

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE



“TREASURES OF THE SPIRIT”

Exhibition of Aboriginal prints by desert artists from Australia's remote
Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara lands

28 January- 11February 2013

FREE OF CHARGE

RTS Gallery
Takovska 10
Belgrade



Supported by the Embassy of Australia in Belgrade

FORWARD

I am very pleased to present the exhibition Treasures of the Spirit a collection of prints by desert artists from Australia's remote Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara lands.

Art is a wonderful medium for creating understanding and sharing diversity. Australia and Serbia have a strong history of people-to-people links. We also share a common interest in drawing on the rich cultural traditions we have been privileged to inherit.

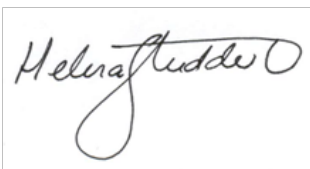
Australia's Aboriginal peoples bring a cultural heritage tens of thousands of years old. We have come over time to recognise the immense responsibility this entails. Australia's efforts towards reconciliation have been embedded in learning respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and valuing justice and equity for all Australians.

Aboriginal art is unique. It represents the essence of Aboriginal culture and along with language is the core of cultural identity. It tells a story and because it reflects the Australian landscape, the colours, vibrancy and distinctiveness resonate with many people around the world.

This is a wonderful opportunity to bring to the Serbian public a cultural experience from a select group of Aboriginal people.

I hope you enjoy the exhibition.

Yours sincerely,

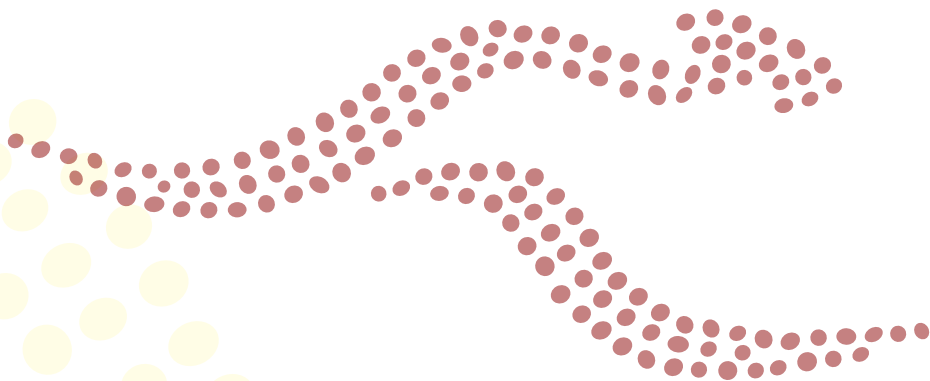
A handwritten signature in black ink, enclosed in a thin black rectangular border. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style and appears to read "Melina Todorovic".

TJUNGU PALYA ARTISTS AT RTS GALLERY BELGRADE PROF. CHRISTINE NICHOLLS

INTRODUCTION

Until recently the PitjantjatjaraYankunytjatjara people, whose vast, remote Western Desert country spans three Australian states (northern South Australia, an eastern part of Western Australia, and a southern region of the Northern Territory), resisted bringing their visual art and accompanying narratives into the public arena, wishing to retain their Tjukurpa ('Dreaming', the Aboriginal religion) narratives and visual artworks in the private domain.

It was only about a decade ago that these mostly very old Anangu (the self-referential term used by PitjantjatjaraYankunytjatjara people) made the fateful decision to present their Tjukurpa artworks and narratives to the rest of the world.

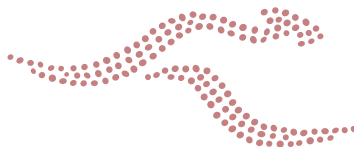



The TjunguPalya Collective of PitjantjatjaraYankunytjatjara Artists

TjunguPalyais a small collective of predominantly South Australian-based artists. The TjunguPalya artists with works in this exhibition – Nyankulya Watson, Ankaliya Curtis, Maringka Baker, Beryl Jimmy, Lance Peck, David Miller, Ginger Wikilyiri, the late WinguTingima, and the late Jimmy Baker – are significant players in this extraordinary late-blooming art movement.

The artworks produced by members of this special group, in part comprising a number of ‘first contact’ people (persons who did not encounter white people in the early stages of their lives) are characterised by compositional strength, freedom and left-of-field colour usage, conveying positive exultation in the life-force. This derives from the Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara religious, ceremonial and legal system, the Tjukurpa.

