected knowledge of Country, which, as Hetti Perkins observes, is informed by his expertise as both a hunter and conservationist.³

Stephanie Martin

- 1 Luke Taylor, in Christian Kaufmann and Museum Tinguely (eds), *Rarrk: John Mawurndjul: Journey Through Time in Northern Australia*, Crawford House Publishing, Belair, South Australia, 2005, pp. 44–45.
- 2 Gary Foley, in *Rarrk: John Mawurndjul*, p. 186.
- 3 Hetti Perkins, in Altman et al., *John Mawurndjul: I Am the Old and the New*, Museum of Contemporary Art and the Art Gallery of South Australia, Sydney, 2019, p. 22.



KITTY KANTILLA

c. 1928 – 2003

Tiwi language

Untitled 1989

earth pigments on bark

79 × 36.5 cm (31.1 × 14.4 cm)

PROVENANCE

The Artist, painted at Bathurst Island,

Northern Territory

Tiwi Pima Art, Bathurst Island, Northern Territory,

cat. no. GA89

Deutscher Brunswick Street, Melbourne, Victoria

James Mollison AO and Vincent Langford, Melbourne,

Victoria, acquired from the above in 1991

LITERATURE

Judith Ryan, *Kitty Kantilla*, National Gallery of

Victoria, Melbourne, 2007, p. 11 (illus.)

Kathy Barnes, *Kiripapurajuwi: Skills of Our Hands: Good*

Craftsmen and Tiwi Art, Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander Commission, Canberra, 1999, p. 111 (illus.)

EXHIBITED

Kitty Kantilla: A National Gallery of Victoria Touring

Exhibition, The Ian Potter Centre: National Gallery

of Victoria, Melbourne, 27 April – 19 August 2007;

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney,

7 December 2007 – 21 January 2008

This bark painting by Tiwi artist Kitty Kantilla draws upon the visual language of jilamara, the ceremonial body-paint designs central to Tiwi cultural life.

Organised as a strong vertical composition, the work translates these ritual markings into a clear and purposeful arrangement of pattern. A central column of ochre circles sits against a dark ground, flanked by finely painted linear bands that guide the eye steadily across the surface. Executed in natural earth pigments on bark, the combination of dots and stripes reflects the structured grammar of Tiwi design. Even in its apparent simplicity, the composition reveals Kantilla's careful attention to balance and rhythm.

Within Tiwi culture, these designs articulate identity, kinship and ancestral connection. Painted onto the bodies of dancers during ceremony, the patterns animate movement and song, transforming the body into a surface of cultural expression. When translated onto bark, these visual elements retain their ceremonial authority while also functioning as resolved compositions in their own right. The repetition of circles and stripes reflects the ordered language of Tiwi design, where meaning is carried through pattern, rhythm and material.

Created in 1989, this work belongs to an early period of Kantilla's artistic practice, preceding her later association with Jilamara Arts and Crafts on Melville Island. During these formative years, she worked primarily with bark and earth pigments, drawing directly from the ceremonial aesthetics embedded within Tiwi cultural life. Works such as this one reveal the foundations of the visual vocabulary that would later define her celebrated canvases. Even at this early stage, Kantilla demonstrates a confident ability to translate the vitality of Tiwi ceremonial design into a striking and enduring composition.

Lucy Foster



ROVER THOMAS JOOLAMA
c. 1926 – 1998
Kukatja and Wangkajunga language

Kankamkankami 1990
earth pigments and brush gum on linen
90 × 180 cm (35.4 × 70.8 inches)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, created at Turkey Creek, Western Australia
Mary Mächa collection
Important Aboriginal Art, Sotheby’s, Melbourne,
Victoria, 25 July 2005, lot 132
Private collection, Sydney, New South Wales, acquired
from the above by private treaty sale

LITERATURE
Belinda Carrigan (ed.), *Rover Thomas: I Want to Paint*,
Holmes à Court Gallery, Perth, 2003, p. 37, p. 74 (illus.)

EXHIBITED
Rover Thomas: I Want to Paint, National Gallery of
Victoria, Melbourne, 3 June – 17 August 2003; Bendigo
Art Gallery, Bendigo, Victoria, 13 December 2003 – 26
January 2004; Art Gallery of New South Wales,
Sydney, 21 February – 9 May 2004; Art Gallery
of South Australia, Adelaide, 24 September –
28 November 2004; Art Gallery of Western Australia,
Perth, 18 December 2004 – 6 March 2005

Rover Thomas Joolama was born at Gunawaggi, near Well 33 on the Canning Stock Route, the son of a Wangkajunga father and Kukatja mother. The family travelled across Western Australia and the Northern Territory working on cattle stations before settling on Gija Country at Warmun, near Turkey Creek, when Rover was around ten. He later worked across the Kimberley as a travelling stockman, beginning to paint late in life following a series of dreams in 1975 in which a recently deceased female relative warned of the decline of Indigenous cultural practices. She connected a destructive cyclone that had levelled Darwin to retribution from an ancestral Rainbow Serpent. Rover initially asked his classificatory uncle Paddy Jaminji to paint related imagery onto wooden boards for use in the Gurirr-Gurirr (Kurrir-Kurrir) ceremony, before the two began collaborating and Rover eventually commenced his own practice.

The following account of the subject of this painting is based on information provided to Mary Mächa by anthropologist Dr Patricia Vinnicombe.

Kankamkankami is an ancestral Mirriwung woman responsible for creating the landscape around Texas Downs Station in Western Australia – a range of mountains and associated springs flanking the southern edge of the valley. During the Ngarranggarni (the Dreaming in Gija language), Kankamkankami abducted two boys who were preparing for their circumcision, jealous of the male initiatory ceremony and wishing to perform it herself. She pushed the boys into a deep hole made with her digging stick, hiding them from their family. They were eventually found, and their family pursued Kankamkankami east over the Ord River onto what is now Newry Station in the Northern Territory, where she was speared to death. Whenever her story is retold, it is accompanied by a repetitive ditty sung to the delight of children.

Luke Scholes



QUEENIE MCKENZIE
c. 1915 – 1998
Gija language

My Dreamings 1995
earth pigments on canvas
120 × 160 cm (47.2 × 63 inches)

PROVENANCE

The Artist, painted at Warmun, Western Australia
Warmun Community, Western Australia,
cat. no. QMF09/95
Private collection, Switzerland,
acquired from the above in 1995

My Dreamings depicts the Texas Downs Station story, and places of significance connected to it, including Bubbalo Hole and Red Butt Cave, sites where Gija people camped when the rains came and waterholes rose, as well as Dahlu Dahlu (waterfall place) and Kuniy (dangerous) Country. A foundational figure of the Warmun painting movement and a respected community advocate, Queenie Mingmarriya Nakarra McKenzie brought a confident, decisive approach to her compositions.

Painted in 1995, at the height of her career and around the time of her first solo exhibition (*Gara Garag: My Life Longa Texas* at William Mora Galleries, Melbourne, Victoria), *My Dreamings* is a striking example of autobiographical works that draw on her relationship to Texas Downs Country and the histories and responsibilities Gija Elders have passed on to her. Her choice of a restricted palette of earthy brown and tan ochres conveys a grounded solemnity that has been shaped by this inherited cultural authority. Fields of pink, a hallmark of her later work, soften the work, its elements bordered with careful white dotting (mawoondool).

As Dr Suzanne Spinner observes, *My Dreamings* is memorable due to its 'division into three sections', a structure not typically found in her other works.¹ Rounded hills in profile compress Country into minimalist configurations, while rivers and roads are mapped at relative scale. Through this visual language, her identity is conveyed: the stories, camps and Law embedded in her Country are recorded, elegantly distilling her depth of cultural knowledge into clear, legible forms that translate the movements of people, water and ancestral presence across Gija Country.

Stephanie Martin

- 1 Dr Suzanne Spinner, personal communication (email to the author), 16 March 2026.

Source: Artwork certificate for *My Dreamings*, issued by Warmun Community Inc., 1995.



EMILY KAM KNGWARRAY

c. 1914 – 1996

Anmatyerr language

Untitled 1993

synthetic polymer paint on linen

121 × 91 cm (47.6 × 35.8 inches)

PROVENANCE

The Artist, painted at Delmore, Northern Territory

Delmore Gallery, Northern Territory, cat. no. 93L048

Thomas Vroom, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

The Thomas Vroom Collection, Bonhams, Sydney,

New South Wales, 6 September 2015, lot 118

Private collection, France, acquired from the above

Painted at Delmore Downs in December 1993, the work *Untitled* marks a pivotal moment in Emily Kam Kngwarray's career. By the end of 1992, the Anmatyerr artist had entered her renowned 'colourist phase', and this work exhibits its subtler qualities: warm golds, soft pinks and sage green applied with a bouncing, dragging technique that moves across the surface with the rhythm and weight of women dancing in ceremony. December at Delmore Downs is the peak of the Northern Territory wet season, intensely hot, with the land charged by monsoonal storms and new growth. The palette here reflects that atmosphere: luminous, alive, and held under pressure.

The work has an exceptional provenance. Acquired directly from Delmore Gallery in the Northern Territory, it became part of the Thomas Vroom Collection, one of Europe's most prominent collections of Aboriginal art, which has been the foundation of the former Aboriginal Art Museum in Utrecht for over a decade, before passing to a private European collection.

Vanessa Merlino



EMILY KAM KNGWARRAY

c. 1914 – 1996

Anmatyerr language

Yam Story 1996

synthetic polymer paint on linen

152 × 91 cm (59.8 × 35.8 inches)

PROVENANCE

The Artist, painted at Delmore, Northern Territory
Delmore Gallery, Northern Territory, cat. no. 96G007
William Mora Galleries, Melbourne, Victoria
The Applied Chemicals Collection, Melbourne, Victoria,
acquired from the above

LITERATURE

Of My Country: Emily Kame Kngwarreye, The Applied
Chemicals Collection, Bendigo Art Gallery, Bendigo,
Victoria, 1999 (illus.)

EXHIBITED

Of My Country: Emily Kame Kngwarreye, The Applied
Chemicals Collection, Bendigo Art Gallery, Bendigo,
Victoria, 1–30 May 1999

Across a deep black background, frayed flickers of yellow, white and grey clash and burst, filling the canvas with restless, creative energy. Occasional threads of red and pink emerge briefly before being absorbed back into the overall field. The marks are spontaneous and continuous – pushed and pulled across the surface with the full weight of the artist’s arm – and the canvas bears that physical force in every stroke.

The yam – anwerlarr, or pencil yam – holds particular significance in Eastern Anmatyerr Country, especially for Kngwarray, who was its most senior custodian. As a food source that reliably returns after drought-breaking rains, the yam embodies the principle of renewal at the heart of awely – women’s ceremonial practice – through which the land’s fertility is maintained and its spiritual force kept in order. Kngwarray’s gestural marks enact this knowledge, the crisscrossing lines describing the underground rhizome systems, the way growth erupts and spreads outward from central nodes, and the broader logic of a living Country constantly regenerating itself.

Painted in July 1996, the final year of Kngwarray’s life, *Yam Story* is part of what has been called her ‘Sacred Grasses’ period, the last of several key stylistic shifts over her concentrated eight-year career. Having moved through zones of delicate dotting, vibrant colour phases and bold linear strokes, she arrived in these final years at a style reduced to its core: line, motion, and the yam root system that had underpinned her work from the very start. Those who have observed her practice note that during this time her fist was clenched tightly around the brush as she forcefully manipulated the paint. In *Yam Story*, the artist returns to her fundamental motif with a force that feels less like repetition and more like confrontation. It stands as one of her most physically commanding pieces from her later years.

Vanessa Merlino



WIMMITJI TJAPANGATI

c. 1924 – 2000

Kukatja language

Tjiti Kutjarra – Two Children 1993

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

100 × 50 cm (39.4 × 19.7 inches)

PROVENANCE

The Artist, painted at Wirrimanu (Balgo Hills),
Western Australia

Warlayirti Artists, Balgo, Western Australia,
cat. no. 95/93

Newstead Art, Sydney, New South Wales

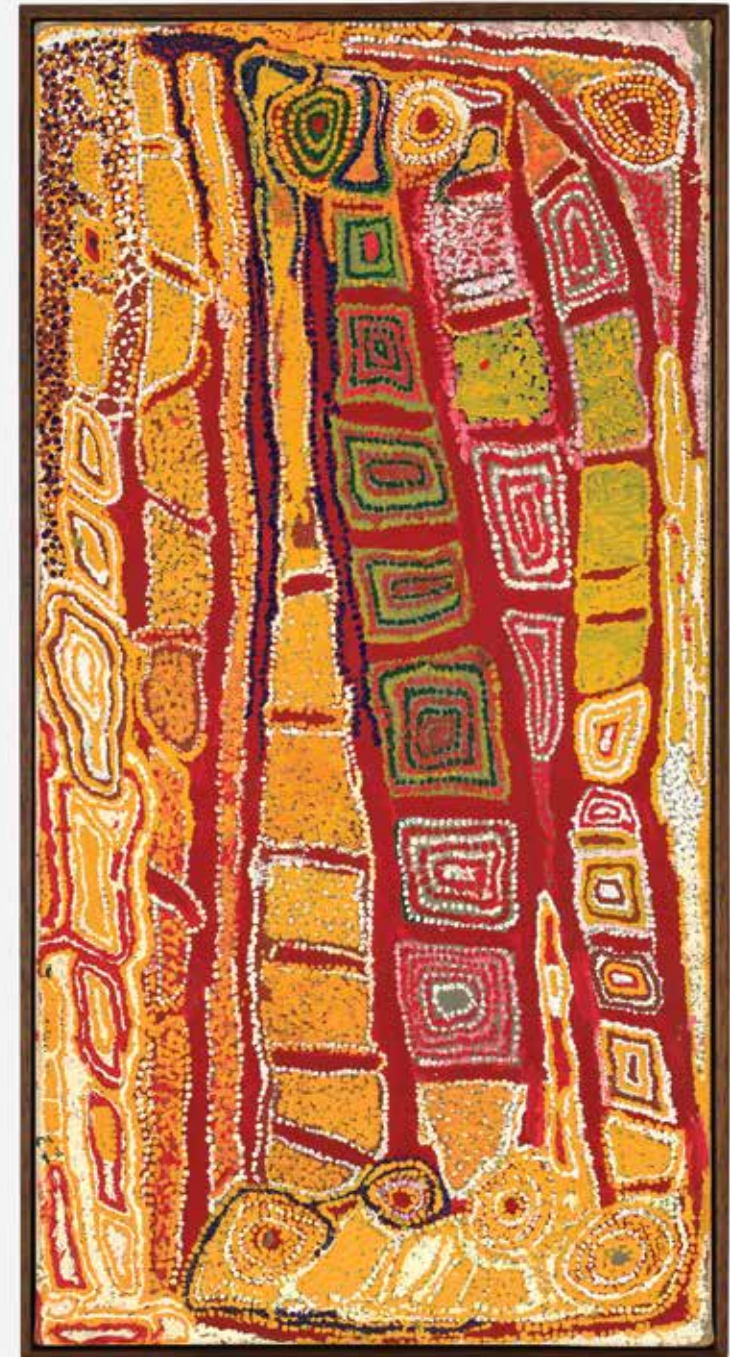
Private collection, United States of America

Wimmitji Tjapangati was the last of his family to leave their customary desert life and settle at the Balgo Mission in the late 1950s. He became a pivotal figure in the history of Balgo and was influential in shaping the understanding outsiders had of Aboriginal language and culture: first through becoming a key contributor to the research of anthropologist Ronald Berndt in the 1960s and again when consulting closely on the creation of the Kukatja Dictionary by a local priest. Through teaching language, explaining concepts, and ultimately painting Country, Wimmitji emerged as a determined and uniquely gifted illuminator of his world.

Wimmitji's art, like his Country, is dominated by the creative acts of the Tingarri ancestors. Yet his paintings are not girdled by the early conventions of men's Tingarri painting – grids of site-paths or circle-line compositions. This is partially because of the deep creative relationship he enjoyed with his second wife, Eubena Nampitjin. No honest or meaningful discussion of Wimmitji's art is possible without observing the influence husband and wife had on each other's paintings, as evident in their different hands at work on *Tjiti Kutjarra* 1993. But Wimmitji's unique artistry was also clearly visible across his oeuvre, as here.

This work, a dappled lattice of narrative tangents and trajectories depicting the Tjukurrpa associated with the 'Two Children', is a wonderful example. Wimmitji rarely painted the same place twice. His paintings were paths worked out in the walking. The classic circle-line and concentric square structures of desert art are evident here, but they are warped and stretched into new shapes. Ideas are followed and then fenced abruptly, before tracking someone or something into little fields of dotting. You can get lost in these details following Wimmitji around. And then you step back, and take in the whole painting: found.

John Carty



EUBENA NAMPITJIN
c. 1925 – 2013
Wangkajunga language

Untitled – Kinyu 1998
synthetic polymer paint on linen
180 × 120 cm (70.9 × 47.2 inches)

PROVENANCE

The Artist, painted at Wirrimanu (Balgo Hills),
Western Australia
Warlayirti Artists, Balgo, Western Australia,
cat. no. 19/98
Private collection
Australian & International Art, Davidson Auctions,
Sydney, New South Wales, 8 March 2008, lot 58
Private collection, acquired from the above

LITERATURE

Stephen Williamson and Samantha Togni (eds),
Eubena Nampitjin: Art and Life, Warlayirti Artists
Aboriginal Corporation, Balgo, Western Australia,
2005, p. 64 (illus.)

These works mark the middle developments of Eubena Nampitjin's extraordinary career; a story that started here, in the warm sands of Kinyu and Kawyujartu in the middle stretches of the Canning Stock Route, some eighty years prior. As a young woman, she walked the length of the route with her first husband, Gimme, and the drover Wally Dowling, moving cattle from Kunawarritji to Wiluna and back toward Billiluna Station. After station work, she and her family settled at Balgo Mission, where, in the 1980s, she started to paint.

Eubena initially painted in close partnership with her second husband, Wimmitji, with whom she developed a finely wired and radiant aesthetic. After Wimmitji's death, Eubena's style shifted, her paintings changed. She developed a brush-stroked technique, merging dots into bolder, laddered compositions such as we see in *Untitled – Kinyu* 1998 and *Kawyujartu*, *Near The Canning...* 1999. Throughout the late 1990s, her work became increasingly painterly, a trajectory evident in these two works. She continued her rhythmic dotting – pushing paint into clustered florets that gather like the footprints women dancers leave in the desert sand. In *Kawyujartu* the dots start to fuse with the containing lines, foreshadowing the petalled abstractions of her late career.



EUBENA NAMPITJIN
c. 1925 – 2013
Wangkajunga language

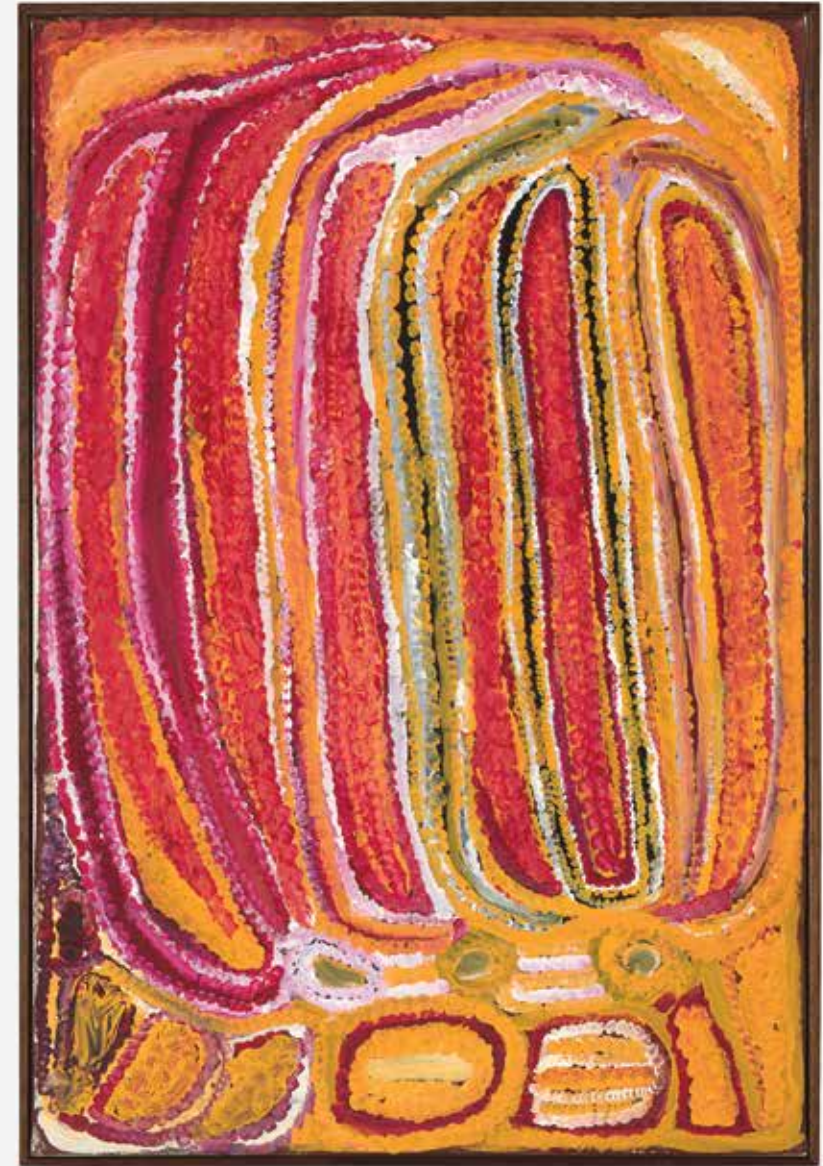
*Kawyujartu, Near the Canning
Stock Route, W.A* 1999
synthetic polymer paint on linen
90 × 60 cm (35.4 × 23.6 inches)

PROVENANCE

The Artist, painted at Wirrimanu
(Balgo Hills), Western Australia
Warlayirti Artists, Balgo,
Western Australia, cat. no. 97/99
Private collection, New York, United States
of America, acquired from the above

Eubena's luminous compositions are not without shadow: the places she painted are remembered because they are sites of encounter and consequence. Sites of memory. When narrating her paintings, she would point out, in the opulent sweep of a seeming abstraction, the specific place where historic events occurred. The place where her mother or her sister had died, and where their bones lie still, buried again in the warm golden tones of their Country.

John Carty



BOXER MILNER TJAMPITJIN
c. 1934 – 2009
Walmajarri language

Untitled – Purkitji 2006
synthetic polymer paint on linen
180 × 80 cm (70.9 × 31.5 inches)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, painted at Wirrimanu (Balgo Hills),
Western Australia
Warlayirti Artists, Balgo, Western Australia,
cat. no. 22/06
Utopia Art Sydney, Sydney, New South Wales
Private collection, New South Wales
Important Aboriginal Art, Sotheby's, Sydney,
New South Wales, October 2012, lot 10
Private collection, New South Wales,
acquired from the above
First Nations Fine Art Auction II, Art Leven,
Sydney, New South Wales, 17 June 2025, lot 6
Private collection, Melbourne, Victoria,
acquired from the above

Boxer Milner was a river man, a water colourist. Boxer painted Purkitji, the floodplain beside Sturt Creek, and Walyarra, the flooding. He painted the Country unfurling to the feel of water: flowing and spreading, pooling into billabongs and animating the dry earth with food, flowers and colour. This is followed by the less dramatic phase after the rains, when the river retreats into pools, the mud of 'the wet' cracking into the scales of another season. The red geometrics of *Purkitji* 2006 reveal this process.

Raised to read such ever-changing country, it is no surprise to find the artist obsessed with the nuances and minute gradations of colour that we see here. Boxer was fastidious in mixing his own pigments. He was especially fond of grading multiple shades of blue or red; to mirror how silt tints the water, how green spinifex dries into shades of straw, how soils darken in the wet or change composition between river and desert Country. The scarlet sands in Purkitji capture the ephemeral light of his rich drying Country, and the eternal relevance of the artist himself.

John Carty



WARLIMPIRRNGA TJAPALTJARRI
born c. 1959
Pintupi language

Untitled – Two Boys Dreaming at Marawa 1991
synthetic polymer paint on linen
92 × 151 cm (36.2 × 59.4 inches)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, painted at Kiwirrkurra, Western Australia
Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs, Northern Territory,
cat. no. WT910240
Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne, Victoria
John W. Kluge, United States of America
Aboriginal Art from the Collection of John W. Kluge;
The Paul Greenburg Collection, Mossgreen Auctions,
Melbourne, Victoria, 6 June 2012, lot 12
Private collection, Sydney, New South Wales,
acquired from the above

There are few figures from the desert who thrive more prominently in the imaginations of Australians than Warlimpirrnga Tjapaltjarri. In 1984, he was part of a Pintupi family of nine that emerged from a hunter-gatherer life in remote Western Australia and into the communal fold of the community of Kiwirrkurra. The family, which included Warlimpirrnga’s mothers, brothers and sisters, had been isolated from outside contact for over twenty years. Most accounts suggest that they remained in self-exile, waiting for contact from their relatives, who had earlier settled in communities throughout the Western Desert.

News of their arrival momentarily blazed on the front page of newspapers across Australia and around the world. For Australia, a country which continues to struggle with its identity and reconcile its past, it was at once a miracle and an awkward reminder of the Indigenous population’s enduring connection to the land.

The Two Boys Dreaming at Marawa, on the south-east edge of Lake Mackay, is depicted in this painting. The story forms part of the Tingarri Cycle, hence no details could be disclosed. A popular subject of Warlimpirrnga’s paintings, Marawa is the site where a large group of Tingarri ancestors entered the earth, creating the rockhole at this site. From here they continued their journey east, travelling underground.

Luke Scholes



RONNIE TJAMPITJINPA
c. 1942 – 2023
Pintupi language

Untitled – Tarkulnga 1997
synthetic polymer paint on linen
153 × 122 cm (60.2 × 48 inches)

PROVENANCE

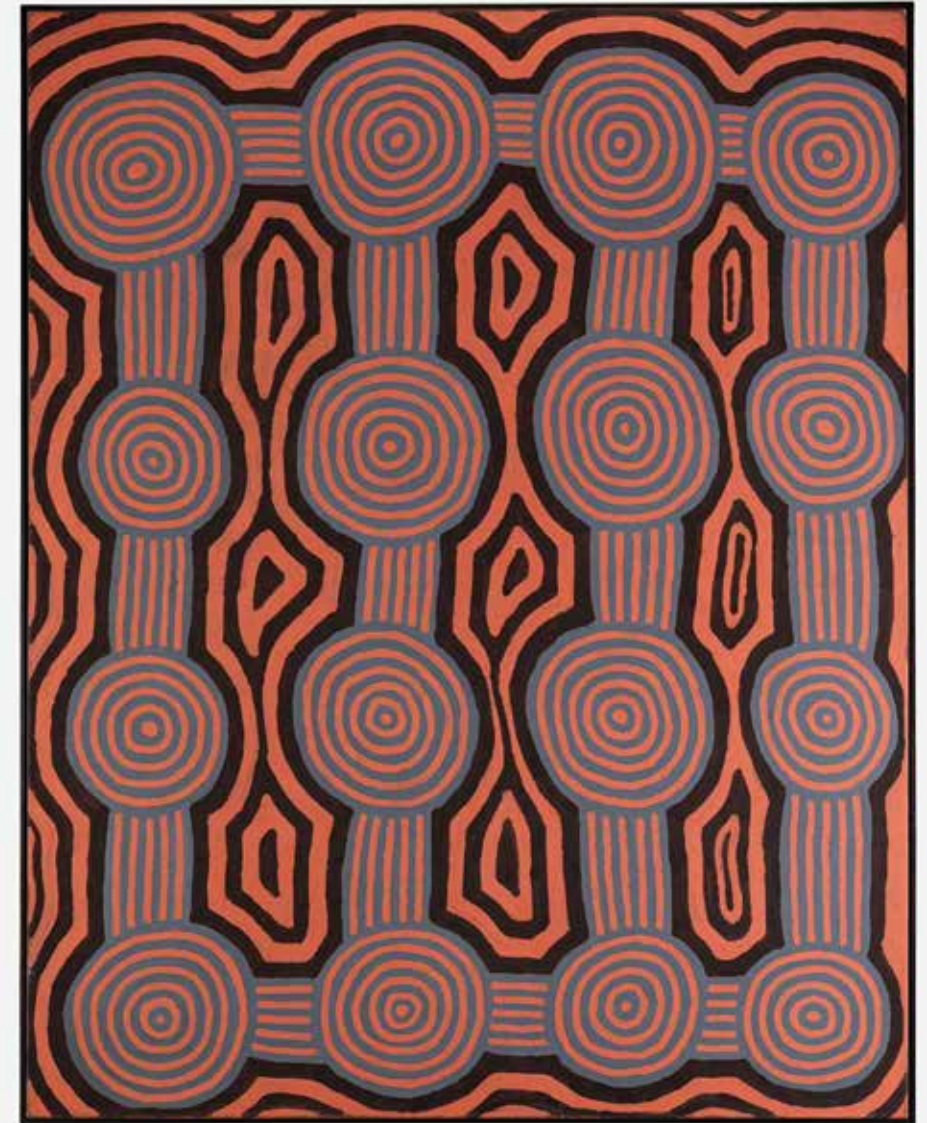
The Artist, painted at Kintore, Northern Territory
Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs, Northern
Territory, cat. no. RT9701136
Utopia Art Sydney, Sydney, New South Wales
Private collection, Alice Springs, Northern Territory
Important Aboriginal Art, Sotheby's, Melbourne,
Victoria, 24 June 2002, lot 238
Private collection, Sydney, New South Wales,
acquired from the above

During the first decade of the Papunya Tula art movement, Ronnie painted only sporadically, distinguishing himself rather as a carver of finely tooled shields, spears and boomerangs for use in ceremony and for sale to kartiya (non-Indigenous people). He began to paint in earnest during the late 1980s. As age brought cultural maturity, he sought to establish himself as a serious painter at a point when he was young enough to reinvent himself and be receptive to the aesthetic innovations of senior artists such as Mick Namarari Tjapaltjarri.

Ronnie took an independent direction and began to expand details of various motifs that are customarily incised and/or painted onto ceremonial objects, not to mask or smother the designs but to increase them beyond the scale of the human form and give them a commanding and vigorous presence. In Ronnie's mature work, unveiled in his first triumphant solo show in Melbourne in 1989, the scale and iconography of a sacred object or body design is transformed into that of a monumental ground painting. His distinct aesthetic has brought the Western Desert art movement to the attention of the contemporary art world.