Tjukurpa - known in (poor) English translation as the ‘Dreamtime’, or ‘Dreaming’ - lies at the heart of tradition-oriented Indigenous artistic production. Unlike Christianity or Judaism, which are ‘abstract’ religions, wherein the spiritual realm is generally distinguished from the secular or profane, Aboriginal religion is pre-eminently practical, literally grounded in local landscapes. For tradition-oriented Aboriginal Australians, the sacred and the profane are not distinct, separate spheres. Without exception, ‘Dreamings’ and ‘Dreaming narratives’ relate to specific, owned tracts of land. Not only are Dreamings and Dreaming narratives site-specific, but for tradition-oriented Indigenous Australian people, religious belief is inseparable from the land itself. Artists’ principal subject matter is almost invariably their own vast desert ‘country’ where they were born and grew up, and over which, as children, they travelled by foot.

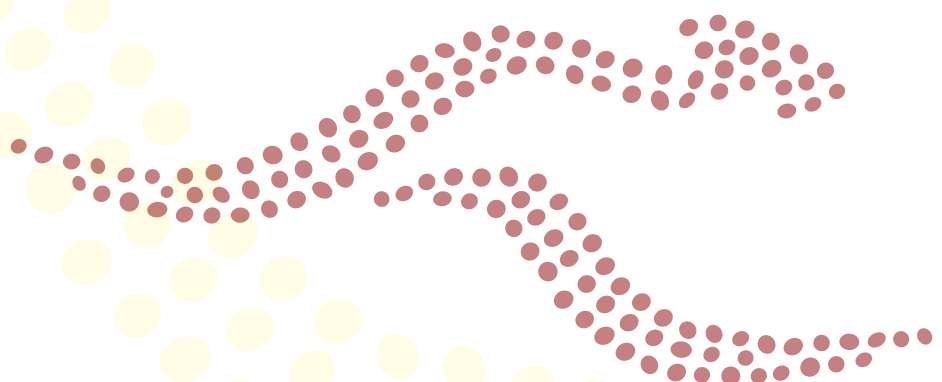




'Dreamings' and their accompanying narratives, which according to Aboriginal belief, were originally planted into the ground, often recount the heroic journeying or exploits of Dreaming Ancestors, creators of all natural phenomena. The behaviour of these Dreaming Ancestors or Creator Beings is always exemplary; whether behaving well, badly, or just inappropriately, they act as exemplars from whose exploits other people can learn.

There is a lot to be learned from Dreamings and Dreaming narratives about local environments, including flora, fauna and natural landmarks - including small hills, caves, rock formations, underground or above ground water sources and creeks. The vitally important matter of the location and availability of permanent water looms large in Dreamings and their accompanying narratives, because desert people are entirely dependent on the availability of this scarce resource.

It should be pointed out that whatever overt shape a Tjukurpa may take in these narratives (animal, vegetable, star constellation etc), all have the ability to morph in-and-out-of human form and landscape form. Traces of their ancestral travellings are imprinted on today's desert landscapes.





'Inarki' 2009

Silkscreen Print 590mm x 840mm

PB1-33/40

This place is Inarki. Lake Inarki. The Kanyala went through this country. He was a big euro and the hunters were after him. They caught him and cut his stomach open ready for cooking. They stiched him up with a piece of wood in preperation, but when their backs were turned he ran off. The hunters chased him to Pulpal. The Kanyala was leading them there. He killed the hunters in revenge for them killing his uncle Wati Ngintaka (Perintie Lizard man).



DAVID MILLER

Language Group: Pitjantjatjara

Community: Kanpi

David Miller is a senior Pitjantjatjara man living at the remote community settlement of Kanpi in the Western Desert of northern South Australia. He was born around 1950 at Aparatjara, a traditional camping place 30 km east of Kanpi. As a child he lived around Inarki, a little further west and travelled with his family on foot over vast distances from Warburton in WA to Ernabella in SA for ceremonial occasions and the trading of dingo scalps for tea and flour.