This painting depicts designs associated with the site of Tarkulnga, to the north of Winparku (Mt Webb) in Western Australia. In ancestral times, the Tingarri Men made camp at this place before continuing their travels east to Pinari. While the men were camped at Tarkul, they also hunted for tjilkamata (echidna). Events associated with the Tingarri Cycle are of a secret nature, therefore no further detail was given.

Luke Scholes

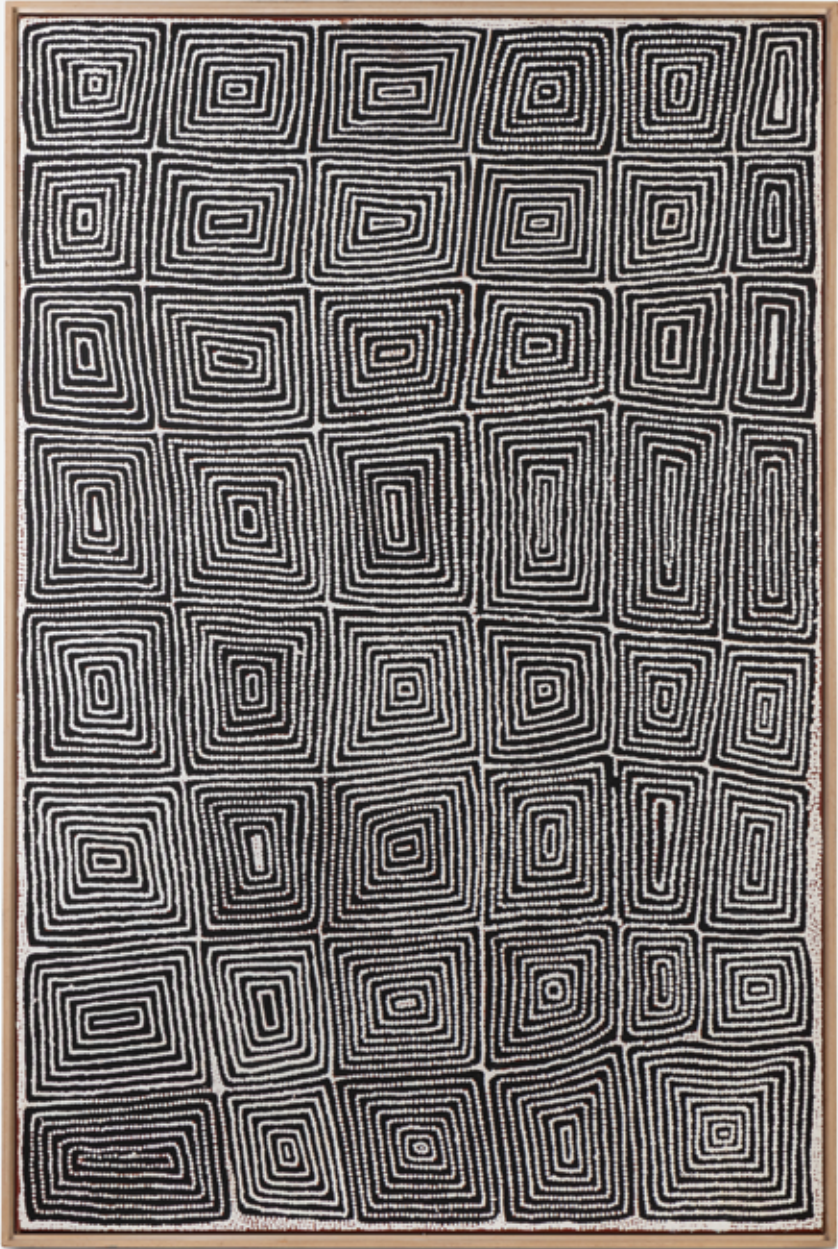


WARLIMPIRRNGA TJAPALTJARRI
born c. 1959
Pintupi language

Untitled – Murrmu 2001
synthetic polymer paint on linen
137 × 91 cm (53.9 × 35.8 inches)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, painted at Kiwirrkurra, Western Australia
Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs,
Northern Territory, cat. no. WT0103097
Scott Livesey Galleries, Melbourne, Victoria
Private collection, Melbourne, Victoria,
acquired from the above

This painting depicts the swamp site of Murrmu, north-east of Winparku (Mt Webb) in Western Australia. A large group of Tingarri Men came from the west and camped at this site before travelling on to Wilkinkarra (Lake Mackay). Once the men reached Lake Mackay, they split into two groups. Half stayed at Wilkinkarra, entering the earth at the surface of the lake and travelling underground. The others travelled east through Watanuma to the salt lake Pinari, north-west of where the Kintore community now stands. Since events associated with the Tingarri Cycle are of a secret nature, no further detail was given.



WILLY TJUNGURRAYI
c. 1932 – 2018
Pintupi language

Untitled 2001
synthetic polymer paint on linen
152 × 183 cm (59.8 × 72 inches)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, painted at Kintore, Northern Territory
Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs,
Northern Territory, cat. no. WT0106143
Utopia Art Sydney, Sydney, New South Wales
Private collection, Sydney, New South Wales,
acquired from the above

EXHIBITED
Museum, Utopia Art Sydney, Sydney,
New South Wales, October 2001, cat. no. 11

Willy Tjungurrayi was born at Patjantja, south-west of Wilkinkarra (Lake Mackay) in the Central Australian Desert in the early-1930s. Belonging to a family of prominent Pintupi painters, Tjungurrayi grew up in the bush before travelling to Haasts Bluff in the late 1950s.

He began painting for Papunya Tula Artists in 1976, and by the 1980s, Tjungurrayi had become one of the most senior Pintupi painters and a respected custodian of cultural knowledge within the community. This granted him the authority to paint significant Tingarri Dreaming stories associated with key sites across his Country. With this responsibility, Tjungurrayi translates the knowledge and memory of these narratives and locations onto canvas.

Tjungurrayi’s paintings display a disciplined use of rhythmic abstraction. *Untitled* 2001 teems with energy. His subtle manipulation of tone beneath his refined dotting technique creates an astonishing sense of depth and, along with it, a sinuous surface of terrain which appears almost to shift before our very eyes. It is a strategy he employs to emulate important geographical sites on Country.

Tjungurrayi was a true master of movement. His tonal shifts and mesmeric linearity mark him as a painter of precision and restraint.

Nina Schoff



BOBBY WEST TJUPURRULA
born c.1958
Pintupi language

Untitled 2001
synthetic polymer paint on linen
153 × 183 cm (60.2 × 72 inches)

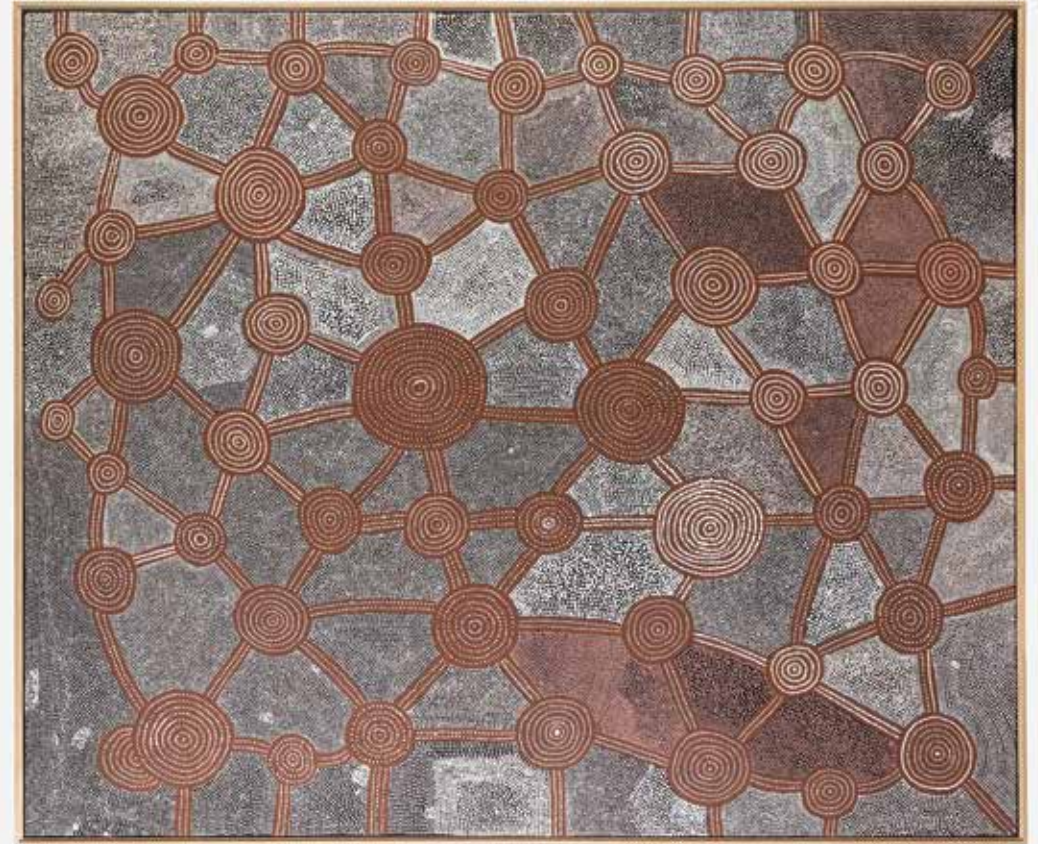
PROVENANCE

The Artist, painted at Kiwirrkurra, Western Australia
Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs,
Northern Territory, cat. no. BW0107080
Scott Livesey Galleries, Melbourne, Victoria
Private collection, Melbourne, Victoria,
acquired from the above

Born at the rockhole site of Tjamu Tjamu, east of the Kiwirrkurra community in Western Australia, Bobby West Tjupurrula and his family, led by his father, Freddy West Tjakamarra, encountered one of Jeremy Long's Welfare Branch patrols at Wili rockhole in 1963. Soon after, the family relocated to the government settlement of Papunya, where Bobby settled for some time, prior to moving far north to the mission at Balgo to live with relatives. For a number of years, he moved between Balgo, Papunya and Yuendumu, before eventually returning to live closer to his traditional lands in Kiwirrkurra, Western Australia.

Bobby commenced painting for Papunya Tula Artists in the late 1980s under the tutelage of his father, who was an occasional, though extraordinary painter of rare finesse. In 1999, he contributed to a large collaborative painting which was auctioned at the Art Gallery of New South Wales to raise funds for Australia's first remote area dialysis machine. Bobby has exhibited in New York, Paris, London and Singapore and was the recipient of the prestigious Telstra Painting Award at the 28th National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards in 2011.

Luke Scholes



PATRICK TJUNGURRAYI
c. 1935 – 2017
Pintupi language

Untitled – Tjipparitjarra 2002
synthetic polymer paint on linen
122 × 61 cm (48 × 24 inches)

PROVENANCE

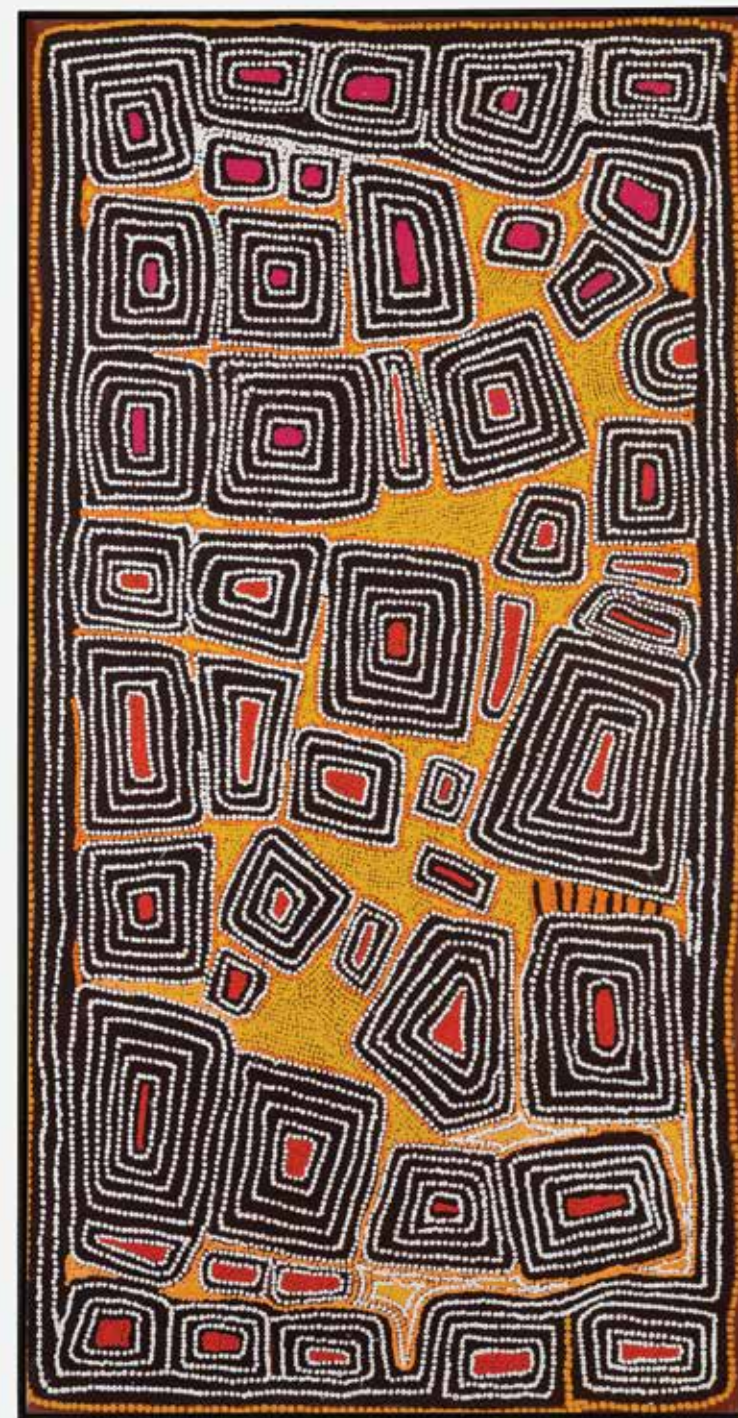
The Artist, painted at Kiwirrkurra, Western Australia
Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs,
Northern Territory, cat. no. PT0201216
Private collection, acquired from the above

This work encompasses a significant transitional moment in the oeuvre of Patrick Tjungurrayi, who forged one of the most dynamic careers of all desert artists. He was among the pioneering Balgo artists in the late 1970s and early 1980s, before returning to his home Country near Kiwirrkurra in the 1990s, where he painted for Papunya Tula Artists. He relocated between Balgo and Kiwirrkurra over the ensuing decades, exploring different styles in both places and ultimately new artistic vision born between them.

The Tingarri ancestors are a cornerstone of artistic subject matter and aesthetics for Western Desert men, and for Patrick in particular. Their epic journeys across the desert can crystallise as the iconic circle–line itineraries synonymous with desert art, as mazes, or concentric squares as in *Untitled – Tjipparitjarra*. This painting represents a transformational process in these paintings occasioned by even greater transformations of the Country Patrick was painting.