'Kunamata' 2009

Silkscreen Print 840mm x 590mm

PB2-33/40

Tjulpu palumpa ngura apu kulpi (these birds have their home in small caves in the rocky hills). Tjulpu ini ipuru, tjulpu mutu mutu (the name of these birds is spinifex pigeon and they are small birds). Apu Kunamata pulka tjuta (at Kunamata there are many big rocky hills). Kuniya wati munu kuniya minyma ananyi palumpa ngura tali, (one man and women python are going to there home in the sandhills) Ngayuku ngura Kunamata (my home is at Kunamata).



GINGER WIKILYIRI

Language Group: Pitjantjatjara

Community: Nyapari

Ginger was born at Kunamata a rock hole south of Nyapari in 1930. His father had three wives. Wingu Tingima is the daughter of the first wife and Ginger the son of the second. Ginger is a senior law man and has cultural responsibilities for both Kunumata and Piltati. His passion for landmanagement and horticulture has taken him to Israel where he learn't about arid land techniques and to Mutitjulu community, where he worked for many years as a ranger for the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park.



'Kalaya Tjukurpa' 2009

Silkscreen Print 590mm x 840mm

PB7-33/40

Kalaya Tjukurpa (Emu creation story) for Kanpi Community. The emu is walking around the country, leaving travelling tracks where he has walked. He is eating many bush foods as he travels. All his children are gone. They have hidden in the bush. The Kalaya was playing a trick on the Kipara (Bush Turkey Man).



JIMMY BAKER

Language Group : Pitjantjatjara

Community: Kanpi

Jimmy was born along the Kalaya Tjukurpa (Emu Dreaming) track in the Western Desert at a rockhole called Malumpa (close to the present day community of Kanpi in South Australia) c 1915. After the mission days Jimmy along with key family members instigated the establishment of a homeland community at Kanpi, so they could live back in their own country. Jimmy passed away in 2010 and is fondly remembered. He was a senior law man, a great artist and a highly regarded Ngangkari (traditional healer).



'Kalinpil' 2009

Silkscreen Print 840mm x 590mm

PB4-33/40

Ngayuku kangkuruku ngura Kalinpil walawaru kulinpa kutjara kurpu nyinanytja munu pula kunyu punkanu kurpu ka pulana papangku patjanu. Ka kungawara kulinpa katingangka ka palaru mapalku pulkaringkupai. (My sisters place other side of Katala called Kalinpil. There were two eagles sitting in their nest and they fell to the ground and a dingo came and killed them. If you take young women to this place they grow up really quickly.)



MARINGKA BAKER

Language Group : Pitjantjatjara

Community: Kanpi

Maringka is a senior Pitjantjatjara artist living in the remote community settlement of Kanpi, 100kms east of the tri state borders of WA, SA, and the NT. She was born c1952. at Kaliumpil rock hole a traditional camping area in Western Australia. Maringka's parents died when she was young and she was raised by Anmanari Brown and other members of her extended family. She went to the mission schools of Warburton in WA and Emabella in SA.



'Ngayuku Ngura' 2009

Silkscreen Print 590mm x 840mm

PB8-33/40

Ngayuku ngura (this is my country). Kapi piti munu kapi tjukula (there are two types of rock holes, big ones and small deep ones). This country is close to Irrunytju.



NYANKULYA WATSON WALYAMPARI

Language Group: Pitjantjatjara

Community: Nyapari & Kalka

Nyankulya was born at Mt Aloysius, at a rockhole not far from the tri state border, sometime around 1938. As a teenager she lived at Anumarapiti, now an outstation of Irrunytju. She remembers shortly after this time white fellas came and told her family to go to Emabella. It was good at the mission, there was lots of flour, tea and sugar. In the morning we would listen for the bell, then we would line up for food, go to church and then to work. Nyankulya was a founding member of Irrunytju Arts. She now resides in Nyapari S.A.



'Minyma Tjutaku Inma' 2009

Silkscreen Print 590mm x 840mm

PB3-33/40

This is Kuru Ala a sacred place for the Seven Sisters story. Kangkuru munu Malanypa nyinangi (the older sister has been sitting with her younger sister). All the sisters were travelling through this country. One cheeky man, wati Nyiiru was chasing the sisters all over. He was a lustful man and wanted to get one of the sisters for his wife. He was a Ngangkari (magician) and could change into many things to trick the sisters. The women were all dancing and have left their footprints (dancing lines) in the sand.