In 2000, Kiwirrkurra flooded and the whole community was evacuated. The rains that Patrick so regularly painted inundated the land on a mythic scale. He relocated his family back north to Balgo during this time, and after years of the working in the sedate contrasts of Papunya Tula's palette: yellow and white, red and brown, white and black, the riot of Balgo colour flowed back into his work. There he played with the diverse palette available at Warlayirti Artists. The pinks, purples and blues that may once have unbalanced his works suddenly gave them depth and force. When he returned to paint for Papunya Tula, the play of these experiments worked their way into his compositions: the pink at the centre of his Tingarri squares in *Untitled – Tjipparitjarra*, and the wobble of golden space between them, a new quirk of composition and colour that gave his Papunya Tula paintings a different kind of music.

John Carty



NAATA NUNGURRAYI
c. 1932 – 2021
Pintupi language

Untitled – Marrapinti 2003
synthetic polymer paint on linen
107 × 122 cm (42.1 × 48 inches)

PROVENANCE

The Artist, painted at Kintore, Northern Territory
Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs,
Northern Territory, NN0310064
Private collection, Alice Springs, Northern Territory,
acquired from the above in 2004

Untitled – Marrapinti holds deep personal significance within Naata Nungurrayi's practice. Born around 1932 in the Gibson Desert at the rockhole site of Kumil, Naata spent her early years with family crossing the vast sandhill country of the Western Desert before they settled in Papunya in 1964. There, she witnessed the emergence of the Western Desert art movement, though it would be many years before she picked up a brush herself.

When Naata began painting for Papunya Tula Artists in June 1996, Marrapinti – a vital site in the ancestral Kana Puta women's ceremonial life – where women and girls gathered to have their septums pierced – became one of her earliest and most enduring motifs. She swiftly established herself as one of the most instinctive artists of her generation, her style characterised by a delicate balance of cultural authority, spontaneity, conviction and whim.

Her idiosyncratic style is evident in this 2003 work. The looseness of the brushwork and the open, drifting quality of the dotting reflect a painter working from an inner register – mark-making that varies with mood and circumstance rather than following a fixed compositional logic. Throughout her career, Naata's depictions of the same subject often varied greatly in execution and emotional tone, each one reflecting her internal state as much as her external environment. This work captures that essence with particular honesty – a landscape rendered as a reflection of a state of mind as much as it is a map of Country.

Vanessa Merlino



GEORGE WARD TJUNGURRAYI
c. 1945 – 2023
Pintupi language

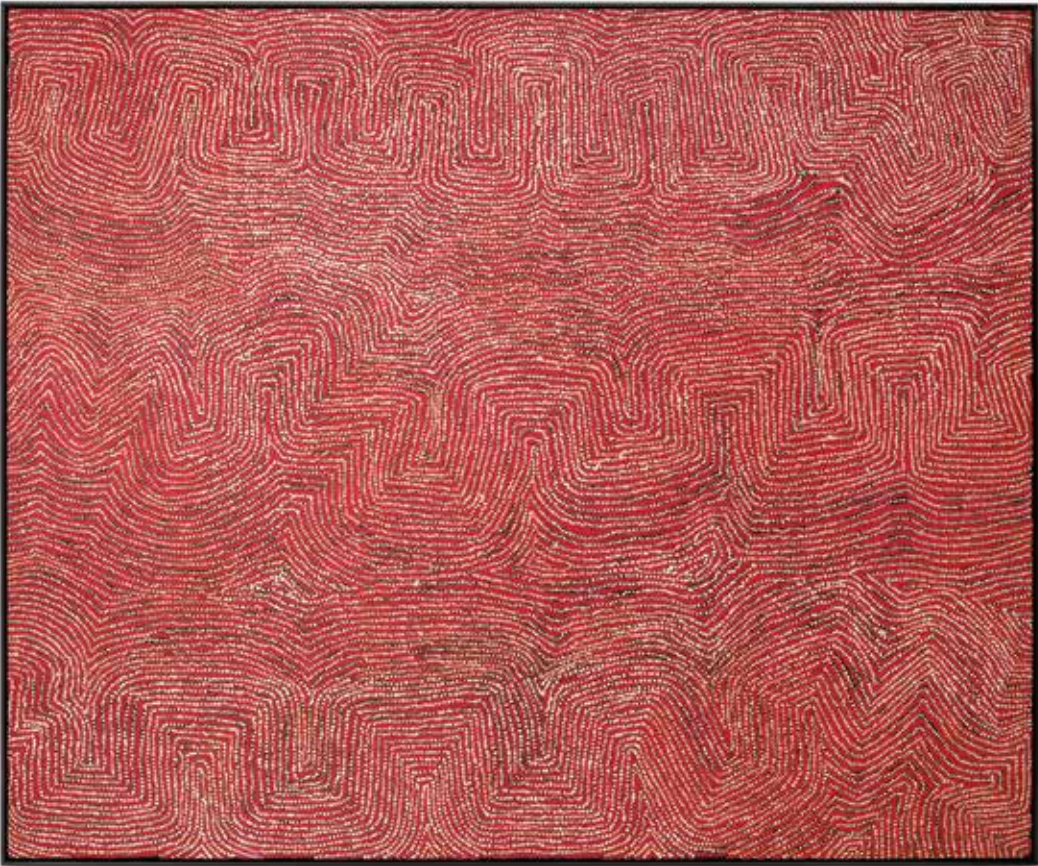
Untitled – Kaakurutintjinya
(Lake Macdonald) 2003
synthetic polymer paint on linen
153 × 183 cm (60.2 × 72 inches)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, painted at Kintore, Northern Territory
Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs,
Northern Territory, cat. no. GW0311217
Private collection, Adelaide, South Australia
Private collection, California, United States of America,
acquired from the above in 2007

This painting depicts designs associated with Kaakurutintjinya (Lake Macdonald). In ancestral times, a large group of Tingarri Men travelled to this site from Kulkuta, south-west of the Tjukurla community in Western Australia. The Kuningka (Western Quoll, or *Dasyurus geoffroyi*) Dreaming also travelled this same route.

George was born in c.1945 near the site of Lararra, east of where the Tjukurla community now stands. His first contact with Europeans was made when a Government Welfare patrol led by Jeremy Long and Nosepeg Tjupurrula encountered George and his family at a rockhole south of Kiwirrkurra. After travelling to Papunya, George eventually began work as a fencer, and later as a butcher in the Papunya kitchen. George’s father was also the father of two other famous Papunya Tula painters, Yala Yala Gibbs Tjungurrayi and Willy Tjungurrayi.

Luke Scholes



NAATA NUNGURRAYI
c. 1932 – 2021
Pintupi language

Untitled – Marrapinti 2004
synthetic polymer paint on linen
153 × 122 cm (60.2 × 48 inches)

PROVENANCE

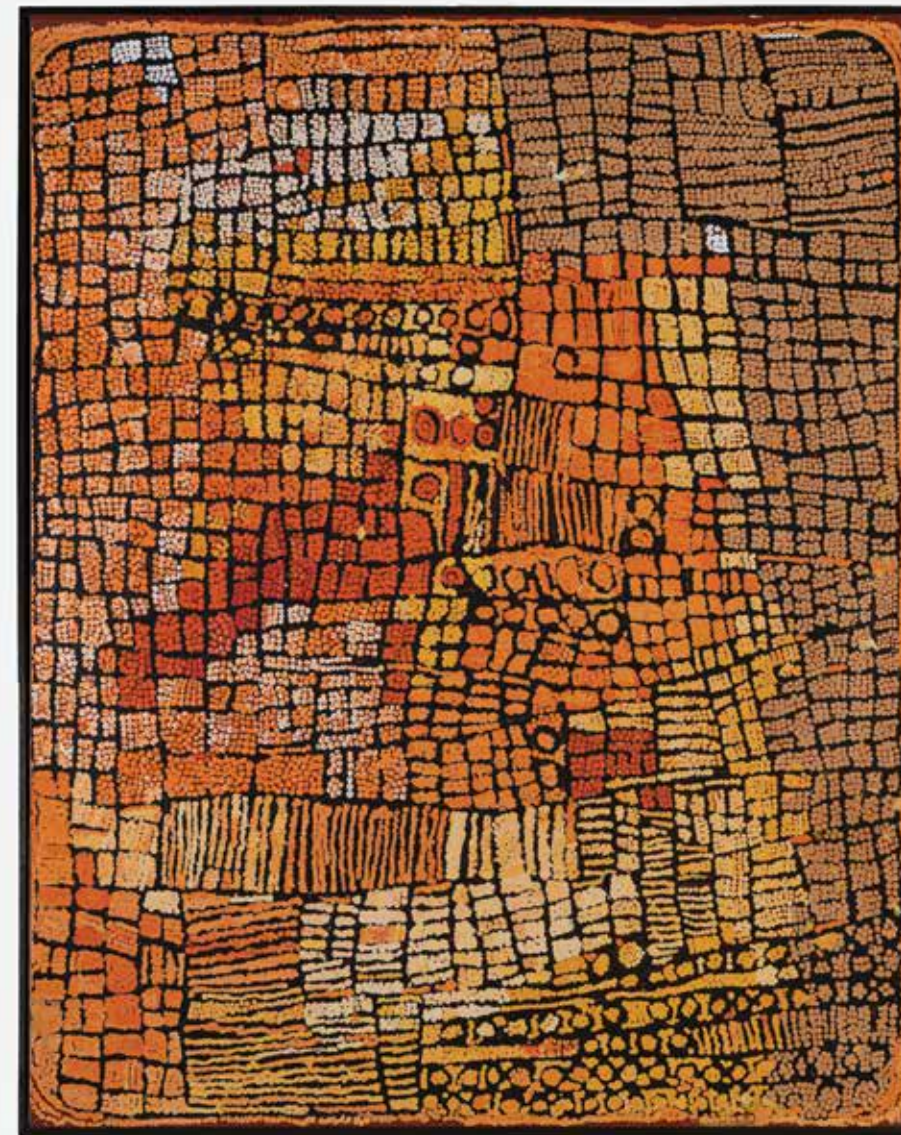
The Artist, painted at Kintore, Northern Territory
Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs,
Northern Territory, cat. no. NN0402074
Private collection, acquired from the above

The grid that Naata Nungurrayi creates to structure paintings like *Untitled – Marrapinti* is a key contribution to the evolution of Papunya Tula painting. While the first generation of male painters organised the picture plane with dispersed dot fields and circle-and-line compositions based on Tingarri stories, Naata rearranged that surface into a sectional, compartmentalised system – clusters of dots bordered by black lines that both divide and connect. The outcome is neither a grid as a modernist device nor a map as a Western convention, but a culturally based system for expressing place, movement and relational space within Pintupi knowledge traditions.

When Naata began painting at Kintore in 1996, she became part of a movement that had been shaped by male painters for nearly two decades. She drew on those structural precedents while asserting the distinct ceremonial authority of women – depicting the Kanaputa women's Dreaming routes that pass through sites like Marrapinti, Wirrulnga and Yunala. Marrapinti, a key ceremonial site where ancestral narrative and personal memories converge, was among her most enduring subjects.

In this work, the compartmentalised surface acts as topographic testimony: Country presented as relational knowledge, with each bounded field symbolising a place connected to the next.

Vanessa Merlino



FRED WARD TJUNGURRAYI
born c. 1950
Pintupi language

Milmilpa 2006
synthetic polymer paint on linen
152 × 102 cm (59.8 × 40 inches)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, painted at Patjarr, Western Australia
Kayili Artists, Patjarr, Western Australia,
cat. no. 06-177
Private collection, Darwin, Northern Territory,
acquired from the above

Fred Ward was a Pintupi man whose career intersects with different art histories in space and time. He first painted for Papunya Tula Artists in the mid 1980s while living at the Pintupi homeland of Kiwirrkurra. His work is iconic in this tradition, with his painting *Tingari Men's Travels at Kiwirrkurra* gracing the cover of *Papunya Tula: Genesis and Genius*, a major survey of the art movement held at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 2000.

His painting shifted gears after this moment, as Ward moved to Warburton in Ngaanyatjarra Country, where he came to paint alongside Kurltjunyintja Jackie Giles at Patjarr. Both men explored the sacred edge of what could be painted publicly in this part of the desert at that time.

Milmilpa 2006 is from a series of paintings by Ward that document the travels of ancestors from the coastal areas far to the north-west in the Pilbara and Kimberley where pearl shell is harvested and pendants are made. The pendants, traded over vast distances, are prized in desert culture for their associations with rainmaking. Some pearl shells come to feature incised maze or interlocking key designs. But where these designs have been historically carved into pearl shell, the canvas presents a different materiality. Rather than being incised into a white surface and filled with red ochre, here Ward lays down the red line on black and builds up the surface in dotting around it. The designs on *Milmilpa* are like acrylic engravings. The canvas – a far larger surface than a pearl shell – encourages the design elements to meander and expand into innovative forms: a new kind of painting that sits now at the intersection of multiple global art histories.

John Carty



JOSEPH JURRA TJAPALTJARRI
c. 1952 – 2022
Pintupi language

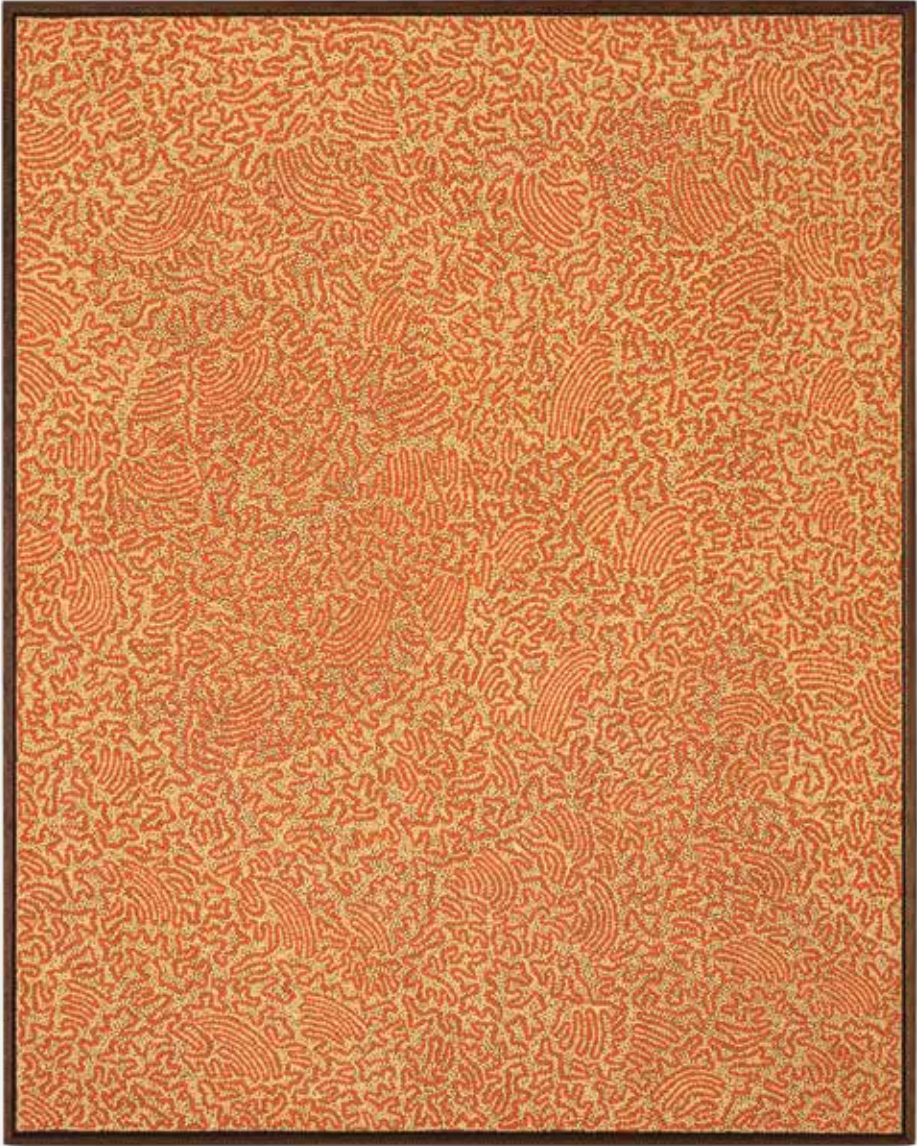
Untitled – Ngarrtjapiritjinn 2007
synthetic polymer paint on linen
152 × 122 cm (59.8 × 48 inches)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, painted at Kiwirrkurra, Northern Territory
Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs,
Northern Territory, cat. no. JJ0708061
Private collection, United States of America,
acquired from the above

This painting depicts designs associated with the soakage water site of Ngarrtjapiritjinn, south of the Kiwirrkurra community in Western Australia. In ancestral times, a large group of Tingarri men camped at this site collecting bark from ngalyipi (sandhill rattlepod shrub, *Crotalaria cunninghamii*). Thin strips of bark are used to create sandals, which were used to protect the feet when walking over hot sand, prickles or rocky country. The lines in this work represent the curly strands of bark that is used. After their departure from Ngarrtjapiritjinn, the Tingarri Men travelled north-east to Tarkul, and then on to Wilkinkarra (Lake Mackay). Since events associated with the Tingarri cycle are of a secret nature, no further detail was given.