WINGU TINGIMA

Language Group: Pitjantjatjara

Community: Nyapari

Wingu was born at a rockhole called Nyumun, in the Western Desert of Western Australia in 1919. "I didn't go to school I was a bush girl!" Later she travelled by foot with her mother and father to the mission at Emabella, where she worked spinning sheep's wool to make things for the mission. "I wasn't worrying to go home because I was happy at the mission". Wingu produced an outstanding body of works, which feature in major public and private collections. She passed away in 2010.



'Tjitji Tjuta' 2009

Silkscreen Print 840mm x 590mm

PB10-33/40

Tjitji tjuta tjintjira inma pulka (the children have sacred dancing and singing on this claypan). That white one is ngapari (edible lerp found on some gum leaves), sweet one. All the tjitji (children) get the ngapari before Inma (sacred dancing and singing). The children have come from everywhere. They have travelled from Ngunmanga to the north and Uumga to the south. This is the Inma (ceremonial ground) where they sing and dance the songs from the Tjukurpa. Inma kutjupa kutjupa (all the different songs). This is close up to Watarra. Ngayuku ngura (my home).

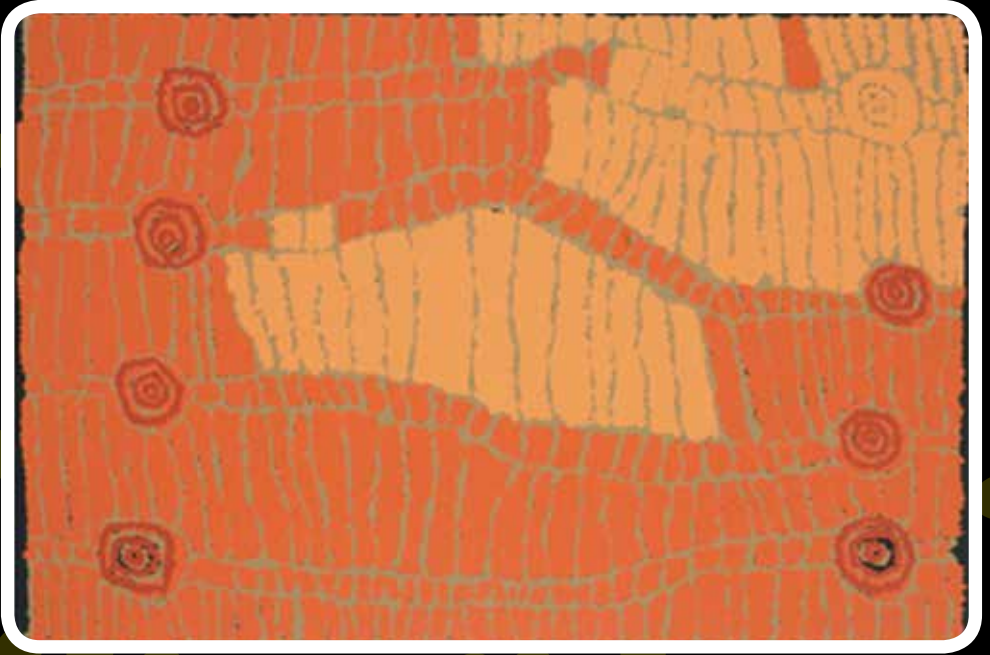


BERNARD TJALKURI

Language Group: Pitjantjatjara

Community: Watarru

Bernard was born in the bush at Waltja rockhole close to the homeland of Kunumata in the far north west of the Pitjantjatjara Lands of northern South Australia in 1930. Bernard's mother's country is Watarru and his father's place is Aparatjara, which is located near Kanpi community. Bernard lived a traditional nomadic life in the desert prior to contact with Europeans. He remembers seeing whitefellas travelling through his country as they headed west to the Warburton Mission when he was a young man.



'Watarru' 2009

Silkscreen Print 840mm x 590mm

PB6-33/40

This is Watarru. There are large granite boulders which rise red from the earth. These hills are important to Watarru. They contain many water sources from flat collection areas after rain to deeper more permanent rock holes. There are Mamu (monster) rockholes here aswell.