Joseph Jurra Tjapaltjarri was born in the bush in 1952, not far from where the Kiwirrkurra community now stands. In the early 1980s, he began assisting one of his classificatory fathers, Charlie Tarawa Tjungurrayi, with his paintings. Within two years of becoming an artist in his own right, in 1988, Joseph was invited to present a solo exhibition at Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi in Melbourne, the same year he was invited to exhibit at the John Weber Gallery, New York. In the late 1990s, Joseph made a significant departure in his work, shifting from his austere geometric compositions and beginning to illustrate various plant materials including ngalyipi.

Luke Scholes



GEORGE TJUNGURRAYI
born c. 1943
Pintupi language

RIGHT: *Untitled – Tingarri* 2009
synthetic polymer paint on linen
87 × 28 cm (34.2 × 11 inches)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, painted at Kiwirrkurra, Northern Territory
Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs,
Northern Territory, cat. no. GT0911022
Private collection, Melbourne, Victoria,
acquired from the above

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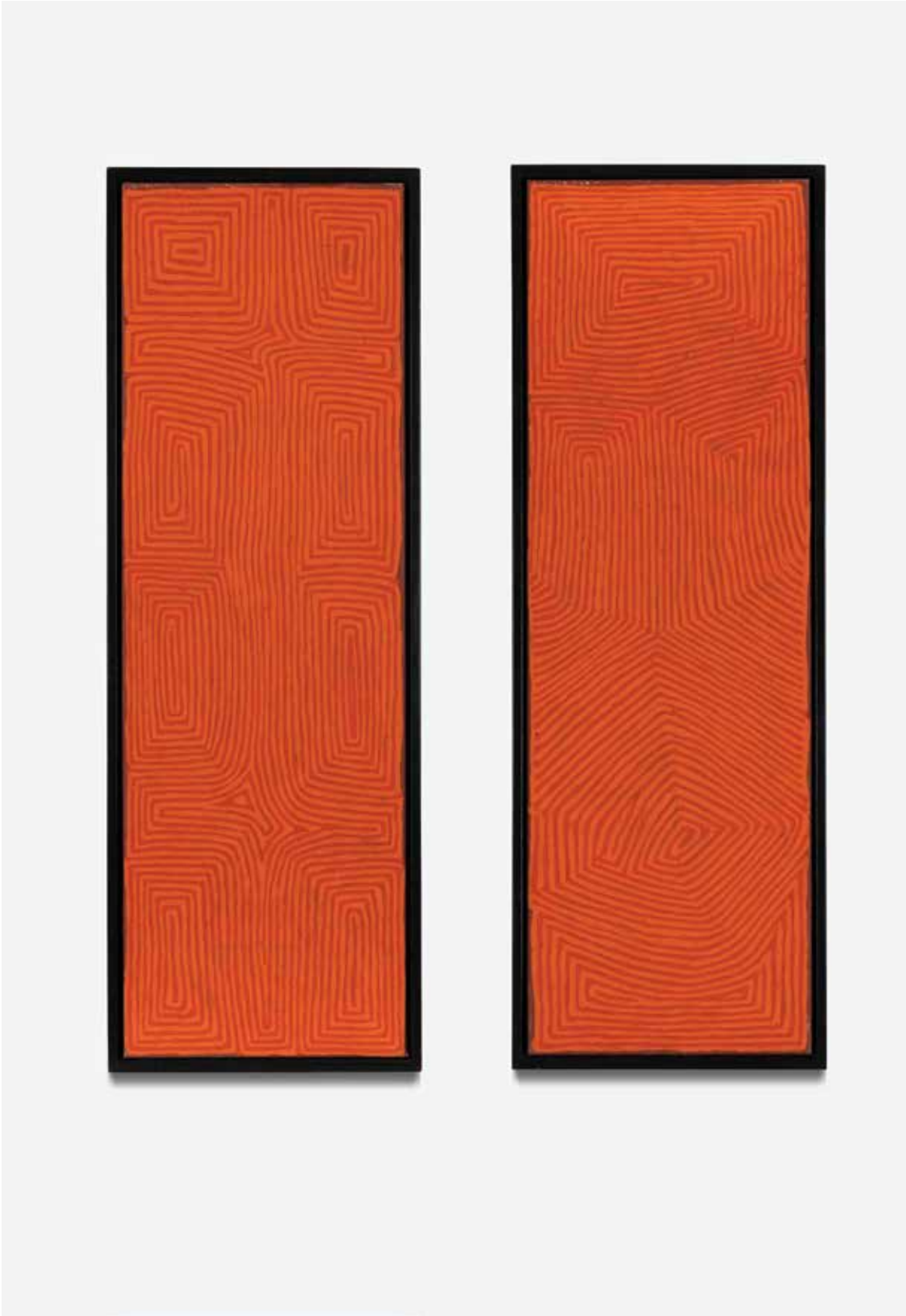
LEFT: *Untitled – Tingarri* 2009
synthetic polymer paint on linen
87 × 28 cm (34.2 × 11 inches)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, painted at Kiwirrkurra, Northern Territory
Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs,
Northern Territory, cat. no. GT0911023
Private collection, Melbourne, Victoria,
acquired from the above

Born near the ancient cultural site of Walawala, near the remote desert community of Kiwirrkurra in Western Australia, George Tjungurrayi commenced painting in the late 1970s under the mentorship of founding Western Desert artists including Uta Uta Tjangala and Mick Namarari Tjapaltjarri. He emerged as an innovative member of their company, Papunya Tula Artists. This period of desert painting revolutionised Australian art and brought international recognition to Australian First Nations artists.

Since then, Tjungurrayi has remained at the forefront of a global Indigenous art movement that challenges entrenched models of modern and contemporary art. In the late 1990s, Tjungurrayi abandoned the traditional technique of dotted grids, circles and lines, and developed a highly distinctive linear process akin to the carved parallel incisions in ceremonial woodcarving. Mesmeric, interlocking lines and vibrant tonal colours characterise Tjungurrayi’s singular practice. These optically mesmerising linear compositions, inspired by sacred ceremonial designs, are vital contributions to the intensifying transcultural conversations in global contemporary art.

Luke Scholes



PADDY BEDFORD
c. 1922 – 2007
Gija language

TOP: *Untitled* 2005
gouache on acid-free crescent board
51 x 76 cm (20 x 30 inches)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, painted in the Kimberley Region,
Western Australia
Jirrawun Arts, Western Australia,
cat. no. PB WB 8.2005.246
Paddy Bedford Trust
The Estate of Paddy Bedford

EXHIBITED
Paddy Bedford: Gouache, D’Lan Contemporary,
Melbourne, Victoria, 17 August – 20 September 2024

LITERATURE
Linda Michael (ed.), *Paddy Bedford, Museum of Contemporary Art*, Sydney, 2006, p. 180 (illus.)
Vanessa Merlino (ed.), *Paddy Bedford: Gouache*,
The Estate of Paddy Bedford and D’Lan Contemporary,
Melbourne, 2024, p. 57 (illus.)

—

BOTTOM: *Untitled* 2005
gouache on acid-free crescent board
50.8 × 76.2 cm (20 × 30 inches)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, painted at Kununurra, Western Australia
Jirrawun Arts, Western Australia,
cat. no. PB WB 8 2005.252
Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection,
Miami Beach, Florida, Untied States of America

LITERATURE
Linda Michael (ed.), *Paddy Bedford, Museum of Contemporary Art*, Sydney, 2006, p. 181 (illus.)
Henry F. Skeritt (ed.) et al., *No Boundaries: Australian Aboriginal Contemporary Abstract Painting*, Prestel Verlag,
Munich-London-New York, 2014, p. 41 (illus.)

EXHIBITED
No Boundaries: Aboriginal Australian Contemporary Abstract Painting from the Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection, Nevada Museum of Art, Reno, 14 February – 13 May 2015;
Portland Institute for Contemporary Art, Portland, 20 June – 16 August 2015; Pérez Art Museum, Miami, 17 September 2015 – 3 January 2016; Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Detroit, 18 January to 15 May 2016; Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University, New York, 9 June – 14 August 2016

Paddy Bedford’s gouache practice acts as a lively and important contrast to the gravity of his larger canvases. Where his celebrated paintings on linen explore the depth of ancestral stories and colonial history, the gouaches sing with a unique freedom.

Introduced to the medium in 1998 during a key visit to Melbourne studios, Bedford found gouache’s water-soluble, chalky opacity to render a quality untethered to Country, unlike his earth pigments. This sense of separation gave his works on paper an immediacy and spontaneity that became their defining characteristics.

Bedford, working mainly on uniform sheets of acid-free Crescent board, developed an improvisational style similar to jazz – multiple gouaches in progress simultaneously, each revisited as it dried, each resolved through instinct rather than strict rules. The noticeable absence of the dot, which is so crucial to his canvas work, is intentional: the lines alone were enough to convey the intensity of each image. The compositions move smoothly between convex and concave forms, embracing accidents and chance as integral parts of their logic. A misplaced line might reveal a new dimension; a spilled mark becomes an expanded field of colour.

The two *Untitled* works from 2005 are part of Bedford’s most lively period of gouache creation, a time when painting on canvas, board and paper became an interconnected practice where each supported and influenced the other. By then, the gouaches no longer needed a title, not to suggest a lack of meaning, but as a reflection on bodily memory and shapes already formed that he now revisited freely. They stand as some of the most radiant expressions of Bedford’s artistic freedom, and the love and generosity of spirit that those who knew him often mention.

Vanessa Merlino



18,000 AUD 12,600 USD
18,000 AUD 12,600 USD

OWEN YALANDJA
born 1961
Kuninjku language

Untitled – Yawkyawk 2009
earth pigments on wood
178 × 14 cm (70 × 5.5 inches)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, created at Maningrida, Northern Territory
Maningrida Arts & Culture, Maningrida,
Northern Territory
Short St Gallery, Broome, Western Australia
Private collection, Melbourne, Victoria,
acquired from the above

SAMSON BONSON
born 1968
Kuninjku language

Mimi Spirit 2009
earth pigments on wood
171 × 13 cm (67.3 × 5.1 inches)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, created at Maningrida, Northern Territory
Maningrida Arts & Culture, Maningrida,
Northern Territory
Short St Gallery, Broome, Western Australia
Private collection, Melbourne, Victoria,
acquired from the above

Owen Yalandja and Samson Bonson, artists from Western Arnhem Land in Australia’s Northern Territory, work primarily as sculptors of painted wooden carvings depicting ancestral beings, Yawkyawk and Mimih, that are central to their Kuninjku heritage. Both artists were introduced to carving by Yalandja’s father, Crusoe Kuningbal, a pioneering artist of the 1970s. Carved from northern kurrajong and painted with his distinctive dotted surface, Kuningbal’s tall, slender Mimih figures transformed two-dimensional rock and bark art into dynamic, life-sized sculptures. This innovation marked a ceremonial and artistic breakthrough for the region, and for contemporary Indigenous sculpture in general, that Yalandja and Bonson have continued through their practice.

Owen Yalandja has dedicated his practice to the Yawkyawk – a young female mermaid-like figure found in the freshwater pools and streams of Western Arnhem Land – having inherited custodianship from his father. In *Untitled – Yawkyawk* 2009, Yalandja masterfully emphasises the aquatic nature of the spirit, enhancing the natural curve of the wood to suggest the figure moving effortlessly through water; the repetition of small ‘u’-shaped motifs interspersed with delicate dotting creates the illusion of iridescent scales shimmering in the sunlight.

Samson Bonson is known for his refined interpretation of the Mimih spirit in sculpture. Kuninjku see Mimih as long, thin spirits that pass through cracks in rocky escarpments, symbolising their cultural and environmental uniqueness. Though grounded in materiality, his works appear elusive and diaphanous, the delicate facial expressions and dotted patterns evoking flowing movement.

Recently, Samson Bonson has embraced more abstract Mimih spirit portrayals, winning the Wandjuk Marika Memorial 3D Award at the Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Awards for his piece *Djarrkno nakudji lorrkkon* 2023. Featuring painted hollow logs with the distinctive Mimih ‘skin’ pattern, it is devoid of any recognisable human features, emphasising the ethereal qualities of Mimih seen in his earlier work.

Isabella Wadley

1 Luke Taylor, ‘The manifestations of the mimih,’ in *The Power of Knowledge, the Resonance of Tradition*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2005, p. 183

22,000 AUD 15,400 USD
14,000 AUD 9,800 USD



MIRDIDINGKINGATHI JUWARNDA
SALLY GABORI
c. 1924 – 2015
Kayardild language

Makarrki 2009
synthetic polymer paint on linen
198 × 101 cm (78 × 39.8 inches)

PROVENANCE

The Artist, painted on Mornington Island, Queensland
Mornington Island Arts, Queensland,
cat. no. 7303-L-SG-1011
Raft Artspace, Alice Springs, Northern Territory
Private collection, acquired from the above

EXHIBITED

Sally Gabori, Raft Artspace, Alice Springs,
13 August – 5 September 2009

Makarrki 2009 is part of one of the most intimate and recurring themes in Mirdidingkingathi Juwarnda Sally Gabori's work – the dulkiiwatha, or conception places, of her closest kin on Bentinck Island. Makarrki is the Country of her older brother King Alfred, a significant figure in Kaiadilt history. King Alfred led the Kaiadilt people during Sally Gabori's early years on Bentinck Island, before the entire community was forcibly moved to the Presbyterian mission on Mornington Island in 1947. His Country, situated beside a large river on the island, is depicted here not so much as a map but as a heartfelt act of remembrance.