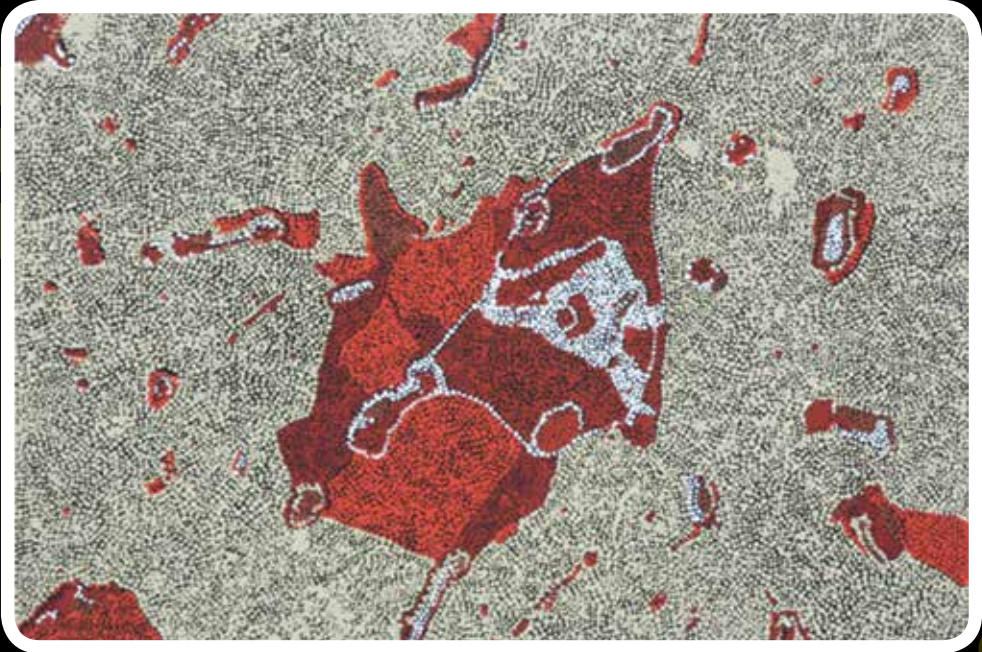


BERYL JIMMY

Language Group: Pitjantjatjara

Community: Watarru

Beryl Jimmy is a Pitjantjatjara woman living at the community settlement of Watarru in the far north west of South Australia, part of an area referred to as the Western Desert. She was born in 1970. Beryl's work is inspired by a deep connection to country and her spiritual links to the desert are expressed with integrity, beauty and creativity. Traditional knowledge of food collection and water sources were vital for survival in this dynamic desert landscape and is a prominent theme in her work.



'Kata Kata' 2009

Silkscreen Print 590mm x 840mm

PB5-33/40

This is country north of Wiluna in Western Australia in the Pilbra region. This rockhole is called Kata Kata. This area is the country, which some people may know from the book Last of the Nomads. It was in this area where that last family walked in (from living a traditional nomadic life). This is my country from my grandfather. The white area is Lake Dissapointment. The red areas represent sandy country and the deeper red the rocky and hilly country.



LANCE PECK

Language Group: Mandiltjara

Community: Kanpi Pitjantjatjara Lands S.A.

Lance was born in Canarvon in 1975. His father is Nanda from Northhampton and his mother Indjibandi from Roebourne. He grew up in Wiluna, Western Australia and came to the Ngaanyatjarra and Pitjantjatjara Lands as a young man. He lives in Kanpi with his wife and daughter.



'Billynya' 2009

Silkscreen Print 590mm x 840mm

PB9-33/40

This is my husband Billynya. He is walking his camel from the mission in Ernabella to Cave Hill. There are two ngintaka's munu tjilpul tjuta (perentie lizards and birds) who have come to drink from the rockhole. One wild dog has left his prints in the sand.



ANGKALIYA CURTIS

Language Group: Pitjantjatjara

Community: Nyapari

Angkaliya was born in 1928 at Miti in the South Australian Pitjantjatjara Lands. When she was small she travelled with her mother to Watarru (her mother's country). The family spent time at Ernabella mission and cattle station properties exchanging animal skins (dingoes and rabbits) for flour and sugar. She married and lived at the Ernabella where she worked in the craft room spinning wool and making rugs. In the 1960's she moved closer to her traditional homeland when the community of Amata began. Today she lives and works at Nyapari



Embassy of Australia in Belgrade
would like to thank
RTS Gallery
for their support to organise this exhibition.

We would also like to thank
dr. sc. Christine Nicholls
from Flanders University in Sydney
for bringing this exhibition to Belgrade.

Our deepest gratitude goes to the
Association of Aboriginal Art Prints Network
from Sydney

and

all Australian artists

who have made their works available to Serbian public.