Painted in 2009 during the mature phase of Gabori's unprecedented late-life practice, *Makarrki* exemplifies her ability to hold landscape and kinship within a single gestural field. Her compositions are more evocation than documentation – what Wierdi/Birri Gubba scholar and curator Bruce Johnson McLean, co-editor of the landmark Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain monograph and co-curator of the 2022 Paris retrospective, has described as a representation of song rather than an attempt to map a site with fidelity. The vertical format of the linen support, at 198 × 101 cm (78 × 39.8 inches), invites the eye to move over the work as one might traverse a tidal landscape, colour fields dissolving and reforming across the picture plane. For Gabori, who began painting at eighty-one years of age having had no prior exposure to a graphic tradition, each work constitutes an act of cultural restitution, a reclamation of Country, language and love.

Vanessa Merlino



MIRDIDINGKINGATHI JUWARND
SALLY GABORI
c. 1924 – 2015
Kayardild language

Dibirdibi Country 2012
synthetic polymer paint on linen
101 × 198 cm (39.8 × 78 inches)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, painted at Mornington Island, Queensland
Mornington Island Arts, Queensland,
cat. no. 8020-L-SG-1112
Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne, Victoria
Private collection, New South Wales
D'lan Contemporary, Melbourne, Victoria
Private collection, Victoria,
acquired from the above in 2020

LITERATURE
Djon Mundine, *Gabori: the Corrigan Collection of
paintings by Sally Gabori*, Macmillan Art Publishing,
Melbourne, Australia, 2015, cover, pp. 198–199 (illus.)

Rising from its ink-like depths, luminous sweeps
of crimson and white punctuate a darkened field,
giving form and dimension to the contours of
Dibirdibi Country. Applied with urgency and physical
confidence, these marks rise vertically across the
horizontal linen, pooling and dragging at their edges,
but also extend outward toward the viewer. The
central strip of vermillion alludes to the first ray of the
morning sun striking the highest point of the sleeping
land. Measuring 101 × 198 cm (39.8 × 78 inches), the
painting requires peripheral vision and, in turn,
evokes an undeniable landscape. There is no horizon,
no sense of recession, yet the composition offers a
direct, bodily encounter with place.

Dibirdibi Country belongs to Gabori's late
husband, Kabarrarjingathi Boltoko Par Gabori, and
is the site of the ancestral being Dibirdibi, the Rock
Cod, who, according to Kaiadilt tradition, shaped
the South Wellesley Islands, including the largest,
Bentinck Island, by digging the earth with his ventral
fins. Gabori held the songs, stories and responsibilities
of this place alongside her husband throughout their
life on Bentinck Island. Created in 2012, seven years
after she first picked up a brush at Mornington Island
Art Centre, this work reflects the development of
a mature and increasingly refined visual language.
While earlier *Dibirdibi Country* paintings used six or
more clashing hues to depict the rock-walled fish traps
and tidal channels of the gulf, this work focuses its
energy upon three main colours, demonstrating the
restraint of an artist fully in control of her means.

Gabori described the salt pans of Bentinck
Island as the focus of this work, and in reducing
her palette, she did not sacrifice any of her power.
Dibirdibi Country 2012 ranks among the defining works
of her later practice, proof that Gabori's painting was
never abstract in the Western sense, but something
intimate and intentional: a mapping of deep
knowledge, loss and belonging expressed in paint.

Vanessa Merlino



ANGELINA PWERLE
born 1947
Anmatyerr language

Bush Plum 2022
synthetic polymer paint on linen
150 × 120 cm (59 × 47.2 inches)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, painted at Camel Camp, Utopia,
Northern Territory
Artlore (Marc Gooch), Northern Territory,
cat. no. 1-822
Niagara Galleries, Melbourne, Victoria
Tim Klingender Fine Art, Sydney, New South Wales
Private collection, Sydney, New South Wales,
acquired from the above
Private collection, Melbourne, Victoria,
acquired from the above

EXHIBITED
Angelina Pwerle: New Paintings, Niagara Galleries,
Melbourne, Victoria, March 2023
Sydney Contemporary, presented by Tim Klingender
Fine Art, Sydney, New South Wales, September 2023

Angelina Pwerle is a senior Anmatyerr artist from the region known as Utopia, in the Northern Territory, north-east of Alice Springs. Her practice emerged through the Utopia Women’s Batik Group in the 1980s before evolving into her signature acrylic works.¹

Pwerle’s paintings often depict an envisioned topography of her ancestral Country, Ahalper, and women’s Dreamings, particularly that of Arnwekety (bush plum). In tending to this Dreaming, Pwerle’s works serve as a contemplative expression of her connection to Country, her deep ancestral knowledge of and custodial responsibility for the Bush Plum Dreaming story.

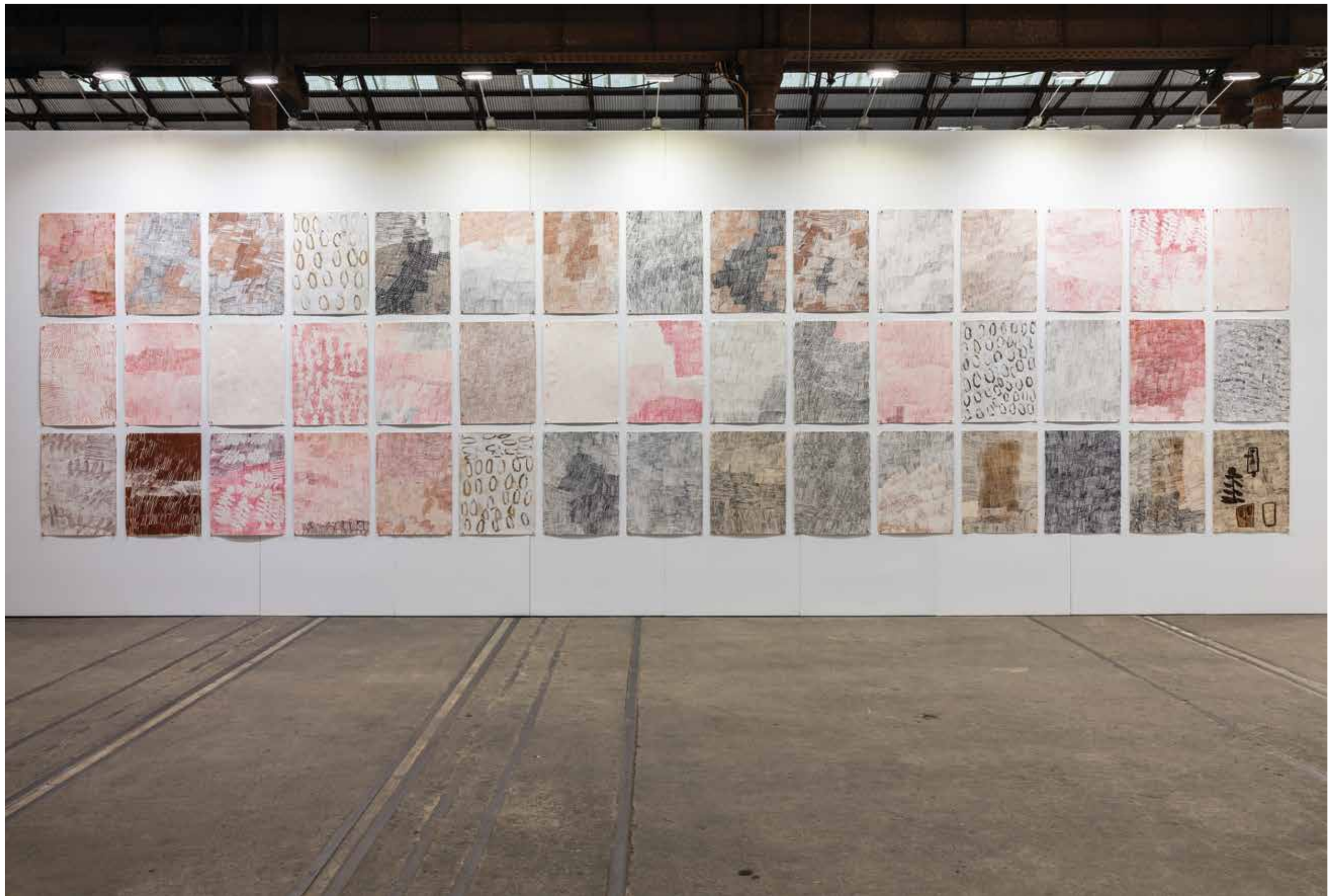
In this work, Pwerle employs her signature stippling technique to depict Arnwekety. Her process is meticulous and mindful. Built through the intricate layering of fine dotting, she presents the bush plum during its seasonal changes, where varying dot size and colour indicate stages of ripeness: from seed to blossom, ripe fruit and later decay. These delicate accumulations form a mesmeric field on which fluctuations of depth and hue are rendered with such precision that the canvas appears luminous.

Angelina Pwerle’s *Bush Plum Dreaming* is alive. It pulses with cultural and ceremonial significance while reflecting on both physical and spiritual sustenance.

Nina Schoff

1 Chrischona Schmidt, ‘Angelina Pwerle: an artist from Utopia’, *Art Monthly Australasia*, Canberra, 2016, pp. 34–39.





NYAPANYAPA YUNUPIŊU
 c. 1945 – 2021
 Gumatj language

Djorra 2014–15
 felt-tip pen and earth pigments on
 discarded paper
 76.2 × 55.9 cm (30 × 22 inches) (× 45 sheets)

PROVENANCE
 The Artist, created at Yirrkala, Northern Territory
 Buku-Larrŋgay Mulka Centre, Yirrkala, Northern
 Territory, cat. no. 4626T
 Private collection, Miami Beach, Florida,
 United States of America
 acquired from the above in 2014

LITERATURE
 Henry F. Skerritt (ed.), *Marking the Infinite: Contemporary
 Women Artists from Aboriginal Australia*, Nevada Museum
 of Art, Reno, and DelMonico Books-Prestel, Munich-
 London-New York, 2019, pp. 167–170 (illus.)
 Luke Scholes (ed.), *The Moment Eternal: Nyapanyapa
 Yunupinju*, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern
 Territory, Darwin, 2020, pp. 73–74 (illus.)

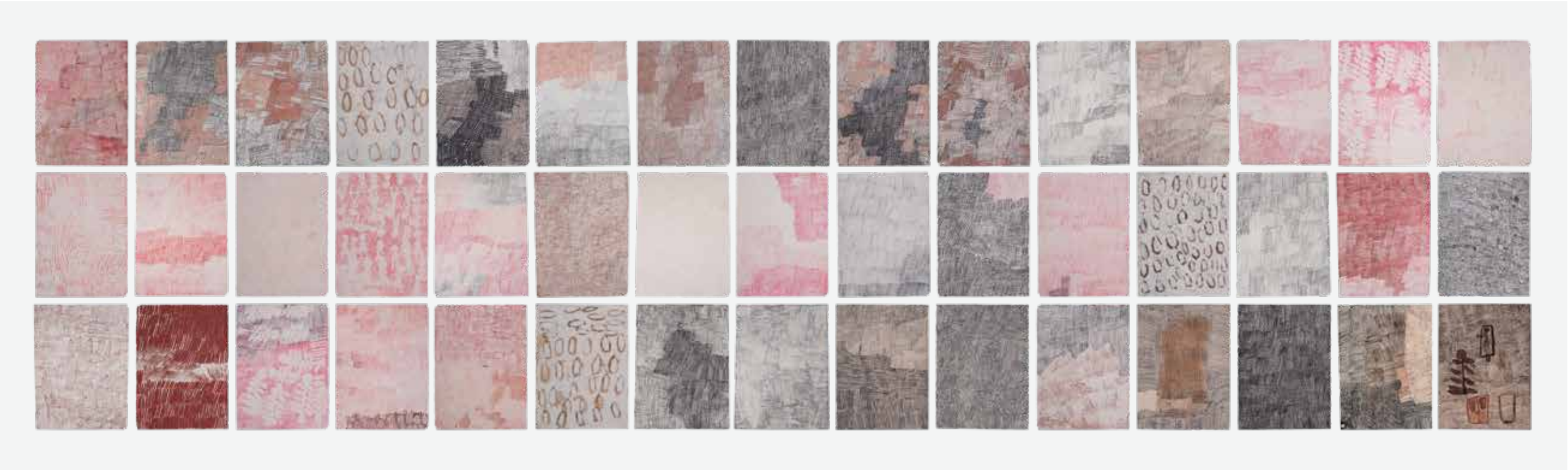
EXHIBITED
*Marking the Infinite: Contemporary Women Artists from Aboriginal
 Australia*, Newcomb Art Museum, Tulane University,
 New Orleans, 7 September 2016 –
 1 January 2017; Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum,
 Florida International University, Miami, 28 January –
 7 May 2017; Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art,
 Scottsdale, Arizona, 23 September 2017 –
 21 January 2018; Nevada Museum of Art, Reno,
 17 February – 13 May 2018; The Phillips Collection, Washington,
 DC, 2 June – 9 September 2018; Museum of Anthropology,
 The University of British Colombia, Vancouver, 1 November 2018
 – 24 February 2019
The Moment Eternal: Nyapanyapa Yunupinju, Museum and Art
 Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin, 23 May –
 25 October 2020

Nyapanyapa Yunupinju (c. 1945–2021) was a Gumatj
 artist from Yirrkala, in North-East Arnhem Land.
 Her artistic practice began in 1996 when she was
 among the very first artists to make a print at the
 Yirrkala Print Space. Her interactions with the centre
 intensified over time, and her persistent presence
 eventually led to her being provided with small barks
 on which she painted unique representations of
 animals and personal accounts of her own history.
 It was partly through observing her sister, the
 celebrated bark painter Gulumbu Yunupinju, that
 Nyapanyapa became interested in the medium.
Djorra arose from a moment of constraint.
 Due to a shortage of available bark during the summer
 of 2010–2011, Yunupinju turned to creating a series
 of works using felt tip pen and earth pigments on
 discarded print proofs from the Yirrkala Print Space.
 The resulting set – forty-five individual sheets –
 demonstrates her longstanding instinct for decorating
 found surfaces. Before taking up painting, she made
 objects from shells and stones to sell through the
 Buku-Larrŋgay Mulka Centre. Yolŋu artists usually
 only work with materials gathered from Country,
 but in the past decade, Elders have allowed the use
 of materials discarded on their land – a cultural shift
 that Yunupinju embraced with her characteristic
 originality. The sheets of *Djorra* show a combination

of figuration and mark-making: cross-hatched grids
 in pink and grey, floating ovoid forms, schematic
 plants and domestic objects painted against densely
 worked backgrounds. Throughout the suite, her hand
 is clearly evident – restless, confident and wholly
 unconcerned by the line between the deliberate and
 the spontaneous.
 Yunupinju’s painting style developed with
 remarkable speed and fluidity as her career progressed,
 constantly challenging the conventions of Yolŋu art.
Djorra was featured in the landmark touring exhibition
*Marking the Infinite: Contemporary Women Artists from
 Aboriginal Australia*, which travelled to six institutions
 across the United States and Canada from 2016 to 2019,
 and is illustrated in the accompanying publication
 edited by Henry F. Skerritt.¹ The work was also
 included in *The Moment Eternal: Nyapanyapa Yunupinju*,
 the comprehensive retrospective held at the Museum
 and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT),
 Darwin, in 2020 – the first solo exhibition at MAGNT
 to feature an Australian First Nations artist. It was
 illustrated in the accompanying catalogue.

Luke Scholes

1 Published by Nevada Museum of Art /
 DelMonico Books-Prestel in 2019.



NONGIRRŊA MARAWILI
c. 1938 – 2023
Maḍarrpa language

Baratjula 2015
earth pigments and synthetic binder
on composition board
LEFT: 204 × 122 cm (80.3 × 48 inches)
RIGHT: 199 × 122 cm (78.3 × 48 inches)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, painted at Yirrkala, Northern Territory
Buku-Larrŋgay Mulka Centre, Yirrkala,
Northern Territory, cat. no. 4928P & 4932D
Private collection, Queensland,
acquired from the above

Over the past decade, few Australian artists have captured the zeitgeist more than Nongirrŋa Marawili. Following a series of successful solo exhibitions, and the acquisition of major works by cultural institutions across Australia and the world, Nongirrŋa’s brutalist interpretations of Yolŋu visual forms have become highly sought after.

Prior to her passing in 2023, Nongirrŋa was part of a group of women painting at Yirrkala who collectively shifted the Yolŋu aesthetic. She, like other women, refrained from painting miny’tji (clan designs), knowing that others might consider this to be a transgression upon the domain of male relatives. Instead Nongirrŋa employed the duality of these designs and their meanings to create paintings unencumbered by cultural strictures.

Nongirrŋa’s father, Mundukul Marawili (c.1890–c.1950), was a famed leader of the Maḍarrpa clan, with wives of the Marrakulu, Dhuḍi-Djapu’ and Gälpu clans. Mundukul is the name of an ancestral Lightning Snake who resides in the waters of Blue Mud Bay at Baratjula. Baratjula is a Maḍarrpa site located in a flood-plain region where salt water and fresh water mix. When the Lightning Snake, Mundukul, tasted the mixing of the waters, it excitedly spat lightning into the clouds. Historically, this lightning has appeared in the form of diamond shapes, which is also the Maḍarrpa clan design for salt water. In *Baratjula* 2015, Nongirrŋa has painted the rocks in the bay of Baratjula in the form of bathi (dillybags). Nongirrŋa insisted, however, that the cascading diamond shapes in this painting represents salt water in its mundane form as it splashes against these rocks and causes sea spray to rise dramatically into the air.

Luke Scholes



WUKUN WANAMBI
1961 – 2022
Yolŋu language

Destiny 2017
earth pigments and synthetic
fixative on bark
116 × 46 cm (45.7 × 18.1 inches)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, painted at Yirrkala, Northern Territory
Buku-Larrŋgay Mulka Centre, Yirrkala, Northern
Territory, cat. no. 4653E
Everywhen Art, Shoreham, Victoria
Private collection, United States of America,
acquired from the above

EXHIBITED
Summer Collector's Show, Everywhen Art, Shoreham,
Victoria, 27 December 2020 – 23 February 2021

Bamurrungu is a sacred rock that rises at the mouth of the Gurka'wuy River within Trial Bay, above Blue Mud Bay in north-east Arnhem Land. At this meeting place of waters, the river flows past the rock before colliding with the incoming tides of the open sea, their currents converging in restless movement.¹

In this bark painting, Wukun Wanambi evokes this Bamurrungu through layers of luminous ochre. Fields of red and yellow underpainting glow beneath a veil of wawurritjpal (sea mullet), delicately rendered in white. The rhythmic movement of the fish forms a living surface across the bark, expressing inherited Saltwater designs belonging to the Marrakulu clan.

In 1997, Wanambi became a contributing artist on the Saltwater Project, which formed a collective of Yolŋu bark painters to create a body of work telling the story of the Yolŋu people of North-East Arnhem Land, together, their paintings formed a comprehensive map and legal claim to Aboriginal sea rights. It was during this time that Wanambi connected with Yangarriny Wunumurra and other djungayi – men responsible for teaching younger generations clan lore and introduce ways of painting their cultural designs. Through these relationships, Wanambi gained the authority to paint Saltwater designs that had not been consistently depicted since the passing of his father, Mithili Wanambi, sixteen years earlier.

Throughout his twenty-five-year career, Wukun's depictions of Bamurrungu and other important sites belonging to the Yolŋu people have been widely celebrated, accoladed and acquired in private and public collections across Australia and abroad. His artistic innovation and dedication to Yolŋu culture remain his legacy through significant commissions and community projects at the Sydney Opera House, Darwin waterfront and Buku-Larrŋgay Art Centre.

Isabella Wadley

1 Buku-Larrŋgay Mulka Centre, 2017



NONGIRRŊA MARAWILI
c. 1938 – 2023
Maḍarrpa language

Baratjala 2019
earth pigments on bark
201 × 84 cm (79.1 × 33 inches)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, painted at Yirrkala, Northern Territory
Buku-Larrŋgay Mulka Centre, Yirrkala,
Northern Territory, cat. no. 1949-19
Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne, Victoria
Private collection, Switzerland,
acquired from the above

LITERATURE
Nongirrŋa Marawili: Pink Lightning,
Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne, 2019 (illus.)

EXHIBITED
Nongirrŋa Marawili: Pink Lightning, Alcaston Gallery,
Melbourne, Victoria, 20 November – 20 December 2019
22nd Biennale of Sydney, Museum of Contemporary Art,
Sydney, New South Wales, 2020

Nongirrŋa Marawili was a senior Yolŋu artist with connections to the Djapu and Gälpu clans of North-East Arnhem Land and was celebrated for her courageous approach to form, medium and storytelling. Her father, Mundukul, the Maḍarrpa warrior (c.1890–c.1950), and a famed Yolŋu leader, was among the first generation of artists from the region to share bark painting with anthropologists and institutional collections. Marawili began painting in the 1990s, initially assisting her husband, Djutjadjutja Munungurr – a Djapu statesman and renowned bark painter – by infilling his miny’tji (designs) with meticulous diamond cross-hatching. Later in her career, Marawili began painting the story of Baratjala, a bay off the Gulf of Carpentaria belonging to her Maḍarrpa clan. These works draw from childhood memories of camping there with her father, whose name means ‘Lightning Snake’ – the same name as the Water Python Burrut’tji, which lives deep within the sea at this place. The designs show rock submerged in cyclonic, crocodile-infested water, wedged between the lightning – an electric curse that the serpent spits into the sky – and the spray of the sea trying to shift the immovable Maḍarrpa rock foundation. Yurr’yunna is the word used to describe the rough waves overtopping the rock and the spray flying into the sky, while guykthun, the serpent’s spitting of lightning, carries the extended meaning ‘to make something sacred or taboo through saying magic words’.¹

Isabella Wadley

Baratjala 2019 was included in NIRIN, the 22nd Biennale of Sydney, in 2020, alongside a curated selection of Marawili’s descriptive depictions of this part of Cape Shield.

1 Drawn from the Buku-Larrŋgay Mulka Centre documentation.



DJAMBAWA MARAWILI AM
born 1953
Madarrpa language

Bäru at Yathikpa 2025
earth pigments and synthetic binder
on hollow log
269 × 22 cm (105.9 × 8.7 inches)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, painted at Yirrkala, Northern Territory
Buku-Larrngay Mulka Centre, Yirrkala,
Northern Territory, cat. no. 6151-25

In *Bäru at Yathikpa* 2025, the strings of diamonds depict the *miny'tji* (sacred design) of Yathikpa. Here Bäru, the ancestral crocodile, carrying the ancestral fire, entered the salt waters, which are still imbued with his presence and the sacred power of fire. Later, from the same beach, a group of ancestral hunters took their harpoons and canoe out to the sea of Yathikpa. The hunters were lured too close to a dangerous rock by dugong. Fire at this sacred site boiled the water, capsizing the canoe. This occurrence is sometimes referred to as an ancestral tide. Yolŋu often speculate that this story is connected to an oral tradition about an ancient tsunami which initiates death and is the foundation of mortuary ceremonies that continue throughout the region.

Djambawa Marawili is a distinguished leader of the Madarrpa clan. He is a caretaker for the spiritual wellbeing of his own and other related clans, and an activist and administrator in the interface between ŋäpaki (non-Yolŋu) people and the Yolŋu people of North-East Arnhem Land.

Luke Scholes



HARRY TJUTJUNA
c. 1930 – 2019
Pitjantjatjara language

Mututa Tjukurpa 2010
synthetic polymer paint on linen
183 × 153 cm (72 × 60.2 inches)

PROVENANCE

The Artist, painted at Kalka, South Australia
Ninuku Arts, South Australia, cat. no. 10346
Yaama Ganu, Moree, New South Wales
Private collection, United Kingdom,
acquired from the above

EXHIBITED

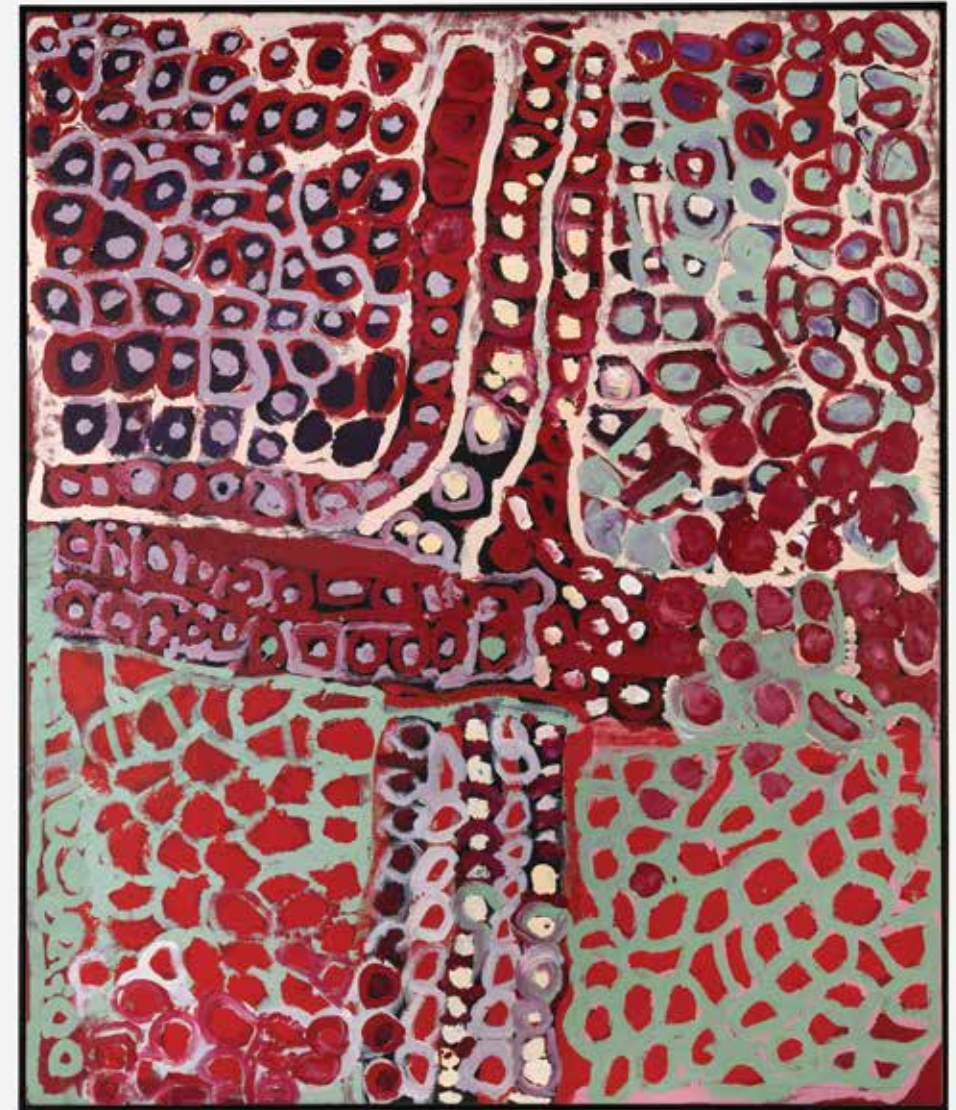
The Stockman and the Spiderman, Yaama Ganu,
New South Wales

Harry Tjutjuna was one of the most important Pitjantjatjara artists of his generation and a senior ngangkari – traditional healer and lawman – whose Country is centred on Pipalyatjara in the far north-west of South Australia. *Mututa Tjukurpa* 2010 unfolds in deep reds and earthy greens, with a composition teeming with rounded forms – witchetty grubs, ant figures, and tracks – pressing against one another in a dense pattern of action and consequence. The painting feels urgent, like a landscape that has been disturbed.

The Tjukurpa recorded by Ninuku Arts tells of the ancestral Bilby Woman and her family, who consumed maku – witchetty grubs – with such greed that only the smallest, immature ones remained. As a result, the many varieties of grub – found on the plants tjilka-tjilka, punti, ngarkalya and kanturangu – were depleted. When the Wati Mututa – Ant Men, discovered what had been taken, they responded with force: marshalling together and pursuing the Bilby family – husband, wife and children – driving them off and spearing them. It is a story about custodianship, excess and the swift justice of ancestral law.

Painted at Kalka in 2010, during a period of remarkable creative vitality at Ninuku Arts, *Mututa Tjukurpa* embodies the authority of a senior lawman and ngangkari who viewed these stories as living obligations. Tjutjuna was the community's leading artist at the time, and this work stands as a testament to a generation of painters whose cultural authority and artistic distinctiveness enriched the diversity of Australian First Nations art history.

Vanessa Merlino



PEPAI JANGALA CARROLL
c. 1950 – 2021
Pitjantjatjara language

Walungurru 2011
synthetic polymer paint on linen
90 × 150 cm (35.4 × 59 inches)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, painted at Pukatja, South Australia
Ernabella Arts, Pukatja, South Australia, cat. no. 81-11
Short St Gallery, Broome, Western Australia
Private collection, Melbourne, Victoria,
acquired from the above
D'La Contemporary, Melbourne, Victoria
Private collection, Melbourne, Victoria,
acquired from the above in 2022

LITERATURE
Significant 2022, D'La Contemporary,
Melbourne, Victoria, 2022, p. 75 (illus.)

EXHIBITED
Significant, D'La Contemporary, Melbourne,
Victoria, 24 June – 29 July 2022

Walungurru 2011 tells the story of an ancestral Wanampi (Rainbow Serpent) that travelled in the vicinity of Kintore in search of a man who had transgressed Aboriginal cultural law. This unique composition consists of shifting hues of yellow dots, a technique Pepai would use and adapt with a variety of other colours throughout his brief career as an artist.

Having spent time as a young man at Haasts Bluff, Areyonga and then Papunya, Pepai settled at the Ernabella community, where he worked in a variety of jobs before serving a twenty-year career as a constable. When he retired in 2007, Pepai took to painting and then ceramics, quickly establishing himself as a stalwart at Ernabella Arts. As his artistic practice flourished, so too did a desire to revisit the Country he had experienced so fleetingly as a child.

Having been denied an education concerning his ancestral Country due to the circumstances of his early life, Pepai did return to Country late in life to re-establish cultural and familial ties he had not experienced since childhood. He sought to engage with the contemporary custodians of places belonging to his family and establish his rights to paint them. He travelled to Walungurru (Kintore), where he received a warm reception from the senior men, many of whom were inspired by his impassioned quest for knowledge and were in awe of the effort it had taken for him to journey so far.

Luke Scholes

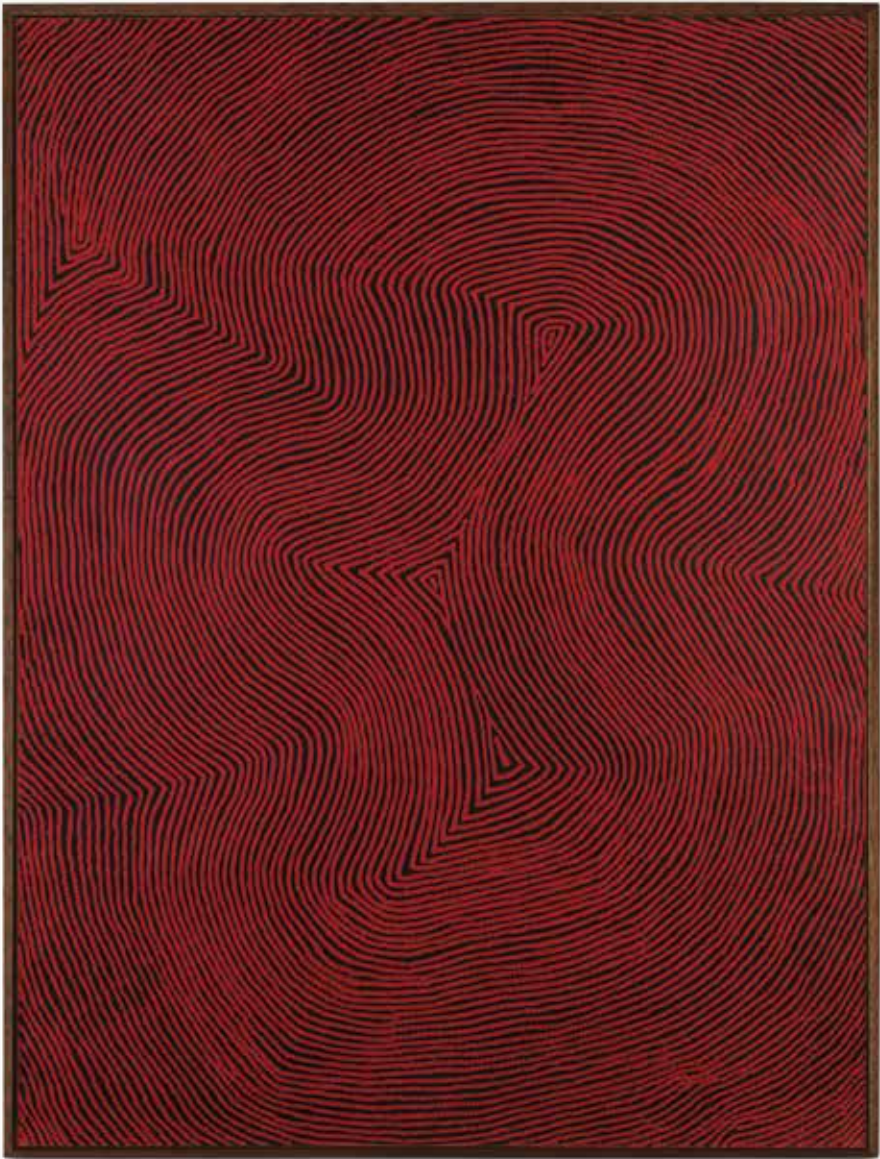


WARLIMPIRRNGA TJAPALTJARRI
born c. 1959
Pintupi language

Untitled – Marawa 2017
synthetic polymer paint on linen
122 × 91 cm (48 × 35.8 inches)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, painted at Kiwirrkurra, Western Australia
Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs,
Northern Territory, cat. no. WT1707139
Private collection, acquired from the above

This painting depicts designs associated with the swamp and rockhole site of Marawa, west of Wilkinkarra (Lake Mackay). A popular subject of Warlimpirrnga’s paintings, Marawa is the site where a large group of Tingarri ancestors entered the earth, creating the rockhole at this site. This painting references the Dingo Dreaming that arrived at this site from Yagga Yagga in the south.



YUKULTJI NAPANGATI
born 1971
Pintupi language

Untitled – Marrapinti 2023
synthetic polymer paint on linen
121 × 61.5 cm (48 × 24.2 inches)

PROVENANCE

The Artist, painted at Kiwirrkurra, Western Australia
Papunya Tula Artists, Alice Springs,
Northern Territory, cat. no. YN2307009
Private collection, United States of America,
acquired from the above

Yukultji Napangati was born near Wilkinkarra (Lake Mackay) and was a young girl when her Pintupi family of nine came out of the remote deserts of Western Australia into Kiwirrkurra in 1984. Prior to this, Yukultji and her family had been living a traditional life on Country and had not encountered kartiya (outsiders). Yukultji stayed in the community of Kiwirrkurra and began painting with Papunya Tula Artists in 1996.

Located to the west of Kiwirrkurra, Marrapinti is a site where women camped in the Tjukurrpa and collected yala (bush potato). Marrapinti is a recurring subject within Napangati's work. The repetitious swathes of lines reflect the sandhills surrounding the site and the underground tubers of the plant. The landscape in the painting is all-encompassing and devoid of a horizon line. Subtle optical shifts provide an impression of movement and shimmer within the undulating lines, reminiscent of the desert haze.

Yukultji Napangati's work first came to the attention of a wider audience through her inclusion in the 2005 Primavera exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art. In 2018, she was awarded the Wynne Prize at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Her work is held in significant public and private collections, including the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the National Gallery of Australia, the National Gallery of Victoria and the Hood Museum of Art, USA.

Lauren Harvey



LAWRENCE PENNINGTON
c. 1934 – 2024
Pitjantjatjara language

Mituna 2020
synthetic polymer paint on linen
137 × 110 cm (53.9 × 43.3 inches)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, painted at Tjuntjuntjara, Western Australia
Spinifex Arts Project, Tjuntjuntjara, Western Australia,
cat. no. 20-99
ReDot Fine Art Gallery, Singapore
Private collection, Sydney, New South Wales,
acquired from the above

EXHIBITED
Making a Mark: A Collection of Fine Spinifex Indigenous Art,
ReDot Fine Art Gallery, Singapore, 2021

In 1998, when the Spinifex People decided they should paint their intimate knowledge of the surrounding Country upon a large stretched canvas, Lawrence Pennington was a willing participant. Lawrence's depiction of his birthplace and other significant sites was a vital piece of the mapped terrain the Spinifex Men submitted as part of their Native Title Claim, resulting in the eventual return of some 55,000 square kilometres of known lands within the Great Victoria Desert of Western Australia.

Lawrence continued to paint in small bursts over the next fifteen years, before settling into a daily rhythm that saw his art practice grow exponentially. His compositions were grounded in mark-making that seemed suspended in time and space, an insight into another dimension – one which, upon reflection, Lawrence himself inhabited. His linear, iconographic depictions of Wati Kutjara Tjukurpa (Two Men Creation Line) resonate with a powerful veneration for the sites he had traversed as a young man but were no longer easy to visit.

As Lawrence aged and his eyesight diminished, his compositions became more expressive, filling space with every nuanced mark in its rightful place. He would take constant breaks to recline and sing inma (sacred song cycle) for the sites he had painted back into existence. He brought the painting, the song and the story to a harmonising crescendo that reflected the spiritually fulfilled life he lived, with each composition a small glimpse into another realm.

Brian Hallett



TIMO HOGAN
born 1973
Pitjantjatjara language

Lake Baker 2023
synthetic polymer paint on linen
290 × 400 cm (114.2 × 157.5 inches)
(overall) (diptych)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, painted at Tjuntjuntjara, Western Australia
Spinifex Arts Project, Tjuntjuntjara, Western Australia,
cat. no. 23-83
Salon Art Projects, Darwin, Northern Territory
Private collection, United Kingdom,
acquired from the above in 2023

EXHIBITED
Tarnanthi – Timo Hogan: Kumpilpa Ngaranyi – Unseen,
Light Square Gallery, Adelaide, October 2023

A National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award winner, Timo Hogan has amassed a global following for his powerful depictions of his custodial Country, Lake Baker. This significant site is situated at the northern edge of the Great Victoria Desert of Western Australia, a remote, arid and barely accessible salt lake within the undulating country that surrounds it. But this is Country that Timo Hogan knows intimately.

With his contrasting black and white palette, Timo is able to bring Lake Baker and the Wati Kutjara Tjukurpa (Two Men Creation Narrative) to life. This important epic is manifest not only in the surrounding landscape but in Lake Baker itself. Timo gives intimate insights into the characters who inhabit the drama that unfolds upon the canvas. With his adroit use of space and contrast, Timo creates movement enveloped by a quiet reverence – akin to grand religious portraits. He displays an exceptional gift in his ability to translate this dynamic into impressive large-scale compositions of such subtle magnificence.

Brian Hallett



PATJU PRESLEY
c. 1945 – 2025
Pitjantjatjara language

Tjatu 2024
synthetic polymer paint on linen
200 × 137 cm (78.7 × 53.9 inches)

PROVENANCE
The Artist, painted at Tjuntjuntjara, Western Australia
Spinifex Arts Project, Tjuntjuntjara, Western Australia,
cat. no. 24-37
Short St Gallery, Broome, Western Australia
Private collection, United States of America,
acquired from the above

EXHIBITED
Spinifex 2024, Short St Gallery, Broome,
Western Australia, 10 May – 6 June 2024

Patju Presley brought his very own colour to every situation he was involved in. His affable personality radiated outwards, and his positivity became infectious, be it that he was relating the known events of the Tjukurpa (creation narratives) or was delivering a sermon on the merits of a moral life. He held nothing back, always committed to expanding his cause – to inform and edify his audience.

Patju wanted people of every ilk to know and to realise the wonders of the Tjukurpa – how the landscape was originally formed by the first beings, and why it still resonates with such power today. His dedication was reflected in his ability to render all of this in his luminous compositions. Patju found his calling in the painted depictions of his Country, which he portrayed as he saw it – an interwoven commentary on history, spirituality and moral meaning. All this he did with an overflowing palette of reverberating colour and movement.

Patju began his painting career in the early 2000s with other men of similar standing at the newly formed Irrunytju Arts at Wingellina Community. It was here that the names of Tommy Watson, Nyukal Dawson and Clem Rictor emerged, with Patju a part of the dynamic ‘Central Desert Colourists’.

Brian Hallett



KEITH WIKMUNEA
born 1967
Wik-Mungkan & Wik-Alken languages

Theewith / My White Cockatoo Totem 2025
earth pigments and PVA fixative on ironwood
252 × 70 × 70 cm (99.2 × 27.6 × 27.6 inches)

PROVENANCE

The Artist, created in Aurukun, Queensland
Wik & Kugu Arts Centre, Aurukun,
Queensland, cat. no. 1-25

Keith Wikmunea's *Theewith / My White Cockatoo Totem* 2025 sits within the sculptural traditions of Aurukun, where carving remains a primary expression of relationships between clan, Country and ancestral knowledge. Drawn from the landscape of western Cape York in Far North Queensland, this vertical ironwood form references the dense eucalypt greenery of the region, where bird and animal life flourishes and is strongly connected to clan identity.

The carving traditions of the Wik and Kugu peoples originally developed through the creation of figures and animals for ceremony. These sculptures were used in performance, where movement, song and painted surfaces brought ancestors to life.

Wikmunea, a Thu'Apalech man, is a senior carver from Aurukun, where carving remains closely connected to ceremony and cultural responsibility. In 2023, Wikmunea was awarded the Telstra Art Award at the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards (NATSIAA) for his large-scale sculpture *Ku', Theewith & Kalam pang: The White Cockatoo, Galah and the Wandering Dog* 2023. This piece presented a dynamic grouping of animal totems emerging from a carved tree, articulating a broader network of ancestral relationships connected to Wikmunea's Country. *Theewith, My White Cockatoo Totem* develops this sculptural language through a more focused treatment of a single totem – the cockatoo – emphasising the specificity of clan-based knowledge and the clarity of Wikmunea's formal approach. Works of this scale and resolution remain rare, and the presence of a closely related example to his award-winning practice underscores the strength and continuity of Wikmunea's carving practice.

Lucy Foster



D Lan Galleries is committed to ethical market practices and rigorous provenance protocols which protect the rights of artists, communities, and art centres, and are critical to building confidence and trust in the marketplace.

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ETHICS

The gallery is a member of the Indigenous Art Code, a voluntary code of conduct developed by the Indigenous visual arts industry in 2009. The Code sets best practice standards for fair, transparent, and ethical trade with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and their art.

In 2019, D Lan Galleries introduced a voluntary resale royalty scheme whereby both the seller and the gallery contribute a 5% resale fee to the artist or estate for works not otherwise covered under current legislation. D Lan Galleries later expanded on this commitment and now commits 30% of annual profits back to artists and artist communities.

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PROVENANCE

In the context of Australian First Nations art, provenance refers not only to the documented history of an artwork, but also provides a traceable link to the artist, their community, and the art centre that may represent them.

Importantly, provenance safeguards against unethical trade practices, ensuring an artwork is legitimately sourced and that artists are fairly compensated.

For collectors, provenance provides assurance of authorship and that the artwork has not been misattributed or fraudulently produced. Well-documented provenance protects the interests of both artist and collector by recording the history of the work’s origin and record of sale.

D Lan Galleries aligns its provenance protocols with those of major public collecting institutions and museums, which includes rigorous title verifications, chain of ownership, and ethical source assessment.

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THE ROLE OF ART CENTRES

Acquiring artwork through a First Nations-governed community art centre, or the dealers they endorse, is the most ethical and sustainable path for collectors. Art centres ensure that artists are paid fairly and that cultural protocols are respected.

The First Nations art centre as a sociocultural institution appeared in the early 1970s with the establishment of Papunya Tula Artists. As First

Nations communities gained greater agency over their artistic and cultural expression, more art centres were founded across Australia, particularly in Arnhem Land, the Central Desert, the Kimberley region, and the Tiwi Islands.

Art centres serve as social and market ecosystems—community-led commercial hubs connecting remote artists with national and international audiences. They operate as not-for-profit, community-led cooperatives where artists are supported in the production and sale of their work while retaining cultural integrity and control over pricing.

For many remote communities, art centres provide the primary source of sustainable income. The revenue generated is often reinvested into community health, education, and cultural preservation. Art centres also act as protective measures against commercial exploitation, ensuring artists receive fair and timely compensation.

Approximately eighty art centres currently operate across Australia, each receiving Australian Government funding to support staffing, registration, and operational environments that support quality artistic production.

Pre-art centre and early community-based contexts

Certain early facilitators operating prior to the establishment of formal Aboriginal art centres are recognised by Australian public institutions as ethical provenance sources where their engagement was artist-led, non-exploitative, culturally informed, and subsequently validated through institutional acquisition and exhibition.

Recognised first provenance sources

For specific artists, D Lan Galleries accepts documented provenance from select reputable commercial galleries as ethical first-line provenance, where those galleries maintained direct, ongoing relationships with the artist and generated comprehensive documentation. These exceptions apply only where the gallery operated as the artist’s primary representative and where major Australian public collecting institutions accept their provenance.

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BUYING FIRST NATIONS ART

When purchasing First Nations art, collectors should look for art centre provenance whenever possible; documentation including certificates of authenticity; and confirmation that dealers are signatories to the Indigenous Art Code and work collaboratively with artists’ art centres.

Please contact us if you have any questions about the ethical acquisition of Australian First Nations art.

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